

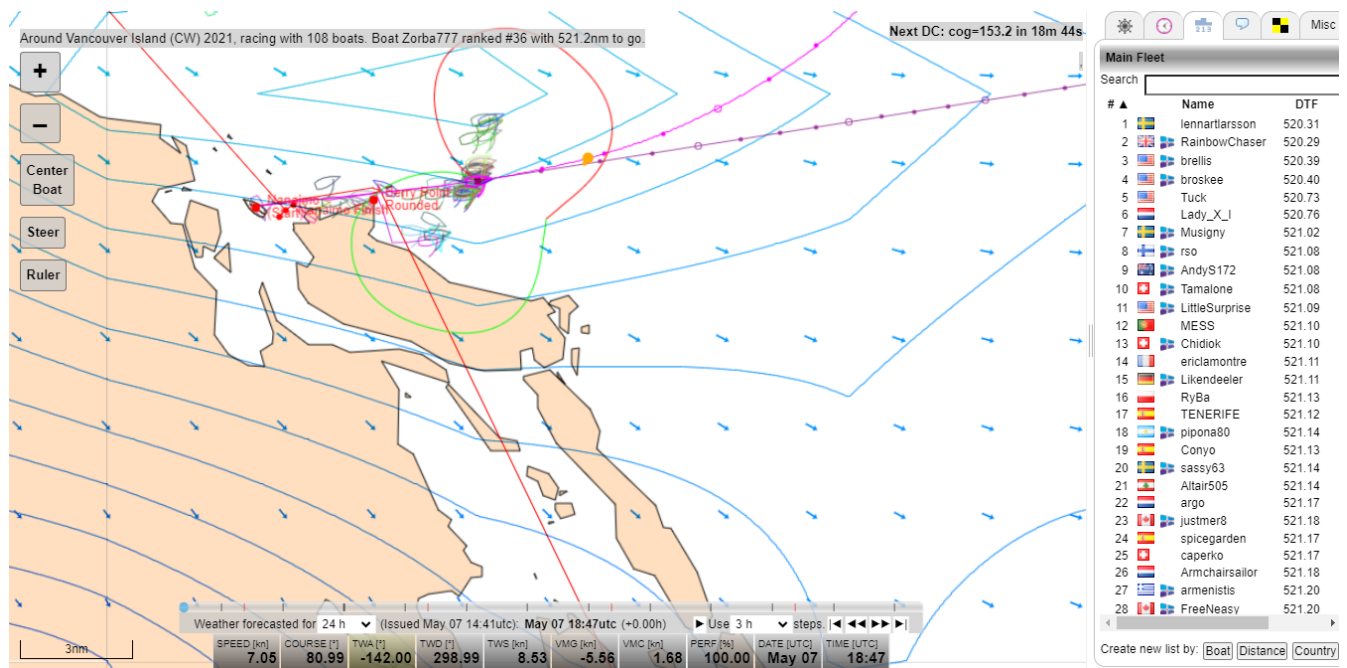
Around Vancouver (CW) 2021 – Report by Zorba777

A 525 NM race around Vancouver island, which has been done both in clockwise and counterclockwise direction over the years. The clockwise version was on the program this year, using the IMOCA 60 v2 polar.

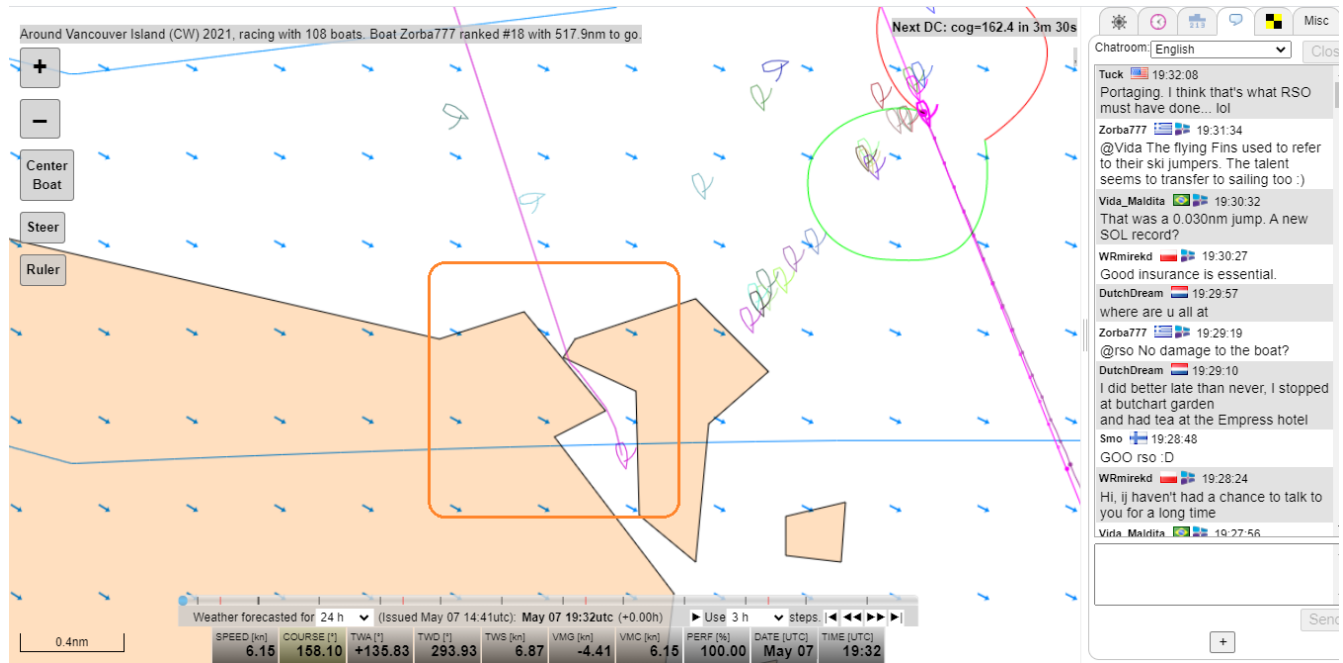
Time at the helm would definitely be an important factor, as this race involves a lot of narrow passages and the winds decide whether we get to do them in local daytime or nighttime.

Here is how it all happened:

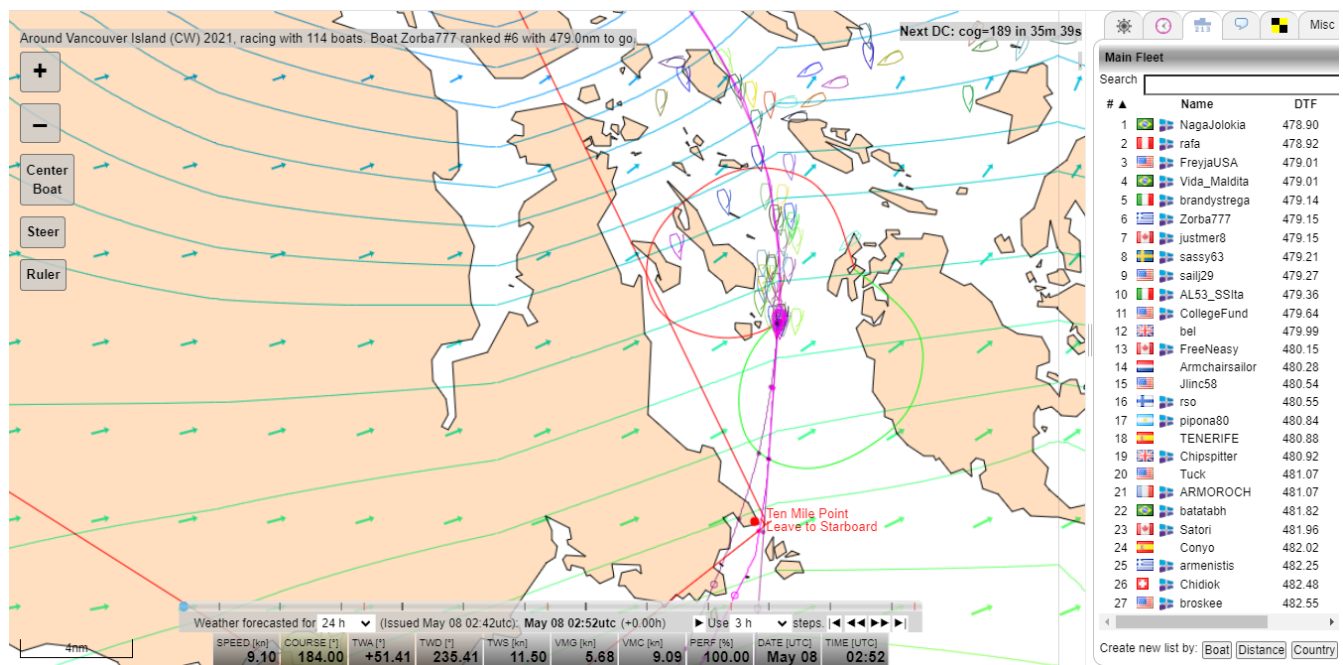
1 – We started in fair winds and a first important decision was whether to do the first part in open sea or go for the narrower in-between islands start that could be a bit shorter:



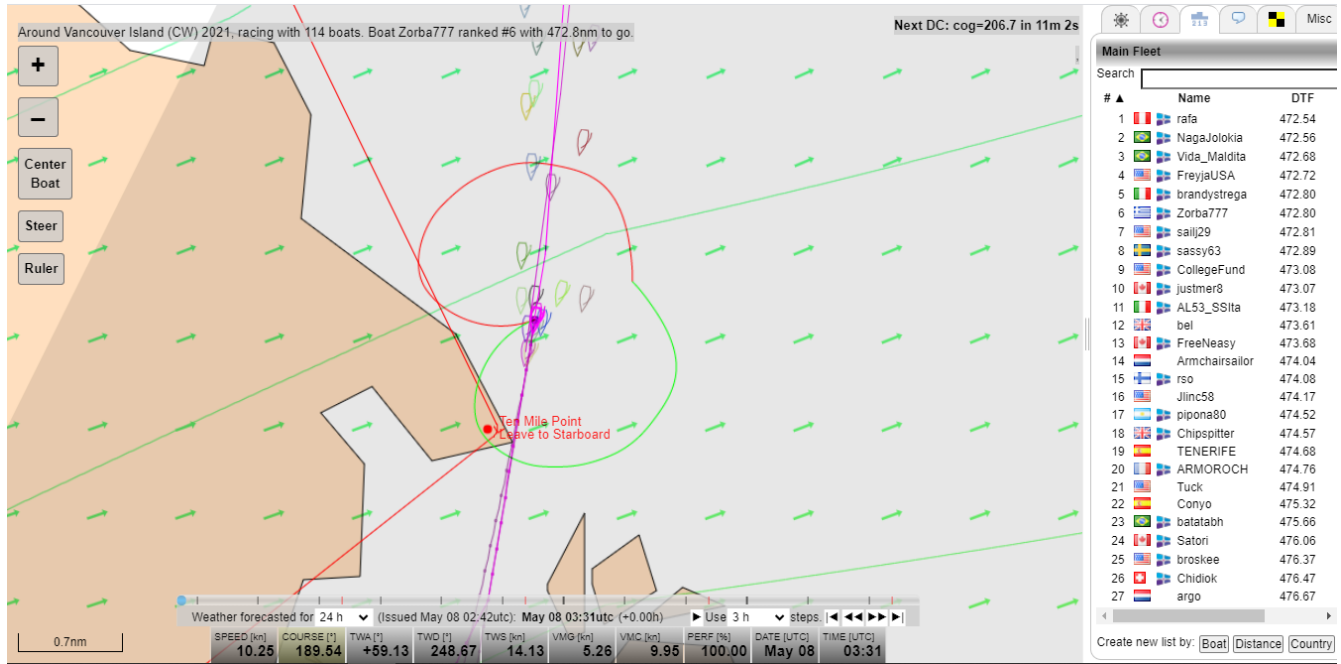
2 – The early lead was taken by @rso, who triggered some forum banter with a long boat jump over land, taking optimal advantage of the 30 seconds server tick. It's a SOL feature that may disappear in the future if the rumors come true that the BBQ check algo is going to be improved. So, here is preserving that jump for future generations :-)



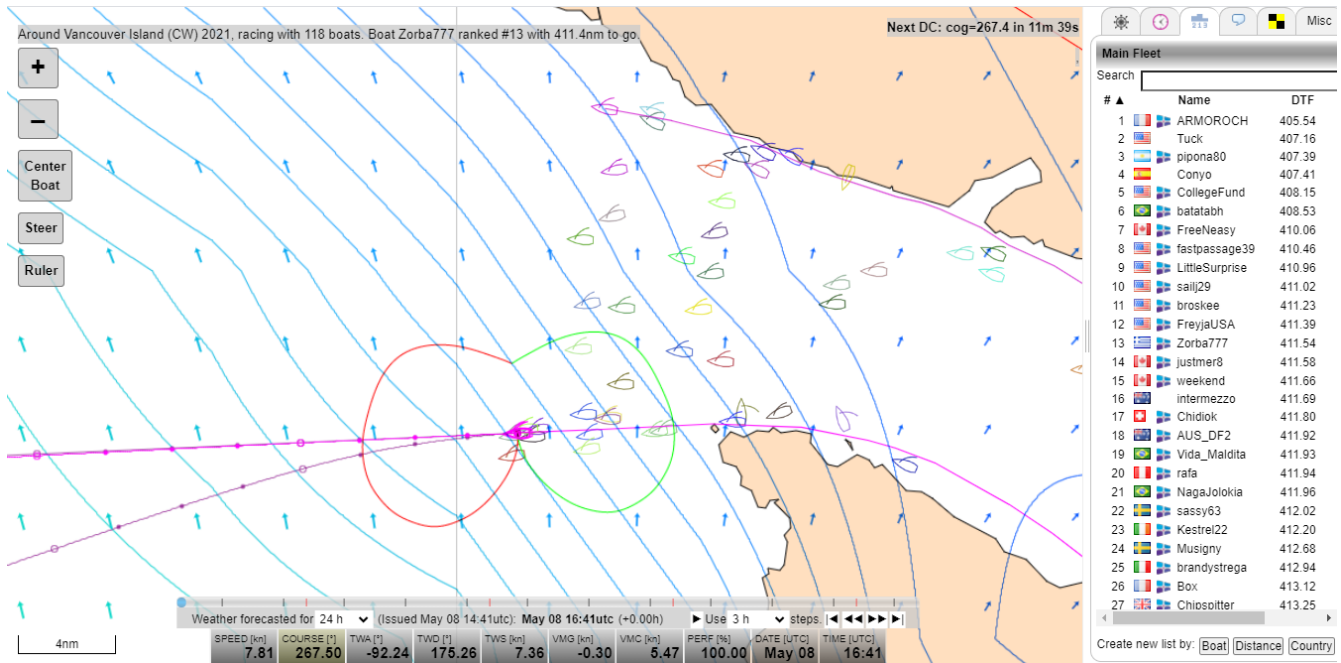
3 – Back to the race. I decided to go in between islands, even though it was overnight. But I always struggle with setting DCs that do not BBQ my boat on the first or second turn already. This race would be a good chance to try the new DC-aware predictor line and find out if that solves my problems. Expecting to find Zorba777 on a beach again I was surprised to wake up in 6th position and not too far behind:



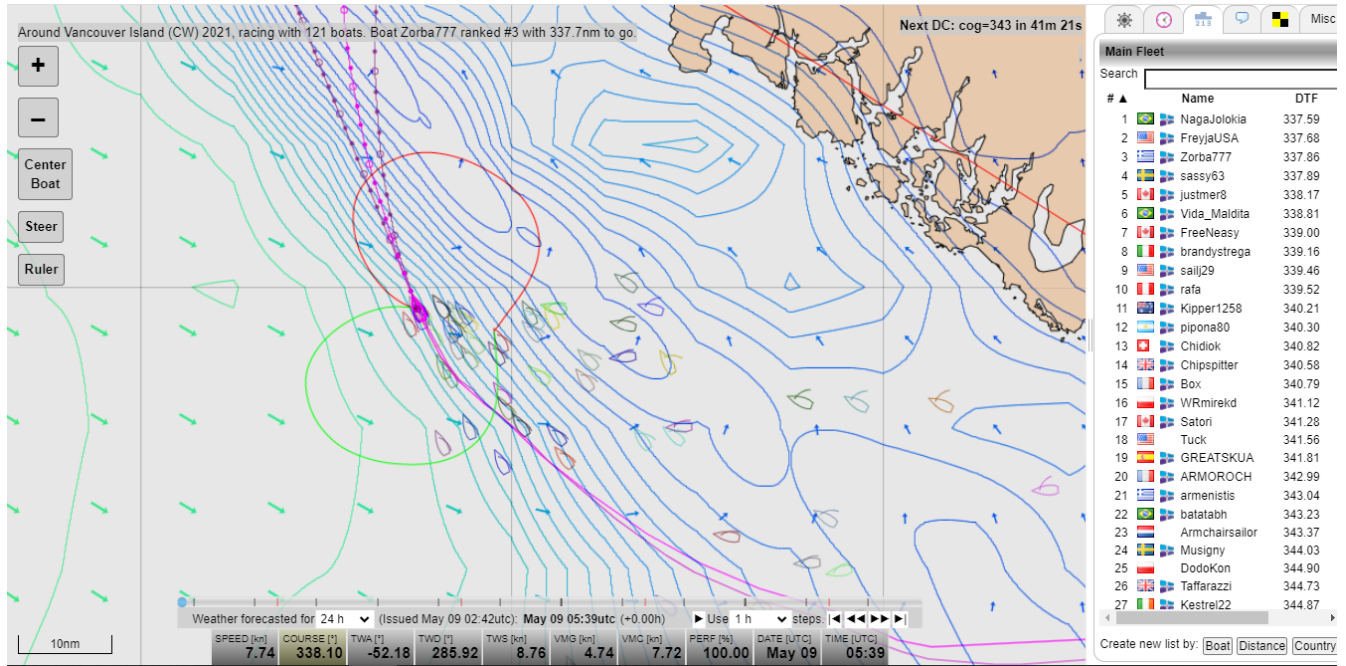
4 – At Ten Mile Point we had 11 boats within 1 NM of the leaders, with a bit of a gap to the rest of the field. It already looked likely that the race would be decided in this group:



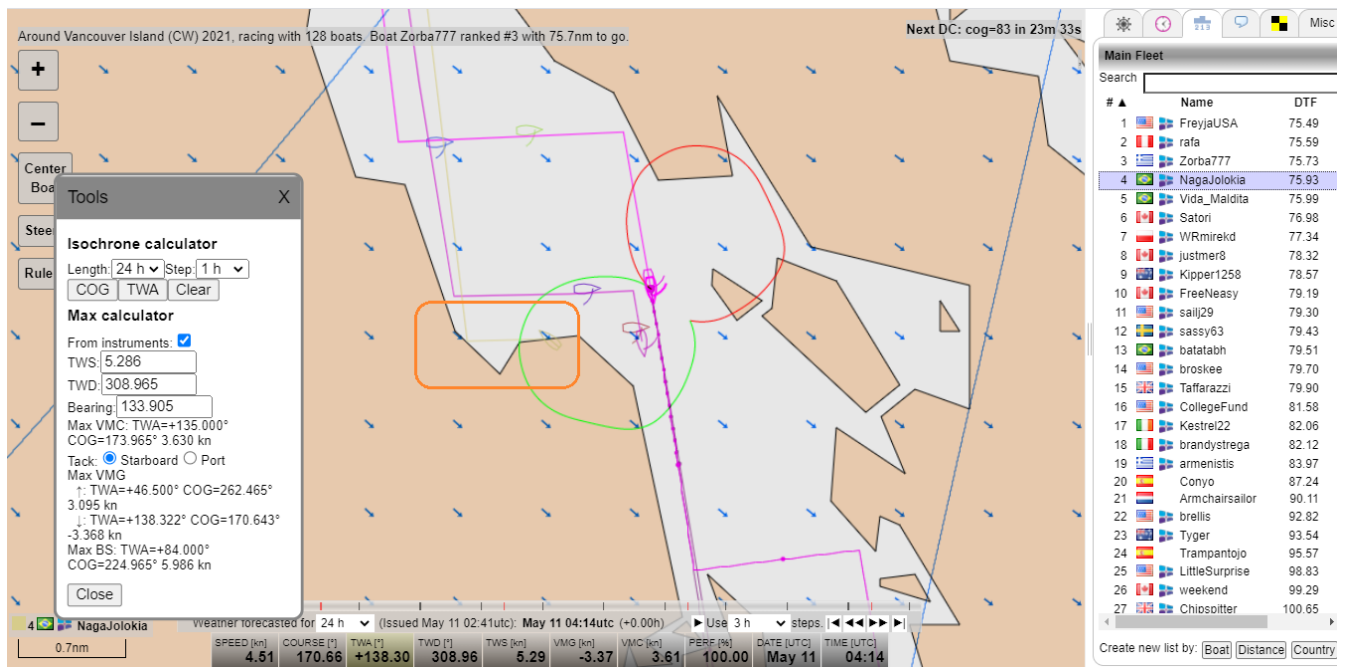
5 – Turning Northeast towards Cape Scott provided a long stretch of open water, and a possible chance to come back for those who didn't start well. But the weather didn't smile on them. The leading boats got to more favorable winds first, making for a classic rich-get-richer scenario:



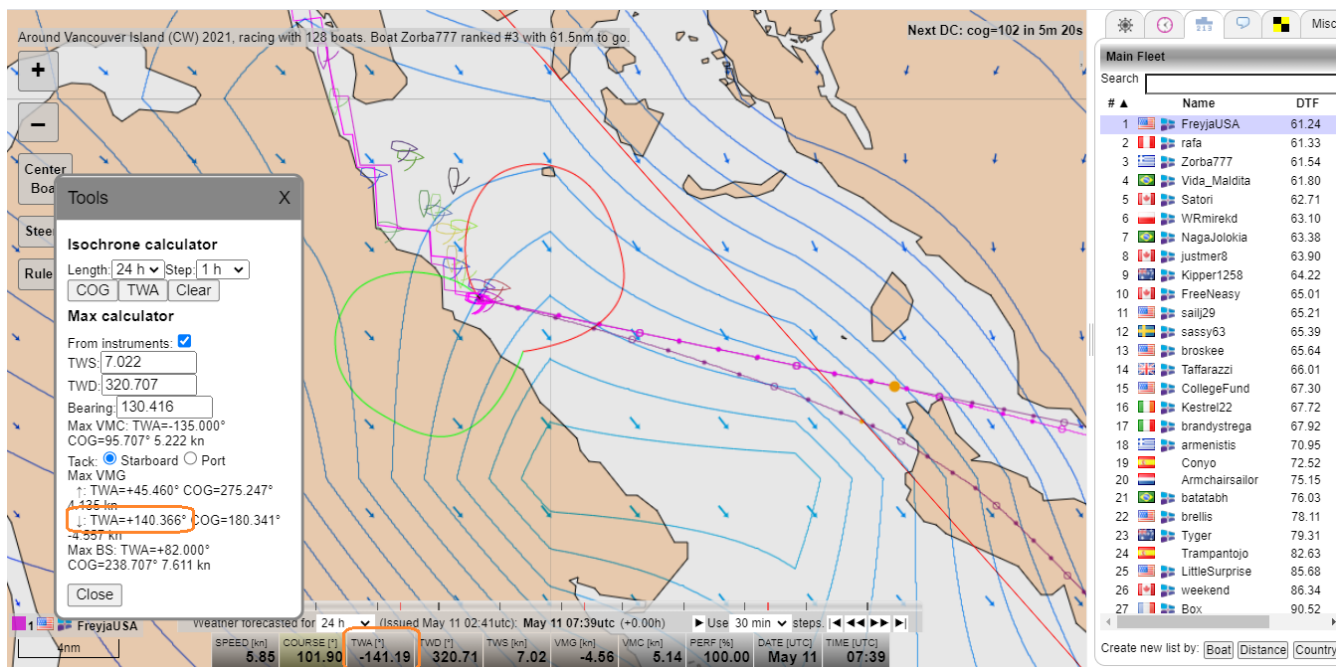
6 – Zorba777 improved to third position, behind NagaJolokia and FreyjaUSA:



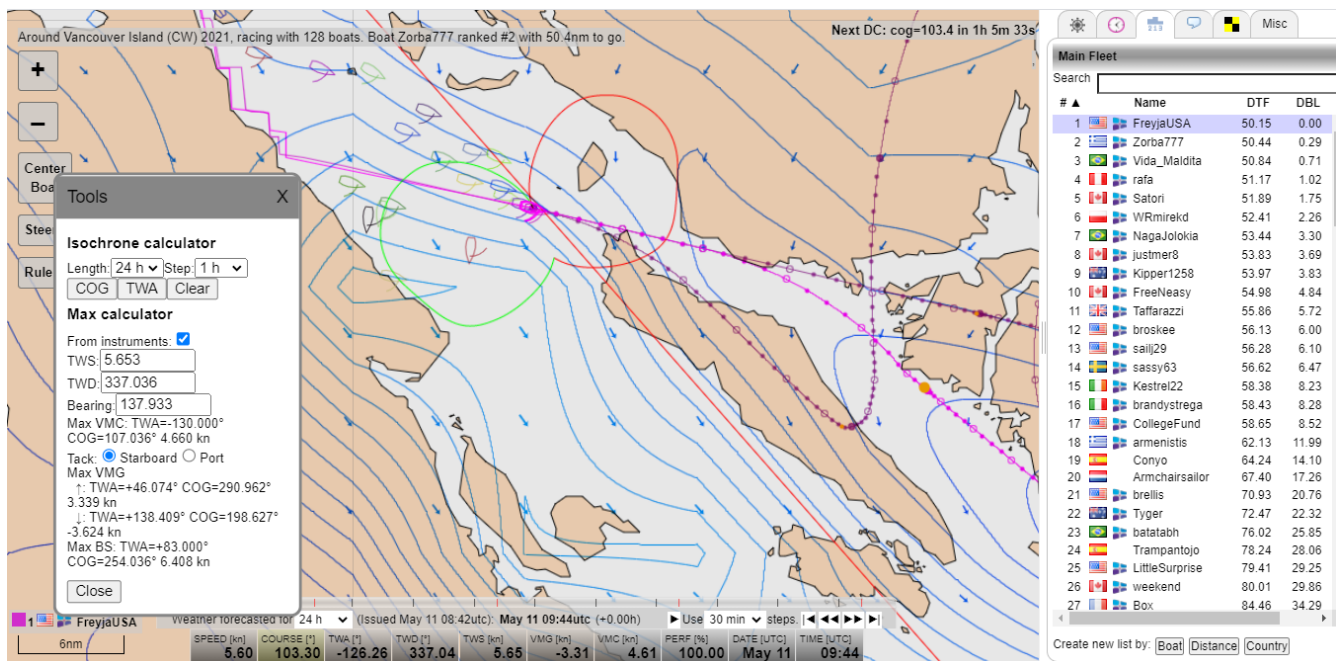
7 – FreyjaUSA took the lead, but a small error allowed NagaJolokia to take over. Then Naga had a (double) BBQ, which gave the lead back to FreyjaUSA. Gybing all night long in those narrow passages can be really unforgiving. Here is that moment:



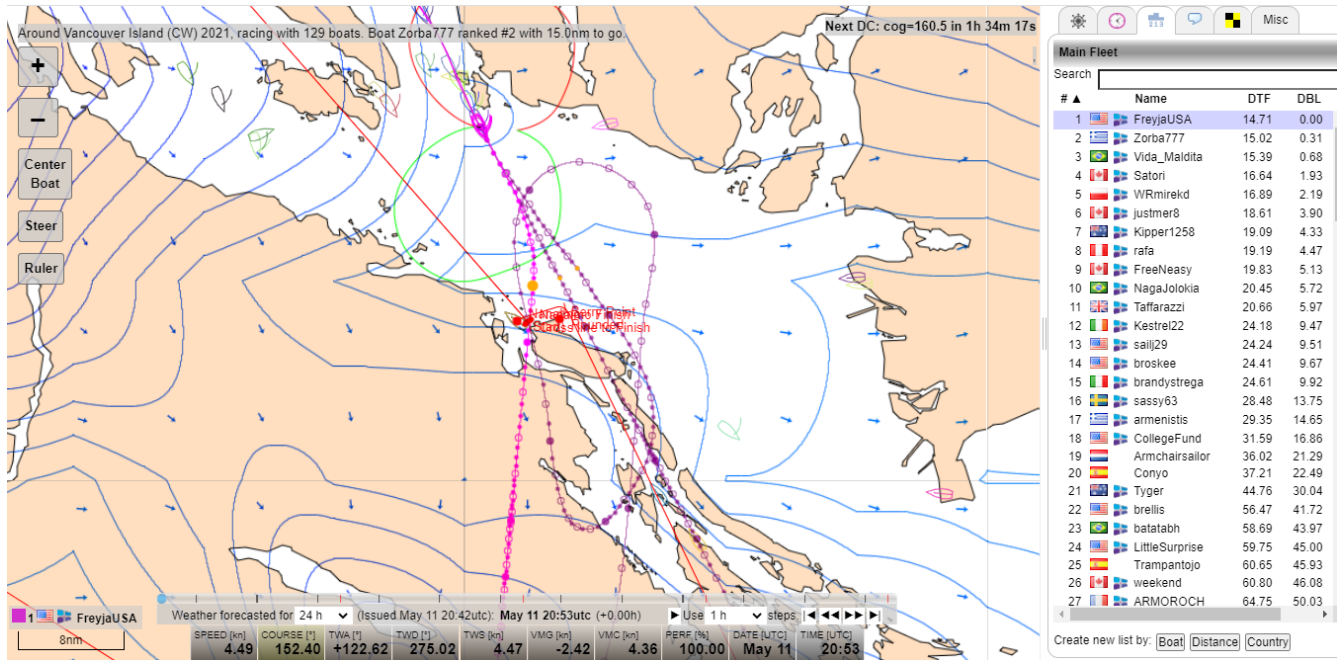
8 – After Chatham Point the narrow channels were done. I was not far behind Rafa, who had gone into 2nd place. I decided to go a bit further South and went on TWA 141 instead of the max VMG 140, nudging the boat a bit towards the extra pressure that was available there. It doesn't always take big things to gain (or lose) 0.1 or 0.2 NM:



9 – A final tactical choice was then to be made at Texada Island. The routing indicated to pass East of it, but it was unstable with a likely finish in very slow winds coming up. NagaJolokia saw his chance to get back on the podium, and also Rafa gybed to pass West of Texada Island with a chance to win. That put my boat in (temporary?) 2nd place, with Vida_Maldita going into 3rd. The next WX would decide:



9 – Unfortunately the NAM-AWIP services let us down in that crucial moment and we were forced to continue the race on the old grib. That decided the race in favor of the boats that had gone East of Texada Island. Here is my last screen, a few hours before the finish:



The positions for the podium wouldn't change anymore: A well deserved win for FreyjaUSA after 4 and a half days of concentrated sailing. Zorba777 finished 2nd and Vida_Maldita placed 3rd. WRMirekD grabbed fourth place and Satori took the honor of being first Canadian boat, finishing 5th. Congrats to all.

Thanks to all for a fun race and see you next time.

Zorba777