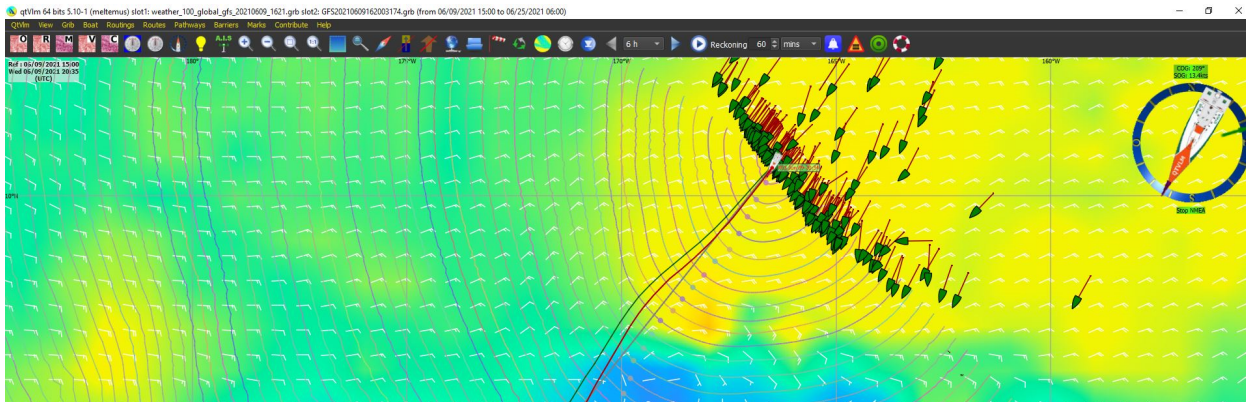


Report for race 1473 - ESRW4 Honolulu to Port Noumea 2021

It was foreseen...

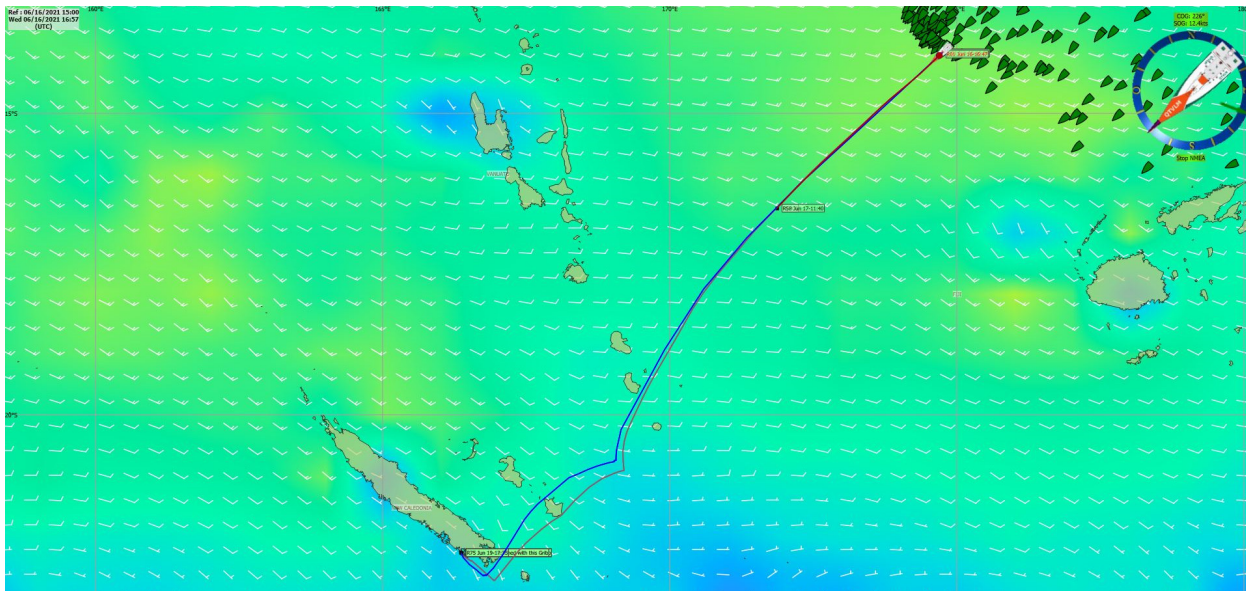
This is a shared report by Thomas of HastySlug and Scott of SlideRule

Stable trade winds and a relatively slow boat (Steinlager 2) made the boats at the start of this race form a semicircle fanning out of Honolulu towards the southwest. Then boats then aligned and marched towards New Caledonia without much change for days.

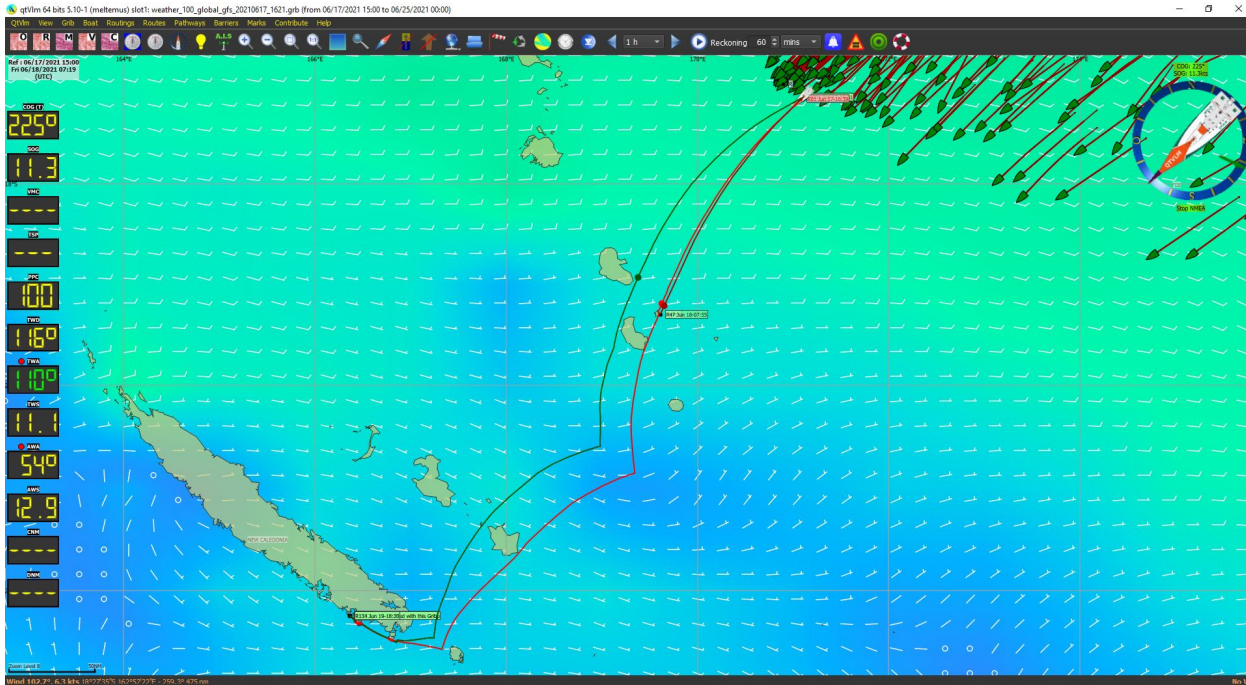


Location, location, location

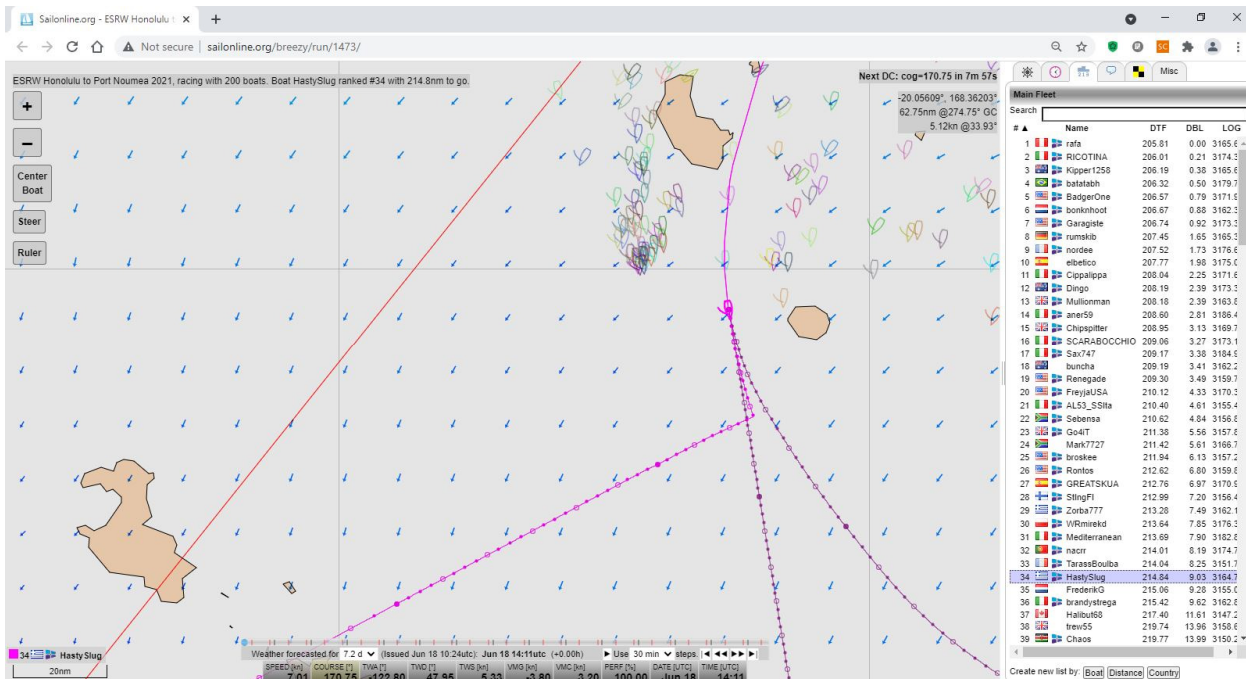
While the trade winds were stable for almost 2000nm from the start of the race, the winds ahead (past Vanuatu and Fiji and before New Caledonia) seemed to change with every weather update. This seemed like the only factor that could differentiate the line of boats coming from the NE, thus the position of the boat when reaching the changing winds near to New Caledonia, would be critical. I decided early enough to avoid the area of unstable winds and steer HastySlug to the longer eastern route. Thus, I routed each day gradually towards the east while staying close to the rhumb line.



It was quite exciting and stressful at the same time to see the rest of the fleet going for the western route, which was at that time favourable from their location. The following weather updates continued to show volatile winds between the Loyalty Islands and New Caledonia, making me doubt my decision. It was certain though that going back to the western route would mean dropping below the top10, so I stayed with my initial plan.



The decisive weather update came at 06/18 10:24. At that point the wind clearly favoured my position with a lift that turned the western fleet towards the south, almost right behind me until the finish line.



Offwatch routing

The merits of offwatch routing have been explained previously by my SOL friend Scott of SlideRule in his reports: Because the boats are identical, the offwatch routings are a critical part of potentially winning a race. The small marginal difference often translates into an opportunity to win. I also think that the discussion of strategy helps and commitment to reliable support is a factor. Lastly there is the sanity and relief from intermittent sleep and insomnia.

Thus, I exchanged offwatch routings with Scott throughout the race, and interesting discussions of strategy, as we've got a convenient time difference and similar SOL skill level. His long experience in IRL offshore racing and position as a professor of strategy at Cornell are bonus for me that I have to gratefully acknowledge.

Weddings, funerals and fever from the COVID vaccine at either end delayed but didn't obstruct the offwatch routing exchanges.

Offerings to Aeolus

When sailing IRL, I have to pour a few drops of wine on the water every night as an offering to Aeolus, the ancient Greek god of wind... I can't determine what share of the success is due to offerings to the gods, strategy and offwatch routings. I also wholeheartedly acknowledge the comments of SCARABOCCHIO, Zorba and Mullionman that being in the right place at the right time need skill and luck. Or in the words of golfer Gary Player when accused of just being lucky: "The harder I practice, the luckier I become!"

You might have missed the comment of SlideRule at the chat, but it was foreseen at 06/13 10:20:30: "It's Hasty's turn now". And that was my first win! Hurray!

Thomas of HastySlug

June 2021

SOL ASCII art gallery ->

SOL ASCII art gallery

I am touched by the participation of so many SOLer artists in the 'design a fast slug emoticon' challenge. Here are the entries. Please go through the gallery while enjoying your drink at Port Noumea.

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'Fast slug' by SCARABOCCHIO

(J°□°) J ˘ ┌───┐

'Fast slug' by pipona80

_____ (ಠ_ಠ)

'Fast slug' by Zorba777

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'Faster slug' by Zorba777

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'Squished snail' by wsguerin

\_\_\_\_ (o)/°

'Tiny fast slug' by wsguerin

[ . ]

'Fast slug in a box with a breathing hole' by HastySlug