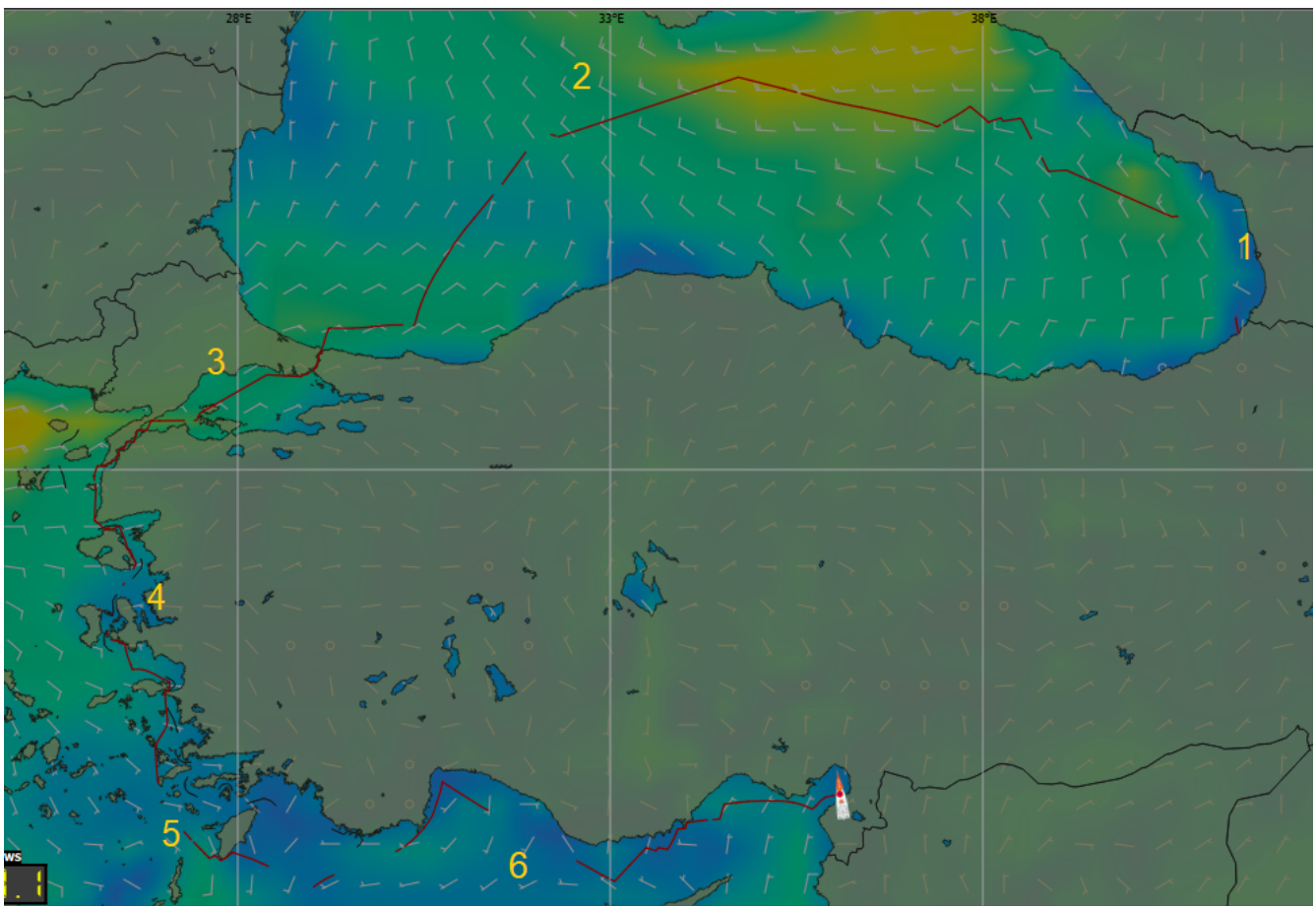


## Sail Around Turkey 2021 – Report by Zorba777

One of the most demanding races on the SOL calendar. Narrow passages, a lot of coastal navigation, ever changing weather forecasts, tactical choices to be made about where to pass between islands... Because it's a week long it's as much about planning well, where you can get the needed sleep, as it is about routing and anticipating well.

It was easy for me to warm up for this race, as the virtual start in Hopa is only about 30 kms away from my current residence in Batumi, Georgia. A kind of home race, and I like the challenges that Mediterranean races always bring.

I didn't make screenshots along the way, to preserve energy. But as I always put my PC on sleep when possible, it leaves traces of the total route sailed in QtVLM. This is how it looked and I marked some crucial points:



1 – Start was evening time for me. Very slow winds, I set my DCs to get to the faster winds in the North of the Black Sea and went to sleep. Used a bathroom break to check the boat and adjust to the latest WX, then went to sleep again (which leaves a straight brown line if the PC is woken back from sleep mode). Next morning we were in front of Sochi, Russia already.

2 – Good progress towards Crimea in favorable winds. Strong winds normally don't change too much, so I used overnight TWA settings and slept well again. Bosphorus and Dardanelles were coming up and would require some manual steering.

3 - @TarassBoulba won the race to Istanbul by about 5 minutes, but family obligations would cause him to lose time, which is unfortunate as it would have been difficult to catch up to him. I was lucky in this part of the race that I could do the Bosphorus in evening and then sleep well while crossing the Sea of Marmara in favorable winds. The difficult Dardanelles required me to wake up a bit earlier than normal, but being in UTC +4 timezone helped me compared to other Europe based SOLers. I had about 5 minutes advantage after the Dardanelles, but a grueling two days of sailing in 2 kts winds was up next. I was not sure I would be able to keep the top spot in such conditions.

4 – Still in the lead after Lesbos island, but we were sailing at 2 kts and avoiding BBQ was a challenge for all participants. I set safe DCs to avoid trouble, but that would cost some time. Woke up the next morning and was only 15 minutes away from a certain BBQ at Cesme peninsula. That was lucky, but I had lost some time and @Sax747 had raced into the lead at this point. I was about 1 minute behind, with Mirek in my back, after further 4 minutes. On the way to Samos Sax had a few small errors and I could regain the lead.

5 – The weather changed and the optimal route became a passage South of Rhodos. That made for a much easier sail. Some concentration was needed to get between Leros and Kalimnos without accidents, but after that some good sleep could be taken again. I don't think anyone regretted that.

6 – After Rhodos we got much stronger winds again. Except for the buoy rounding at Antalya the main challenges were behind us. The weather made it difficult for the boats behind me to make up any ground, so all I had to do was route well and make no stupid errors.

Mirek battled back into 2<sup>nd</sup> place and Sax completed the podium, holding off challenges by Olev, Taffarazzi and Pit8008. Congrats all.

Too bad we couldn't do this trip IRL. I would have invited all to a nice beach BBQ with Georgian khinkali and some good local Askaneli brandy:



KaanC was so good to ask us for a stop in Istanbul, where tasty doner kebab was on the menu:



And Armenistis was waiting in the South of Rhodos with nice souvlaki and plenty ouzo:



But I am not sure anyone would have gone all the way to the finish in such conditions :-D

Thanks all for racing, and see you in the next one.

Zorba777