

Christmas Jeer 2023!

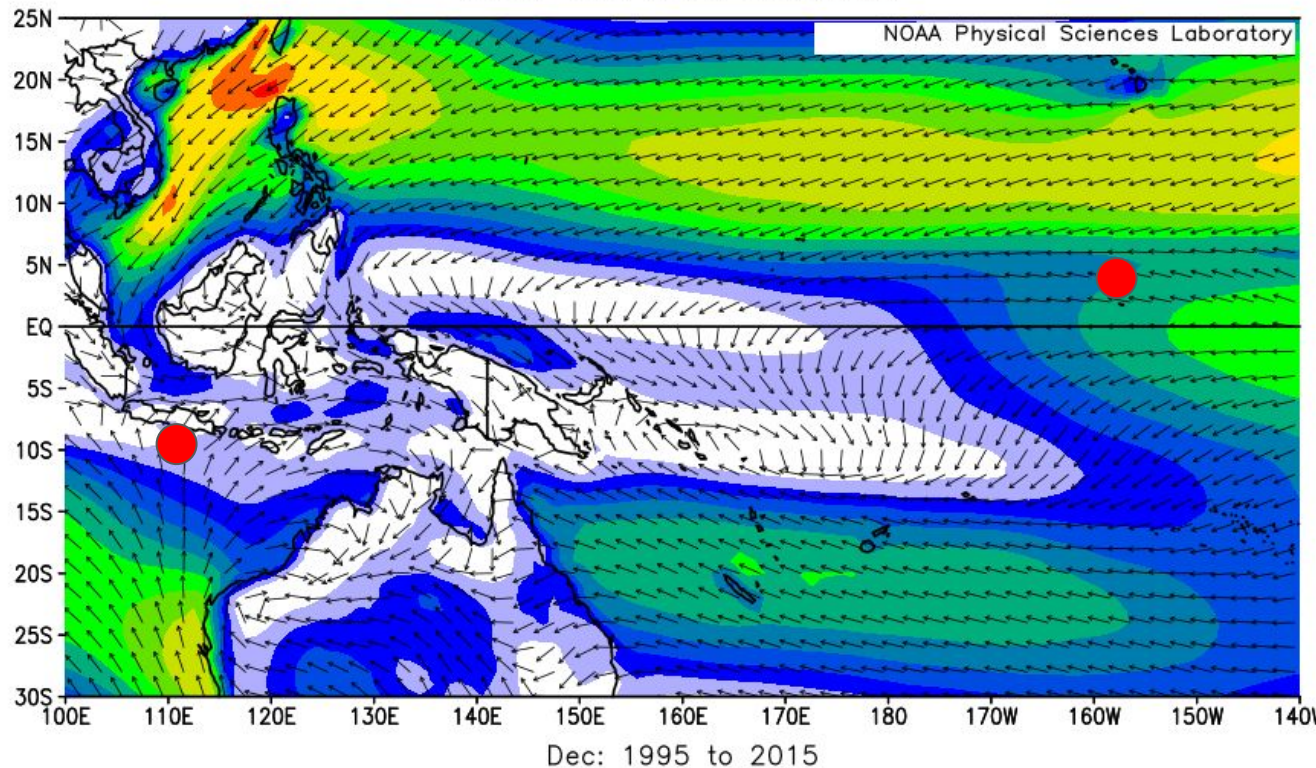
What a race. The WX gods looked down and laughed at many of our finest racers and most of our best efforts.

The historical norm was inverted and a relative unknown (to WS at least), **Leelu22**, took the honors by believing in the shortest route through the Torres Strait, Arafura, and Timor Seas.

Bonk bailed on his mid-south plan and headed far south for at least a day to meet up with Leelu22 and the wind needed to take the Silver.

Olev, is a newcomer by his ranking but has been successful with two ocean-race top15s under their belt took the Bronze.

Let's go to the videotape!



Planning

For what good it did my finish position, my routine in the days ahead of a big race were to:

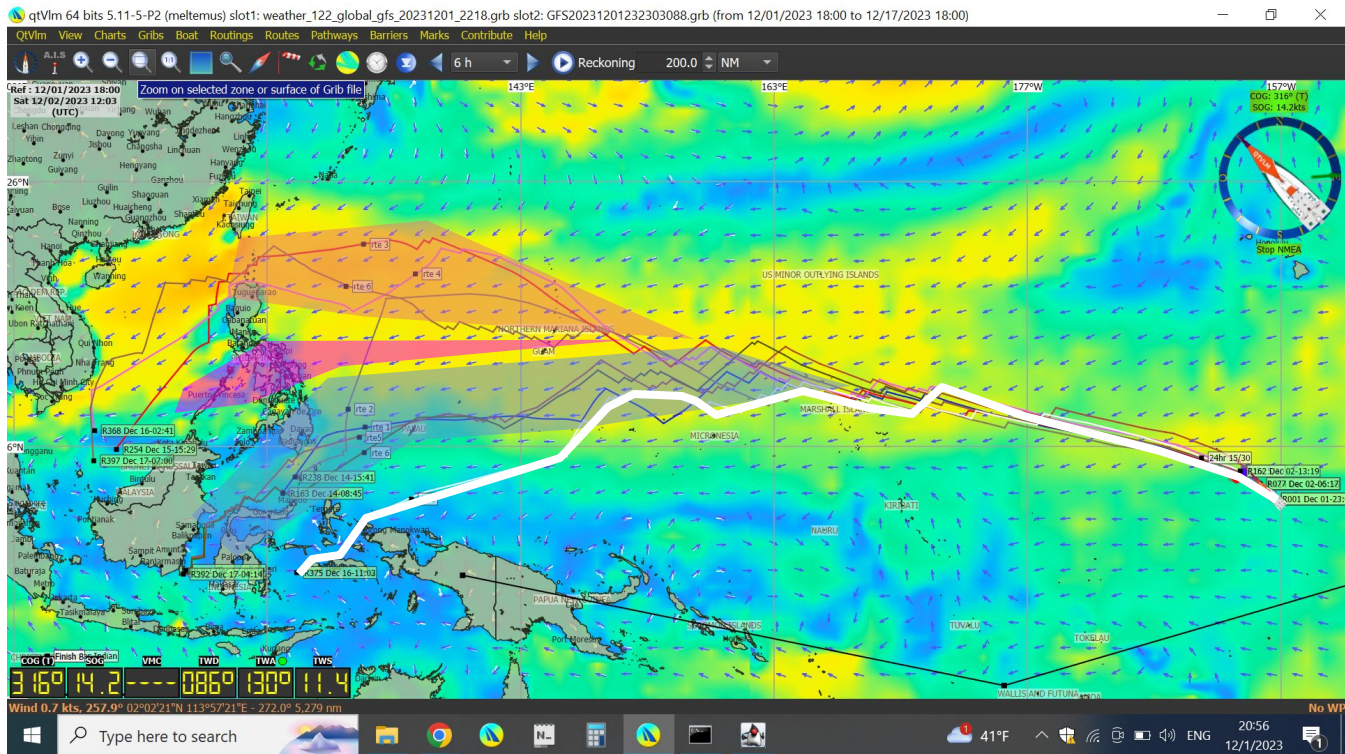
- ✓ the historic average winds (image on first slide.

- ✓ previous race reports

- ✓ QT routing couple times a day to get a sense of the variability of the models. Saving screenshots to analyze trends.

The trend at first looked like the traditional north route, then shifted middle, then south. This image shows 8 routes over several days (TIP: Freeze the routes in QT so each new WX does not affect them)

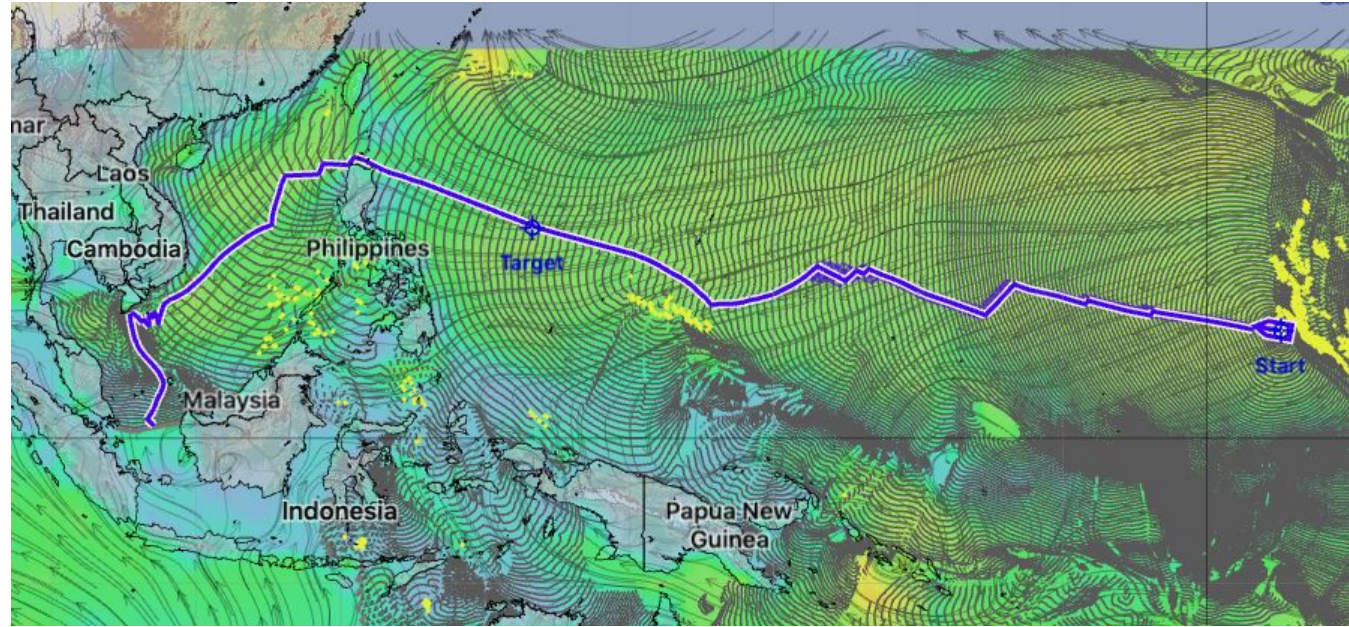
The highlighted white routing of 12/1/23 is pretty close to the route WS and others took.



Planning

I do a LuckGrib routing a few times (it didn't handle the archipelago's narrow spots well unfortunately). This is a 12/4 routing a few days after the start.

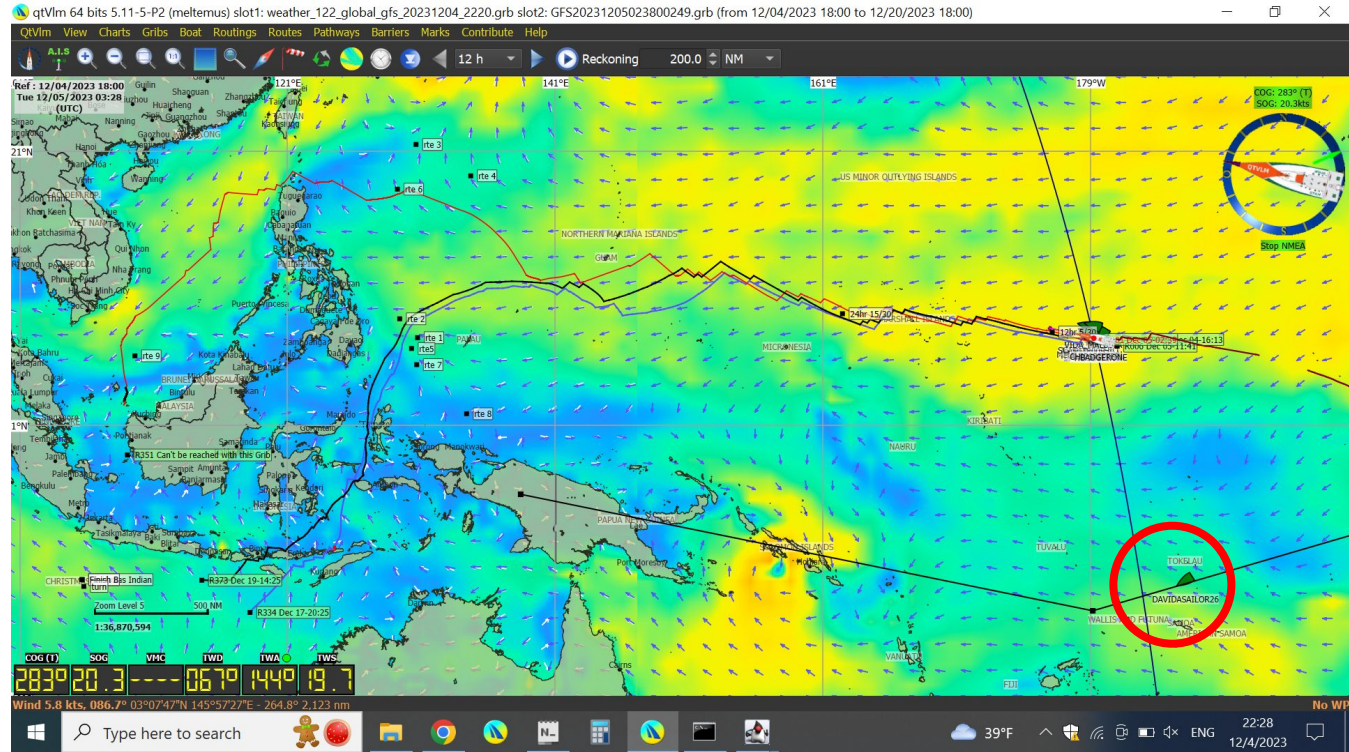
By the way LuckGrib Solutions take 15 seconds to solve. It seems to optimize along the way, and has the full suite of WX models available at a click.



Kaboom

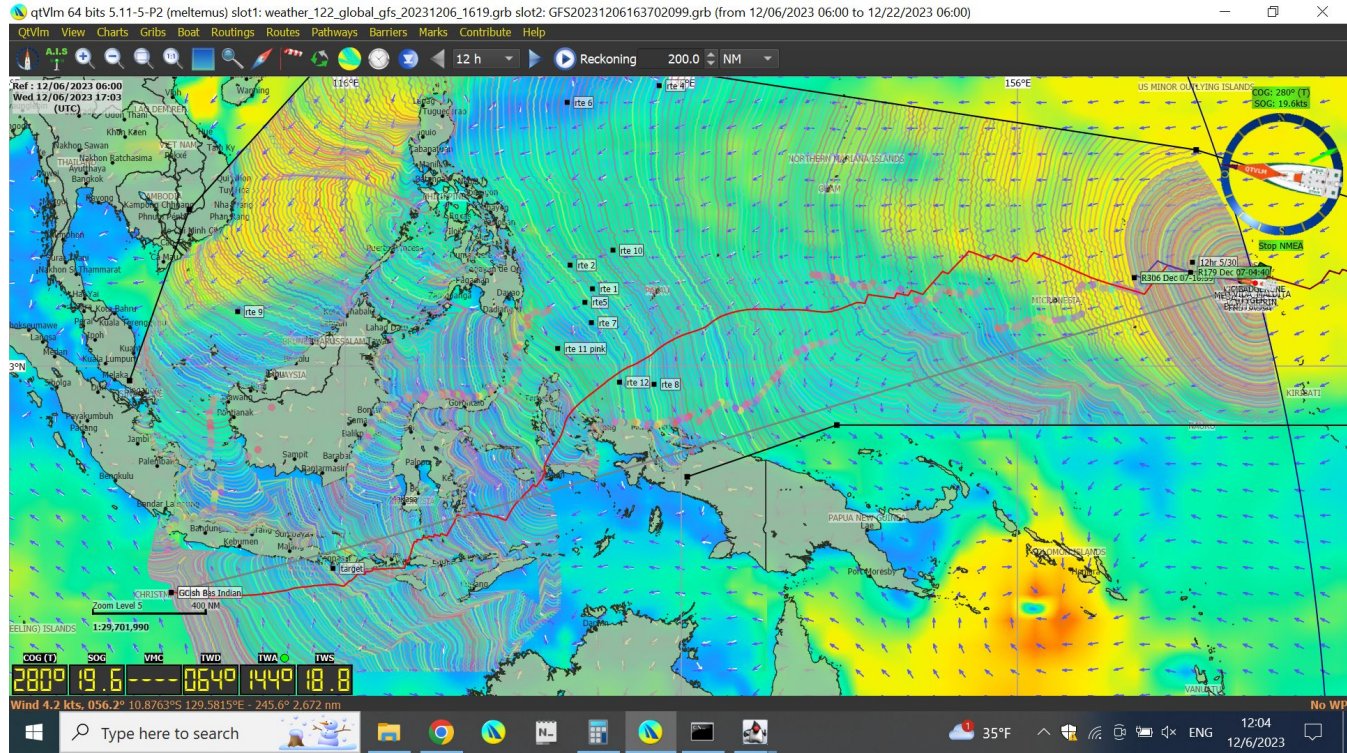
The race started on 12/1 and by 12/4 the main fleet was bunched and Davidsailor (Circled) was headed south with others including Leelu22 who was not on my watch list.

The typhoon that must've shot her through that route is developing east of Papua New Guinea.



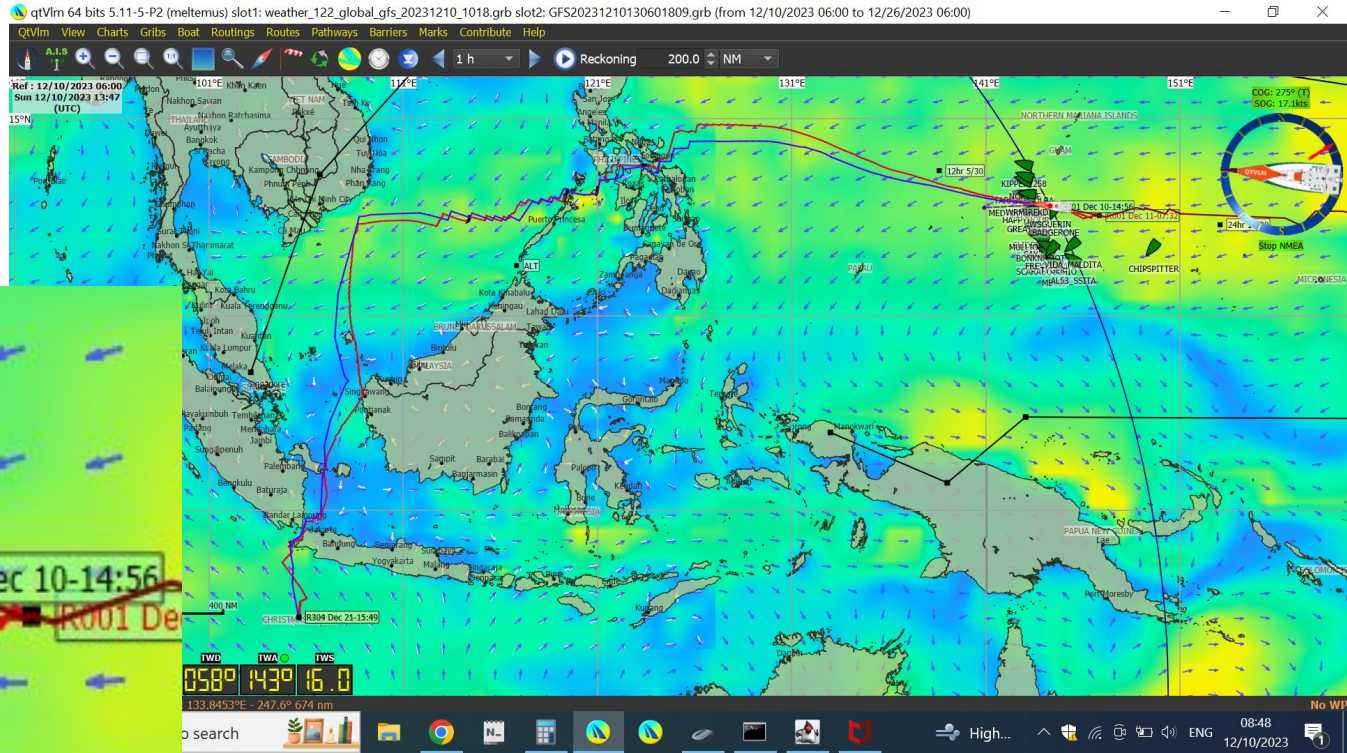
First Week

By 12/6 I was sure of the Southern route, but when to turn?



Second Week

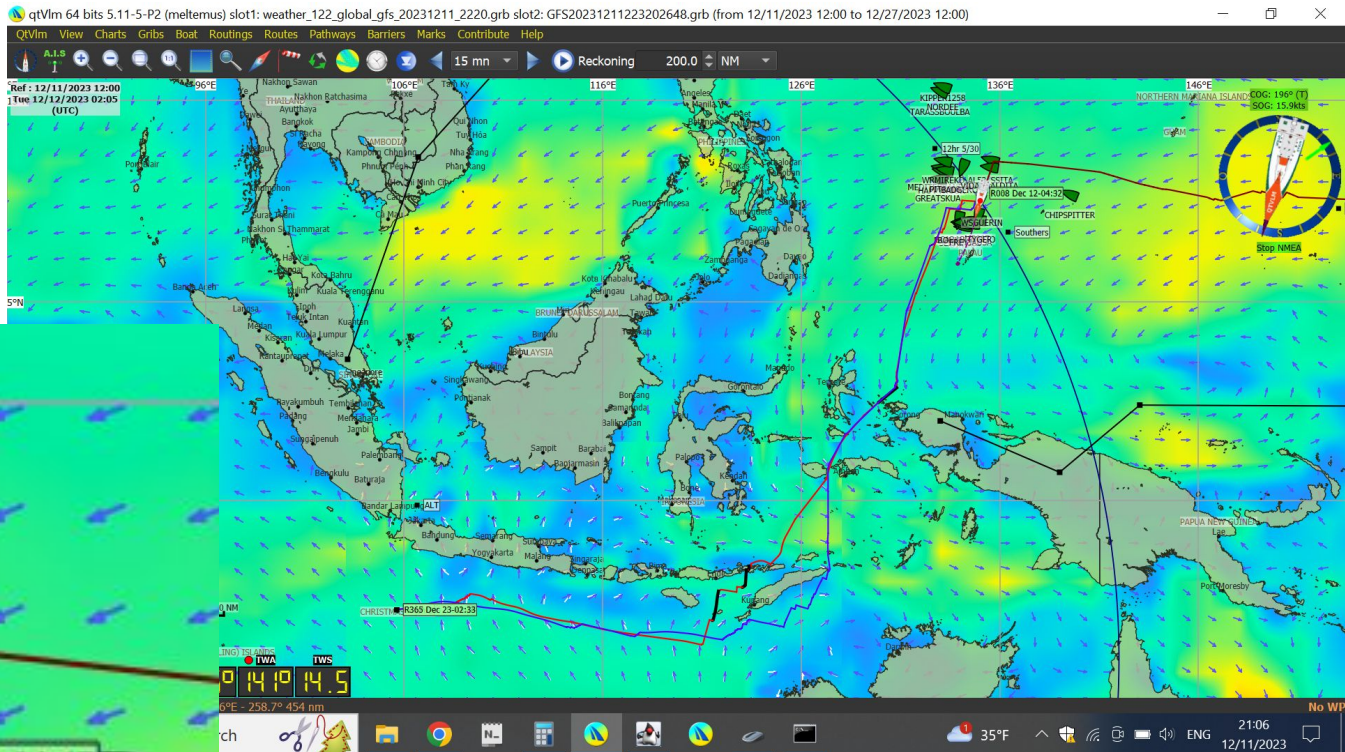
On 12/9 QT was having second thoughts and showed a mid Philippine route.



Second Week

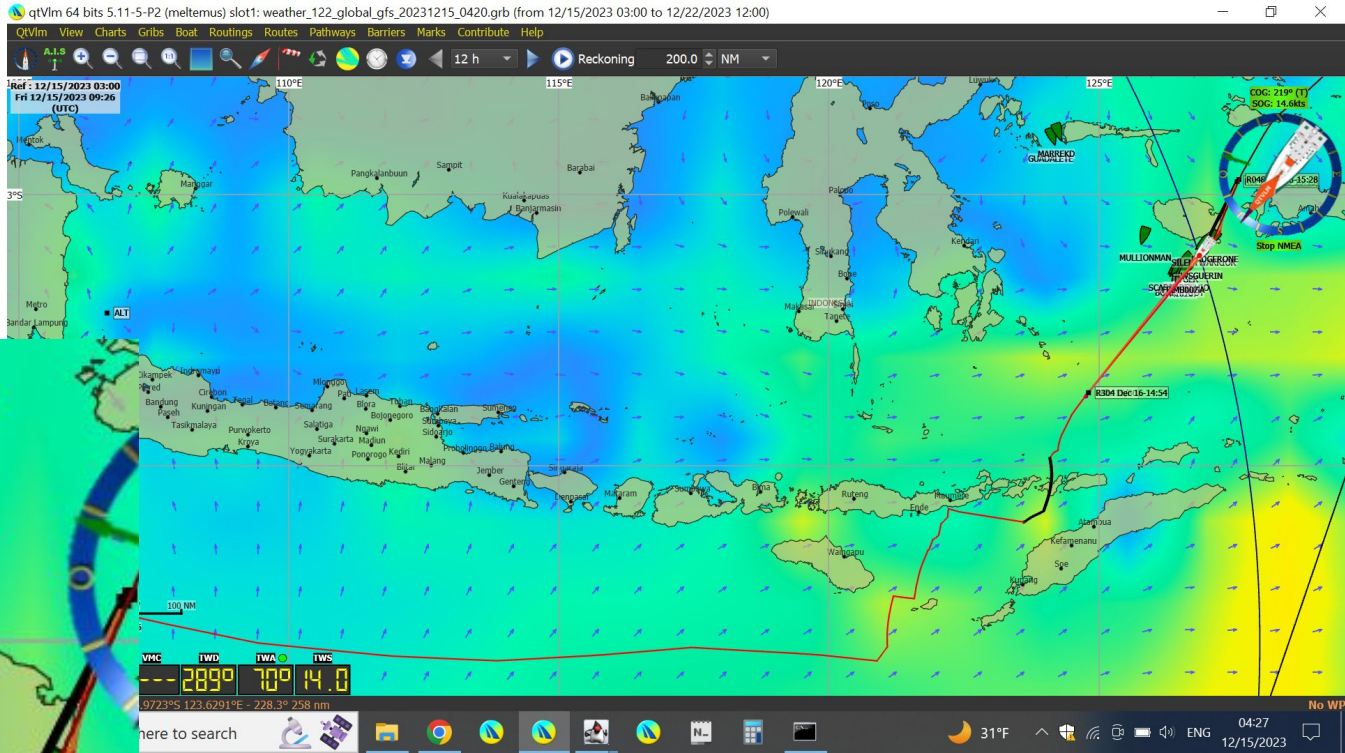
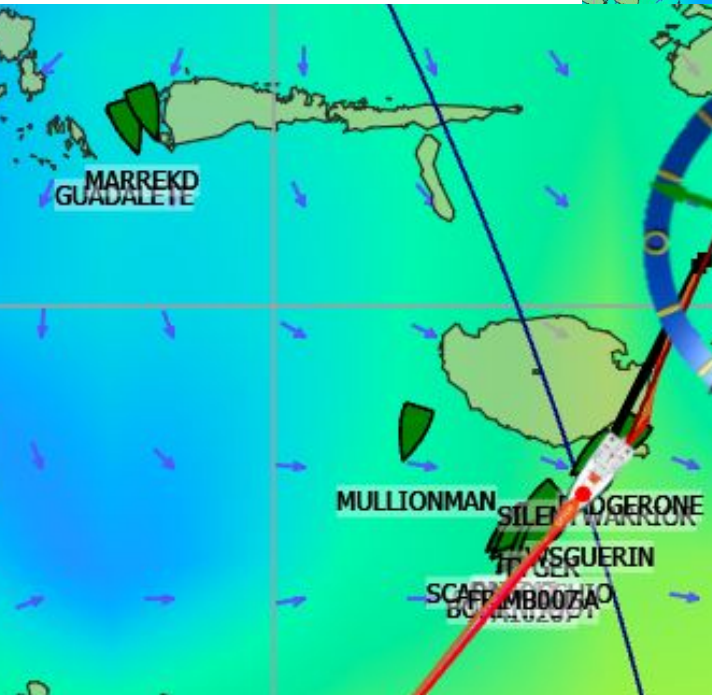
On 12/12 QT three fleets roll the dice as shown here. WS heads south.

A fourth was headed toward the Arafura Sea, and the Fifth was Down Under...way down under.



Second Week

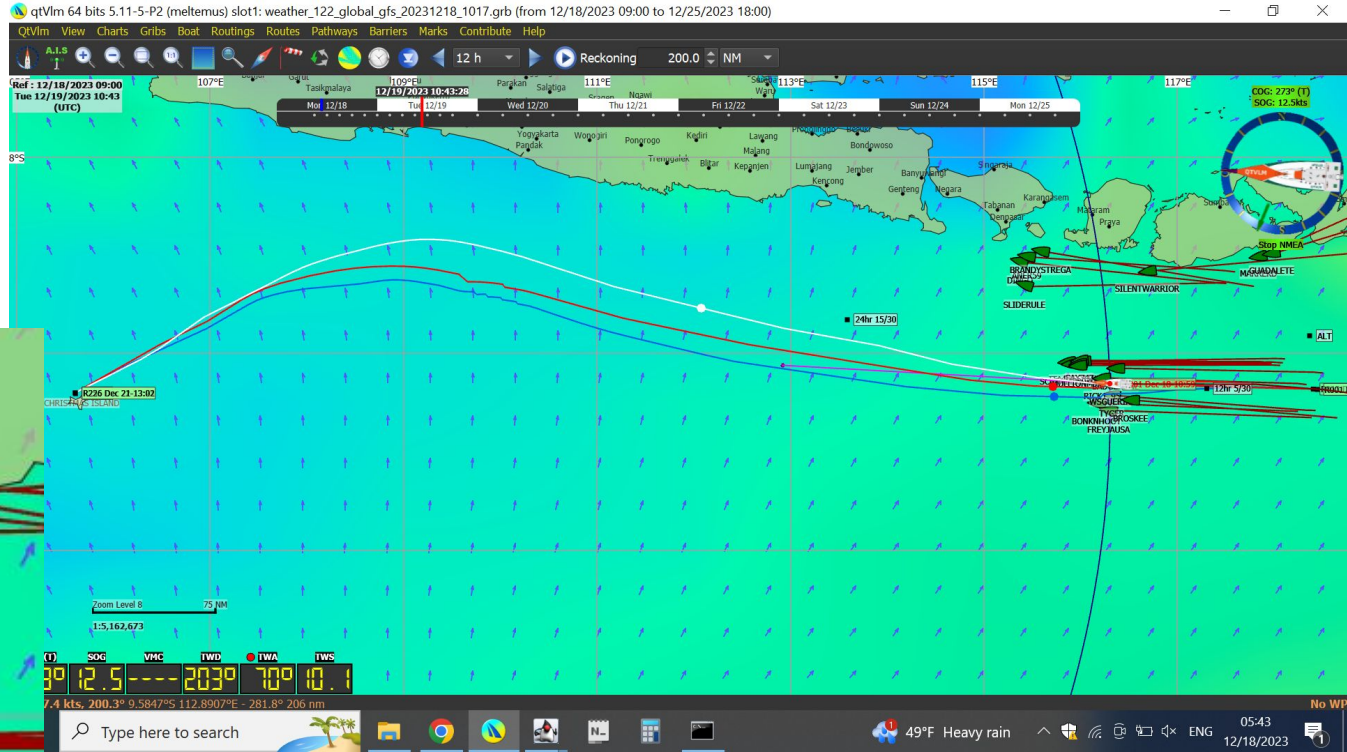
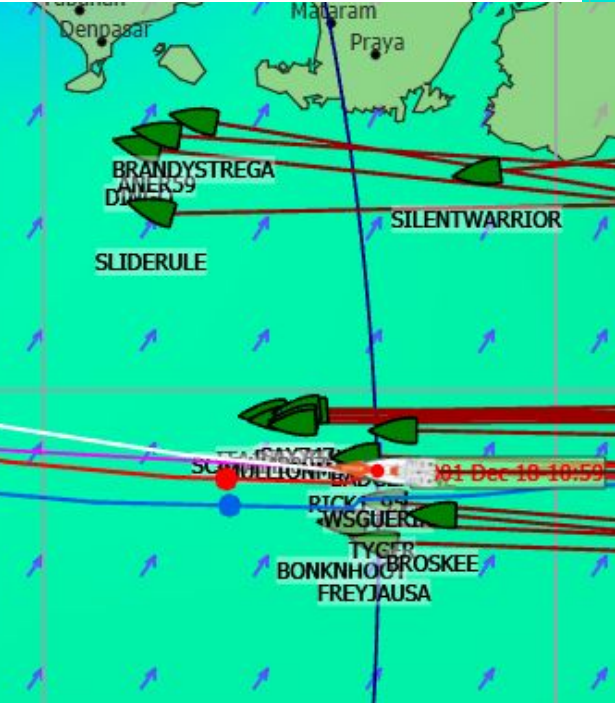
WS had fallen behind some 20nm behind Sliderule, Bonk, Dingo and others. The usual reasons: he missed most 0430 WX, a reversed DC added 5nm, and was possibly following QT to slavishly.



Third Week

By 12/17, WS had a bit of luck and good wind. Slide, Dingo, Aner, Brandy and others stayed north.

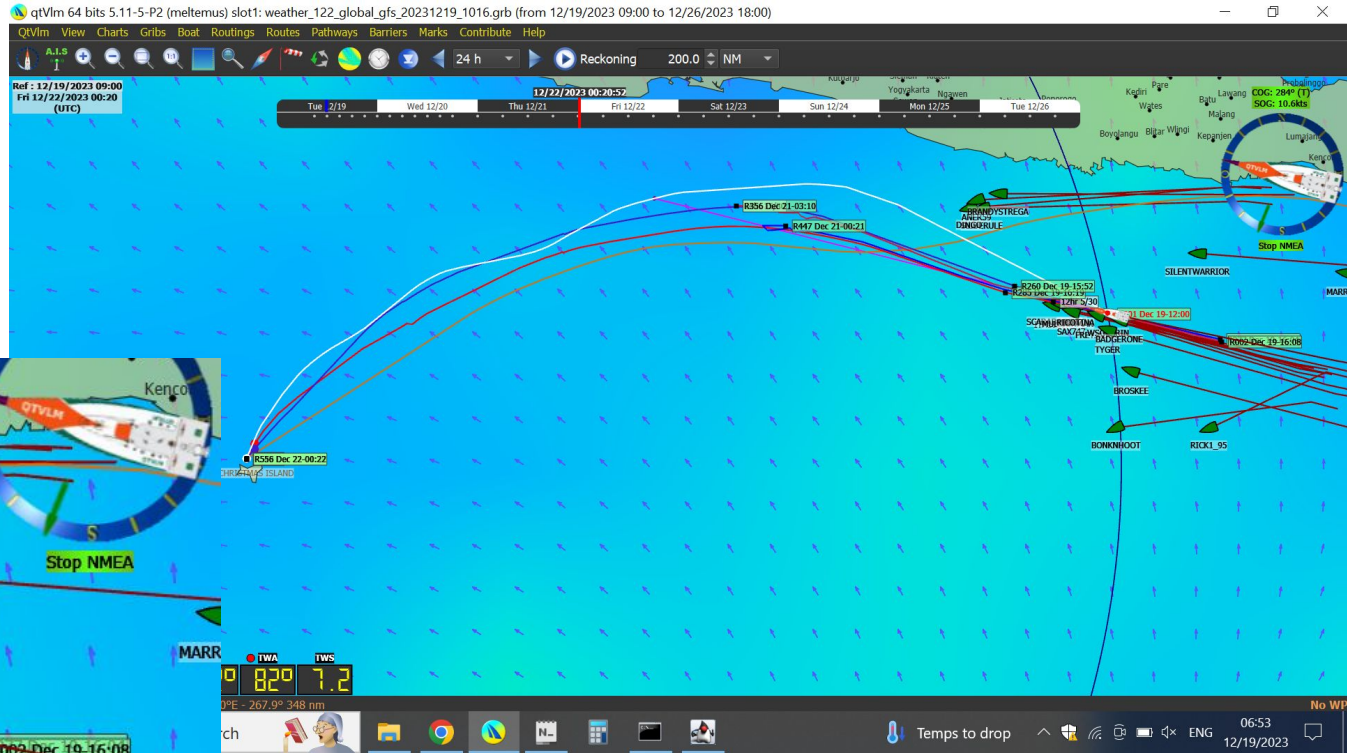
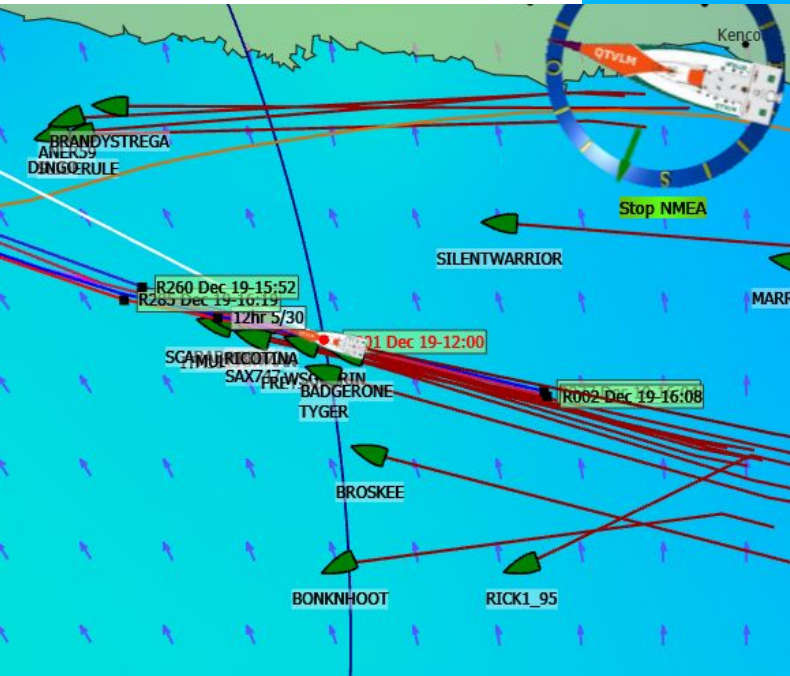
It looked like a top twenty was in sight for WS while Dingo and Slide had a good chance to podium if not win - NOPE.



Fourth Week

By 12/19 Bonk and Rick1_95 split off to join Leelu22 (still not on my watch list) and the better wind and angle. That was a brave but prescient move.

Still, Sliderule Dingo and the others north looked to be in a great spot.

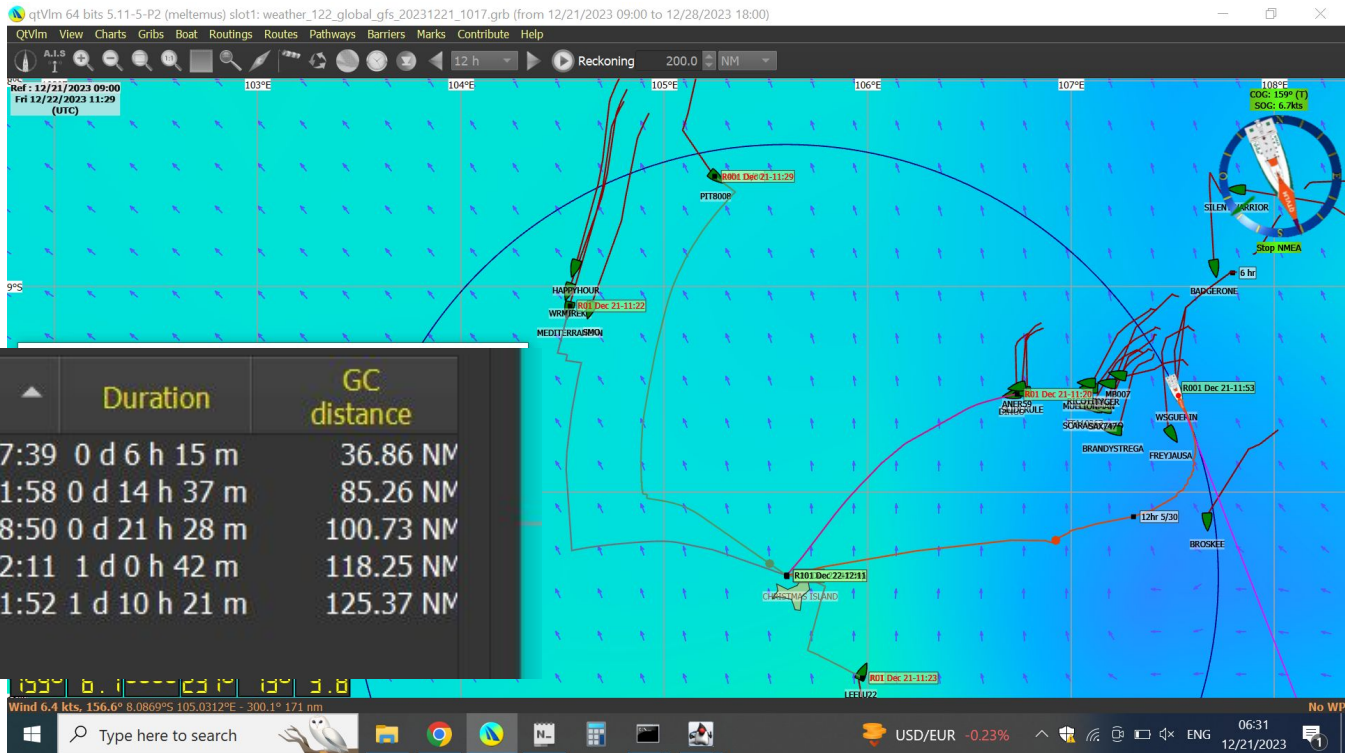


Rick1_95 12/22 18:20:59
wsguerin will confirm : For our gang, the
20231219_0419 Wx, has been crucial... ;-)

The Finale

By 12/21 Leelu22 had it wrapped up. She (or he) was a quiet one so I don't know their state of mind, hope they write a report!

The track of WS and others tell a tale of chaos and negative VMC...sigh.



Name	Start Date	ETA	▲	Duration	GC distance
Leelu	12/21/2023 11:23	12/21/2023 17:39		0 d 6 h 15 m	36.86 NM
Dingo	12/21/2023 11:20	12/22/2023 01:58		0 d 14 h 37 m	85.26 NM
Mirek	12/21/2023 11:22	12/22/2023 08:50		0 d 21 h 28 m	100.73 NM
Pitt	12/21/2023 11:29	12/22/2023 12:11		1 d 0 h 42 m	118.25 NM
WSG	12/21/2023 11:31	12/22/2023 21:52		1 d 10 h 21 m	125.37 NM

Thanks to SOL and dedicated volunteers who make the races happen. While some skippers didn't stay awake, the servers did. All is well, Seasons Greetings.

Bonk predicted the outcome on 12/19 10:58:53
“mind you, if it does flop again, this will be the year the Torres Strait wins, and **Leelu22** if it is, I know we all want you to finish the race and have that honour for posterity.”

Doggrel

WS limped in on the pink track to end up 39th. Along the way I shared a few thoughts as follows:

To "Oh Tannenbaum!"

Oh Christmas Sea
Oh Christmas Sea
How cruel is this water?
Oh Christmas Sea
Oh Christmas Sea
Why should I even bother?

Every year, about this time
We set out, to cross the line.
Oh Christmas Sea
Oh Christmas Sea
I should just stick,
to drinking wine.

Somewhere in the archipelago:

QT old gal, I've left you behind.
The route that you pose,
just keeps me aligned.
So I'll seat of the pants it,
for this short stretch,
With hope that the finish line,
I'll more speedily fetch.

