Monday, 30/11/2020, 12:00: As the low pressure system moves eastwards, into the Indian Ocean, the fleet profits from a fresh southwesterly breeze. Boris reports that today, it is particularly difficult to sail fast and find a good sail configuration, due to the 4-5m high swell (see chart to the right) and overall very confusing, choppy sea state in the area. In addition, the wind goes up to 33kts at times. So, challenging sailing conditions this afternoon, with boat speeds varying between 15 and 25kts!

Monday, 30/11/2020, 22:00: Boris, Sébastien and Yannick have all been requested by the Race Direction to divert and head to the position of PRB. The skipper, Kevin Escoffier, is in distress after his IMOCA broke in two and sunk around 600 nautical miles south-west of Cape Town! Competitor Jean Le Cam is first on site and eventually rescues Kevin from his life raft in the middle of the night in 5 metre seas and +35kts of wind. A huge relief for everyone involved in this intense rescue mission, when Kevin is finally safe on board Yes We Cam with „Roi Jean“. Great teamwork and great seamanship!
Tuesday, 01/12/2020, 12:00: Following the rescue mission, the fleet continues on an easterly course in calmer wind conditions. Due to the Low (988hPa) moving north-east, away from the fleet, and the High (1030hPa) closing in from the west, the sailors profit from moderate winds from the south, south-west (orange arrows) in between the weather systems today.

Tuesday, 01/12/2020, 22:00: Seaexplorer YCM and the boats in vicinity are still in the transition zone with favourable southwesterly winds of 15-18kts between two Lows. Boris and Jean Le Cam follow the latitude of 40° South. Now, the front of the fleet is also right in the influence area of the notorious Agulhas Current, as shown on the ocean currents chart overlay on the right. Red and white colouring indicate the strongest flow between 1.5 and 3.2kts. More details on the next page!
Tuesday, 01/12/2020, 21:00 UTC: Visualisation of the path of the Agulhas Current flowing down the east coast of Africa in a southwesterly direction. White colouring on the map indicates a flow speed of 2,0-2,6kts! Boris, Jean and the boats to their south are all approaching the Agulhas Retroflection area between longitudes 16° - 22° East approximately, where the current turns back into the Indian Ocean and meanders to the east. Right now, the fleet is navigating through the Agulhas Rings still in the Atlantic Ocean. These visible vortices / rings break away from the Agulhas Current and drift into the Atlantic.

Tuesday, 01/12/2020, 21:00 UTC: Yellow and orange colouring on this map here indicate water temperatures of 18-22°C. Comparing to the current overlay on the first visualisation, it can now be seen how the warm water coming from the north (Agulhas Current and Agulhas Rings) mixes with the colder water coming from the south (green colouring: ~10°C), exactly in the area where the fleet is currently located. The instruments on board Seaexplorer YCM measured a sudden drop in water temperature and salinity earlier today, which could depict Boris crossing the colder water between warmer Rings (blue circle).
Wednesday, 02/12/2020, 12:00: Boris has reached another big milestone this morning: At 03:35 UTC, he has passed the longitude of Cape of Good Hope after 23 days, 14 hours and 15 minutes of racing (1day 04h 24min behind leader Charlie Dalin (Apivia)). Seaexplorer YCM was the 5th IMOCA to round the first of the 3 iconic capes of the Vendée Globe. Now, at the 12:00 position report, Boris had already crossed the longitude of Cape Agulhas (020° East), which is the southernmost point of Africa ("The point where the oceans meet"), marking the official entrance into the Indian Ocean. Very windy conditions on route today with 27kts sustained, due to the big low pressure system passing a few hundred miles south of the fleet.

Wednesday, 02/12/2020, 22:00: With the Low closing in (see falling barometric pressure) and moving eastwards, the wind has been increasing continuously to around 35kts sustained. Boris gybes at 19:40, profiting from the wind shift in the evening (from south-west to west, north-west), and continues on an easterly course in 5th position.
The fleet crossing the Agulhas Current (02/12/2020)

Current - 12:00:
Boris gybed to the north-east earlier this morning, right at the edge of the strongest current. He can now take best advantage of around 2.6 knots of current setting on a northeasterly direction.

Current - 22:00:
Meanwhile, the front of the fleet is already sailing in the area of the **Agulhas Return Current** (ARC), which meanders in the South Indian Ocean, following generally an easterly to southeasterly direction (see page 2).

Water temperature - 12:00
Very interesting to consider the various significant water temperature changes recorded by the automatic laboratory on board today! The graph visualises the temperature differences of up to 8°C within 12 hours, as Boris passes ~360 miles south of Cape Agulhas!
Thursday, 03/12/2020, 12:00: Boris is sailing in a strong southeasterly breeze (25-30kts) behind the cold front at 16 to 23kts boat speed. Not easy for him to maintain a high average speed due to the wind conditions and sea state in the area. The satellite image shows the typical cloud pattern (many rain showers) in the area behind the distinct cloud band marking the edge of the westerly cold front, where the IMOCA fleet is currently sailing in. Leader Charlie Dalin (Apivia) is now right at the edge of the front, which will eventually overtake him.

Thursday, 03/12/2020, 22:00: As soon as the cold front overtook Charlie and the wind shifted respectively to the south-west, he gybed heading south-east. Boris stayed in the same sector of the Low, profiting from southwesterly winds, which allow him to sail on direct and shorter course to the east (Past 24h: Average boat speed 16,8kts, 403nm covered).
Friday, 04/12/2020, 12:00: The southwesterly winds remain favourable on Friday, too, but are lighter compared to yesterday. The Low has moved further to the east over the night, while the High south of Cape Town has been closing in from the west. Boris is currently in the transition zone with 17-23kts sustained winds (edge between orange and green colouring on the wind chart above), sailing at 16,6kts average boat speed.

Friday, 04/12/2020, 22:00: The current sailing conditions appear to be very moderate on the wind chart, but the sea state is significant in the area of navigation: 5,1m high waves from a southwesterly direction, according to the forecast. Certainly not easy for the skippers to find the right configuration to sail fast and maintain high average speeds at this point.
Saturday, 05/12/2020, 12:00: As the High moves north-east behind the fleet, the wind veers gradually further to the west-southwest (orange arrows), allowing Boris to head on a more southeasterly and direct course now. Disadvantageous however, is the direction of the waves, which remains south-west today, even though the wind has slightly shifted...

Saturday, 05/12/2020, 22:00: With the High (1025hPa) now located right behind (north of) the fleet, the wind has veered further to the west for Boris and his competitors close by. They are all heading in a southeasterly direction at this point, to take best advantage of the moderate winds on the southern side of the High and to be well positioned for the incoming Low, which is rapidly intensifying and moving east, with winds well over 45 knots!
Sunday, 06/12/2020, 12:00: Over night, the big low pressure system has caught up with the first 11 boats of the fleet. At around 09:30, the centre of the Low was directly to the south of Boris and as the wind veered to the west accordingly, he gybed. On the new northeasterly course, sailing and life on board is a lot calmer, as Boris reports. On this tack, slamming is significantly reduced, given that the waves follow exactly the direction of travel! The graph displaying experienced G-Forces shows clearly how movements on board decrease immediately after the gybe.

Sunday, 06/12/2020, 22:00: Tough Southern Ocean conditions today, as Boris and his competitors sail in the strong Low. Over the next week, the fleet will continue east across the challenging Indian Ocean towards the next big milestone: Rounding Cape Leeuwin, ~2400 nautical miles ahead!
Overview of the weather development (30.11. - 05.12.)

Vendée Globe fleet passing Cape of Good Hope

Monday, 30/11/2020, 12:00

Monday, 30/11/2020, 22:00

Tuesday, 01/12/2020, 12:00

Tuesday, 01/12/2020, 22:00
VENDÉE GLOBE
WEATHER RECAP AND RACE PROGRESS

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