

**Mike Broughton is a professional navigator with 17 Fastnets under his belt and he is racing onboard the Ker 56 Varuna in IRC Zero. He spoke to the media team on Wednesday 2 August and gave us a quick overview of the predicted weather for the race.**

“Anybody sailing on the south coast this month has noticed that it is really windy and wet as well – more windy than usual. That’s because the jet streams are much further south, right on top of London and Lyme Bay, the southwest of England, hence the rain and strong winds. The jet streams drive the systems through and the winds tend to be stronger.

For Sunday we’re looking at things improving as there is a ridge of high pressure coming in on Saturday/Sunday so much lighter winds and much nicer. But don’t be fooled into a false sense of security.

As of next Monday we are going back into what we’ve seen over the last few weeks. It looks as if we’re going to get a long beat, all the way from Cowes to Land’s End and then, as typically happens, the wind veers and then there’s a long beat on the way to the Rock. Conditions would be pretty strong through Monday and Tuesday when we might see winds of 23-29 knots, right on the nose. Sort the men out from the boys.

So it looks like a long beat to the Rock, it’ll be tough with bigger waves – Monday night, northwest of the Scillies shows perhaps 2 metres. Boats turning for home after the TSS area will be setting their spinnakers for the first time and it’s going to be, generally speaking for the first half of the fleet, a pretty rapid blitz back to Bishop Rock and then a fast reach home to Plymouth. I know it’s a long time out yet, but its looking like a bigger boat race in my opinion.

For the smaller boats the winds tend to get lighter by early hours on Wednesday morning and then we’ll see a high pressure moving in which will push in which will give lighter northwesterly winds and lighter conditions generally for smaller boats in the second half of the week.”