

IRC CONGRESS 2014

Country reports

BELGIUM

There have been no major changes in the IRC fleet, neither in the IRC race program for 2014 compared to 2013. The race program of the Open North Sea Championship is concentrated around 5 weekends along the Belgian coast with an extension to Ramsgate in the South-East of England and Breskens in the South of Holland.

For the first time in many years, one of the events had to be cancelled one day before it took place due to extreme weather forecasts. The other events attracted a similar number of participants compared to 2013. We do however see a decrease of participants coming from just across the borders (only one French boat, no more English boats, and only a few regular participants from the South of Holland).

Also the participant list of the yearly Antwerp Race, which is a race with local "iconic" value, does no longer fill up to the maximum number of participants (225 boats), and this for the second consecutive year. Before 2013 this race was year after year fully booked, with waiting lists. There was no change in the format, neither in the quality of the organization or the date, so the decrease must be looked after in other areas.

It remains a concern in Belgium that very few new teams are coming on the water. This trend is not only an IRC trend. It can also be seen in other sailing fleets.

On the international level, there was no Belgian or Benelux participation in this year's Commodore's Cup, because no team could be established. We had however a Belgian winner in Cowes Week in IRC Class 1 with Moana.

FRANCE

The number of IRC boat Owners in France in 2014 is around 700, representing an increase of 10%. Despite this fact the number of participants in courses varies slightly according to the different regions (English Channel, Atlantic, and Mediterranean).

With a significant decrease in the English Channel, participation is accompanied by a slow erosion of historical events in South Brittany, while maintaining an certain stability around the Atlantic, and the Mediterranean upholds a decent level thanks to events such as Giraglia, Voiles de St Tropez, and the Middle Sea Race.

Even if these events remain popular with the crews, the decrease in participation seems to come from the fact that these same crews take part in fewer courses throughout the year.

However it should be noted that after several years of decrease the Tourduf, which was held for the first time with IRC, recorded an increase in participation.

A good participation for French Owners in the Commodores Cup with 12 boats, including the A35R and A13 built by Archambault in 2014.

Great Britain & Northern Ireland (GBR)

- The number of IRC rated boats at the end of 2013 had fallen further from 2012 (1378, cf 1551). A comparison of numbers at the end of August 2014 and August 2013 shows however that the GBR fleet has stabilised this year with 1379 boats compared with 1378 last year.
- In addition to the above, 106 boats had been issued with Limited Validity IRC TCCs by the end of August 2014. With a few more qualifying events still to come, this number will increase further. It is intended to continue this scheme in GBR in 2015, re-branded as the 'IRC Single Event TCC'.
- The existing GBR IRC Incentive Scheme to assist clubs adopting IRC for the first time will be re-branded as 'IRC Start Up' and will be more widely promoted.
- The GBR IRC Rule Authority, in conjunction with the RYA, plans a further series of regional cruiser/racer seminars during winter 2014/2015.
- The GBR IRC Rule Authority continues to work closely with the RYA further developing the national strategy for cruiser racing in GBR. This now includes the RYA's new 'National Handicap for Cruisers', a progressive handicap system. The GBR IRC Rule Authority sees this as complementary to IRC and is encouraging dual scoring whenever appropriate under IRC and NHC.
- The GBR IRC Committee again noted that many GBR regattas are continuing to struggle to maintain numbers of entrants. What does appear to be the case is that events which are easy to do and include also attractions beyond simply the racing are holding up better.
- Again, a very wide range of different boat types, sizes and ages has been reported as winning races in GBR during 2014.
- Nine IRC championships including national, small boat and double handed championships were successfully held in GBR in 2014. The inaugural IRC double handed national championship was very successful attracting 33 boats racing in 2 classes. This event will be repeated in 2015.
- **IRC Technical Committee Submissions:** The GBR IRC Committee supports all the IRC Technical Committee submissions for changes to IRC Rules for 2015.

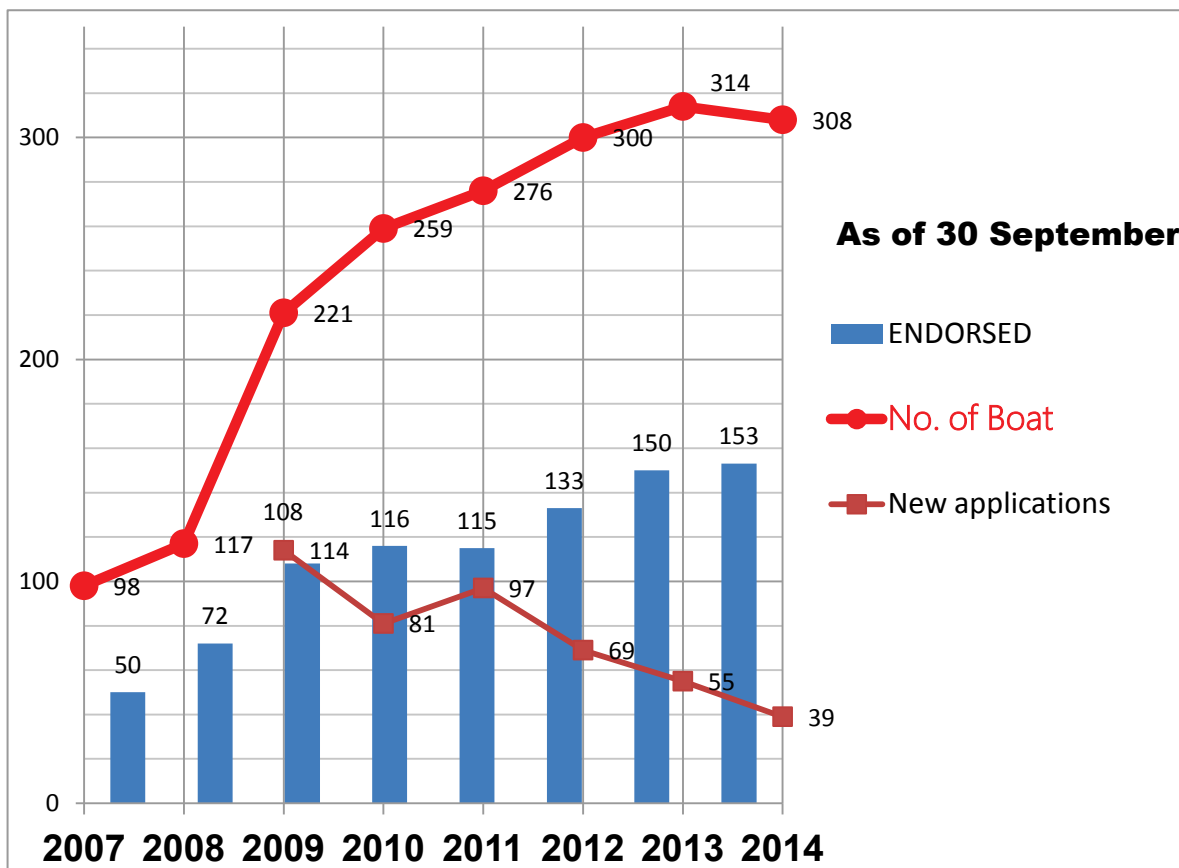
JAPAN

This is our 9th season of IRC in Japan. With a total number of certificates 308, as of 30 of September, we had small decline from 2013. 153 certificates are endorsed and 155 are non-endorsed.

We had 39 new applications with which those new comers are reducing every year. Because we believe IRC has been known to Japanese racing sailors nationwide now, this is what we have in the Japanese racing community. That is, very little number of new boats launched, no new racing event held, economy not yet in good shape.

Other than that, people are quite happy with the IRC system and services we offer. We do not have any issue or submission this year.

[Please see the graph below]



MALTA

There was little change in the RMYC fleet in 2014 with numbers of rated boats remaining stable at just over 50 with a couple of new boats among them. A few more certificates are likely to be requested particularly for the Rolex Middle Sea Race.

The composition of the fleet remains largely the same, mostly modern production boats within the 10 – 15 metre length band and a couple of all out racers.

As in previous years despite a relatively large fleet of rated boats for our small population, the number of boats that race regularly is less than one would wish for. Some success has been achieved in the cruiser class which is limited to a single furling headsail and an asymmetric spinnaker only.

A new and growing J70 fleet has encouraging renewed interest in inshore racing among some sailors but this has had a slightly negative effect on the IRC racer fleets.

The programme which runs from March to December includes local coastal races, weekend regattas and short offshore races to destinations in nearby Sicily all run under IRC.

The same difficulties we have had in keeping up participation persist despite undergoing a review of our sailing programmes with a view to regenerating interest in racing events. Weekend regattas which are perceived to be more enjoyable especially those that include a weekend in Gozo or Sicily remain popular.

The club has this year started its own sailing school looking to address the shortage of crew in the longer term by setting up sailing tuition programmes aimed particularly at young adults who may be new to sailing and have not previously had the opportunity to sail. This initiative is still in its initial stages but operated throughout the summer using four RS visions.

Two offshore international races the Malta- Syracuse race and the 606 mile Rolex Middle Sea Race include both IRC and ORC Categories. Both these races remain very popular and the Rolex Middle Sea Race has experienced continued growth from international participants in recent years. The Rolex Middle Sea Race is due to start on the 18th October with 133 entries submitted. In this race almost all the boats are expected to enter the IRC Category with a significant number of boats entering both categories. Dual scoring these races attracts entries that normally race under either of the two rating systems while enticing them to enter in the other as well.

USA

• Number of boats on December 31, 2013	288	(264 August 31, 2013)	
• Number of boats on August 31, 2014	257		
	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u> (Aug 31)
• Number of new boats	61	40	33
• Percentage of endorsed boats	86%	85%	84%

There is no national endorsement policy. Event organizers make the determination based on the needs of the individual events. While most required endorsed certificates previously, over the last few years most events have stopped requiring endorsed. Only a few upper echelon events now have the requirement: Key West Race Week and Newport-Bermuda Race.

Additional info:

- The number of certificates continues to drop. Economic factors are a large reason. Other reasons are less clear.
- Nonetheless, IRC remains the measurement rule used in the most number of events in the US.
- Strongest presence continues in the Northeast; more than 60% of USA certificates.

Major IRC Events:

Ft. Lauderdale to Key West Race - January
 Key West Race Week - January
 Pineapple Cup Montego Bay Race - February (alternating years)
 American YC Spring Series - April/May
 Storm Trysail Block Island Race - May
 New York YC Annual Regatta - June
 Newport to Bermuda Race - June (alternating years)
 Annapolis to Newport Race - June (alternating years)
 Storm Trysail Block Island Race Week - June (alternating years)
 New York YC Race Week at Newport - July (alternating years)
 Ida Lewis Distance Race - August
 Stamford YC Vineyard Race - August
 Long Island Sound IRC Championship-September
 American YC Fall Series - September/October
 STC Annapolis Fall Regatta-October
 Nassau Cup Ocean Race - November
 Wirth M. Munroe Fort Lauderdale to Palm Beach Yacht Race - December

TURKEY

Statistics:

- Number of yachts on December 31, 2013 : **377**
- Number of boats on Aug. 31,2014 : **311**
- Number of new boats : 2012-**84** 2013-**40** 2014-**21**
- Number of boats below 10 meters : 2012-**100** 2013-**74** 2014-**70**
- Number of boats 10-12 meters : 2012-**106** 2013-**102** 2014-**114**
- Number of boats 12-15 meters : 2012-**83** 2013-**91** 2014-**114**
- Number of boats above 15 meters : 2012-**19** 2013-**13** 2014-**13**
- Percentage of endorsed boats: 2012- **65 %** 2013-**68 %** 2014-**68 %**
- Evolution of the IRC fleet compare to the other rules (PHRF, IMS, ORC...): **NO OTHER RULES**

Comments

- 2014 has been marked by the increasing number of yachts and races. There have been 21 new yachts and totally 202 races all around Turkish blue waters
- IRC Rule is the sole rating rule represented by TORC as the Rule Authority since 1995.
- The Turkish Offshore Racing Club Trophy, has been a series of races, consisting of spring and summer races, that are deemed as the most popular trophy of the Turkish Sailing Community. The Trophy is made up of 15 inshore and 3 offshore races. Apart from that, there are two series DUO and the Autumn Series Races consisting of 5 races. The participation to those races are approximately 60-70 yachts, that are classified solely by TCC factor, in IRC divisions.
- Istanbul Sailing Club has organised 8 races at the Sea of Marmara with participation of 40-50 yachts.
- Double handed regattas were realized fourth time this year by TORC and BAYK (Bodrum Offshore Racing Club) and won critical recognition among the sailing community and shall be continued .
- The Turkish Navy Cup Regatta has been organized for the 43rd time, with a fleet of 72 boats, starting from Bosphorus/Istanbul and finishing at Sigacik/Izmir 295 nm,
- In other venues, namely Cesme/Izmir, Bodrum, Bursa, Gocek and Marmaris, racing scene was also very active. With the initiatives of Bodrum, Izmir, Bursa and Marmaris clubs, who lead successful Winter Trophies covering 14-21 races in 7-8 weekend events from January to May, race season is continuing now for 12 months in west and southern Turkey. (Apart from Istanbul races, Winter Trophy is organised in Bursa, Izmir, Bodrum, Marmaris, Gocek at between January & May and also Autumn Races are organised between July & October. Approximately 30-40 yachts participate to those Trophies in each event.) Marmaris Race Week by the end of October, and Loryma Summer Cup by end of August, both organized by Marmaris International Yacht Club(MIYC), with TORC support for race management, are the two major events. Marmaris Week celebrates this year its 25. anniversary and will attract more than 1200 sailors in 200 boats from 20 different countries, They also organize the Channel Regatta jointly with Rhodes Yacht Club since 9 years and Loryma Cup since 4 years.
- Göcek Yacht Club is continuing its programme on May with Göcek Regatta (50 yachts) and in November Autumn Regatta with 60 yachts.
- All those venues are supported by TORC/UNCL trained measurers.
- In 2014 number of endorsed yachts increased considerably to 68 % of the certificates.