



MINUTES of IRC CONGRESS

Held on Saturday, 5th October 2019

At

Société des Régates d'Antibes, Quai Nord Port Vauban, 06600 Antibes, France

Present

Chairman	Michael Boyd - MB
Vice Chairman	Malcolm Runnalls - MR
Vice Chairman	Carl Sabbe (Belgium) - CS
Australian Sailing	Nicolas Degorce - ND
Canada IRC Owners	John Crawley - JC
Great Britain IRC Owners	Mel Sharp - MS
International Maxi Association	Andrew McIrvine - AMI
Japan Sailing Federation	Haru Hiko Kaku - HHK
Japan IRC Owners Assoc	Keisuke Nagamatsu - KN
Netherlands Noordzee Club	Raymond Roesink - RR
Turkish Offshore Racing Club	Cahit Uren - CU
Turkish Offshore Racing Club	Alican Turali - AT
US Sailing	Eric Baittinger - EB
UNCL President	Jean-Philippe Cau - JPC
UNCL Vice President	Philippe Serenon - PS
UNCL	Yves Ginoux - YG
UNCL	Jean-Claude Bertrand - JCB
UNCL Centre de Calcul Manager	Ludovic Abollivier (IRC Technical Committee) - LA
UNCL	Claude Charbonnier (IRC Technical Committee) - CC
UNCL	Jean Sans (IRC Technical Committee) - JS
RORC Commodore	Steven Anderson - SA
RORC CEO	Eddie Warden Owen - EWO
RORC Rating Office Director	Jason Smithwick (IRC Technical Committee) - JETS
RORC Technical Manager	Jenny Howells (IRC Technical Committee) - JH
RORC Rating Office	Emma Smith - ES
Royal Yachting Association (GBR)	Niall McLeod- NML

1. Introduction and welcome from Michael Boyd, Chairman of the IRC Congress.

The Chairman welcomed all present and thanked the Société des Régates d'Antibes and Alain Venturi, President of SRA, for their hospitality.

2. Apologies for absence and proxy votes.

Apologies were received from all those countries unable to be present at the meeting. Proxy votes: Spain (Ludovic Abollivier), SE Asia (Malcolm Runnalls)

3. Minutes of the meeting of the IRC Congress 2018.

The 2018 minutes were agreed as correct.

4. Matters arising not covered by the agenda.

None.

5. To comment IRC 2019 Notices

No IRC notices or interpretations had been issued in 2019.

6. IRC Annual Report

A brief presentation was made by Jason Smithwick, Director of RORC Rating Office. The IRC report will be presented to Offshore & Oceanic Committee at the World Sailing meetings in October.

At the IRC Europeans 2019 in San Remo pre-event and post-race safety and measurement inspection was undertaken.

The Rolex Fastnet Race 2019 had had 150 boats on waiting list; there were 388 starters. The limiter for entries is the amount of berthing in Plymouth. The overall winner was VO 70 'Wizard', all other classes were won by French boats.

Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup. The ORCs class only had 3 boats so they transferred to the IRC Maxi class; J Class yachts also raced in IRC. IRC measurers Eric Baittinger, Ludovic Abollivier and Andrew Yates were part of the equipment inspection team. The crew reduction trial continued based on 70% crew, in the Cruiser/Racer classes only. The IMA wishes to continue this for 2020 and expand it into other classes except the Maxi Racing classes.

The IRC Technical Committee TC consists of Jean Sans, Claude Charbonnier, Ludovic Abolliver, Jason Smithwick, Jenny Howells and Andrew Yates (AY absent as at Nations Cup). A productive meeting had been held on 4th October.

There was a brief discussion about numbers of boats rated. 2015-2017 saw a general decline in the sport but the numbers have since levelled off. The Rolex Fastnet Race boosted boat numbers especially for UNCL, but also more optimisation, amendments and measurement.

JETS reminded Congress that events drive certificates.

7. To receive contributions from attending National IRC Representatives (not including submissions for proposed rule changes).

AUS – ND. See report. Nicolas Degorce introduced himself having been at Australian Sailing for almost 6 months, taking over from Matteo Zuppini. Australia Sailing had done a good job with increasing the number of certificates and they are expecting 450 boats this year. Endorsement is an Australia Sailing rule, however ND would like to open IRC to Standard certificates (non-Endorsed) to help small clubs/boats get into IRC; this would be discussed within the organisation. There has been a promotion in Tasmania with a measurement push and price reduction, this has been led by two clubs in particular.

BEL – CS. See report. The evolution of the sport is that inshore racing is less popular while offshore is holding numbers. Their local system is also struggling with numbers. The average age of sailors is increasing and J/80s are being used to try and get young people sailing (one design); two have also participated in IRC events. CS had been introduced in San Diego (US). There is the need for a local advocate to bring IRC to people's attention; this should be a regatta participant rather than an event organiser. One club in Belgium uses an OSIRIS based handicap system for very casual Saturday afternoon races once a month, with 50 boats on the water.

BRA – LA spoke on their behalf. See also report. Numbers growing and they expect 100+ boats rated in 2020. The Rule Authority ABVO is doing a good job with measurement, especially for small boats, and there are attractive events and good promotion. The two main people responsible are a measurer plus the IRC rating contact. They race IRC & ORC side by side.

CHI – See report.

FRA – JPC. See report. The level of racing at the IRC Europeans was very good. Offshore racing is more popular than inshore, possibly because inshore requires more skill and discourages people from competing against the top boats. There is a need to carry on the technical work, keep the cost down and bring cruisers back into IRC. JETS said that in GBR we would like to require GBR Champs to have different course types, not just windward-leeward [to encourage lower level boats]. PS argued that this depends on the waters: 'round the cans' courses are easy in places like the Solent, UK where there are lots of buoys.

Regarding the increase in boat numbers, LA believed this is due to the new designs, the Rolex Fastnet Race, new championships, double handed championships and the Atlantic offshore programme. A very positive discussion had been held between UNCL and the IMA in Porto Cervo.

PS said it is important to note that IRC maintains the value of boats on the second hand market.

Andrew McIrvine joined the meeting.

CAN – JC reported that owners of larger boats are moving to smaller boats, and 75-80% of racing on Lake Ontario area is one design. Cost is quoted as an issue but Congress members argued that it is not significant in the context of running a boat, and that attractiveness of events is more relevant. There are no major events in the Lake Ontario area.

GBR – MS. See report. Agree cost is not significant but can be a factor at club level. The GBR Advocates scheme has individuals in clubs who help owners and collate the applications in exchange for an ongoing 15% discount on application fees. It was interesting to note from the NED report that they are trying to reduce fragmentation by reducing their point-scoring events to just 3 larger events. MS noted that there are a great many different IRC events in GBR.

GRE – LA spoke on their behalf. See also report. There is to be new offshore race in Aegean Sea, 600 miles in the summer around the islands. It is not yet known whether this will use ORC, IRC or both.

HKG – see report. JETS advised that there is an ongoing discussion regarding the HKG sportsboat fleet coming back into IRC.

ITA – LA spoke on their behalf. See also report. They have the same issue as everywhere else with aging racing owners. UVAI is keen to promote IRC but also administers ORC.

IMA – AMI. The IMA is growing well and now has influence in many Med events regarding NOR/SIs. In 2020 this will include Voiles de St Tropez. The IMA is encouraging more maxi racing, and is passionate about IRC. The Wally class has recently voted to stay with IRC. The shrinking fleet is superyachts under ORCs, these boats prefer processional racing (ORCs includes a performance factor).

IRL – MB. Numbers have declined but the IRC fleet is still very active and event-driven. The Dun Laoghaire regatta is an example of a regatta that works well involving several clubs and varied racing. Future events are: 2020 biennial Round Ireland Race in June, Cork Week 300th RCYC anniversary in July, including the 2020 IRC European Championship; RORC's Morgan Cup will be run as a Cowes-Cork feeder race.

JPN – HHK. See report. No additional comments/questions.

MLT – see report. No comments/questions.

NED – RR. See report. Racing is split between different levels of racers. Lower level racers are avoiding high level events and creating new ones. 3 new events are being introduced to appeal to all, these will be in the south, mid and north NED and it is hoped to get lower level boats back racing IRC/ORC. Youth is being given special attention at the new events with youth incentives & initiatives; they are

also working to find talent for 2024 Olympic double handed event. Boat ownership is declining in popularity especially among younger people.

JETS recognised incentives for youth/women eg. allowing an extra crew member. Weighing crew is most often not practical. There was a brief discussion about the possibility of including additional crew options on IRC cert (but with no rating effect). EWO thought that crew are best dealt with by the event NOR.

TUR – AT. See report. There is racing all year round, and a lot of racing with boats from Greece, though no joint events yet. An Eastern Mediterranean regatta would be good. The Aegean 600 will be of interest to Turkish owners.

LA suggested that UNCL could talk to get Eastern Med countries/clubs and encourage them to work together with events. RR suggested that as TUR & GRE have large charter companies, perhaps some incentive could be offered to them for IRC? Agreed this is a good idea.

USA – EB. Little change to previous reports, the reduction in IRC rated boats from 10 years ago reflects the multiple rules offered in the USA: ORC/IRC/ORR/PHRF. Race organisers select a rule for their event and many regattas offer all 4 to attract participants, which means small classes. Regarding local advocates, ORC is the only rule with an advocate, well-funded and effective.

Certificate pricing is not an issue, except for the lower end comparing with PHRF. Pricing is deliberately close between the three rating rules - approx \$300/year. ORC club is about \$100 and is growing for that reason. The lower level ORRez pricing is similar to ORC club and also gaining ground in PHRF fleets. It was noted that IRC does not have a lower priced product to compete with ORC and ORRez, and if it did it may be beneficial. AMI noted that certificate fees do not include measurement, and that from his experience ORCi measurement is very expensive compared with IRC Endorsed.

USS will not promote any particular rule, but is planning send a request for proposals ("RFP") to each of 3 rules (IRC, ORC, ORR) with intent to give recommendations to event organisers. This should be seen as an opportunity for IRC and MB suggested that other members of Congress could also have input to it.

JETS explained about data checking even for Standard (non-Endorsed) certificates by the UNCL & RORC rating offices and MB agreed that this should be a USP of our product.

New York Yacht Club is hoping for 60 boats in 3 classes for the IRC/ORC World Championship in 2020.

MB noted that the reports showed that to increase and maintain IRC racing in an area requires one or two good local people promoting IRC.

8. To receive a report from the Policy Steering Group.

MB was pleased to report there were no current technical conflicts to resolve in the last year. The PSG had spent a lot of time looking at the governance for the next 2-3 years. The IRC rule is 34 years old and there is a need to look at how the RORC/UNCL offices work together. The PSG has agreed operational and personnel aspects and co-ordination for a combined IRC organisation. A new constitution is to be produced.

9. To receive a report from the IRC Technical Committee, including IRC distribution worldwide, UMS.

MB acknowledged the work of the IRC Technical Committee (TC) and thanked them for their work. JETS reported on the ongoing rating projects:

Canting keels and Water ballast: much work had been done by CC & JS. The TC is evaluating water ballast especially for smaller boats; it has agreed a final framework for 2020 and a programme of research for 2021 including the canting keel formula.

Keel types 4,5,6: There is ambiguity between 5 & 6 and the TC has been working on a smoother rating effect between 5 & 6 using aspect ratio. We are also seeing new designs with a trapezoidal keel, which is an undesirable development.

Whisker poles ie. a pole used to sheet a headsail, either to windward or leeward: There is ambiguity between the current ERS & RRS. There are World Sailing proposals on this for the next ERS & RRS (2021-2024). For 2020 IRC will define a whisker pole and it will be rated.

Code zero headsail: the TC refers to this as a **flying headsail**, meaning reaching/upwind sails with SHW 60-75% of SFL. It has been working on how to define and rate these sails; this will not be ready for 2020 but there is plan to offer trial certificates from July 2020 before implementation in 2021. The definition includes no battens and not attached to the forestay; the sail will have to be measured as a spinnaker first to determine how it is defined.

PS asked whether trials could start in January as there is high demand for this type of sail. JETS & LA regretted that this would not be possible due to the amount of work involved, but significant progress is being made. It was agreed that clear communication about the plan for rating these sails will be vital; for instance the definition can be published once it is finalised. The definition will be virtually the same as ORC so that the same data can be used for both rules.

JETS confirmed that IRC does not want to offer multiple numbers for different sail configurations, and it would be better to offer improved tools for easily amending certificates between offshore/inshore configurations.

10. To receive answers from the Technical Committee to subjects still pending at the end of the last meeting (Crew weight, multiple TCC).

JETS earlier report (9.) was complete for 2020 developments. There is no serious consideration of multiple TCCs on a certificate, nor any overwhelming requests for this.

JETS summarised the TC's research agenda:

- Boats over 24m, minor power factor adjustment.
- Beam effects.
- Keel type treatment.
- Crew number and how it is calculated. The ongoing difficulty is that of sisterships having different crew numbers.
- Outboard engines on large boats, considered undesirable.
- Rating the number of headsails.
- Aerodynamics of the hull.
- Ergonomics.
- Canting keels.

Regarding foils, this is currently stable since the rule changed to using physical foil measurements and the perception is that ratings are now fairer. The TC continues to monitor development, particularly re 'flying' foiling boats.

There was some discussion about planing v. non-planing boats and the effect of conditions, and the diversity of foiling system styles and designs.

11. To receive, consider and decide proposals for IRC Rule changes for 2019.

11.1 From the IRC Technical Committee.

1. Rating Certificates rule 8.2. It was noted that this invokes the RRS definition of *racing*. **AGREED.**
2. Short handed certificates rule 8.2.1. **AGREED.**
3. Detachable items. **AGREED.** CS asked about the rating of cushions generally and keeping them in their normal position. It was agreed to discuss this after meeting.
4. Whisker poles rule 21.3.5 and definition. **AGREED.** In parallel there is a proposed new ERS definition for 2021-2024. If the pole is not attached to the mast it becomes an outrigger, which is not allowed.
5. Sailcloth. CS said that as this now doesn't say 'at present none', there is a need to define what is 'exotic material'. The Rig Factor rule includes many similar loose definitions. However, IRC could hold a list of 'exotic sailcloth materials' and add to it when necessary (currently none). **AGREED.**
6. Water Ballast & Canting Keels. The new rule allows IRC to ask for List Angle for water ballasted boats, but there is a surrogate technical solution for boats where the List Angle is not available. Plumbing is included as a deterrent against large transfer pipes; and 'permanently installed' to exclude water ballast bags hanging from the rail. **AGREED.**
7. Bulb weight definition. Some classes and boats are exploiting the current bulb weight definition. MR suggested this change should be applied immediately and not deferred to 2021; EWO agreed with this while AMI said fair warning needed to be given. In answer to a question about measuring it, in most cases the rating offices would use design information. **AGREED.**
To be implemented for 2020 and publicised as soon as possible.

11.2 From IRC Rule Authorities.

1. Mainsail measurement – head point. ERS G4.2.8 says attachments included, proposal is to exclude attachments for IRC. If accepted, IRC could not include mainsails in the IHC measurement system as IHC requires sails to be measured to ERS. EB pointed out this would create problems for boats rating under multiple rules if sails are measured differently. Much work has been done to bring rating rules together. JETS suggested that the question should go to ERS, it would be a mistake for IRC to move away from ERS. JPN agreed with this. **Submission withdrawn.**
2. The second submission, regarding whisker poles, is consistent with the rule change already agreed.

12. To discuss and consider the future direction of IRC.

12.1 IRC Marketing

There were no comments regarding this.

12.2 IRC/ORC World Championships

JETS reported that there is a working group between ORC/IRC/NYYC. The NOR is published and a press release is being written. Liferrafts are a subject for debate, currently there is no requirement for them; this is a matter for the organising authority. A joint ORC/IRC measurement seminar is planned for Spring 2020. LA, EB, JETS and AY will be part of the Equipment Inspection/Technical Committee. The scoring system has not yet been decided, but it is proposed to be different from the previous Worlds (The Hague 2018). It needs to be published before the end of 2019; SA offered to speak to the ORC to push a decision.

Event page: <https://nyyc.org/2020-orc/irc-worlds>.

12.3 Future Championships.

LA reported that for the Europeans 2021 there were two Mediterranean possibilities, Spain or France.

Regarding the next Worlds, IRC needs to be fully integrated into the decision-making process and it was agreed that the next event should be held in an IRC stronghold.

A 5-year plan for IRC Europeans and Worlds is required.

PS questioned the validity of World Championships when very few countries are represented, and suggested focus could be more on regional championships with a Worlds every 4 years.

An Eastern European regional championship was approved (see earlier item re TUR & GRE).

EWO summarised main 2020 RORC events: no Commodore's Cup due to full calendar and in particular Cork300 and the feeder race RORC's Morgan Cup. Cork300 also offers Cruising in Company. The Ile d'Ouessant Race, a new race in 2016, will be run again. Apart from these there is the usual RORC race programme.

JPC reminded Congress that UNCL is not a race organiser. A new double/single handed transatlantic race has been announced for April 2021, there are already 25 boats interested before the NOR has been issued. In 2020 there will be the Transquadra; and La Rochelle to Azores and back in July.

Unfortunately there was no North American Championship in 2019. EB said the unofficial agreement is that CAN hosts it in even years and the USA in odd years, however in 2019 Block Island Race Week was eclipsed by ORC. He reiterated that the USA needs an IRC advocacy programme in order to advance. NYYC has reported that the ORC representative is aggressively marketing ORC.

MB talked about the Olympics 2024. Many IRC boats are eligible for training and preparation for this. NML reported that the RYA is awaiting better direction from World Sailing before deciding on qualification event(s) and boat designs. RR - in NED they are developing talents on existing boats. ND – in AUS CYCA has started a double handed programme starting in 2020.

There is a World Sailing video released in Aug 2019 about the Paris 2024 mixed offshore class:

<https://www.sailing.org/news/88920.php#.XZywZ1VKi70>

13. To discuss any proposed amendments to the IIRCOA Constitution.

None

14. To discuss general submissions and Special Regulations submissions to World Sailing.

JETS represents IRC at World Sailing meetings, and also attends ORC technical meetings.

To note relevant OSR submissions:

- Halyard locks. Preventing crew having to go aloft to release the halyard. No comments.
- AIS transponders include in Cat 3. No comments.
- Lifteraft stowage (deferred from 2018). No comments.
- Storm trysails / reefed mainsails. AUS and NED submissions. SA thought most racing sails would not be suitable sailcloth for the 50% reefing. No recommendation to approve or reject.
- Electric engines power. Congress opinion was a) there is no definition of renewable energy and b) this has no place in the OSR.
- Keel inspections. In-built validation (building in accordance with the plans). There is no definition of 'qualified person' but SA referred to MCA guidelines regarding qualified people.

MB asked for Congress comments to be included to World Sailing.

15. IRC Go ! "Bringing back Cruiser-racers in the game"

Presentation by Philippe Serenon & Claude Charbonnier (and circulated after the meeting).

IRC GO! is a contract with clubs and other race organisers, not with owners.

Congress members were invited to be included in development discussions

There was unanimous enthusiasm for the initiative and UNCL was thanked for their work on it.

Discussion included:

- Static or adjusted numbers within the year
- How to handle custom boats or those designs not in the IRC database
- Rating should be conservative
- Pricing – scaled by length or equal for all boats
- Compatibility with full IRC certificates
- MNA control/lack of control (but any user is a potential IRC certificate holder)
- Inclusion of a scoring system
- Possible addition of a performance adjustment in future

16. Any Other Business.

The venue for the next meeting was raised. Newport, RI (USA) after World Championship was a possibility, but with the priority being maximum attendance London would be better. No members present were in favour of NY. A suitable location will be found.

MB thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting finished at 16:15