

## **2021 IRC Congress Report from Hong Kong**

Hong Kong continues to be subject to Coronavirus restrictions, particularly around the issue of international travel. Currently upon ones return to Hong Kong you are mandated to undergo three weeks of isolated quarantine in a designated hotel at your expense. As a result there is little international travel happening, as a knock on consequence all offshore racing events have been cancelled for another year and the racing fleet remains in Hong Kong participating in local events only. There is currently no cross border travel between Hong Kong and China which has meant no participation from the Mainland in local events.

All of that said the local yacht clubs are managing to go ahead and run events that are well attended both in the number of yachts and sailors on board. The number of boats rated has increased marginally over 2020 but is still noticeably down on pre Coronavirus levels. Part of the continued drop in numbers I believe is due to the China Mainland owned boats that would normally race in HK are not able to move crew through the HK/China border

An IRC Nationals event was not organised in 2021, it is hoped that some impetus can be generated and another event organised in the future.

Despite the HK Sportsboat association electing to continue with the SMS rating system last year a small number of boats have obtained an IRC rating this year. It will be interesting to see if it develops further

There continues to be new boats coming into Hong Kong and joining the IRC fleet which is a clear positive. The local PY handicap system (HKPN) is popular and is well represented at most events, there a number of boats that race in both HKPN and IRC. They tend to be the production cruisers and usually weekend race in HKPN and occasionally IRC race at the larger events. The perception is that they are not always competitive under IRC. Further growth in IRC numbers will come from changing that perception though there is no clear way to achieve that..... The lure of winning a prize is strong!

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