



IRC Congress 2021

Minutes

of the meeting held on Saturday, 16th October 2021
RORC Clubhouse London and Zoom Video Conference

PRESENT at the RORC Clubhouse

Michael Boyd - Chairman
Anne de Bagneaux Savatier – UNCL President
James Neville – RORC Commodore
Eric de Turkheim – RORC Vice Commodore & IRC Board
Philippe Serenon – IRC Board - UNCL
Jason Smithwick – Director RORC Rating Office
Ludovic Abollivier – UNCL Senior Manager Centre de Calcul
Jeremy Wilton – RORC CEO
Jenny Howells – RORC Technical Manager
Emma Smith – RORC Technical Team
Sally Moss – RORC Technical Team
Eddie Warden Owen – RORC

PRESENT by video

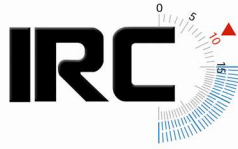
Carl Sabbe – BEL & Congress Vice Chairman
Simon James – SEA & IRC representative
Ed Cesare – USA/RORC Overseas Rear Commodore
Jean-Philippe Cau – IRC Board - UNCL
Chris Zonca – AUS Australian Sailing
David Griffith – AUS, CYCA Board and IRC Owners
Nikola Dukov - BUL
Stephen Tudor – GBR Owners
Niall McLeod – GBR/RYA Racing Services Manager
Johannes Christophers – GER/DSV Head of Technical
Liz Hall – IRL/ISA
Mark Mills – IRL/ICRA
Riccardo Provini – ITA/UVAI
Haruhiko Kaku - JPN
Godwin Zammit - MLT
Johan Tuvstedt – SWE/Offshore Association
Jean Sans – IRC Technical Committee
Claude Charbonnier – IRC Technical Committee

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

Delegates introduced themselves. Michael Boyd said that it is good to be back at RORC [after Covid restrictions] and looked forward to hearing the positive news from around the world.

2 Apologies for absence and proxy votes.

Apologies: Richard Colwell (IRL), Gideon Mowser (HKG)
Proxy votes: none



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3 Minutes of the meeting of the IRC Congress 2020 (*published on ircrating.org*)

- 3.1 The minutes of the 2020 IRC Congress were signed as a correct record.
- 3.2 Matters Arising not covered on the agenda – none.

4 IRC Organisation update

- 4.1 To receive an update from IRC Board Chairman, Michael Boyd, regarding the new IRC Organisation for 2021 agreed between RORC and UNCL.

Last year the merging of RORC and UNCL and the rating office arrangements was announced. This is working well, as is the IRC Technical Committee. Michael Boyd thanked the IRC Board for their voluntary efforts and the Executive for their cooperation. There has been much positive news on events since the challenges of Covid, particularly some spectacular events such as the Rolex Fastnet Race.

Regional meetings with Rule Authorities were held earlier in 2021 to plan more regional championships and events; Philippe Serenon is leading this marketing initiative. It was agreed that well run international events are essential to IRC.

5 To receive a report from the IRC Board and IRC Policy Steering Group (PSG)

As above.

6 To receive the IRC Annual Report (*published on ircrating.org*)

- 6.1 IRC distribution worldwide, IRC Events, IRC Technical Developments - Jason Smithwick and Ludovic Abollivier.

The report has been delivered to World Sailing and will go to Offshore & Oceanic Committee.

Additional notes:

As well as the major events mentioned in the report, we do not forget the many other IRC races that are going on in each country.

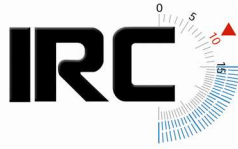
The 2022 IRC European Championship is confirmed as 24th August 2022 in Breskens (Netherlands) and the Notice of Race is expected in the new year.

Rule Authorities' work at the local level is recognised and much appreciated; the RORC/UNCL rating offices are always ready to help with any queries.

Boats racing 2-handed in IRC are not counted separately, as they can race 2-handed with their primary certificate (only additional 'short handed' certificates are counted separately). 2-handed racing has emerged as a major segment of the Australian fleet.

Carl Sabbe commented regarding future technical changes, he would like to understand what the IRC Technical Committee (TC) is seeing and how it is being addressed, perhaps it could share more what trends are being seen on the water and why they are a concern, without going into the software specifics. It was agreed this would be a good idea and Jason Smithwick provided more detail regarding the proposed changes for 2023 and future years:

Much feedback has been received regarding TP 52s continually winning, particularly in Australia; this also applied to, for instance, light 70 footers. It must be noted that solutions are always generic and physics-



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based and a possible solution has been found around the power/weight ratio for that size of boat. 35-40' boats are another area that is being looked at, as possibly not performing to rating at present.

Keel types – the TC would like a more technical approach to how keels are treated. Jean Sans and Claude Charbonnier have done a lot of research in the area; a lot of work is involved in this project and the aim is to have a solution for 2023.

Multiple headsails set simultaneously – this is very expensive for owners and the TC is looking for a user-friendly way of rating number of headsails. Carl Sabbe agreed that rating the number of headsails would be logical as IRC rates the number of spinnakers.

Whisker poles – the 2020 rule caused a particular problem in Australia [which led to IRC Notice 2021/01] so the TC has been looking at this again.

David Griffith thanked Jason Smithwick and the rating team for responding so quickly to the whisker pole issue. He suggested that a separate technical meeting would be interesting to a lot of people and it was agreed that this would be considered.

7 National Reports (*published on ircrating.org except where presented verbally as noted below*)

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

USA (Ed Cesare)

It had been a normal season with strong fleets. Most growth is from mid-level Corinthian programs. The SORC in Florida is growing and this is very positive for the sport. The US fleet is currently enamoured of ORC but there are some issues that need to be dealt with such as the scoring tools not providing the higher level of accuracy as expected. Some suggestions were made on how to encourage IRC back into the US, such as focussing on offshore events to demonstrate benefits of a single number rule; and providing more information on how the IRC rule works. However it is best to bide our time and monitor how things go.

There is a potential winter circuit based around the RORC Caribbean 600. This would be a scheduling challenge but it is being worked on (Ed Cesare, USS & RORC).

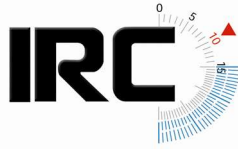
Jason Smithwick advised that he will be meeting soon with Alan Ostfield, the new CEO of US Sailing. Noted that the new USS Technical Director of the Offshore Office is Jim Teeters, and that he is expected not to do any work for ORR.

IRL

Jason Smithwick commented on the request for event equipment inspection in Ireland, and proposed that this is an aspect that should be promoted further. It was noted that some Irish measurers had attended the last RORC measurement seminar.

FRA (Philippe Serenon/Jean Philippe Cau)

There had been no racing until June, unfortunately this was too late for a decision on the 2021 European Championship so it was cancelled. Most races were postponed until later in the year. IRC is expanding in the Mediterranean; the recent Voiles de St Tropez was very successful and saw the highest number of boats racing in the Med. The Atlantic coast is growing with long distance races e.g. Armen and Cap 45/11; there had also been good entries for Spi Ouest France and good activity in inshore racing in Brittany. The 2023 programme has been set as a regular year but adding the Rolex Middle Sea Race to the French Mediterranean IRC Championship.



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Re the Class 30 competition run by UNCL with RORC and the Storm Trysail Club, the winner was VPLP/Multiplast and the boat should come out late 2022 in a Club version and an IRC version with extra options.

BUL (Nikola Dukov)

There have been problems with aggressive ORC management/promotion. Owners wanting to compete in regattas outside Bulgaria prefer IRC. Bulgaria is in a difficult situation particularly in relation to other Black Sea countries. It is hoped to find a good solution with the help of a potentially useful pro-IRC contact in the Black Sea area, and Nikola Dukov suggested more proactive action from UNCL with countries around the Black Sea to educate them.

GER (Johannes Christophers)

There had been some successful German IRC boats in the Rolex Fastnet Race; restored IOR tonner boats are also proving successful. All IRC certificates issued are for offshore races such as the RFR and Rolex Middle Sea Race.

AUS (Chris Zonca / David Griffith)

IRC is the primary rating system in Australia. There is a big double handed class in the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race (RSHYR). The 2021 Australian Championships at Hamilton Island had to be cancelled for the second year due to Covid. There are 35 boats doing the Blue Water series.

Chris had experienced some technical problems with the [Excel] forms as they do not work on all devices. Liz Hall in Ireland had experienced similar problems and corrupted forms. This was noted.

Endorsement: Chris Zonca reported that there is no enthusiasm among sailors or clubs for non-Endorsed (Standard) certificates. All sailors want to have Endorsed certificates and are not keen on e.g. ORC club. This is probably historical, with owners being wary of owner declared data despite it being checked by Australian Sailing and the Rating Office. Cruiser/racers tend to race in PHS. The very few local clubs using ORC Club cater more for casual racers rather than high end.

IRC is used for major races but there are also ORCi races; this is confusing for owners. The Australian Championships were only going to be IRC, no ORC.

The inaugural Australian Maxi Championships (IRC) for maxis and mini-maxis will be held at the beginning of December; this is aimed at encouraging maxis to come to Australia ahead of the RSHYR. The RSHYR still has a 100' length limit but is looking at possibly opening it up.

IRC is strong in Australia and there is a revival with new boats and TP 52s coming in from Europe. The country is now opening up post lockdown and there is a lot of enthusiasm.

Jason Smithwick thanked Australia as one of the largest IRC nations.

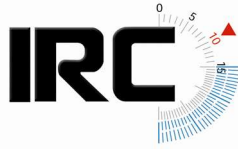
ITA (Riccardo Provini)

It was a short season starting in May due to Covid. Only national events were allowed to start with, but now the IRC fleet is similar to 2019. Next season a lot of events are planned and hoping for more normality.

Other items noted:

Michael Boyd expressed sympathy for those competing in mixed double handed racing regarding the cancellation of Olympic classes, as this was very disappointing.

RORC Baltic 600 is a new race with a start/finish in Helsinki. Date for 2022 is 21st July. The preliminary Notice of Race requires IRC rating and the proposal is for RORC to offer free IRC cert to boats not



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holding a certificate before (in most cases the data will be a conversion from ORCi). It is also intended to offer race finishers a guaranteed entry in the 2023 Rolex Fastnet Race.

IRCGo!

Brief explanation – IRCGo! is an IRC rating based simply on the production design with adjustments for spinnaker yes/no and propeller type. Rating to 0.005 accuracy. It is intended to increase Corinthian racing. A successful trial had been held in Belgium this season. The 2019 presentation is to be re-sent to all delegates.

Jason Smithwick reported that the UK has the same need for a lower level rating system and is working with the RYA. No two clubs want the same thing and most would want additional inputs e.g. sail sizes; many also want performance adjustment. These areas are being looked at.

Godwin Zammit expressed reservations about IRCGo! as in most cases boats will move down e.g. from Endorsed to Standard IRC, rather than the other way around.

Philippe Serenon invited any interested countries to contact UNCL/RORC, and the system can be fine tuned to individual countries' needs.

A call to be set up between Philippe Serenon, Claude Charbonnier and Haruhiko Kaku in JPN.

Sweden has a similar system with approximately 400 designs with a standard Swedish Handicap. Estonia and Finland adopted ORC club and abandoned their own local systems. Sweden looked into this but decided not to adopt the ORC approach.

8 IRC 2021 Notices (*published on ircrating.org*)

8.1 IRC Notice 2021-01 Rule 21.3.6 Whisker Poles (relevant to race organisers)

This was issued after working with Australia as it was recognised that a whisker pole is a safety item going downwind in heavy weather. The Notice added the ability for a race organiser or rule authority to alter this rule. There is a proposed rule change for 2022 (see item 9.1).

The IRC Rating Authority is about to issue a second notice related to cloth set below the boom as this had been seen at some events in France, and there had been questions from Australia. This cloth is defined as a sail and the notice will explain how to measure the additional area so it can be accounted for in the rig factor.

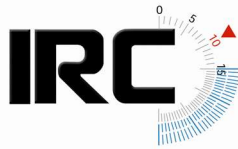
Johan Tuvstedt (SWE) asked about the take up of the Flying Headsail: 40 boats were rated with one in 2021.

9 To receive, consider and decide proposals for IRC Rule and Rating changes for 2022 (*published on ircrating.org*)

9.1 From the IRC Technical Committee.

TC 01 – Rule 17 Boat Weight (renewable power sources). AGREED

TC 02 – Rule 15 Manual power (autopilots). Introduction: The wording has been taken from the RORC standard Notice of Race wording and ORC has a very similar rule. We want to lobby World Sailing to address this in Racing Rules of Sailing and Offshore Special Regulations as it applies to many classes and rating systems.



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A discussion was held regarding the wording and the final proposal was as follows (from Carl Sabbe): **“Boats shall not use stored power for steering unless specified by the Notice of Race”**. This was AGREED. It was noted that Rule 11 must be updated to encompass all of Rule 15.

TC 03 – Rule 21.3.6 Whisker pole (to leeward only). e.g. jibstick, reaching strut.

A discussion was held regarding boats with no spinnaker, and whether a whisker pole then had to be declared to pole a headsail out to windward, with the current rule proposal the answer was no, but this is to be checked.

The new rule text was AGREED.

TC 04 – Definition A5 Spinnaker - AGREED

TC 05 – Rule 8.5 Endorsed certificate - AGREED

9.2 From IRC Rule Authorities (published on ircrating.org)

AUS 01 – secondary certificates.

The IRC Technical Committee has discussed this relating to IRC Rules and administrative considerations, and what changes would be allowed for the second certificate. The existing rule 8.2.1 (short-handed certificates) encompasses what we envision (sails, poles, moveable/variable ballast) and two concurrent certificates, different certificate numbers, as we have now for short handed certificates. The owner would have to declare which certificate he would be racing with, by the rating deadline. We do not want to name the certs ‘inshore’ or ‘offshore’ as others will want different variations such as cruising/racing configuration; or full/reduced crew.

Discussion:

Liz Hall said that in Ireland the inshore to offshore change is often going from 3 to 4 spinnakers, so they would support the second certificate. Chris Zonca pointed out that boats such as TP 52s add bunks and make other significant changes between inshore/offshore.

James Neville argued that the second certificate would only allow what owners can do already, but more easily; IRC should therefore allow the same modifications as would be allowed on an amendment. Owners would have to pay to maintain two certificates. Philippe Serenon disagreed and argued that this would drag IRC upwards to allow changes such as keels, masts and interior, and this would discourage Corinthian sailors. Jason Smithwick pointed out that 85% of the IRC fleet do not regularly change the configuration of their boat during the season; this rule change would be to benefit a very small proportion of the IRC fleet. James Neville argued nothing will stop the ‘arms race’ and that IRC weakens its position by making things difficult for owners. Ed Cesare said that varying configurations is also a big issue in the US and this proposal would be a good development for IRC. Mark Mills thought that there should be no limitation on the second certificate data.

David Griffith thought this proposal would help regarding complaints about the cost of IRC compared with ORC, and the flexibility would enhance IRC. Organising authorities could automatically default to using the highest rating if the alternative one is not declared. Michael Boyd pointed out that we pride ourselves on the simplicity of IRC compared with the multiple scoring options of ORC, and the fact that IRC sailors instantly know their place on the racecourse. We need to protect that. Philippe Serenon said that we need to be careful of transferring complexity from owners to race organisers.

Rating deadlines: The decision on which certificate to use should have to be made in advance (e.g. a week) and it would depend on organising authorities setting and enforcing rating deadlines in advance of the event.

Online listings: Stephen Tudor asked how the online listings would work, from a race organiser point of view? Both configurations would be in the listing with a separate certificate number. Many race organisers



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have automatic links to the online listing and certificate number would be required; searching on boat name and sail number would cause problems.

Carl Sabbe proposed that we should start asking organising authorities to add a certificate number field to their entry forms and communicate this in advance.

Jason Smithwick said that agreement would need to be reached for what changes should be permitted, and that there should not be an additional short-handed certificate. The Rating Authority would not be able to implement this rule change for January 2022 due to the administrative changes required.

Proposal by Jason Smithwick to accept the principle but defer until June 2022 when it could be run as a pilot for IRC 'South' countries, with a view to rolling it out in January 2023 or earlier for all countries. The proposal needs more consideration about the limitations and rule wording. This was agreed.

AUS 02 – date of Congress papers

To be compatible with rule authority meetings and reporting requirements to IRC Congress and World Sailing there was a suggested amendment to the constitution as follows:

*Submissions for changes to IRC Rules shall be received by the IRC Rating Authority a minimum of **28** days and circulated to all IRC Rule Authorities a minimum of **21** days before a meeting of the IRC Congress.*

This was accepted by Australian Sailing and there was unanimous consensus.

10 The future of the IRC World Championships.

10.1 To consider the future of the World Championships and make any recommendations to World Sailing.

2020 ORC/IRC World Championship (Newport, USA) – it had not been possible to hold this, due to Covid. Ed Cesare said this had been very disappointing as the US was excited about the 2020 event so North America could see both rules at work and see the differences.

2022 ORC/IRC World Championship to be held in Porto Cervo Sardinia, 23rd June.

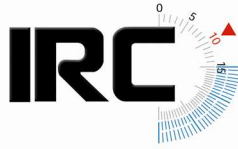
There has been great difficulty agreeing the scoring system despite it being agreed for the Newport 2020 event. In Scheveningen 2018 the average points were used which created large scoring differences, so the agreement for 2020 was to average the corrected time for each system instead. Now ORC is proposing using ORC for inshore races and IRC for offshore races, but we have rejected that. The ORC has suggested postponing the event and discussing it further during 2023. There is no agreement yet and the issue has been passed to World Sailing.

11 Any Other Business

Ed Cesare reported that following the sad loss of Luiz Kahl recently his Yacht Scoring website is being looked after by one of his colleagues. The committee expressed sympathy at the loss, and are pleased to hear the website is continuing.

Mark Mills suggested that all the items on the IRC application form should be printed on the certificate i.e. declared hull materials, accommodation etc. The Rating Authority agreed to look into this.

Philippe Serenon suggested that in future there should be a benefit for environmentally friendly boats.



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David Griffith raised the following points for future consideration:

- Dry sailing i.e. no antifoul, with regular lift out of the boats for cleaning and maintenance; there is currently no rating effect for this.
- Short handed certificate currently has no rating effect for having fewer crew.

Michael Boyd thanked everyone for the support and for their input and participation. There is still vigour, spirit and enthusiasm for IRC, and hope for renewed enthusiasm for IRC racing. He thanked all the rating team for their continued work.

James Neville thanked Michael Boyd for chairing the meeting, and for his continuing contribution to French/Anglo relations.

The meeting finished at 1445