



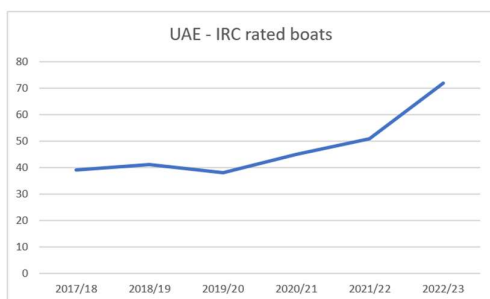
DUBAI OFFSHORE SAILING CLUB

2023 IRC CONGRESS - UNITED ARAB EMIRATES REPORT

The IRC racing season in the UAE runs from October until May. Whilst we are geographically in the northern hemisphere, our certificate validity follows the southern hemisphere system.

Number of boats with IRC certificates

It is assumed that the total number of keelboats in the UAE is around 200 - 250. Around 140 are moored at the Dubai Offshore Sailing Club with the remainder spread out in marinas across the country.



The UAE IRC fleet numbers have shown a significant growth in 2022/23, in part from the fleet at DOSC and in part from other marinas.

This number of certificates represents somewhere between 25 - 30% of all sailing boats in the UAE, with around 40% of the boats moored at DOSC having an IRC certificate

Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
IRC rated boats	39	41	38	45	51	72

Unlike many parts of the world, Covid boosted participation in sailing in the UAE. Whilst we were restricted in the numbers of crew we could take on

board, there were no real restrictions placed on either coastal sailing or the organisation of racing. Because of the drop in international travel, many people who would have normally travelled for work had to stay in the UAE and, with little else to do, went sailing.

So as to keep the momentum after the world returned to normality we made some changes to our race management. These included:

- The introduction of different division categories in some race series so that sailors were not always competing against the same boats.
- The start of a Friday evening IRC series. This proved popular as, with spinnakers, it becomes a step up from our mid-week, white sails only, NHC pursuit races. It also meant that boats could be left rigged and ready overnight for that weekend's racing.
- A shorter, inshore race to run alongside our Offshore series. This has allowed smaller and slower boats, or teams who are perhaps less confident in spending a full night at sea, the chance for some nighttime racing. The courses generally stay within 12 miles of the coast and are designed to give a reasonable opportunity to finish by about midnight, which is in good time to make last orders at the clubhouse.

There is growth in the sport in the UAE, with a new fleet of Far East 28s having recently been imported by another organisation together with a slow but steady stream of new boats arriving in the market. It is hoped that these boats will want to join some of our IRC race programme.

2022 IRC Middle East Regatta

This season saw the first IRC Middle East Regatta which was run over two days in December. There were thirty-two entries across three divisions. The first day had three inshore races, the second day started with one inshore race and was followed with a coastal race.

As an example both of the range of boats entering, and perhaps the closeness of IRC racing, first and second places in the regatta were taken by an International Dragon and a Landmark 43, respectively the lowest and highest rated boats in the UAE fleet.

2022/23 season - Number of IRC races/entrants:

Event	IRC Entrants	IRC Divisions	Race days	Total races
Commodore's Cup	40	4	8	24
Coastal series	40	4	3	3
Double-handed series	28	4	6	6
Short handed trophy	11	2	1	3
Offshore series	10	2	5	5
IRC evening series	17	1	5	5
IRC Middle East Regatta	32	3	2	5
Airbus Spring Regatta	25	4	2	5
Dubai to Muscat Race	22	4	3	2
D2M race to the corner	22	1	1	1

Total days IRC racing	36
Total IRC division race starts	197

- Average IRC race days held per month during the season: **4.5**
- Average race-day attendance as a percentage of overall IRC fleet: **35%**

Annual weighing and measuring:

Each September we run an annual IRC weighing and measuring weekend. This is run by volunteers and provided for free for all keelboat boat owners that would like to take part in racing, whether members of DOSC or not. The number of boats that have signed up for this over the last five years are given below:

Year	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Hull	Sails	Hull	Sails	Hull	Sails	Hull	Sails	Hull	Sails
Boats measured	8	11	11	19	14	14	11	19	9	13



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There are five IRC measurers in the UAE, with another five having started training this year. The measuring process has been gradually refined over the years. What took us two days in 2019 was completed in a single morning in 2023.

There was an uptick in numbers in 2020, driven by a push to move boats from Club Class to IRC, and again in 2021 with the commencement of a new IRC Cruiser division specifically to cater for larger, more cruising-orientated boats that wished to race together.

We arrange for boats and sails to be measured on request during the season. On average this may amount to two or three hulls and five sets of sails each year.

2023/24 revalidations

At the time of writing we are still receiving renewals for the new season. We expect the number of IRC certificates to be issued this season to be similar to last year, give or take 5%.

IRC feedback

In general the fleet seems to accept that IRC creates a fair and level playing field given the broad range of boats and weather/sea conditions it caters for around the world.

There have been occasional concerns raised that some boat types rate better than others. This is likely to be down to a combination of the courses we've run in the past and our sailing conditions which are, 95% of the time, 10-12 knots of wind, sunshine and flat seas. The former we have been finding a better balance with; the latter we are simply grateful to have.