

IRC Rating System - 2023 Annual Report to IRC Congress and World Sailing

1. IRC OVERVIEW

The IRC Rating System is managed by the IRC Rating Authority (RORC Rating Office & YCF Centre de Calcul) and further administered by 38 additional rule authorities worldwide, on seven Continents, making it the most widely used Rating System available, with **IRC certificates issued in 40 countries**.

► IRC Boat and Certificate Numbers

Joint figures from RORC and YCF show that at the end of August the overall total valid boats (new applications, revalidations, single event ratings (SERs)) rated is 3690 which is an increase of 4.3% (151 boats) from the end of August 2022. There have been 3829 boats and 5120 certificates issued since 1 January in 2023. The secondary certificate permitted by the updated rule 8.2.1 has proved popular with 186 boats holding a valid secondary certificate on 31 August.

2. EVENTS AND CLASSES

IRC remains the principal International Rating System for a long list of events around the world, with the offshore classics, including among others the RORC Transatlantic Race, Rolex Fastnet Race, Rolex Sydney Hobart Race, Rolex Middle Sea Race, RORC Caribbean 600, Aegean 600, Rolex Giraglia Race, Spi Ouest France, SNIM and the Voiles de Saint-Tropez using IRC as the rating system for the principal trophies.

► 2022/2023 Events and Championships

There has been a full programme of inshore and offshore IRC events supported by RORC and YCF around the globe with examples including the IRC Middle East Championships, Phuket King's Cup Regatta in Thailand, RORC Caribbean 600 and the Australian Yachting Championships.

There are many local inshore and offshore IRC racing events around the World from club events to IRC national and regional events. This report will highlight some of the major international events and for information on local events please refer to the individual country reports submitted to the annual IRC Congress on the [IRC website](#).

Elsewhere around the world there are many examples of premiere IRC events inshore and offshore with a selection as follows:

AUSTRALIA

The 2022 Rolex Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, hosted by the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia in Sydney, was the 77th edition of the event. A fleet of 109 boats started with 100 finished. Line honours were claimed by Andoo Comanche in a time of 1d 11h 56m 48s. The TP52 Celestial (Sam Haynes) won the Tattersall Cup, the 1st place under IRC corrected time.

Importantly the CYCA announced after the event that the CYCA Board has confirmed that IRC will be the sole rating system used to determine the overall and divisional winners in their major Category 1 and 2 races in 2023, including the Rolex Sydney Hobart, Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore, Noakes Sydney Gold Coast and Ponant Sydney Noumea Yacht Race.

The 2023 Australian Yachting Championships were held as part of the Teakle Classic Lincoln Week Regatta in Port Lincoln, South Australia using IRC as the primary rating system.. Geoff Boettcher's PAC 52 Secret Men's Business held off TP 52 Zen to take the triple crown of the Adelaide-Lincoln race, the Lincoln Week Regatta, and the Australian Championship that combines results from the two events, and was the first South Australian yacht in history to claim the Australian Yachting Championship crown. Next year's Australian Yachting Championships will head to the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club as part of the iconic SailFest event in April 2024.

DUBAI – UAE EMIRATES

IRC Rating is strong in the Middle East with the Dubai Offshore Sailing Club (DOSC) supporting the rating system and attracting competitors from across the region, including the popular annual Dubai to Muscat Race. Through this continued development and recognizing their support DOSC was awarded the inaugural IRC Middle East Championship. In December 2022, the Dubai Offshore Sailing Club in the United Arab Emirates hosted the inaugural event sailing a six-race series over a three-day event with around 40 boats entered. The sailing took place on the Persian Gulf just offshore of the famous Burj Al Arab Hotel.

SOUTH AFRICA

The iconic Cape to Rio Yacht Race from Cape Town to South America, the longest continent-to-continent yacht race in the southern hemisphere, started on 2nd January 2023 with 13 boats completing the 3300nm race from Table Bay, Cape Town to Guanabara Bay, Rio de Janeiro.

Prizes were awarded for line honours overall and within classes but the main award for the 2023 Cape to Rio Race was the solid gold and silver South Atlantic Trophy, awarded to the winner on corrected time in the IRC rated fleet. The overall winner was JPK 1030 Atalanta skippered by Adrian Kuttel, sailing solo across the South Atlantic Ocean in the smallest vessel in the entire fleet.

FRANCE

Full crewed, Two-handed and One-handed, the French IRC Championships are a key element of the success of IRC in all the sailing areas of the country.

The IRC Championships, 74 competitions in total this year, combine the most renowned French and international events with lesser-known competitions which benefit from an attractive promotional framework, offering those events the opportunity to develop.

At the time of writing this report, none of our Championships have been completed. In fact, the season extends from Easter to the end of September for the Atlantic and Channel, and it extends until November in the Mediterranean.

Of course, the IRC Championships do not prevent other initiatives in terms of IRC promotion. The Pôle Course du Yacht Club de France encourages the IRC beginners with a very open policy in terms of Single Event Rating Certificates.

We are also convinced of the interest of the IRC Vintage class, and we hope that such a class to develop at the international level.

Finally, because we truly wish to defend the idea of IRC for all, the Pôle Course again recorded several successes in the implementation of IRC GO! with the support of very enthusiastic clubs, such as Saint-Cast Le Guido this year.

GREAT BRITAIN

The 2023 Rolex Fastnet Race proved near perfect as a celebration of the 50th running of the Royal Ocean Racing Club's flagship event. The largest offshore race with nearly 400 entries in the IRC class across 6 classes. The 695 miles from Cowes, UK to the Fastnet Rock and back to finish in Cherbourg-en-Cotentin. The Fastnet Challenge Cup's worthy winner was Max Klink's TP52 Caro, the IRC Zero winner. See www.rolexfastnetrace.com



This year IRC had a full national programme of premiere events with the 12 regional championships spread wide over the UK and Spinlock offering generous prizes to all events. Highlights include the Shanghai Cup in the Bristol Channel, attracting boats from Wales and England. The 2024 Championships culminated in the IRC Nationals over an outstanding long weekend of yacht racing, the Royal Ocean Racing Club's 2023 IRC National Championship was a resounding success. The IRC National Championships has been the battleground for close victories in the past, with Rán winning last year by 0.005 of a point. However, the 2023 Overall IRC National Champion was decided by an even smaller margin. Adam Gosling's JPK 1080 Yes! scored second place in Race 8 by four seconds after IRC time correction. This gave Yes! the overall IRC National Championships by 0.004 of a point.

The RORC domestic calendar of inshore and offshore IRC events has been busy with many IRC events from the club in Cowes, including the RORC Easter Challenge, Vice Admiral's Cup, De Guingand Bowl, Myth of Malham Race, East Coast Race to name but a few.

ITALY

The 14th edition of the 151 Miglia Cetilar Trophy started on the 1st June 2023. The race course explores the Tyrrhenian Sea, starting from Livorno-Marina di Pisa, then heading Giraglia Rock and returning to the Tuscan coast to reach the finish line of Punta Ala after leaving the Forminche di Grosseto on the left.

Giancarlo Gianni's DURLINDANA 3 claimed the victory in the IRC Over 60' Class (10 boats) while Felice Egidi's IRC 52 NO REGRET took the first place IRC overall comprising 4 IRC divisions.

IRELAND

2023 was a mixed year for IRC racing in Ireland. Some events reported greater than ever numbers including the Dun Laoghaire to Dingle offshore race and Sovereigns Cup in Kinsale whilst many others saw lesser numbers. It appeared that the very full 2023 calendar saw a watering down of participants whilst overall numbers were down on pre-Covid levels. ICRA is carrying out a full review of sailors'

RORC (UK) and YCF (France).

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preferences and willingness to travel to events in the coming months which will help formulate plans for future National Championships and major events.

JAPAN

Two events, over 100 nautical miles, were held in 2023. The Ogasawara Race successfully took place with 7 participants. This 500 mile offshore race is held every 2 years alternately with Okinawa-Tokai race (720nm). The winner was Kiho (Class 40 Pogo). The 64th Pearl Race (180nm) drew 54 entries, with 46 in the IRC class and 8 in the IRC double-hand class. The IRC class winner was Summer Girl (ClubSwan 42) and the Double-Hand class winner was Siesta (First 40.7).

MALTA

The Royal Malta Yacht Club runs a calendar of keelboat racing under IRC. The racing consists mainly of coastal and round island races as well as weekend regattas and short series. Longer offshore races include passages to nearby Sicilian ports over a long weekend.

The main event for the RMYC remains the Rolex Middle Sea Race which in 2022 had an entry of 118 boats from 24 countries. The race is scored under IRC and ORC with the Rolex Middle Sea Race Trophy awarded to the overall winner under IRC. Boats may enter both categories and in 2022, 98 boats competed under IRC and 76 under ORC.

NORWAY

The Royal Norwegian Yacht Club and Half Ton Class Norway welcomed sailors for a fantastic week at Hankø for the 2023 Half Ton Classics Cup using the IRC Rating system for corrected time. The event marks the 40 years reunion of the Half Ton world championship at Hankø in 1983. At this 2023 event 32 boats competed with more than 220 sailors from Norway, Sweden, Ireland, France and Belgium. The overall winner was the 1985 Berret design The Evil/Bagdad2 friends, skippered by Borre Hekk Paulsen.

TURKEY

The 52nd edition of the Turkish Naval Forces Cup, organized by the Turkish Offshore Racing Club (TORC), started at, July 15, 2023 in Istanbul Çengelköy. It is a very important event for the development of sailing races in Türkiye. 35 IRC yachts fought an extremely competitive and exciting battle and sailed towards the Sea of Marmara, Dardanelles and Aegean coast of Türkiye. Bülent Atabay's Orient Express VI was the first yacht to arrive at Turgutreis and won the IRC Overall Cup. Orient Express VI covered the 390 nautical mile course in 31 hours 41 minutes and 32 seconds.

The International Turkish Presidential Yacht Races 2023, one of the most prestigious sea sports organizations in Türkiye, aims to help promote our country globally. Organized by the Istanbul Open Sea Yacht Racing Club under the auspices of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye. The Marmaris-Bodrum stage was successfully held on July 25-30, 2023. 35 IRC class yachts participated in the race.

The 34th Marmaris International Race Week organized by Marmaris International Yacht Club (MIYC) will be in October 2023. MIRW has the largest number of participants in Turkey (about 150). Starting on November 4th from one of the most beautiful bays in the southern Aegean region of Türkiye, the 23rd edition of the Göcek international yacht race. 100 IRC entries are expected for very exiting tactical and coastal races around the islands of the bay.

► **2023 IRC European Championship and IRC Double Handed European Championships.**

Organized by the Yacht Club de Cannes, in collaboration with the Pôle Course du Yacht Club de France and the Royal Ocean Racing Club.

The eighth edition of the IRC European Championships was held in the Mediterranean. Teams from the host nation France were joined by an international fleet from Belgium, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Italy, Poland, and Sweden. Close racing after IRC time correction was rife through the fleet with the overall champion decided on countback.



Télémaque 2 © Jehan Lérin Sébastien Henri, Sébastien Taraquois, Eric Merlier, Victor Bordes

Sebastien Henri's JPK 1010 Télémaque 2 (FRA) from the Société Nautique de Marseille was the overall IRC European Champion racing in IRC Four. The 2023 IRC European Championship will likely be held in Cannes, France. The 8th edition of the IRC European Championship will take place in September 2023.

The inaugural IRC Two-Handed European Championship took place from 02-09 July 2023, organised by the Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC) in association with l'UNCL Pôle Course du YCF and La Société Nautique de la Trinité sur mer (SNT). The Championship was decided by the combined results from two races: La Trinité – Cowes (350nm) and Cowes – Dinard – St Malo (150nm). A decisive win cemented Didier Gaudoux and Gildas Morvan's Lann Ael 3 as overall victor.

► **2023 Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup**

The Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup once again proved that the RORC/YCF's IRC rating system is thriving at one of the most prestigious events in the sailing calendar. This year's event, organised by the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda in conjunction with the International Maxi Association, saw 33 boats competing under IRC across five classes. Divided into five principal classes based on size and potential, the winners were: Galateia, Wallycento (Maxi A); Bella Mente, Maxi 74 WB (Maxi B) and Spirit of Lorina, Botin 65 (Maxi C). For the second year the event again saw Roberto Lacorte's 60ft FlyingNikka, the first ever flying maxi based on AC75 foiling technology, compete in her own IRC Class M0 within the Maxi A fleet.

3. IRC CONGRESS

The IRC Congress will meet on 14 October in person in Paris, France at the Yacht Club de France, and via video conference call. The IRC Congress will discuss the organisation of IRC and IRC Events around the World. The proposed technical development will be presented and approved. There will also be considerations of the Championships for the future. Papers can be seen on the [IRC website](#).

4. TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS 2024

► **IRC Program and Certificate Processing**

The IRC processing program continues to work well, and IRC certificates now include a page 2 with a boat drawing and further information. There have been further developments throughout the year with more data checks and tools for research. The program and calculation methods will be updated for the 2024 IRC formulation and rule, and development will continue in 2024.

RORC (UK) and YCF (France).

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► IRC Technical Committee

The IRC Technical Committee consists of nominated representatives from RORC and YCF and this year Dr Martyn Prince from the renowned Wolfson Unit for Marine Technology joined the committee to help develop IRC into the future. The committee continues its many discussions via digital meetings etc. Rule changes have been developed to present to the IRC Congress in October and a good number of IRC rating calculation developments are being discussed.

► IRC Rating and Rule Changes for 2024

There are proposed rule/rating changes for the following areas:

- Rules clarifying rating deadline.
- Rules for onboard systems and equipment.
- Rules for ballast and RRS 51.
- Rules for Setting of sails.
- Rules and Rating number of headsails carried.
- Rules for Sail measurement stamps and labels.
- Rules for flying headsail definition.
- Rating of rig materials.
- Rating of poles and bowsprits.
- Integration of spreader sweepback rating.

► Rating Changes Beyond 2023 and for Further Consideration

Technical Committee research continues into the following areas: low beam boats, keel types, hull types, foils, flying headsails and aerodynamic drag.

5. MEASUREMENT AND RULE AUTHORITIES

We continue to help our Rule Authorities around the world who look after the network of IRC measurers while offering resources for appointing and training measurers. The Rating Offices will be happy to receive any requests that the rule authorities may make in this regard. Our actions in this area were numerous in 2023:

The [IRC Measurement Manual](#) was updated throughout the year and includes measurement and policy guidance for measurement of hull, appendages, rig and sails.

Hosted by the Turkish Offshore Racing Club (TAYK) and the Centre de Calcul IRC, An IRC measurement seminar took place in Istanbul, Turkey last February for the measurers of the TAYK, IRC Turkey. We were particularly happy to hold this seminar which takes place approximately every two years. Once again, it allowed us to appreciate the skills of the Turkish measurers, from the most experienced to newcomers. Their experience contributes significantly to the success and dynamism of the IRC in Turkey.

The work on UMS with ORC and World Sailing continues and we maintain the use of IHC for sail measurement around the world expanding its use for IRC.

6. IRC FLEET STATISTICS

To provide suitable statistics for comparative purposes we have included the total number of certificates issued as well as the number of boats rated for each of the last 5 years in a table below. From this we can see that the predicted number of certificates for the end of 2023 is in the region of 6200 worldwide, to approximately 4500 boats. Information on fleet distribution is shown below.

IRC Certificate Numbers at 31/8/23

	CUMULATIVE FIGURES - NUMBER OF CERTIFICATES (ALL TYPES)											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
2019	817	1512	2437	3352	4301	4950	5513	5789	6120	6532	6735	6875
2020	705	1371	1968	2146	2374	2664	3056	3352	3854	4204	4301	4399
2021	180	607	1376	2012	2711	3450	4018	4248	4667	5097	5316	5440
2022	656	1208	1963	2774	3490	4105	4526	4853	5217	5570	5787	5926
2023	757	1313	2310	3065	3789	4424	4885	5120				

Note: IRC Fleet statistics table on next page

IRC Boat Distribution at 31/8/23

Full certificates only, excludes SEC (worldwide) and SER (GBR/FRA)												
Country	Continent	Region	To end of certificate year						To 31 August			
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022 to 31 Aug	2023 to 31 Aug	boats 2023 - 2022	if >10 boats % difference
IRL	Europe	North	326	301	293	204	254	274	268	258	-10	-3.7
CAN	N America	North	24	27	22	3	1	1	1	0	-1	
DEN	Europe	North		4	1			2	1	1	0	
FIN	Europe	North	16	19	12		2	14	13	3	-10	
GER	Europe	North	44	47	38	11	25	24	22	39	17	77.3
NED	Europe	North	126	118	113	74	74	70	63	85	22	34.9
NOR	Europe	North	6	9	1	1	1	2	2	34	32	1600.0
SWE	Europe	North	5	12	4	3	10	11	11	8	-3	
ISL	Europe	North	13	13	11	12	10	9	9	6	-3	
ISR	Europe	North	1	2	0					1		
MLT	Europe	North	42	49	33	32	33	31	32	33	1	
JPN	Asia	North	296	269	286	225	230	266	241	236	-5	
KOR	Asia	North	1	3	1							
Worldwide			68	57	70	39	54	57	43	51	8	
TPE	Asia	North	5	5	9	8	8	18	16	20	4	
AUT	Europe	North					1					
BUL	Europe	North	18	20	21	20	27	31	28	27	-1	
CRO	Europe	North	6	12	10	5	10	6	2	2	0	
CZE	Europe	North					2	2	1	1	0	
GRE	Europe	North	22	23	25	6	24	29	21	19	-2	
LTU	Europe	North					1	1	1	1	0	
MON	Europe	North								1		
POL	Europe	North					1	4		5		
POR	Europe	North								1		
ROU	Europe	North	10	1	3	2	8	3	1	1	0	
RUS	Asia	North	10	13	11	10	18	11	11	8	-3	
SLO	Europe	North	1	0	1	1	1			2		
SUI	Europe	North	5	4	10	6	6	9	8	6	-2	
UKR	Europe	North								1		
MRI	Africa	North	5	9	0					9		
BRA	S America	North	49	61	89	57	7	2				
NZL	Oceania	South	14	13	1	1	1	3	1	1	0	
RSA	Africa	South	6					8				
HKG	Asia	South	84	84	84	65	65	77	52	50	-2	
PHI	Asia	South	1	6	6	2	7	8	2	6	4	
SE Asia	Asia	South	70	92	78	16	31	58	32	19	-13	-40.6
UAE	Africa	South	39	41	38	45	51	72	4	6	2	
IND	Asia	South	11	16	11	7	15	11	5	9	4	
ARG	S America	South	0	10	5							
MEX	S America	South					1					
URU	S America	South	14	18	17	18	12	10	4		-4	
NCL	Oceania	South	1	0	0		12	2	1		-1	
CHI	S America	South	13	17	20	1	7	36	4	1	-3	
COL	S America	South	0	6	4							
GBR	Europe	North	1472	1424	1399	950	1133	1178	1110	1142	32	2.9
USA	N America	North	165	157	156	68	14	22	18	27	9	
BEL	Europe	North	48	56	45	16	31	40	39	38	-1	
CHN	Asia	North	72	86	93	20	0	17	17	28	11	
FRA	Europe	North	694	603	608	469	492	562	488	567	79	16.2
ITA	Europe	North	468	459	440	269	320	317	264	281	17	6.4
ESP	Europe	North	106	96	115	63	77	104	100	96	-4	
TUR	Europe	North	282	281	291	260	244	287	213	247	34	16.0
AUS	Oceania	South	388	442	439	380	339	372	224	211	-13	-5.8
		Totals:	5047	4985	4914	3369	3660	4061	3373	3588	215	6.4
		As % of previous year:		98.8	98.6	68.6	108.6			106.4		

RORC (UK) and YCF (France).

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