



Association Technical Office

Title: IMA ATO IRC Congress Report 230929

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Through 2023 the IMA has worked with multiple yacht clubs and event organizers to develop and support Maxi Yacht Racing.

At the main events this year we have seen a stable number of competitors, with slight growth in general, and an increasing number of competitors joining the IMA.

At the Maxi European Championship, we had 26 competitors, up from 24 in 2022. At the Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup, we had 48 competitors, up from 46 in 2022. Through the year, more competitors are competing in multiple events.

For the 2023 season the members voted to fix the class splits for the whole year based on TCC alone. The IMA staff highlighted that this potentially restricted the ATO options on improving class size separation when the entries were not known. This was demonstrated in the main events of the association (Maxi European Championships in Sorrento, and again at the Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup in Porto Cervo, where the split points created an unbalanced number of competitors in each class, resulting in classes being combined rather than the split point adjusted. At the 2023 AGM it was agreed to retain the splits based on TCC alone, but to allow for flexibility in split points.

Again in 2023 IMA supported and promoted the use of the Reduced Crew Rating. This is seen as a valuable component for maxi racing. However, it requires additional logistical resources, and it is not recommended to be adopted for events outside of the IMA calendar for this reason. The benefits seen in reducing crew sizes from 29 to 21 for example, are not seen as dramatically for smaller boats. It not only reduces costs, but also, we have been told, makes the owners feel more of the team when it is not so large.

We are as a result possibly also seeing an increase in the use of water ballast in a number of yachts, with a number stating their intentions to adopt this for 2024. Combined with the reduced crew rating, this makes sense. However, for the majority of the IRC fleet, this results in a larger percentage of the internal space being compromised and can result in high costs. At the moment, it seems to be an option, but it would be sensible to ensure it does not become a requirement if the rating benefit is seen as too great.

We have also seen an advantage to increasing equipment inspection at events. We currently carry this out at the two main events noted above and always find aspects that are either overlooked or missed. Competitors appreciate the involvement and the level of trust that we maybe use to see from declarations is significantly improved when the equipment inspectors are seen at the dock. We are maybe also seeing an increase in competitors moving away from the view that it is cheating whether caught or not, to it only being cheating if caught. We all need to make sure that this shift is stopped before it takes over eth sport completely.

For 2023 we experienced several boats using their secondary IRC Certificate, without fail this caused confusion and disagreement in the lead up to each event. As such, for 2024 we plan to state in the



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NOR that only primary IRC certificates will be accepted. We recognise the intention here, but the result is not as clear cut, and we feel that it is an unnecessary complication for the IMA fleet.

Also, of note for 2023 is that IMA is under increasing pressure from ORC and those supporters of ORC to switch to ORC for the main Maxi fleet (60-100 feet). Throughout the season there has been ORC support for the small number of ORCsy (over 100feet) and ORCmh (multihull) competitors, with little visible support from IRC. Competitors in the Mediterranean have grown to expect to see rating officials at important events and are often surprised and disappointed to not be able to see IRC representatives at IMA events. We very strongly encourage both RORC and UNCL/YCF to send technical staff to more key events throughout the year to show that IRC supports sailors and is keen to learn from what is seen to happen on the water. This approach is working well for ORC and IRC should take note.