



IRC Congress 2023

Minutes

**Saturday, 14th October 2022
Yacht Club de France, Paris
and Zoom Video Conference**

Present:

Michael Boyd – Chairman (MB)
Carl Sabbe – Vice Chairman / Belgium (CS)
Eric de Turckheim – IRC Board (EdT)
Willem Ellemeet – Dutch Owners' Association (WE)
Akihisa Miyakawa – Japan Owners' Association Chairman (AM)
Haruhiko Kaku – Japan Sailing Federation (HK)
Philippe Serenon – FRA PropIRC (PS) / IRC Board
Ed Shiffner – Dubai Offshore Sailing Club Rear Commodore (ES)
Stephen Tudor – GBR IRC Committee Chairman (ST)
Jason Smithwick – IRC Director of Rating (JS)
Ludovic Abollivier – YCF Centre de Calcul IRC Senior Manager (LA)
Jenny Howells – RORC Technical Manager (JH)
Emma Smith – RORC Technical Team (ESm)
Sally Moss – RORC Technical Team (SM)
Jeremy Wilton – RORC CEO (JW)
Claude Charbonnier – IRC Technical Committee (CC)

Attendees on Zoom:

David Griffiths – Australian Owners' Group (DG)
Chris Zonca – Australian Sailing (CZ)
Simon James - IRC South East Asia (SJ)
David Cullen – Irish Cruiser Racing Association (DC)
Liz Hall – Irish Sailing Association (LH)
Godwin Zammit – Malta IRC Owners' Association (GZ)
Johan Tuvstedt – Swedish Offshore Association Chairman (JT)
Fabrizio Pirina – Yacht Club Costa Smeralda ITA (FP)
Ting Kuo – CTSA Taiwan (TK)
Murphy Ni – IRC China (MN)

The meeting began at 1000.

All papers may be found online at <https://ircrating.org/about/irc-congress/>

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

2 Apologies for absence and proxy votes.

Apologies had been received from: James Neville (RORC Commodore), Nick Scott (RYA Director of Racing), Mark Mills (Irish Owners' Association), Géry Trentesaux (YCF Vice President), Vincent Fertin (FRA PropIRC), James Dadd (IMA).

Proxy votes (Philippe Serenon): Bulgaria, Turkey, Romania, Italy

3 Minutes of the meeting of the IRC Congress 2022.

The Minutes were signed as an accurate record of the meeting. There were no matters arising not already covered on the 2023 agenda.

4 To receive a report from the IRC Board (Michael Boyd)

MB gave a brief report and reminded the Congress that the IRC Board is composed of RORC and YCF members with Carl Sabbe as an additional representative. The IRC Board had several meetings throughout the year and discuss matters relating to IRC policy, finance, resources and administration of the IRC Rule.

5 To receive the IRC Annual Report

<https://ircrating.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Item-5-IRC-Annual-Report-2023.pdf>

Additional notes:

The report had also been sent to World Sailing. JS reminded Congress that it is a requirement for IRC, as an International Rating System, to report to WS annually.

It was noted that final results were very close in the IRC Europeans and the GBR IRC National Championship, being determined by fractions of points. The 50 boats entered in the IRC Double Handed European Championship shows the current strength of double handed racing in Europe.

2023 IRC Middle East Championship will be held in Dubai in December.

2024 IRC European Championship will be held in Dun Laoghaire, Ireland, in September.

The IRC Technical Committee has a new member, Dr Martyn Prince, from the Wolfson Unit at the University of Southampton (PHD in Naval Architecture).

The research agenda of the IRC Technical Committee for 2024 and beyond includes the treatment of keels, planing hulls and scow bows.

Reminders of these useful resources, which are updated annually.

Race management manual <https://ircrating.org/irc-racing/race-management/>

Measurement manual <https://ircrating.org/irc-certificate/measurement/>

6 National Reports

<https://ircrating.org/about/irc-congress/>

Two new representatives present were welcomed by MB: Ed Shiffner from Dubai and Akihisa Miyakawa from Japan.

Additional notes to the published reports are as follows:

AUS (CZ)

CZ is doing a lot of training for new measurers and to improve the quality of measurement. CYCA's decision (<https://ircrating.org/irc-news-articles/articles/irc-is-rule-of-choice-for-cycas-blue-water-programme/>) has prompted more people to get IRC certificates. Technical Committees/equipment inspection are being encouraged around the country, including for RSHYR. More custom boats are appearing and the future is bright.

DG: CYCA are considering standard certificates for club racing. ORC Club is still popular in the state of Victoria. Regarding the use of ORC inclining to prove stability, it would be good to have an IRC method to replace that. Transparency of the rated information on IRC certificates would be very welcome; JS confirmed that IRC are looking at publishing page 2 of the certificate (with some additional information than on current page 2), it is hoped to introduce this in January 2024.

FRA (PS) no published report.

There has been an extensive season in France with over 70 IRC events from international to local races. Many French boats did the Rolex Fastnet Race (RFR) and were successful. Single and 2 handed racing is still very popular in France. Single Event Ratings are being used to promote IRC. An IRC Vintage class, launched to allow older boats to compete in their own class, is growing. IRC-GO is being used in France, but cautiously; don't currently have support of FFV for this. Trying to get regular (not Grand Prix) boats back into IRC, and this is mentioned in the submission.

GBR (ST)

Asking race organisers to state in event reports that IRC is the rating rule being used. YTC and SER are seen as ways to encourage boats into IRC. ST thanked the Rating Office team for making IRC easily accessible to competitors.

IRL (DC)

A survey was done with owners after ICRA's and ICRA will be happy to share the results. More engagement is needed in IRL with vintage and non grand-prix boats. JS thanked ISA/ICRA for being great supporters of IRC.

LH asked about costs of amending primary/secondary certs; RORC policy is being reviewed so that any data change that is not permitted under rule 8.2.1 (e.g. hull data, keel change, etc) will also be updated on the SEC cert free of charge. LA confirmed that YCF will do the same.

JPN (HK)

There is some ORC racing but IRC is the main system.

SWE (JT). There is an estimated total of 2500 active racing boats in Sweden but there was a significant fall in participation this spring. In a survey of 100 responses as to why they were not racing reasons included complexity and lack of crew long term (multiple seasons). This survey can be shared.

JS mentioned the RORC Baltic Sea Race and talks with the Royal Swedish YC about having an IRC Europeans close to that event and the Gotland Runt. He noted that the Half Ton Cup was held nearby in Norway this year and IRC certificates increased to 35 due to that event. It was agreed that events drive certificates.

UAE (ES)

IRC is the rating rule for the Middle East; there has been interest from Saudi Arabia and Oman and it is hoped they will start getting involved in IRC racing in the region over the next few years. The annual weigh/measure at the start of the season is also a social event and helps with engagement, inclusivity and owners getting a certificate. In UAE sailing did not stop during Covid, this created growth in participation. There is a push for outdoor sports in Dubai and other countries will follow.

SEA (SJ) – no published report.

There have been low numbers for regattas this year and also fewer charter boats available as they are being sold. A continued ban on Russian competitors in Thailand means they can't race despite many Russians and their boats being resident in Thailand. China Cup has 43 IRC entries, including 15 from Hong Kong and 28 Chinese boats, which is a good increase on last year.

MLT (GZ) – no published report.

IRC numbers are stable; the fleet is made up of larger boats or smaller performance boats. There is an IRC Cruising division (single furling headsail). Rolex Middle Sea Race entries remain high. Transparency is a common question from owners.

Transparency

MB suggested that there are two relevant facets to 'transparency' - openness on parameters of all boats as they are rated; and indications of influence of potential changes on ratings.

About publishing page 2 of the IRC Certificate:

The question this needs to answer is 'what is on that boat', e.g. long/short luff length headsail, large roach/pinhead mainsail etc.

Crew number would be useful.

DG said that certificate data being published is a good way of finding data errors.

The Technical Committee and the Board will discuss what should be included on the IRC certificate p.2.

ST suggested each boat should have a printout of p.2 so the crew knew the limitations such as how many sails should be aboard.

WE asked why not publish Hull Factor; JS confirmed that we do not want to publish HF for every boat, we will start with page 2 and review in the future.

CS suggested that publishing rating effects of common changes, such as headsail or spinnaker dimensions/area, would be a good way to increase transparency.

Admiral's Cup Update

EdT and JW – RORC wanted to make the event simpler than it used to be for teams and nations. Rating and length bands for the two classes have been published and RORC will now expand interest going to clubs around the world. 20 countries have expressed interest. RORC wish the event to have longevity. It will be biannual (2025, 2027 etc.). RORC will review and get feedback from 2025 for future events.

Why no 3rd boat? To ensure close competition between times for the first and last boats, hence just two boats with relatively similar speeds.

Why no 2-handed class? The racing for that boat would need to be different from the fully crewed boats. Logistically this would not work.

DG confirmed there is enthusiasm from AUS sailors.

Sun Fast 30 (Class 30)

PS and JW – Wanted to address the lack of younger crew and clubs were looking to replace their training boats. First boat christened at Southampton Boat Show 2023. Jeanneau has 40 pre-orders. The boat is designed for offshore racing (not a competitor for e.g. Cape 31).

Claude Charbonnier has written the OD class rules, and a class association has been formed; there is a calendar of events for 2024. Production will be one boat per week from October. It may need some adjustment of sail data to be competitive in IRC, as it had been foreseen as one design.

Rating Competitors

EdT asked about competition with other rating rules in e.g. USA and South America. It was agreed that key top clubs are influential in which rating rules are used.

Re the USA, JW noted that RORC is reintroducing a West-East transatlantic race in conjunction with New York YC, 18 June 2025 start. This will be a feeder race for Rolex Fastnet Race 2025 and there is interest from 35 boats so far. Admiral's Cup boats will be unlikely to do the transatlantic race due to wear and tear on the boats.

JS pointed out that RORC/YCF regularly correspond with ORC Technical Committee on technical issues. Both sides try to write rules that match (e.g. setting sails after the Celestial issue), to try and make it consistent for sailors. LA confirmed that YCF/UNCL also have a very good technical relationship with international ORC measurers in e.g. ITA, ESP.

PS pointed out there is no more or less secrecy in ORC to IRC, no-one knows the details of the ORC VPP.

There was some discussion about the varied IRC fleet and how it is served. IRC was born from CHS which was for cruising boats; it has evolved to include e.g. Maxi 72s and TP 52s which shows its success but we should not forget our roots. In 2024 it will be 40 years since CHS started.

EB thought some marketing about it having come from rating cruising boats would be helpful. ORC is proactive in trying to get into countries and offers ORC [Club] certificates using IRC data.

CZ asked whether rig and hull factors can be reviewed where they vary between sisterships. JS commented that HF is always a major focus for owners but it should not be; HF and RF are calculated from inputs; we can check the inputs for specific boats.

7 IRC 2023 Notices.

Notice 2023-01 re Number of Headsails 2024 rating effects, was issued September 2023. Covered under item 8.1.

8 To receive, consider and decide proposals for IRC Rule and Rating changes for 2024.

8.1 From the IRC Technical Committee (TC).

See published proposals <https://ircrating.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Item-8-IRC-Rule-Changes-for-2024-Tech-Comm.pdf>

Comments:

JS clarified that the TC considers feedback and addresses any areas that it believes require changes. The TC is solely responsible for IRC rule changes but considers IRC Congress opinion and representation from those using IRC on the water.

1. Rating deadline and Secondary certificates. *Approved.*

2. Onboard systems and Equipment. E.g. sink with no inlet/outlet pipe, cooker with no gas connection. Amendment: delete second sentence as unnecessary. *Approved as amended.*

3. Ballast (stacking). Clarified that this can only be changed by an NOR, not by a class (e.g. Class 40s racing in IRC mixed fleet). **Approved.**

4. Setting of sails. This resulted from the Celestial ORC RSHYR 2022 protest and is intended to clarify the position in IRC. The phrase 'approximately on the centreline' is as commonly used in both IRC and ORC. **Approved.**

5. Number of Headsails.

Since Congress 2022 this change had been mentioned in Seahorse and RORC/YCF have talked to sailmakers, owners, designers and made it public. There have been some modifications since the initial proposal. Notice 2023-01 has been published showing potential rating effects. This proposal does not include one OSR Heavy Weather Jib in the headsail count, this also matches ORC rules. A Flying Headsail is not counted as a headsail, as that is a different declaration.

8.2.1, 11.1 and 11.2 changes **approved.**

Q. why are Flying Headsails are not included in rule 11.2?

A. we are still being conservative with flying headsails hence not included in this rule.

21.1.5 changes **approved.**

21.1.5(d) there was a discussion regarding this rule (carrying the same sails aboard during a regatta) and whether it is still appropriate. There was a suggestion that the default should be no restriction on sails as many boats wish to use older sails on very windy days.

JS pointed out that an NOR may change rule 21.1.5 (d), and also that NOR changes should only ever make rules more lenient, not stricter. Boats without a large suit of sails would suffer from a change as they would feel they need alternative heavy weather mainsails etc.

JS asked the Chairman to point out that this not the subject of this submission, and Congress members could make a submission next year if they wished.

21.7.1 changes **approved**

21.8 simplified single furling headsails section. **Approved.** JS confirmed that there will no longer be a rating difference between 'single furling headsail' and 'single furling headsail + heavy weather jib'.

Notice 2023-01 has been issued with approximate rating changes. The rating effect is conservative as the TC is being careful about how it is introduced; this will be reviewed for future years.

EdT expressed concerns over the rating of headsails proposals. These concerns included boat's management of certification, event policies on the rule, inspection, increasing complexity, consultation and communication.

CS noted that having more headsails aboard is an advantage that is not currently rated, and that the solution has to suit the large majority of the fleet. The new rule is simple and the published rating changes are not large. This suggestion makes the rule fairer and is a good starting proposal.

It is a choice for owners to make, and the secondary certificate can be used for different configurations.

JS said there are various factors that might change the zero rating change point and it is not an integer point but a decimal (e.g. 4.3); this prevents rating steps and creates a gradual rating effect.

CS suggested Notice 2023-01 could be updated with more information re the zero rating change point and examples. **The TC will look at this.**

Approved .

6. Endorsed sail measurement stamps.

All sails certified from 1/1/2024 shall have an UMS/IRC sail stamp or other certification note, e.g. ORCi stamp or dimensions written/signed on the sails. RORC/YCF we will provide a template/format but not provide the actual stamps.

While it is a new rule there is the option for an NOR to amend it; however this option may be removed in future.

There was a discussion about sail stamp position on furling headsails, as CZ felt that they should always be on the head of the sail. It was decided that in many cases it is difficult to access the head of a furling sail and also the wording matches ORC rules. It was agreed to change 'shall be placed at the clew' to 'may be placed at the clew'.

Approved as amended.

7. Heavy Weather Jib definition. Approved

8. Mainsail width definitions. Approved.

It was confirmed that the rated maximum widths may be from different mainsails.

9. Flying Headsail definition. Approved.

There was some misunderstanding about an IRC-defined flying headsail v. 'headsail set flying'. The first is a defined sail type, while the second relates to how a headsail is set.

8.2 From IRC Rule Authorities.

FRA

1. Provide free certificate for production/cruising boats that come out of a shipyard.

There was a discussion about what would be considered standard sail data, an option would be to use maximum data. It was agreed that the proposal was a good idea as some owners struggle with the complexity of the application but there are issues with owner's declaration and consistency of certification and standard data; **TC agreed to consider it from a technical standpoint.**

2. Segment the IRC fleet.

The IRC software now has the ability to show whether boats fit into a particular group, e.g. IRC Vintage or Maxi etc. It would require work on how to define other groups. **The TC will look for a solution.**

3. Sustainability.

Giving a TCC allowance for second hand or older sails would be open to abuse, this is already an issue in some classes (buying new sails and storing them for a year).

ES suggested a 'sustainability' grading, separate from the TCC rating, for e.g. old sails, electric engine. It would be up to the event how they used it, for instance to give a secondary ranking.

It is important that IRC is not seen to be 'greenwashing'.

JS & JH have talked with a UK company about re-use of sails, both recycling into other items and breaking down a sail into its constituent parts (currently expensive). We want to raise awareness of the recycling options. JS also intends to talk to makers of bio-resins so they can be added into the hull materials options for hull factor. There is also research into electric engines and propeller types.

PS suggested forming a working party of TC members and other relevant/knowledgeable people.

4. Equipment Inspection

It was agreed that event Technical Committees and equipment inspection are desirable. However, once an event starts the responsibility is that of the event organisers/technical committee, not the IRC

management. For IRC to have rights to do checks would be expensive in resources, training etc. and every event situation is different.

Competitors can protest other boats under IRC rule 9 but owners prefer to contact the Rating Authority. JS thought that it's the culture that needs changing as currently event organisers do not naturally consider equipment inspection (all events not just IRC).

To be further discussed during 2024.

9 IRC Submissions to World Sailing

9.1 To consider the submissions from IRC to World Sailing (November 2023 meetings)
OSR Heavy Weather Jib – measured without a reef.

OSR stability include date criteria for SSS to recognise that it is historical. ORC have put in a counter-submission to completely remove SSS from OSR. It was noted that 20% of the RFR fleet were accepted with SSS and were safe; it is a higher percentage in the UK JOG fleet. The only other option for older boats would be a hull scan/inclining.

No comments, both submissions supported.

JS noted that RORC have put in a number of OSR submissions via the RYA. An important one relates to the requirement for the ability to reef the mainsail, it was evident from the start of the RFR that many boats did not have the ability to reef a mainsail as they were using full sail or trysails. It was agreed that changing to a trysail can be dangerous in a heavy seaway or high winds.

JW explained the reasons RORC had not delayed the start of the RFR 2023 with the conditions forecast. The RORC Special Regs sub-committee is undertaking an investigation and will survey competitors who retired, the report is expected in Jan 2024.

ST agreed that it was helpful for other offshore race organisers that RORC did not postpone the start. JS noted that designers are looking at what conditions they are designing to. MB noted that ultimate decision is that of the skipper alone (not the crew).

Two other submissions from RORC/RYA are re locator beacons and medical training.

10 Any Other Business – as agreed at the beginning of the meeting

Regarding next year's meeting it was suggested to send a questionnaire to delegates about potential venues.

The meeting finished at 1600.