



# Association Technical Office

Title: IMA ATO 2024 Report to IRC Congress  
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This report focusses on the technical elements of IMA events.

## 1. Preseason measurement checks

The winter and spring were busy times with not only new builds, but significant modifications within the fleet. A number of competitors decided to install water ballast and a number altered bulb weight to compensate for this. We also saw a number of new keels and rudders along with general refits and winter maintenance.

In total 16 boats were weighed and 13 bulbs were weighed. A large number of sails were also measured and the new IRC approach of officially measuring not only the largest sails, but the whole inventory was taken onboard. IRC sail stickers are also now being implemented. This is all seen as a positive step forwards.

## 2. Reduced Crew Rating

Over the last few years, combined to a degree with the increased use of water ballast and stored power, the number of competitors requesting the use of Reduced Crew Ratings has increased. We are seeing this expand to more events and are currently reviewing the approach, with the view to ensure it is expanded and becomes a feature of all IMA events. Discussions on adding reduced crew to the certificates for maxis is appreciated and seen as a very positive move

Tied to this is the increased interest in the guest allowance. This is currently limited to an extra 15% of the crew number printed on the IMA certificate. If the full IRC crew number is used, the guest allowance is therefore higher. With the increased interest, IMA guest rules have been tightened to now ensure that the guest is a family member of the owner, a friend or a business associate of the owner. This is to ensure that we encourage new people and family into our sport rather than see a circumvention of the reduced crew allowance.

## 3. Equipment Inspection

During the Maxi European Championship and Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup, the technical committee has provided an Equipment Inspection team to check both safety equipment and compliance with rating certificates. This has included checks on all yachts prior to the event and spot checks of yachts after racing each day. The team has ranged from 4 to 7 and consisted of experienced Maxi measurers who have been involved with IMA for several years and have been involved in both new and seasonal update measurements of the fleet. The knowledge of this team along with their experience of the boats and working together has become extremely valuable. With the involvement of the appropriate rating offices, we have also had the possibility to update certificates on site and immediately where necessary when errors have been spotted.

## 4. ATO Database

The IMA ATO database has continued to grow and expand with information and historical data on all competing yachts stored here, including photographic information for use during inspections. There are



currently 164 yachts in the database. The Equipment Inspection team has full access to the database when carrying out checks and can review photos and information from historical data and weighing conditions etc during their checks, and update the database as they work.

#### **5. Issues from 2024**

For 2024 the IRC rules have adjusted to now take account of the number of headsails carried. This has led to some competitors developing Heavy Weather Jibs, where one is not considered in the IRC headsail number, which are intended to be used primarily as staysails. We believe that the priority should be to have appropriate safety equipment over and above performance.

A submission has been made to World Sailing to set a minimum design requirement for Heavy Weather Jibs for 2025. However, it is recommended that for all future IMA events, all OSR equipment cannot be changed after the start of the regatta without permission, and that changes to heavy weather and storm sails will only be provided in exception circumstances, to avoid this issue in future.

#### **6. Class splits**

The split between Maxi 1 and Maxi 2 has been contentious this year, with the ex Maxi 72s wanting to race with the 100 footers, but the 100 footers wanting to not race with the ex Maxi 72s. This is seen as being a rating issue by the competitors, and as such they have asked the technical office to oversee a review and comparison with ORC.

It is important to note 2 things here: 1. We are comparing IRC optimised boats against IRC and ORC so we will not see the affects of any ORC optimisation on this study. 2. This could disenfranchise some maxi racing from IMA events or vice versa. I plan to have a preliminary study completed by December, but initial studies suggest that the rating system is not the problem.