

Seahorse

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**Essential
ingredient**
– Brian Thompson

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IRC Rating Authority

ircrating.org

The IRC Rule is owned and managed by RORC and YCF and certificates are issued by:

RORC Rating Office

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 Ludovic Abollivier
 Basile Despres
 Rose Lounes

In countries outside the UK and France, IRC administration is through the local Rule Authorities around the world.

Please see ircrating.org for contact details.

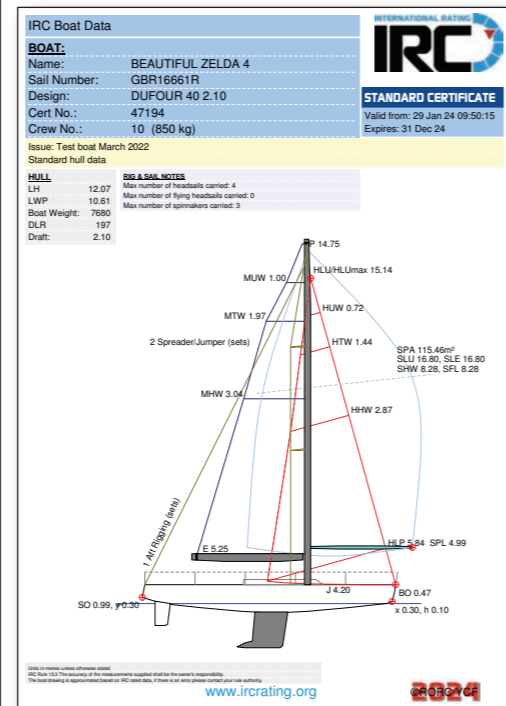
IRC Rating publishes valid boat data

In a major move towards increased transparency IRC Rating is now publishing the valid rated data for all boats with an IRC certificate issued since 1st January 2024. This initiative marks a significant step forward in promoting fair sailing, openness and accountability within the sport; it will foster trust and confidence in the integrity of the IRC rated data and prevent misunderstandings or disputes regarding boats' measurements, as all relevant data is openly accessible.

The published valid boat data is easily accessible through the IRC Rating website enabling sailors to review the rated information for their competitors, and allowing race organisers and equipment inspectors to benefit from more efficient access to boat data. The data is in the form of a PDF download for each boat showing the rated data along with an approximate image of the boat showing appendages and rig configuration and other relevant information, closely mirroring the IRC certificate page 2 that was introduced in 2023.

For full information see the press release on

ircrating.org, and the valid boat data and listings can be found in the IRC Racing menu.



Anyone can now download the valid data for boats rated since 11/1/2024

IRC website resources updated

The RORC Rating Office has been busy updating the resources on the Measurement page of the IRC website and we encourage owners, measurers, Rule Authorities and equipment manufacturers to read these to make sure you are up-to-date. In summary:

Measurement manual updated February 2024: much of this was 'housekeeping' with no change in practice, but notable updates are marked by a sidebar.

Endorsement Standards updated February 2024: the main addition to this is paragraph 5. Retention of Endorsed Status. IRC Endorsement is intended to show that the data on the rating certificate is verified as correct to add confidence in the rated data for the owner, competitors and event organisers. Due to increasing concerns about issues such as aging weighed or measured data, compound weight adjustments and changes of ownership the IRC

Technical Committee has added specific examples to the document whereby the Rating Authority (RORC/YCF) has the right to remove Endorsed status, and a Rule Authority has the right to request that we remove it.

The following resources relate to the rating of sails and the rule changes for 2024:

Get answers to **frequently asked questions** regarding **Number of Headsails**, **Flying Headsails** including updated approximate rating effects for 2024, and **Sail Measurement Stickers**. We have also added a sticker template for approved measurers, a useful IRC sail check and area calculation form for use by sailors and measurers, and advice on Heavy Weather and Storm Jib sizes.

You can find all these resources on this page <https://ircrating.org/irc-certificate/measurement/>.

Striking a balance

As a cornerstone of competitive sailing around the world, IRC strives to create a fair and competitive environment for a diverse fleet of boats to race together. Every year the IRC Technical Committee and IRC Congress debate and decide on rule changes aimed at improving the fairness of IRC racing. Sails are a boat's driving force and a key area of development, so it's no surprise how often an IRC rule change involves the rating of sails or associated rigging. So a key change for 2024 is that for the first time the number of headsails will be rated (from 1 June in the southern hemisphere).

Let's look at why IRC's rating of headsail numbers carried is not only a logical step from a performance perspective but also a sustainable one for the sport.

Recent years have seen a rise in the number of increasingly specialist headsails being added to onboard inventories, bringing a plethora of initials

such as JT, SS, GS, MHO and FRO. Offshore racers are often seen sporting double, triple or occasionally quadruple-header configurations today... and with no rating penalty. At the other end of the scale are the club racers with just one or two headsails in their entire inventory.

While IRC 2024 doesn't count how many headsails are set simultaneously, there is now a rating price placed on the number of headsails carried. The more specialist sails carried the greater the ability to increase sail area by setting multiple headsails, particularly for larger boats set up in a reaching configuration offshore.

Introducing this new rating input aims to help ensure that race outcomes continue to be determined as much as is practical by skill and strategy, rather than by a costly overabundance of sails.

IRC Rule 21.7.1 – requiring that boats shall not



The triple-headed rig first came to prominence in the 2017 Volvo Ocean Race – the second held in VO65 one-designs. To make the most of this rig good trimming is a prerequisite; one reason – the other being cost – why the set-up soon found an IRC audience among big budget campaigns where the financial outlay on sails and pro crew to trim them was less material. So for IRC to adhere to its basic principles of fairness something did need to be done

IRC 2024 Rules and Definitions

IRC 2024 Rules and Definitions are available to download at ircrating.org



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10-15 September 2024
Royal Irish YC, Dun Laoghaire, Ireland
<https://www.riyc.ie>
in association with RORC
<https://rorc.org>

You can also follow updates at
<https://ircrating.org/irc-news-articles/>

carry onboard more headsails than declared – follows the same model as for spinnakers and flying headsails.

The important exception is for Special Regs-compliant safety sails: one heavy-weather jib and one storm jib are exempt from the new headsail count (here it is worth noting that OSR sails are not just defined by size alone, there are additional OSR technical requirements). Boats previously rated with a single furling headsail plus heavy-weather jib may now carry an OSR heavy-weather jib without declaration and therefore it will not be rated.

While some may consider the new rule stringent, it aims to increase fairness and the rating formulation takes into account various factors including boat size. For instance, classic boats often carry more headsails, and the rating formulation considers this. The maximum number of headsails before each boat's rating is bumped up depends upon more than just the size of the boat; the IRC Technical Committee published a notice in autumn 2023 with approximate rating effects for some example designs.

So far this year we see most boats declaring headsails close to the 'no rating change' number, though there are variations within designs reflecting different choices and configurations. For example, the headsail declarations for some popular designs are: J/109 1-3 headsails; First 40 2-3; JPK 10.80 2-5; Ker 40 3-4; Sun Fast 3300 1-4; TP52 4-5; X-41 2-5. Boats that comply as IRC One Designs are rated for the maximum number of headsails allowed by their class rules.

All rating rules have the same aim of rating diverse boat types as fairly as possible. But the responsibility for influencing design, technology development and even social behaviours cannot be ignored. The decision to rate the number of headsails was made not only to reflect performance benefits but to consider how IRC can promote longterm sustainable practices within our sport, such as careful consideration of manufacturing quantities and resource consumption as well as reduced disposal.

According to sail recycling company Sustainable Sailing, global production of sails is now upwards of 2,000 tonnes per year; as well as the environmental impacts of the production of modern materials there is the issue that around 99 per cent of those sails will end their lives in landfill. There are various options for owners when their sails reach end-of-life including recutting/reselling, upcycling into other items, and recycling; and many owners already consider these resources when

their sails are replaced.

Rating the number of headsails in IRC should also encourage owners and sail designers to focus on optimising the performance of a limited number of headsails but with wider performance bands, which can ultimately drive forward development in sail design and technology and steadily reduce the number of sails produced and discarded each year.

Sticky

In a move towards greater transparency IRC has introduced a new requirement for sail measurement stickers or stamps on all sails certified after 2023; currently this only applies to boats holding an Endorsed IRC certificate.

This significant rule change works alongside increasing equipment inspection at IRC events and is introduced in response to requests from event organisers and measurers. A measurement stamp on a sail serves as visual confirmation that a sail is properly measured, making it easier for event organisers, measurers and sailors to quickly verify that a boat's sails comply with its rating certificate. Another primary goal is for sails to carry standardised information in a recognised format to reduce ambiguity.

Of course, the question we receive is: does the rule apply to every sail, or only the largest? Although IRC only requests the largest sizes for calculating a rating the sail sticker requirement does apply to every sail used on the boat. The reasoning is that every sail, even if designed to be smaller, needs to be certified (measured) to confirm its size, and the new rule reflects the importance of data accuracy across all sail sizes. On smaller jibs measurements may also be made to check whether the size complies as an OSR heavy-weather or storm jib.

This new sail measurement sticker does not replace existing numbered certification stickers from IRC-approved authorities such as World Sailing In-House Certification (IHC); measurement stickers complement these by displaying the measured data.

By introducing sail measurement stickers IRC is committing to increasing accountability in our sport by establishing a clear framework for easy verification.

There are other new resources relating to sails on ircrating.org in the Measurement section, including FAQs on headsail numbers and sail stickers. I encourage you to take a look at these...

Jenny Howells, Technical Manager,
RORC Rating Office



Seahorse Magazine

DEAR IRC MEMBER

I really hope you are enjoying your IRC edition of Seahorse magazine.

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