

IRC Congress 2025

Minutes

Saturday, 11th October 2025 at Royal Ocean Racing Club, Cowes, Isle of Wight

Present:

Michael Boyd	MB	Congress Chair (outgoing)
Andrew McIrvine	AMI	Congress Chair (incoming)
Stephen Tudor	ST	GBR IRC Chairman
David Cullen	DC	Irish Owners Association
Ed Shiffner	ES	Dubai Offshore Sailing Club - Rear Commodore
Gilles Fournier	GF	IRC Board
Chris Zonca	CZ	Australian Sailing
Liz Hall	LH	Irish Sailing Association
Deb Fish	DF	RORC Commodore
Robert Jacobsen	RJ	DSV - GER
Philip Corbett	PC	Hellenic Offshore Committee
Nick Scott	NS	Royal Yachting Association
Derek Shakespeare	DS	RORC Vice Commodore
Jason Smithwick	JETS	RORC Rating office - Director of Rating
Emma Smith	ESm	RORC Rating office - Congress Secretariat
Jenny Howells	JH	RORC Rating Office - Technical Manager
Sally Moss	SM	RORC Rating Office - Technical Team
Andrew Yates	AY	RORC Rating Office - Technical Consultant

Present remotely:

Johan Tuvstedt	JT	Swedish Sailing Federation
Ting Hsiang Kuo	TK	Taiwan IRC Admin
Shih Bou Wang	SBW	Taiwan Secretary general
Marco Franzetti	MF	UVAI - ITA
Luc Geirnat	LG	IRC Belgium
Fabrizio Pirina	FP	Yacht Club Costa Smeralda
Jeremy Wilton	JW	RORC CEO
Simon James	SJ	Vice Chairman/IRC SE Asia
Haru Hiku Kaku	HHK	Japan IRC
Philippe Serenon	PS	PropIRC - FRA

1. Introduction and welcome from Michael Boyd

MB welcomed delegates, joining in person or remotely, to the 2025 IRC Congress. He reflected on the strong engagement of IRC representatives globally and set the tone for a productive and collaborative meeting.

2. Apologies for absence and proxy votes.

Apologies had been received from: Gideon Mowser (HKG), Carl Sabbe (BEL / Vice Chair) who was represented by Luc Geirnat. It was noted that Ludovic Abollivier (YCF) was attending the IRC European Championship in Corsica.

3. Minutes of the meeting of the IRC Congress 2024.

3.1 The minutes of the 2024 IRC Congress were agreed without amendment.

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3.2 Matters arising: Clarification on the spare mainsail rule (21.1.5(e)) was considered unnecessary as the IRC Rule is clear as written and allows organising authorities flexibility.

4. Handover IRC Congress Chairman to Andrew McIrvine

MB reflected on his tenure as Congress Chairman since 2018, expressing gratitude for the collaboration of members and the IRC Board. He announced his decision to stand down, noting it was time for renewal. The nomination of AMI as successor was confirmed and approved unanimously, having been previously approved by RORC and YCF as IRC Board chairman. AMI was formally welcomed as IRC Congress Chairman and AMI thanked MB for his leadership and long-standing support of IRC, pledging to continue fostering IRC's growth and stability. JETS presented MB with a gift from RORC in recognition of his service; MB will still be involved in IRC as a global ambassador.

5. To receive a report from the IRC Board

JETS reported that the IRC Board meets quarterly and comprises representatives from RORC, YCF, an owners' representative (CS), and Chair. The Board oversees financial management, strategic planning, and promotional initiatives. An ambassador role has been created to support the defence and promotion of IRC internationally, supplementing the rating offices' engagement with organisers and federations in key regions. Recent successes include collaboration with IMA securing IRC use for a further three years; reviving the Sardinia Cup in Italy; and in the Caribbean where regattas will now dual score CSA and IRC.

6. To receive the IRC Annual Report - see <https://ircrating.org/about/irc-congress/>

JETS presented the Annual Report, highlighting continued operation of the two rating offices at YCF and RORC, and the addition of new Rule Authorities, notably Estonia (due to the success of the Baltic Race), and the Caribbean Sailing Association. Participation has declined slightly overall but remains strong and the rating offices are financially stable. A fantastic cross-section of events is being run under IRC from 600nm offshores to many inshore regattas.

Technical developments being discussed by the IRC Technical Committed (TC) include:

- interceptors (wedge under the transom) – these provide more dynamic lift at the back of the boat.
- scow bows – different ways to identify and rate these.
- code boost sails – 75% width spinnakers that can be used well to windward.
- trim tab systems – these are complex and expensive systems; the rating is being reviewed again for 2026.
- the rating of complex control systems is being considered.

The balance between innovation and rule stability remains central.

Delegates were reminded of resources available online, including:

- IRC Measurement Manual <https://ircrating.org/irc-certificate/measurement/>
- IRC Race Management Guidelines <https://ircrating.org/irc-racing/race-management/>

7. Presentation on RORC Admiral's Cup and update on future events.

JETS showed a video illustrating the success of the 2025 RORC Admiral's Cup (AC). JW reported strong participation at AC, exceeding expectations with 15 teams. He noted the excellent work the rating offices did before and during the event, which reinforced the good rating system and how stringent we are with the rules and the boats which was appreciated by the teams. Positive feedback had been received from owners and sailors, particularly on event organisation and equipment inspection. A firm foundation has been laid for AC which is very good for IRC and the event into the future, and it was a great success for IRC, RORC and international racing. The 2026 Sardinia Cup (SC) will adopt the AC framework, including rating bands and an overnight race, and would also

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incorporate lessons learned from the AC. Both AMI and GF emphasised the importance of consistent support and coordination between events. JETS confirmed that from a technical perspective the AC and SC Notices of Race would be aligned.

NORs for the SC 2026 and AC 2027 are both expected to be available at the end of October 2025.

Financial models for international event attendance were discussed, and JETS noted the need for flexibility in deploying technical teams from the rating offices and the importance of utilising local expertise.

GF introduced the **IRC 600 Trophy**, a proposed promotional initiative linking the major 600nm races over a two-year cycle, potentially with sponsorship. The trophy would recognise the best cumulative results across key long-distance events such as the Rolex Fastnet Race, Rolex Middle Sea Race, Baltic Race, Aegean 600, Round Ireland Race, China Sea Race, Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, and RORC Caribbean 600.

AMI noted rising shipping costs make such a series more challenging and suggested a European focus initially. ES suggested there could also be an Asian series including the Dubai–Muscat Race. MB proposed a high discard scoring format such as the best 5 of 10 results. The RORC points system was commended for its ability to weight scoring depending on entry size.

It was noted that using 'World Series' could cause confusion with other events such as the Admiral's Cup (AC) or Sardinia Cup (SC). IRC has the right to hold a 'World Championship' but it was considered that was a title already over-used by other fleets.

DF said it would be helpful to have an actual proposal for the IRC 600 Trophy with events, dates, scoring details, etc.

JETS confirmed updates to the World Sailing (WS) event list for IRC **International Measurer** qualification to which has been added Admiral's Cup, Sardinia Cup, Sydney-Hobart and Australian IRC Championships; also National IRC championships which would be Level-2 (L2) events. The full list would be circulated once approved by WS.

8. National Reports - see <https://ircrating.org/about/irc-congress/>

AUS: AMI noted that the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race (RSHYR) remaining solely scored under IRC, following CYCA's decision not to dual-score with ORC, has been positive for IRC participation.

BEL: LG, representing CS, noted that IRC-GO has not yet encouraged greater IRC engagement, while the local Cruiser Rating system, though less accurate, remains popular with over 200 boats. Belgian sailors tend to race at their home clubs rather than travel.

GRE: The Aegean 600, dual-scored under IRC and ORC, was won by a Swan 441 (1979) and despite ORC's complex weather-based scoring, both systems produced similar results. Including this event in the IRC 600 Trophy would greatly benefit Greek sailing and tourism. Greece benefits from a strong pool of measurers qualified in both rating systems.

GER: Although there are no IRC events in Germany, three German teams participated in the AC 2025, reflecting the country's strong historical ties with the event. German rating certificates continue to be issued for boats racing abroad, particularly in the Rolex Fastnet Race. IRC opportunities in GER events remain under consideration.

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GBR: There was recognition of the increased use of IRC branding in event names and PR for UK events. YTC, the RYA-supported entry-level rating system, continues to grow and is helping to encourage racing between clubs in the place of differing handicap systems. It provides a clear pathway into IRC racing. JETS noted how vital human input is for accuracy of ratings though both YTC and IRC software include rigorous automatic data checks; DF agreed the importance of blending of human skill with technology to make things more efficient.

FRA: GF reported a slight decline in IRC participation within a very active national sailing scene that includes OSIRIS, IMOCA, Mini 650, and Figaro classes. Technical challenges continue, especially around scow designs, but the YCF Rating Office remains highly motivated and optimistic.

ITA: Marco Franzetti reported 157 active certificates and good prospects for growth through winter trophies. He suggested that organisers should include IRC-only trophies at events such as the 151 Miglia to further promote the rule.

Dual Scoring Discussion: AMI and JW noted that classes with the largest entries often dominate trophies in dual-scored events, as seen in the Aegean 600. Greater promotion of IRC as the preferred system was encouraged.

IMA: The Maxi fleet now numbers around 40 boats and measurement consistency and long-term rule stability remain priorities. It was suggested the IMA could have a more stable rule version of IRC that would remain fixed for more than one year, applying only to the IMA fleet rather than globally. It was confirmed this would not affect entries in events such as the Rolex Middle Sea Race (RMSR), as the same rating would be used. JETS noted that design trials are already under way and that early communication about potential rule changes is ongoing. Potentially an "IRC+" system could be developed to ask more specific question about e.g. interceptors, ballast transfer rates, and automated control systems.

SWE: It was reported that an IRC division would be included for the Gotland Runt in Baltic Sea Race years (next 2026). The overall winner is decided using SRS, and IRC owners will receive support and advice with SRS ratings available free of charge.

IRL: While ORC had issued 70 free Club certificates, IRC participation remains strong, and it was noted that it is the less competitive boats that are getting ORC certs. Most key Irish events have rejected dual scoring. IRC fees would be reduced for 2026. Dún Laoghaire–Dingle (D2D) continues as vital RORC qualifier which encourages IRL boats to enter the Rolex Fastnet Race. RORC will work with organisers to avoid any future scoring conflicts.

JPN: HHK noted that IRC requires one-designs to comply with their class rules, but there are more than equipment rules such as crew eligibility or owner-driver rules etc. contained within class rules. JETS confirmed investigating this concern for an IRC rule proposal for one-designs in the 2027 rule..

SEA: Participation across Southeast Asia remains steady, though charter monohull fleets have declined in recent years and this has affected the entries for IRC regattas in Thailand. Major events include the Phuket King's Cup Regatta (PKCR) with 40 IRC boats, Samui Regatta, Langkawi Regatta, and China Cup, now linked with the Hong Kong Round the Island Race. The Queen will again attend the PKCR and compete in the SEA Games. Measurers from Taiwan and Singapore will attend PKCR and a rating deadline has been added to the NOR. IRC in Singapore and Hong Kong remains strong.

SJ requested a standard boat rating for production boats that have rig and sails as supplied by the builder per the specification, as owners in SEA struggle to get rig and sails measured. JH noted that

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this had been considered in previous years but rejected. The Rating Office would revisit the proposal for SEA boats.

PHI: SJ is currently overseeing four Philippine events, including the Boracay 200nm Race.

TUR: PS and LA reported growing pressure from ORC, particularly among charter fleets, due to free certificates. However, IRC activity is strong, and Istanbul has been proposed to host the 2026 IRC Congress.

UAE: The UAE maintains a close partnership with RORC, especially through the Dubai–Muscat Race.

9 IRC 2025 Notices

No notices or formal interpretations had been issued in 2025.

10 IRC Rule and Rating changes for 2026

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

10.1 From the IRC Technical Committee.

IRC Technical Committee (TC) members were confirmed as: JETS, JH, AY, Martyn Prince (from the Wolfson Unit, University of Southampton and also Chair of RORC Technical Committee), Ludovic Abollivier, Claude Charbonnier; Basile Despres at YC is also being integrated more into TC discussions.

It was confirmed that the RORC Technical Committee is not an IRC committee, it discusses design and safety subjects although members also offer IRC feedback.

The TC encourages rule authorities to approach it with issues, questions, ideas or submissions outside IRC Congress, so they can be discussed.

IRC Rule Changes for 2026:

- 1) Gender. CZ noted some grammatical wording improvements. JETS and JH will review this.
- 2) Advertising.
- 3) 21.7.2 foot offset. It was confirmed that this only applies to the rated headsail or flying headsail.
- 4) 22.6 lifelines. It was confirmed that boats cannot opt to have lifelines on/off on primary/SEC certs.
- 5) Age date definition re LH. It was confirmed that this only refers to a modification to the boat, not due to a measurement / remeasurement. It was agreed to change wording to 'modification to hull shell or hull length'.
- 6) Hull Shell definition re interceptors. Currently the rating is more penal for older boats but we want the rating effect to be even across all boats. It is a sustainable option to keep older boats competitive. Older boats will see age revert in 2026, so a rating reduction. It was confirmed that a retractable interceptor would rate higher.
- 7) SPL definition. It was explained that for a mast with rake, SPL measured at the base would be shorter than at the normal pole fixing height.
- 8) Square top mainsails and establishing 7/8 leech point. This is to harmonise with ORC measurement rules, for UMS, as this was the only difference.
- 9) Appendix F foils. IRC limits the dynamic lift at hull speed to 30% of boat weight. Regarding rudders, in reality on modern designs the angle needs to be about 23°, so we have increased the limit to 25° (i.e. 50° between the two rudders). There is potential for a future foiling rating rule to accommodate those boats that are not eligible for IRC rating.

All proposed Rule Changes were approved. Congress reaffirmed its commitment to balancing innovation with fairness and accessibility.

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10.2 From IRC Rule Authorities.

None received.

11 IRC Proposals to World Sailing

11.1 To consider the proposals from IRC to World Sailing including relevant OSR Submissions.

Congress reviewed IRC submissions to World Sailing and discussed the challenges of the new WS structure, with multiple meetings during the year making it more difficult to engage and follow proposals.

Offshore Special Regulations (OSR) 4.27.4 Battens in Storm Jib:

It was noted that the OSR max area for a storm jib assumes a triangular sail a straight leech. Following concerns about the design of storm jibs since IRC started rating the number of headsails carried, to make them a more mainstream-use headsail, a submission to prevent battens in OSR Storm Jibs has been submitted jointly by IRC and ORC. This has been approved pending ratification by the Offshore & Oceanic Committee in November. It was confirmed that a storm jib is only required for Cat 1 & 2; however for any Category race if a boat is claiming a 'free' storm jib for their IRC rating, it must comply with OSR.

In discussion about rating the number of headsails, it was noted that IRC opposes allowing clubs to permit daily sail changes during regattas, as this undermines the purpose of rating the number of headsails carried. In cases where sails may get damaged on board, an NOR may specify that not all sails need to be carried on board each day, providing practical flexibility without compromising the rule.

The importance of promoting sustainable racing practices was reiterated.

Other proposals can be seen at the World Sailing proposals portal: <https://www.sailing.org/inside-world-sailing/organisation/governance/proposals-portal/proposals/>

12 Any Other Business

Scow Bows

GF raised this subject requesting a solution for Jan 2026, even if it is further developed later. JETS summarised the ongoing evaluations by the TC, with an interim solution planned for 2026 using flotation length. All agreed that any solution must minimise complexity and retroactive measurement. The Technical Committee will report progress in 2026. JETS noted that the TC does fleet runs that test the effects of software changes on the whole IRC fleet, including expired certificates. AY noted that additional ideas can be tested to determine the potential rating effect. DF supported the plan, and it was agreed that any adopted solution must have the full approval of the Technical Committee.

AMI also reiterated the need for organising authorities to set varied courses that mitigate design advantages. It was noted that no scow bow designs were entered in AC2025 due to the race course types and the inshore racing. GF said that he had seen studies showing scow bows are fast on all points of sail including upwind, and not only when reaching.

PC suggested asking owners to declare hull shape in the same way as we do for keel shapes.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and the meeting ended at 1600.

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Actions

1. RORC Rating Office to circulate the updated World Sailing (WS) event list for IRC International Measurer qualification, once approved.
2. JETS and JH to review and finalise approved 2026 IRC Rule amendments, including language updates and technical definitions.
3. The IRC Technical Committee to develop and test an interim solution for scow bow rating using flotation length in 2026.
4. Rating Office to revisit the proposal for standard boat ratings for production classes for SEA boats.
5. RORC to continue discussions with Irish event organisers, in particular those which are RORC qualifying races.