



GBR IRC Committee – Rating Office Report 2026

15th September 2026

Introduction

For IRC in the UK, 2026 has seen a good flow of certificates, although with a slight decrease compared to 2025. The UK represents around 28% of the worldwide fleet. Encouragingly, we continue to see revalidations from boats that last held IRC certificates five or more years ago. Events have seen particularly good entries in offshore and day coastal racing; two-handed racing continues, but at a steadier rate than in previous years.

There has been an abundance of offshore races through the RORC and JOG Calendar, and the many regional IRC championships including the IRC National Championship which was held at Dartmouth Regatta (more details below), and the 200th anniversary of Cowes Week, which attracted 130 IRC entries.

GBR IRC Statistics

To avoid confusion, the numbers listed are to the end of August each year. This total generally increases by around 40 boats between 31 August and 31 December. In 2026, we see stability in IRC racing participation in most areas; the reduction in the NE is explained in the Advocate Scheme section of this report. Overall, the number of UK boats holding a full IRC certificate has reduced very slightly, by 1.3%, from 2025. Details are shown in the table below.

No. of Boats holding full certificates (excludes SER and Secondary certs)										2026 - 2025 change	
Area	Code	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Number	%
Central S. Coast	101	609	437	536	532	518	486	480	496	16	3.3%
Dorset	102	70	37	52	56	56	58	59	54	-5	-8.6%
Sussex	103	50	40	40	42	54	62	61	63	2	3.2%
East Coast: Kent, Essex, Ipswich & Norfolk	104	117	68	79	78	70	83	71	68	-3	-3.6%
South West	105	216	122	157	166	170	147	150	138	-12	-8.2%
Midlands (sailing area unknown)	106	0	1	1							
South/Mid Wales	107	40	24	29	37	36	33	33	38	5	15.2%
North Wales	108	38	28	38	36	32	32	30	25	-5	-15.6%
Liverpool/ Blackpool & Fleetwood	109	17	18	13	12	16	15	12	15	3	20.0%
Yorkshire/ Lincolnshire	110	32	16	16	16	19	15	4	0	-4	-26.7%
Northern Eng: Lake District/ Newcastle	111	9	6	3	4	4	4	4	2	-2	-50.0%
Isle of Man	112	10	4	7	11	9	6	4	2	-2	-33.3%
Scotland	113 & 114	34	23	19	24	23	29	23	20	-3	-10.3%
Channel Islands	115	58	47	46	47	50	43	38	34	-4	-9.3%
Northern Ireland	117	57	27	47	51	51	42	41	40	-1	-2.4%
TOTALS:		1357	898	1083	1112	1108	1055	1010	995	-15	-1.4%

The secondary certificate continues to prove popular, with 89 secondary certificates issued this year; this includes changes for offshore racing and short-handed racing. In the majority of cases, the differences between primary and secondary certificates are the number of sails, choice of largest sails and use of water ballast.

The following table shows the total number of boats with full IRC certificates, including those issued under the Advocate Scheme, to 31 Dec in 2021-2025; 2026 figures are to the end of August; these also show number of Secondary certificates in each area and Single Event Ratings.

See below for more about the Advocate Scheme and SER. Please note that boats may change racing areas between 31 Aug and the end of the year.

	Area code	Total no. of boats at end of December													
		Total full 2021		Total full 2022		Total full 2023		Total full 2024		Total full 2025		31-Aug-26			
		Full	inc Adv.	Full	inc Adv.	Full	inc Adv.	Full	inc Adv.	Full	inc Adv.	Full rated boats	inc Adv.	SEC	SER (by race area)
Central S. Coast	101	559		540		554		516		511	1	496	2	49	33
Dorset	102	55	37	62	37	58	52	59	39	61	46	53	33	1	
Sussex	103	40	11	45	10	57	20	63	25	62	33	63	34	0	
East Coast: Kent, Essex, Ipswich & Norfolk	104	83	11	83	4	78	1	89		74		68		5	
South West	105	161	24	174	30	172	27	151	26	153	24	139	23	12	
Midlands (sailing area unknown)	106	1												0	
South/Mid Wales	107	29	6	39	5	37	10	39	13	33	8	38	12	1	
North Wales	108	39		34		33		35		32		25		6	
Liverpool/ Blackpool & Fleetwood	109	14		15		18		16		12		15		2	
Yorkshire/ Lincolnshire	110	16	11	17	11	19	11	15	9	4		0		0	
Northern Eng: Lake District/ Newcastle	111	15	9	17	10	15	10	10	2	6		2		1	
Isle of Man	112	7		11		9		6		5		2		0	
Scotland	113 & 114	20		23		24		29		23		20		3	
Channel Islands	115	45	5	49	3	50	6	45	5	40	3	34	4	4	
Northern Ireland	117	49		54		57		44		43		40		5	
TOTALS:		1133	114	1163	110	1181	137	1117	119	1059	115	995	108	89	33
TOTAL SER		45		50		38		34		34		33			
TOTAL IRC RATED BOATS		1178		1213		1219		1151		1093		1028			

IRC Advocate Scheme

The Advocate scheme continues to deliver good results, and at 31 August 2026 represents about 11% of the total GBR boats rated. The success of the Advocate Scheme is primarily down to the excellent relationships we have with the Clubs and the passion they share for IRC. We never underestimate the efforts the individuals in the clubs put in and appreciate their drive and commitment.

The total number of boats issued certificates under this scheme can be seen in the chart above and the distribution is shown below:

First Year	Cert code	Club	Contact name	31-Aug 2022	end 2022	31-Aug 2023	end 2023	31-Aug 2024	end 2024	31-Aug 2025	end 2025	31-Aug 2026
2015	503	Weymouth	Helen Webb & John Morrison	41	42	45	46	38	39	46	46	34
2016	505	Royal Dartmouth YC	David Goulden	25	25	27	27	26	26	24	24	22
2016	507	Sussex YC	Chris Hawks	10	10	20	20	24	25	34	34	37
2016	508	St Helier YC	James Kent	3	3	6	6	5	5	3	3	4
2018	513	New Quay YC	Chris Seal	5	5	10	10	13	13	8	8	12

Unfortunately, we have seen a slight drop in certificates for the south west, in particular Weymouth; however, this has in part been covered by increases for the other three clubs. Ideas would be welcome from committee members on how to get more clubs involved in the Advocate Scheme, and also to promote IRC to clubs currently using YTC.

Single Event Ratings

The Single Event Rating scheme is limited to six specific events; the majority are issued for the Round the Island Race which is the event for which SER was originally conceived. The number of SERs issued each year is stable and 33 boats have held Single Event Ratings in 2026.

The number of SERs issued for each event in recent years is as follows:

							Aug
SINGLE EVENT RATINGS	Ref.	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Round the Island Race (June)	1	29	33	24	23	21	22
Cowes Week (Aug)	2	6	6	4	4	4	6
Panerai British Classic Week (July)	3	5	4	5	7	7	5
Three Peaks Yacht Race (June)	4	5	3	3			0
Little Britain Challenge Cup (Sept)	5		1	1			
Hamble Classics	6		3	1		2	
		45	50	38	34	34	33

IRC Classes

There are several classes using IRC rating which have their own class rules with rating bands and often other limits such as DLR and construction. The Rating Office assists the classes with their rules and offers information and advice whenever possible.

The office also maintains a close working relationship with the International Maxi Association (IMA) offering technical support to the IMA and the owners and continues to work with the IMA on the rating of reduced crew and other initiatives.

GBR IRC Championships and Major Events

It is encouraging to see that the GBR IRC championships went well this year with a full national programme of events. The IRC Nationals in Dartmouth proved a very successful event with 39 entries with Endorsed certificates that were eligible for the championship class prizes. The total IRC entry was 61 including the boats with Standard certificates, with the National Champion being Claire and Ed Mockridge's ELAINE AGAIN after a close fought battle with David Franks LEON, both boats taking a clean sweep of victories in their respective classes.

The event acted as a test ground for the new Equipment Checklist produced by the Rating Office. Feedback on the compliance checklist was positive overall, with organisers reporting that it was effective and straightforward to administer. Minor improvements were identified, including clarification of certain terms, clearer instructions on how to complete the checklist, and refinement of some questions to avoid ambiguity in responses. Spot checks were also carried out on eight boats during the first two days of racing. Competitors were cooperative and supportive of the process, no discrepancies were identified, and organisers considered the combination of self-declaration and targeted inspections to be successful in promoting rule compliance and deterring non-compliance.

An extremely successful 2026 IRC European Championship was held in light airs as part of International Paint Poole Regatta, with an extra day added at the beginning. The support of the event and IRC from Andrew Pearce has been excellent, and all the feedback from the event was very positive. A total of 52 boats competed, with the European Champion being Sam Laidlaw's Quarter Tonner AQUILA with an almost flawless scoreline.

Offers to Owners

IRC Members, i.e. current certificate holders, continue to benefit from these offers:

- Free access to Seahorse Digital editions - <http://www.seahorse.co.uk/digital/irc/>
- Subscription offer for Seahorse print editions - <http://www.seahorse.co.uk/shop/subs>
- 15% off Tuff Luff products - <https://www.sea-sure.co.uk>

The Rating Office would be pleased to receive applications to offer similar discounts to IRC Members, for consideration. Please email the Rating Office with details.

Website, Newsletters and Seahorse issues

The RORC Rating Office website <https://rorcrating.com> includes information specific to GBR boats; it also includes YTC information and application.

General, technical and international IRC information is only on <https://ircrating.org>, including rules, measurement and advice, online rating listings and valid boat data. An IRC Event Calendar was added last year in the racing section.. **Please encourage event organisers to submit details of their IRC events, which will then be automatically included in the online calendar. See <https://ircrating.org/irc-racing/racing-calendar/>**

The Rating Office continues to use social media (@rorcrating) and issue occasional email newsletters to GBR owners, and internationally as appropriate, with relevant news and information regarding IRC. There are also exclusive free online IRC editions of Seahorse Magazine available to all current IRC members; these include IRC-specific articles.

Weighing, Measuring and General Enquiries

The number of boats which have been weighed and/or measured from 1st January 2026 to date is 96, with loadcells still being booked out for September. Hamble is still our busiest area for measurement, closely followed by Cowes, we have also seen more measurement this year in Poole due to IRC Europeans being held in Poole Harbour.

We have introduced new forms in Cognito for sailmakers & RYA measurers to complete online which seem to have been received very well and make things a lot easier for identifying IHC numbers for endorsement.

We expect another busy year in 2027 with the Admiral's Cup, with boat captains and owners already making enquiries.

As an additional service to IRC certificate holders, the Rating Office continues to assist owners and designers in obtaining stability information for racing in Offshore Special Regulations categories. This includes helping owners understand the stability requirements and, where appropriate, putting them in contact with specialists who can assess the boat's stability. The more onerous Category 0 and 1 requirements have made this work increasingly important, but also more difficult to manage, particularly where competitors do not understand why a boat that has previously completed offshore or Atlantic passages may no longer meet the current requirements.

General enquiries to the office by both phone and email remain high, with a notable increase in owners new to IRC or returning after a break from racing. This includes owners from YTC wanting to apply for an IRC certificate, which is exactly what we were hoping for.

IRC Application Process and MyIRC

MyIRC continues at this time to be the main route for UK IRC applications and paying measurement invoices. It allows us to allocate applications to team members and process certificates efficiently.

In September, we plan to launch the new IRC Application Portal, developed primarily in-house with support from an external contractor. The scale of work involved in this project should not be underestimated.

This year we have added several online forms to make it easier to submit information to the Rating Office, including the Sail Measurement Input Form for sail measurers, the IRC Event Form for event organisers submitting details for automatic inclusion in the new Event Search on the IRC website, and the IRC sail area calculation check form. This supports the digital strategy and the eventual integration with the new application portal.

Rating Office Staff

In July 2026 Rob Taylor joined the Rating Office as Deputy Director. Rob brings a blend of technical, regulatory and practical racing expertise to further enhance our experienced team. His appointment further strengthens our capability in IRC rating, safety, measurement services and race organisation, supporting sailors and events around the world.

The technical team staff of Jenny, Emma and Sally have been extremely busy this year with IRC, and continuing the RYA YTC scheme with almost 2046 boats rated at the time of writing the report including many new boats, particularly for Cowes Week and other events adopting the scheme, including CCC in Scotland for their events. The YTC application portal, developed entirely in-house with associated web pages, is working well.



The RORC Rating Office team continue our representation on National and International Committees with Jenny on the RYA Technical Committee, Rob as chair of the RYA Empirical Handicap Advisory Group and Jason as chair of the World Sailing working parties involving keel failures and the Universal Measurement System. Jason has also worked with the RYA on developing the YTC scheme and other safety areas. Jason and Jenny also sit on a World Sailing stability database working group looking to have a central point for obtaining stability information for designs, this is together with representatives from the ORC and other safety experts from around the world. The Rating Office is also the organiser of the RORC Technical Sub-committee. This is a group of renowned designers, consultants, manufacturers, builders, race organisers and journalists that are working in the sport and driving development and observing the sport at a technical level.

RORC Rating Office
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IRC Championships 2027 – Applications received to approve

MAY

Event Title IRC North West Championship
Venue: Liverpool Yacht Club
Dates: 21 – 23 May 2027
Website: <https://www.lyc.org.uk/regatta-hub/gbr-irc-north-west-championships-liverpool>

Event Title IRC Bristol Channel Championship
Venue & dates: Portishead: Dates TBC
Cardiff: Dates TBC
Website: www.shanghaicup.co.uk

Event Title IRC Scottish Championships
Venue: Clyde Cruising Club
Dates: TBC
Website:

JUNE

Event Title IRC National Championship
Venue: Royal Thames Yacht Club & Royal Ocean Racing Club, Cowes
Dates: 10th – 13th June 2027
Website: www.rorc.org

Event Title IRC Northern Ireland Championship
Venue: Belfast Lough
Dates: 26th – 27th June 2027
Website: <https://www.ruyc.uk>

JULY

Event Title IRC East Coast Championship
Venue: Ramsgate Week
Dates: 25th – 27th July 2027
Website: www.ramsgateweek.com

AUGUST

Event Title IRC South West Championship
Venue: Falmouth Sailing Week
Dates: 11th – 14th August 2027
Website: www.falmouthsailingweek.org

SEPTEMBER

Event Title	IRC Channel Islands Championship
Venue	Jersey Regatta
Dates:	TBC
Website:	http://jerseyregatta.com
Facebook:	Royal Channel Islands Yacht Club (Jersey) Facebook

Event Title	IRC Welsh National Championship
Venue:	Pwllheli, Cardigan Bay Celtic Regatta
Dates:	TBC
Website:	www.ircwelshchamps.com
Facebook:	IRC Welsh National Championships Facebook