IRC Congress 2026

Minutes

Saturday, 10th October 2026 at the Royal Overseas League, London, UK

Present:

Andrew McIrvine	AMI	Congress Chair
Stephen Tudor	ST	GBR IRC Chairman
Ed Shiffner	ES	Dubai Offshore Sailing Club - Rear Commodore
Chris Zonca	CZ	Australian Sailing
Liz Hall	LH	Irish Sailing Association
Deb Fish	DF	RORC Commodore
Philip Corbett	PC	Hellenic Offshore Committee
Ludovic Abollivier	LA	YCF Directeur du Centre de Calcul IRC
Luc Geirnaert	LG	IRC Belgium
Willem Ellemeet	WE	NED Technical Chair Noordzee Club
Philippe Serenon	PS	YCF/IRC Board
Philippe Girardin	PG	YCF President of IRC
Jean-Eudes Renier	JER	RORC member/IRC Board
Jason Smithwick	JS	Director of the Rating Office
Rob Taylor	RT	RORC Rating Office Deputy Director
Jenny Howells	JH	RORC Rating Office Technical Manager
Emma Smith	ES1	RORC Rating Office/IRC Congress Secretariat
Sally Moss	SM	RORC Rating Office

Present remotely:

Simon James	SJ	Congress Vice Chair / IRC SE Asia
Chris Tutmark	CT	US Sailing
Pierre Perdoux	PP	IRC France
Godwin Zammit	GZ	IRC Malta
Nigel Biggs	NB	Irish Owners' Association
Louise Edgren	LE	Swedish Sailing Federation
Ting Kuo	TK	IRC Chinese Taipei
Shihbou Wang	SW	IRC Chinese Taipei
Gilles Fournier	GF	IRC Board
Akihisa Miyakawa	AM	IRC Japan
Haru Hiko Kaku	HHK	IRC Japan

Items marked as *published* are available at https://ircrating.org/about/irc-congress/

1 Introduction and welcome

Andrew McIrvine welcomed delegates attending in person and on Zoom.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Gideon Mowser (IRC HKG), Alp Doguoglu (IRC Turkey), Ben Willows (RORC Sporting Director), Stephan Jentzsch (IRC Board). Derek Shakespeare (RORC Vice Commodore), Nick Scott (RYA).

IRC Congress 2026 - Minutes

3 Minutes of the meeting of the IRC Congress 2025.

The minutes of the 2025 IRC Congress meeting were signed as accurate.

Matters Arising not covered on the agenda: the following actions have been completed:

Circulate World Sailing (WS) event list for qualification as an IRC International Measurer. All the primary IRC events are included. Since the updated list was published, more people are applying to become an IRC IM and are on the pathway. More information:
https://ircrating.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/IRC-International-Measurer-qualification-260629.pdf

An interim solution for scow bow rating had been completed and applied by the IRC Technical Committee.

Simon James had requested a simplified IRC application/low level rating system for SE Asia. YTC rating will now be implemented in the region.

Regarding Irish events dual scoring with ORC in RORC qualifying races, DF has written to the relevant clubs.

4 To receive a report from the IRC Board

AMI reported that regular meetings have been held which have addressed many topics, including how to encourage more people into racing, and the intent to drive IRC forward with new ideas to move into a space that fits the current fleet. He thanked the members of the Board for their time and hard work.

5 To receive the IRC Annual Report (*published*)

The report was presented by JS.

Additional notes:
A new online MyIRC application system opened in mid-September. It is currently for GBR boats only, with a view to extending it to RORC administered Rule Authorities, and in the future YCF Rule Authorities.

The number of YTC rated boats is increasing and it is hoped that this will be a feeder into IRC. A discussion about local and lower-level rating systems was held later in the meeting.

6 IRC Events

An update on IRC major events was presented by JS.

The 2026 IRC European Championship in Poole attracted the largest entry for many years, covering boats from Quarter Tonners to TP52s. The strong entry was partly attributed to increased Solent participation and interest generated by the Admiral's Cup.

The 2027 European Championship will be held in Porquerolles, FRA from 3–9 May. Expressions of interest and venue suggestions were invited for the 2028 Championship, probably in northern Europe. The IRC Middle East Championship will take place in Dubai in December, and the Australian Yachting Championship had recently concluded in Southport, QLD.

For IRC Championships there is currently a requirement to hold an Endorsed certificate to be on the podium. A similar requirement for other RORC races, including the Rolex Fastnet Race, was discussed.. Views differed on whether it would be exclusive to require it, but greater use of inspections was supported including for events such as the Rolex Fastnet Race.

It was agreed to consider awarding a European Champion in each class rather than a single overall title, and to consider the same approach for the GBR IRC National Championship.
LA and JS will review this for the next IRC European Championship and for the GBR IRC Nationals; and add guidance to the Race Management Guidelines. *(Action)*

Admiral's Cup (AC) 2027 and Sardinia Cup (SC)
RT updated delegates on preparations for the 2027 Admiral's Cup, noting strong engagement with confirmed and prospective teams from the RORC Race Team. A recent NoR amendment has clarified technical requirements and simplified sail limitations to an overall limit (14 for AC1 and 13 for AC2). A Corinthian Trophy has been introduced which will use the World Sailing Sailor Categorisation, allowing up to four Cat 3 sailors in AC1 teams and three in AC2. Teams must apply and declare eligibility, which will be verified.

The Event Technical Committee is being built on the previous event's strong team.

JER pointed out that teams are holding on AC development pending canting keel rating discussions, following the success of Northstar III (Maxi 72). JS noted that there was no advantage at the 40-52' size, the increase in rating would be around 0.040.

These events require stricter weighing and measurement, including windows for weighing and bulb weight, and overhangs being recorded to mm. It was noted that teams are expected to be more competitive and less accommodating than at the inaugural event in 2025.
Andrew Yates has been employed as a consultant for AC2027.

LA reported that preparing for the **2026 Sardinia Cup (SC)** fleet had been demanding but rewarding.

AMI noted that at SC2026 the teams were reluctant to do the windy offshore race as their boats were optimised for light airs. It was agreed that these events should encourage offshore-capable boats, and it is important that the AC and SC NoRs match.

A trophy for best combined result in AC and SC has been suggested. *[Action]*

AC and SC have created an impetus for new boats being built, the question was raised of how more events for these boats could be run, especially in the Med. It was noted that the RORC Rating Office had issued design trials for a number of 40' designs aimed at AC/SC. AMI noted that, although there are not many boats, the grand prix side of IRC is good for the brand.

It was noted that the Rolex Middle Sea Race and Aegean 600 are useful for comparing IRC and ORC (weather routing) results. PC commented that this year's Aegean 600 was windy then it dropped, which meant the big boats won in IRC, while in ORC small boats were in the ranking.

A discussion was held on the proposed IRC600 Series. A European series was considered more practical than a global format, although some boats could combine the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race and the Rolex Fastnet Race with careful scheduling. A two-year series was suggested, recognising high transport costs. Sponsorship is needed, especially for communications and promotion. It was noted that the Dhream Cup should be included; and that there is a potential new 600-mile race in Turkey.

7 National Reports (*published*)

Contributions from attending National IRC Representatives (not including submissions for proposed rule changes).

Additional reports and discussion:

SEA said that there are a lot of old boats wanting to come back to racing. Using YTC across the region means the same system will be used in each country instead of each having their own, which should increase enthusiasm to travel, and it is hoped owners will go on to join IRC. Sailing activity in the Philippines is increasing, largely through the restoration of older boats and the return to racing of former cruising sailors. It was noted that the TP52 series is coming to Thailand, but it's not known what effect that will have long term on sailing in the region.

SJ asked about the RORC attitude about Russian boats. DF confirmed that RUS boats are still not allowed in RORC races. However, it will follow the advice of World Sailing if it relaxes its position. SJ said that ORC lets RUS boats race in the SE Asia region. However, AMI noted that this is incorrect information and the ORC policy is the opposite. It was noted that IRC does not rule on this issue, it is for the relevant MNA to decide.

SWE LE reported that the Swedish rating system, SRS, is designed for 12 knots of wind and a round course, which does not work for offshore racing so it would be good to have an additional rating system for offshore racing. However, Swedish sailors are resisting this on the grounds of difficulty and expense. It was noted that the expense of a certificate is small relative to the cost of running a boat.

FRA PP introduced the IRC Promotion Division in the South of France which is designed to increase participation. LA explained the criteria which are part of the YCF Med Championship rules: series design with more than 15 produced; series date <2011 (rolling 15 years), DLR >160, mast not carbon, Standard certificate.

MLT GZ reported that the Malta fleet is still active and healthy. All racing is solely IRC, with the exception of ORC dual scoring in the Rolex Middle Sea Race and the Syracuse Race.

USA CT reported that IRC certificates are stable. Most are for boats racing in the Caribbean or Europe. There is one confirmed AC2027 team already, and interest for additional teams. In answer to a question, CT reported that ORC is stable (approx. 1200 boats) while ORR sees a Bermuda Race year fluctuation.

IRL NB reported that IRC numbers similar to last year. ORC was being promoted aggressively and, in some cases, misleadingly. Dual scoring had been introduced at events without agreement from the Organising Authorities (OA), driven partly by owners who felt unfairly rated under IRC. This risked fragmenting keelboat racing. ORC had promoted its system effectively, including offering free [ORC Club] certificates. Rating Office support was requested to promote IRC positively. Attendance at the ICRA Conference was requested to enable direct discussion and highlight the strengths of IRC racing. *[Action]* It was noted that claims of closer ORC results could be selective and that some vocal critics might remain dissatisfied under any rating system.

Crew limitations

NB requested that OAs in Ireland should be encouraged to impose and enforce stricter crew number limitations. Boats such as the J/109s benefit from no crew limits as they have low righting moment, so extra crew are beneficial. Meanwhile other boats are struggling to get crew.

JH noted that a J/109 in Ireland had stated that they were used to racing with 11/12 crew, while the IRC crew number is 8. It was agreed that the answer is for OAs to impose and enforce stricter crew number limitations.
JS would talk to Irish Sailing about this, and potentially an Afloat magazine article would be appropriate. *[Action]*

A discussion was held about using crew weight instead of number; the general consensus was that OAs do not want, or have the resources available, to weigh crews. It was noted that ORC Club certificates in Ireland are calculated with standard crew weight, not declared crew weight. GZ noted that crew weight can be declared for ORC Club, but that it was unlikely to be checked by an OA.

JS pointed out that the subject of crew number/weight has been a long running discussion in IRC Congress over the years, and the current IRC rule works. ST said the IRC Welsh Nationals used IRC crew number as a maximum. This encouraged people to travel, reduced accommodation costs, and gave people on the boat jobs and they enjoyed it more. ST suggested that it should be made mandatory for IRC championships to apply crew number. *[Action]*

It was suggested that people are exploiting the additional crew sometimes permitted for youth and females, for instance taking them solely to sit on the rail.

TPE in addition to their written report, it was noted that IRC participation in Taiwan had declined as owners retired from racing, boats shifted towards cruising and local regattas accommodated alternative handicap systems. To renew interest in IRC rating there are plans to work with organisers and sponsors to introduce dual scoring with IRC with additional prizes, and perpetual trophies for major regattas, creating a positive incentive for IRC certification, encourage fair competition and gradual fleet growth.

GBR ST noted that the GBR committee had urged all events to promote IRC rating in event titles and PR. It also stressed the importance of using a variety of course types. It was noted that AI can be used for designing courses, e.g. percentages of upwind/downwind.

UAE ES noted that external geopolitical factors had been affecting numbers and racing.

GRE PC had nothing to add to the written report, but AMI noted the impressive safety booklet issued for the Aegean 600, and that the race is gaining a good reputation and is very good for IRC in the area.

BEL LG said the IRC fleet is small but stable and club events are going well; fewer boats now travel for racing. IRC Go! is successful with 50+ boats using it. The Federation offers support with information, and free weighing and measurement.

AUS CZ reported that levels of IRC certificates are stable and positive. He has been pushing equipment inspections, which have been identifying and resolving certificate discrepancies. In his experience a number of inspected sails did not match certificate data, usually because remeasured, undersized sails had not been updated, while some aft rigging details were also incorrect. These issues were attributed mainly to oversight rather than deliberate rule breaches. Extending inspections to club level was improving certificate accuracy, supporting fair racing and preventing problems from persisting.

8 IRC 2026 Notices

No notices or formal interpretations have been issued in 2026. However, the following subjects had arisen recently and will potentially lead to Notices or Interpretations:

Series Date

Recent conversations with individuals may result in a Notice / Interpretation being published by the Rating Authority.

Hull Factor / Rig Factor

JS noted that there had been AI attacks downloading multiple Boat Data PDFs from the IRC website, creating a high risk of reverse engineering IRC. This risk is increased by the availability of HF and RF data, as these form part of the rating calculation. It is therefore proposed to remove HF and RF from IRC certificates from January 2027 to protect IRC. It was recognised that people may be suspicious of the change, but it would also have positive effects.

It was confirmed that when standard items are declared as removed, such as doors or tables, this is included in the certificate notes. Regarding printing information about HF inputs on the certificate, JS noted that for some old designs with standard HFs not every boat has the resolution of HF inputs in its file.

WE asked about sails on board not remaining the same during an event, as Organising Authorities (OAs) allow people to take sails ashore, allowing them to choose different sails the next day. JS confirmed that the IRC default is that sails should remain the same. This rule may be amended by an NoR, but this is not recommended (see IRC Race Management Guidelines https://ircrating.org/irc-racing/race-management/).

9 Proposed IRC Rule changes for 2027 (*published*)

Proposed changes from the IRC Technical Committee were presented by RT, who noted that the changes are largely for clarification and do not change current processes or rating.

1. Setting of Sails

This was accepted after a short discussion.

There was a discussion about storm jibs, and whether IRC rule should specify that a storm jib must not be set with any other headsail. RT said the IRC rule intentionally references OSR as a fixed document, and we should not repeat OSR wording in the IRC rule.

It was confirmed that if a storm sail is flown with any other sail, it is no longer an OSR storm jib so must be counted as a headsail for the rating. DF noted that this is hard to police as competitors lack enough information to protest a boat. It was noted that if a protest is won, this may under either IRC or OSR, and the relevant penalties would apply.

JS noted that once pre-2026 storm jibs reach end of life, the questions around people flying orange headsails which are not OSR storm jibs should cease to be an issue.

2. Manual power

RT noted that moving moveable and variable ballast with stored power is already taken into account in the rating. AMI suggested that gravity water ballast should be rated differently; this was noted potentially for the future.

Following a question from GZ, RT noted that using moveable ballast for propulsion (pumping) is an RRS question, and there is a current submission by WS to prevent this.

3. Age Date – Beam
Any change to maximum beam will reset age date. There were no comments.

4. Tack Point and STL
Introducing a definition of Tack Point to simplify other rules/definitions.
DF suggested the definition needs to have 'or' after each of the tack points listed. This be reviewed.

5. STLFHmax
It was clarified that the purpose of STLFHmax is to ensure a Flying Headsail has an overlap to prevent it being used to windward.

GZ suggested flying headsails with SFL too short could be rated in a different way rather than as the largest headsail. JS will discuss this with the IRC Technical Committee. *[Action]*

6. Aft rigging
This change is only to make it clearer for twin masted boats; there is no change for single masted boats.

All these rule changes were agreed, with the friendly amendment to 4. as noted above.

9.2 From IRC Rule Authorities.

AUS - IRC Rule 7.2. change to allow local MNA special regs to override OSRs where necessary [Note: the main reason for this submission relates to IRC rule 21.7.1. number of headsails].

JS noted that aside from the political question, technically it would be confusing for owners who travel between countries, for instance a boat entering the Sydney-Hobart would have different sail carrying rules from e.g. the Fastnet. He also expressed concern that MNAs could make future changes to their special regulations which could further conflict with IRC rules.
DF suggested that a submission to WS to change OSR in the respect of carrying storm sails would be preferable.

There was a discussion around local special regulations generally, with AMI concerned it was exposing the MNA to litigation and IRC should not get involved.

RT noted there was a WS proposal to limit what can be modified in the OSR. It was agreed therefore to put this submission on hold. Instead, JS suggested a friendly, specific amendment to the Storm Jib definition, to be considered by the IRC Technical Committee. *[Action]*

FRA – PP introduced the submissions. Re. scow bows, he requested it be a rating, not a penalty.
JS confirmed that changes have already been made to the formulation [for 2026], and these were under review by the IRC Technical Committee. He noted that scow boats perform very well on particular courses and in certain conditions.

Re. Code Boost sails, LA confirmed that the IRC Technical Committee are looking at a solution but it needs more research. There may not be a solution for 2027 but it is being worked on.

LA confirmed that no-one at IRC Congress or on the Technical Committee are opposed to innovation.

NED - The submission on storm jibs was not discussed, noting the subject had already been covered. WE agreed to wait and see how/if the new formulation as proposed by IRC will work sufficiently.

WE introduced the submission proposing allowing the adjustment of turnbuckles during racing - IRC rules 21.1.6 a) and b).

There was a discussion about the safety of allowing turnbuckle adjustment during a race. WE pointed out that it may be safer in variable winds; and that ORC allows turnbuckle adjustment.
JS noted that it would require a different declaration within IRC, and there may be a rating impact. He will take this to Technical Committee as rules 21.1.6 a) and b) would need to be revisited, and recognised it would be good to get a solution. *[Action]*

WE noted the real benefits are for boats with mast jack, the use of which is difficult to police. JS noted that for some boats mast jacks are the only way to adjust the standing rigging, but only between races.

GF asked about WS Case 78 Fair Sailing submission, e.g. it may cause a lot of protests for one boat tacking on another. It was noted that the intention is to prevent persistent tactical behaviour and putting the responsibility onto the rating rules (ORC/IRC) to police doesn't provide the overarching consistent application of rules that the RRS provides. Furthermore, class rules cannot change the RRS definitions or the rules of Part 2 which is where most of the references to 'proper course' lie. At the conclusion of the discussion, no decision was made on the submission.

10 IRC Strategy

JS presented the proposed strategic vision for IRC covering the period 2027-2032. It was emphasised that the document should be viewed as a strategic direction rather than a fixed operational plan. IRC was described as entering the period from a position of strength but facing increased competition from other rating systems, changing owner expectations, technological developments and participation challenges.

The proposed strategy seeks to preserve IRC's core strengths of fairness, simplicity, technical credibility, major event support, owner focus and international reach while modernising the organisation. Central themes included closer alignment between RORC and YCF, investment in a unified international identity, and improved coordination of resources and systems.

A significant focus was placed on the development of a "Digital IRC" platform to improve certificate administration, data management, measurer support, event integration and customer experience, while reducing administrative burden and improving efficiency within rating offices and Rule Authorities.

The strategy also highlighted strengthening support for events and increasing participation, positioning IRC as a technical and rating partner rather than solely a certificate provider.

Discussion:
It is recognised that the rating offices already enjoy a close relationship with owners or their representatives; and design offices engage at a very high technical level and trust the Rating Authority with information and data.

Increased resources for marketing are necessary. For overseas boats it is recognised that Rule Authorities / MNAs cannot be biased towards any single rating system, so need to be encouraged to buy into IRC.

There is a need to invest in modernising technology, such as moving databases into SQL. This would potentially allow dynamic simple calculations such as changing number of sails, although this would of course need very good protection of the formulation.

It was noted that marketing begins with the product and includes pricing, promotion and a clear end goal. It should be developed from the grassroots, with care taken to avoid revolutionary changes, such as multiple ratings, that could undermine IRC. DF informed the meeting that RORC will shortly be employing a Communications Manager, a new post, which will help with IRC marketing.

JER asked how IRC could be used more in the Mediterranean, and how much it would cost, leading to discussion on ways to increase IRC participation in areas where other rating systems are well established. Direct engagement with clubs and local sailors was considered important, supported by a clear presentation or promotional package and online discussions. Major events such as the Aegean 600 can help introduce or re-establish IRC, although experience with the Baltic 600 showed that major standalone events do not necessarily generate wider participation.

It was agreed that IRC should continue to be promoted positively, emphasising its accessibility, longevity and use at major events, rather than by criticising competing systems. AMI is going to talk to ORC about better co-operation in the wider interests of the sport.

In response to a question by DF asked about AI (e.g. data mining) and dealing with the potential risks to IRC, JS confirmed that the online PDF data has been locked down.

11 IRC Grand Prix *(this was presented after Item 6.)*

JS presented the IRC Grand Prix concept, described as an enhanced certification and technical assurance framework within IRC rather than a separate rating rule. The proposal would introduce a "GP Endorsed" notation sitting above the existing Standard and Endorsed certificate levels, providing additional declarations, verification and event controls while retaining the existing IRC rating framework.

The need for the proposal was linked to the increasing complexity of high-performance yacht designs and onboard systems, together with a requirement from some organisers for a higher level of technical assurance. It was stressed that the proposal would not affect normal IRC processes or costs for the wider fleet and would only apply where specifically required by an event. The proposed process would be event-led. Organisers would identify a requirement for GP Endorsed certification, the Rating Authority would determine whether its use was appropriate, and the Notice of Race would invoke a dedicated GP Appendix. Boats would then apply for review and verification before receiving a GP Endorsed notation. The certification could be linked to a specific event and remain attached only to the yacht's primary IRC certificate.

The technical assurance framework would combine controls relating to weight and ballast verification, sail registration and control, equipment inspection and approval processes, and verification of the yacht's racing configuration. Additional declarations could be required covering areas such as rig systems, appendages, ballast transfer systems, stored power, automation technologies and supporting technical evidence.

Potential benefits identified included increased confidence for Grand Prix fleets and organisers, greater consistency in the treatment of advanced technologies, a clearer route to enhanced technical assurance, and a mechanism to support future technical development within IRC. Key risks discussed

included the framework being misunderstood as a separate rule, increased administrative demands and concerns regarding disclosure of technical information. Proposed mitigations included clear communication, early event planning, cost recovery through fees, and limiting data collection to information relevant to rating assessment.

A phased implementation approach was outlined, using Admiral's Cup 2027 processes and controls as a reference point, followed by limited pilot use at suitable events before any wider adoption. The indicative target for launch was after Admiral's Cup 2027.

Discussion:
The IRC GP concept had been developed by RORC, YCF and the IRC Board and had also involved Design offices; Admiral's Cup (AC), Sardinia Cup (SC) and Maxis are currently the targeted events.
It is intended that boats would apply directly to Rating Authority (RORC/YCF), who would then involve the boat's Rule Authority for weighing and measurement.
Appendix GP will be added to IRC rule and include specific timescales for weighing etc.
A GP section of the IRC application form will require additional declarations for innovative features.

This project requires investment from YCF, RORC and the IMA have also offered investment, to enable development over the next 12 months. This may necessitate another team member across the two rating offices. The application fee for IRC GP would be higher than the current IRC Expedited fee; a discussion followed regarding potential fees for applications and trial certificates. It was noted that trial certificates for GP style boats are often complex and time consuming.

There was a discussion about a boat with an IRC GP certificate competing against similar boats with a normal IRC Endorsed certificate, for example AC boats in the Fastnet, as the latter would not have been asked to declare all the features. JS confirmed that all boats are required by IRC rules to declare innovative or special features, and are rated for interceptors, rotating rig etc. where relevant. Nothing would be rated in IRC GP that is not currently rated in IRC.

A discussion was held on whether a boat could request GP status without it being required for a specific event. It was thought unlikely that any boat would voluntarily apply for it.

The IRC GP fees will be higher to fund the additional workload in the rating offices. There was discussion about opportunities to increase the rating offices' income through IRC GP, but it was noted that this concept is not just about more income, it is to handle high end optimisation of the IRC rule and features, and to keep the sport healthy. It will also enhance IRC rating at the top level and demonstrate to the top campaigns that they are all being treated the same way.

JS noted that the newly released application system allows dynamic pricing, so in the future simpler changes (e.g. number of sails) could be charged at less than more complex changes. However, it was recognised that this would be more complex for applications coming through IRC Rule Authorities.

DF said that it is important that a comms plan is instigated as soon as possible.

PS commented that for marketing it will be important to separate the cost of the certificate itself from the cost of the service, and noted that the cost of a certificate is very small in relation to other boat costs, weighing and measurement etc.

Lower level rating systems and IRC branding

A discussion was held about the future of IRC Go! and the role of entry-level rating systems as a pathway into IRC. It was noted that different countries currently use a variety of systems, including IRC Go!, YTC, OSIRIS and PHS, and that a single common system may not be necessary.

However, there was support for an IRC-branded entry-level system, potentially using different underlying local rating systems in different countries, to provide a clearer progression towards IRC. Concerns were raised that IRC Go! is not currently achieving its intended objective of encouraging competitors to progress to an IRC certificate, or Single Event Rating. As IRC Go! ratings are obtained by clubs with no direct paperwork or contact with owners, owners may not necessarily be aware of the connection with IRC or the opportunity to progress.

It was also noted that progression may not necessarily involve the same boat moving from an entry-level system to IRC. Experience with YTC suggests that owners may become more interested in racing through club participation and subsequently move to a more race-orientated boat using IRC.

There was unanimous agreement on the importance of making it easy for people to start racing and of providing a clear pathway towards IRC, while recognising that many of the factors affecting participation cannot be addressed by rating systems alone. Declining IRC boat numbers were highlighted as an issue that should remain a priority for the Committee.

Separately, there was discussion on rating the age and sustainability of sails. JETS reported that ORC had been approached regarding the possibility of rating systems taking a common approach to sustainability requirements for sails within particular classes, rather than trying to rate it.

12 IRC Proposals to World Sailing

There were no submissions from IRC. Other proposals can be seen at the World Sailing proposals portal: https://www.sailing.org/inside-world-sailing/organisation/governance/proposals-portal/proposals/

DF talked about the WS Oceanic & Offshore Committee ‘Human Endeavour’ proposals about handling technology, which mostly refers to autopilots. RORC/CYCA/NYYC/STC and many other clubs were objecting, this was still in progress.

DF noted that the proposed Offshore Code is more of a concern, as that would have the same status as OSR and mean WS O&O could easily change rules in the future. This is potentially a larger threat to sailing. It was noted that these WS proposals have brought ORC and IRC closer together.

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

Ther was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 17.00 with the Chair thanking delegates for attending and their contributions.

Actions are summarised on page 12.

IRC Congress 2026 - Minutes

Actions

1. Regarding suggestion of awarding separate European Champion titles for each class:
    a. LA to review 2027 IRC European Championship NoR
    b. Possible application of the same approach to the GBR IRC National Championship
    c. Add appropriate guidance to the IRC Race Management Guidelines.

2. Explore the introduction of a trophy for the best combined result in the Admiral's Cup and Sardinia Cup with RORC & YCCS.

3. Discuss Rating Office attendance at the ICRA Conference to enable direct discussion and highlight the strengths of IRC racing.

4. Discuss with Irish Sailing the use of IRC crew number limits by Irish Organising Authorities; consider an article for *Afloat*.

5. Consider whether use of IRC crew number as a maximum should be made mandatory at IRC Championships.

6. IRC Technical Committee to consider whether flying headsails with an SFL below STLFHmax could be rated differently rather than being treated as the largest headsail.

7. Consider friendly amendment to the Storm Jib definition to allow use of local MNA special regulations.

8. Refer the adjustment of turnbuckles during racing, to the IRC Technical Committee.

9. Prepare and implement an early communications plan for the IRC Grand Prix concept.