



## Royal Ocean Racing Club Rating Office

### Minutes of a meeting of the GBR IRC Committee at the Royal Southampton Yacht Club on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2006 at 10am.

#### Present:

Full Members:	Paul King	Chairman
	Peter Bateson	
	Chris Brown	
	Mike Crompton	
	Andy Hill	
	Peter Jones	
	Martin Ozard	
	Ian MacDonald	
	Jill Stevenson	
	Ras Turner	
Co-opted Members:	John Stewart	
	Syd Thomas	
RORC:	Peter Wykeham-Martin	
In attendance:	Mike Urwin	RORC Rating Office Technical Director
	Jenny Howells	RORC Rating Office IRC Manager
	Emma Cary	RORC Rating Office
	Colin Guar	RORC

#### Friday 23rd September 2005

##### 1. Introduction and Welcome from the Chairman.

The Chairman welcomed all present to the annual meeting of the GBR IRC Owner's Association Committee, particularly new member Mike Crompton representing North Wales

##### 2. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from: Damien Bloor, Steve Coleman, Ken Kershaw, Robert Leggett, Mike Plunkett-Cole, and Stuart Quarrie.

##### 3. Minutes of the meeting of the GBR IRC Committee meeting held on Friday 23rd September 2005.

The minutes of the meeting of the IRC Council held on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2005 were signed as a true record of that meeting.



#### **4. Matters Arising.**

Item 6, GBR IRC Area Reports: Review of use of IRC by less committed owners. The Technical Director reported that directly, this has been difficult to address in a wholly objective fashion. Anecdotally (eg Mike Plunkett-Cole verbally and also many conversations with owners at regattas and elsewhere), the perception continues. There are also conflicting issues in that the less committed want complete simplicity which is then exploited by the more committed. Additionally, the less committed want rating benefit for their own failings which would turn IRC into a handicap rule. It should also be clearly recognised that local club handicap rules have a fundamentally important place in the structure of the sport and satisfy many sailors.

The ethos therefore is that IRC will remain a rating rule but as far as possible will avoid increasing complexity while at the same time discouraging developments not in the interests of the majority. The banning of heavy keel materials, rating taxation of high powered sail handling systems, and the (reluctantly) proposed introduction of headsail top width are examples of the latter.

In further discussion, it was noted that the apparent complexity of the IRC application form was a disincentive to some owners. The Rating Office would review the IRC application process with the aim where possible of simplification by for instance publication of a list of standard hulls.

Item 9, Technical Issues: No further abuse of bow knuckles has been noted this year.

The USS submission to the 2005 IRC Congress calling for Short Handed IRC certificates was not approved by Congress. The Yachting Australia submission calling for Standardised Endorsement requirements was however approved. Standard requirements will be presented to the IRC Congress next month for formal adoption.

#### **5. To note IRC Notice #06/01, Rule 24, Keel, Centreboard and Rudder, and IRC Notice #001-2006, Interpretation of Rule 26.3.1, Sheeting of Headsails and Spinnakers.**

The committee took note and that Notice #06/01 was the subject of a proposed IRC Rule change for 2007. Notice #001-2006 requires no rule change, simple revision to the French rule text.

#### **6. GBR IRC Area Reports.**

Written reports had been previously circulated. Members were asked to highlight any particular issues.

Verbally, Ras Turner noted that small fleets were an issue creating wide rating bands and all the inherent problems. He considered this to be primarily a race management issue. Ras noted that regatta events were becoming more popular.

Jill Stephenson reported that IRC numbers in Sussex had essentially plateaued and that the risk now was a decline because boats perceived that they were uncompetitive. Jill considered that education of owners was an issue and was organising seminars for local sailors. The Technical Director concurred and applauded the proposed seminars. The Chairman noted that the RYA was looking at a 'Club



Professional' scheme similar to that run by most golf clubs. This scheme could also be of value in assisting owners with initial IRC applications.

Ian MacDonald noted encouraging gentle growth. A new IRC only regatta had been successfully held for the first time this year. As also reported by others, class TCC spread is an issue which can only properly be addressed at Scottish Series with its large entry. Ian noted that production designs fared well in Scotland albeit that there were few one offs racing regularly.

Mike Crompton noted that racing in N Wales was generally dual scored under IRC and PY with IRC seen as the better system. Efforts were in hand to encourage increased participation and the proposed standards list was seen as beneficial to this.

Syd Thomas echoed last years comments that IRC is not for club racing and is 'too expensive'. It is seen as fair but owners will not pay. The Technical Director noted that the Rating Office had offered a 'club incentive scheme' for a number of years but that take up had not been good. While this had a set of criteria, the Rating Office had always been flexible and would consider any sensible suggestions. The meeting concluded that more publicity for the incentive scheme might help. It was also noted in discussion that 'cost' was not simply related to the first cost of an IRC certificate. Boats racing under IRC were also in effect committing to increased expenditure on eg sails, whereas under a handicap system, reduced performance due to tired sails would be reflected in a revised handicap. In further discussion, the view was expressed that in the context of the cost of going racing, to complain about the cost of an IRC certificate was unreasonable.

Echoing comments from elsewhere, Martin Ozard reported increasing participation with the majority of issues related to small fleets and race management. Lack of boat preparation was also a consistent issue which often distorted results.

Peter Jones noted a wide variety of winners offshore during 2006 with a significant proportion being French owned and raced. Peter was of the view that some designs were beneficially rated. In discussion, it was noted that some designs were easier to sail to their potential, particularly offshore in RORC and/or JOG style races. Responding, the Technical Director advised that it was neither feasible nor desirable to rate 'difficulty of sailing' within IRC.

Peter Bateson reported an increase in turnout for the Warsash Spring Series, but that the new 'IRC Solent Series' run over 7 summer weekends in conjunction with existing events had been poorly supported. This latter was not a reflection on IRC, rather it reflected the changing pattern of participation and was also reflected in Robert Leggett's written report noting that Sail East was also struggling. The Royal Southampton YC's short handed series continued to be well supported and retains the previous prescription barring rating changes during the series. This would negate any benefit to entrants of this series from any future 'short handed certificate'. Peter saw age allowance as a potential issue for fully crewed boats, but not when short handed.

Andy Hill reported that JOG had had a successful season with IRC working well for their fleet. JOG were considering increasing the number of classes from 3 to 4 to reduce the spread of TCCs within each class.

John Stewart reported a wide range of winners although the J/35 continued to score well. John was of the view that IRC Hull Factor should include an element for 'quality of design'. Disagreeing, the Technical Director noted that this would be inherently subjective and would inevitably lead to dispute.

Chris Brown reported a number of apparent issues prevalent in boats of 40' and larger including that he considers carbon construction to be a must, narrow deep rudders which create steering difficulties in stronger winds, trim tabs, and composite rigging. The IRC treatment of trim tabs was on the IRC Technical Committee agenda. The Technical Director considered that the development of composite standing rigging was potentially the greatest advance in boat construction in recent years because of the large weight saving aloft. Accepting that it was currently expensive, he nevertheless considered that it should as far as possible be equitably rated. On a vote of 10 for and 3 against, the committee



proposed that for the immediate future composite standing rigging should be harshly treated for boats of less than c50'.

Highlighting written comments received from those not present, the Technical Director noted Damien Bloor's view that some designs, particularly modified designs, were winning too easily. IRC does address modifications, but these are treated in a consistent manner with the same features on any other boats. This issue raised the question of whether in these instances it is the boats that are winning or whether it is that they are campaigned by more committed crews. The Technical Director has asked for further detail on Damien's comment related to the Rating Office being more customer friendly. This was the only comment of this type that had been received by the Rating Office in recent years. As yet, there had been no response.

Stuart Quarrie had proposed separation of 'super yachts' into a separate class. The Technical Director reported that this reflected discussions at an international level towards consistent entry criteria for major events.

## **7. Rating Office Annual Report.**

There were no questions arising from the previously circulated Rating Office annual report.

The apparent small decline in GBR numbers was noted and discussed. It was agreed that the Rating Office would circulate lists of boats rated in 2005 and 2006 by geographic area to committee members for their comment.

## **8. Proposed 2007 IRC Rule Changes.**

The committee approved the 8 IRC Rule changes for 2007 proposed by the IRC Technical Committee. It was agreed that the definition of checkstays should be amended to read:

**Checkstay** An item of running rigging from the mast significantly below the forestay to the stern of the boat which may be adjusted either directly or indirectly while racing.

## **9. Technical Issues.**

### **9.1 Stored Power.**

The Technical Director noted that it was intended to introduce a rating tax for high powered winch systems. This would be implemented in such a way that current 'cruisers' using stored power would be largely unaffected. It was agreed that any questions related to this on 2007 revalidation forms would be as simple as possible and would if appropriate be split into separate questions.

### **9.2 'IRC and the Grand Prix Rule. A Discussion Paper. Draft 3. PF King 28.8.06.**

In lengthy discussion, it was noted that separation by crew classification was not a practical solution, and that division by eg DLR and Hull Factor was not straightforward. This was in practice a race management issue which some events already embraced but using criteria specific to their events. It was considered unlikely that many events would adopt the proposal. The proposal was not approved.

In further discussion, it was agreed that a review of the race management guidelines should be carried out and that the Rating Office should try and initiate dialogue with event organisers in this context. Peter Wykeham-Martin noted that the decision reinforced the RORC policy view that there was a need for a high level international rating rule, but that this could only be achieved by consensus.

### **9.3 Proposal To Amend Rule 12.2. Paul King 28.8.06.**



The proposal was approved

#### **9.4 Sprit/sportsboat/IRC - guidance for race officers, e.g. J-92. Chris Brown.**

The committee agreed that the existing race management guidelines addressed this subject. Specifically, when racing mixed fleets, variety in courses and course types was of great importance. This issue had been addressed with some success in both Falmouth and Plymouth.

#### **9.5 The growth of 2-handed sailing. Chris Brown.**

A potentially significant increase in short handed sailing was noted with crews actively wishing to compete in short handed events. Race results however indicate that there is little apparent need for a specific short handed certificate and that the problem may have gone away. Implementation of a short handed IRC certificate, in parallel with a boat's normal certificate, would generate a number of administrative problems. It was agreed to take no action and to review the position after one year. However, should a submission be made to this year's IRC Congress proposing a separate short handed IRC certificate, GBR should vote in favour.

#### **9.6 Hull Factor assessment. Mike Urwin.**

The Technical Director intended to produce an article for the 2007 IRC Yearbook outlining the underlying purpose and philosophy of Hull Factor. This would not however reveal any specific details of the assessment. Responding to a question by John Stewart, the Technical Director noted that the assessment of Hull Factor must as far as possible be objective.

### **10. 2007 Fees.**

The committee noted the proposed fees for 2007.

### **11. Report and Submissions to the IRC Congress.**

The committee noted that a synthesis of this meeting will be presented to the IRC Congress. The Technical Director undertook to circulate this as early as possible for any comment from members prior to the Congress meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

### **12. AOB.**

Ras Turner advised the Committee that he would be resigning with immediate effect. The Chairman thanked Ras for his input.

The 2007 meeting of the GBR IRC Owners' Association committee would again be timed to coincide with the Southampton Boat Show.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 15.00.