



IRC Congress 2017

Minutes of a meeting held on Saturday 7th October 2017 in St Malo, France

PRESENT:

Chairman	Peter Wykeham-Martin (PWM)	UNCL	Jean-Philippe Cau (President)
Vice Chairmen	Alp Doguoglu		Philippe Serenon
	Malcolm Runnalls		Jean-Claude Merlivat
			Marc Noel
Belgium	Carl Sabbe		Jean Sans (TC)
Belgium	Luc Geirnaert		Claude Charbonnier (TC)
Bulgaria	Pavel Nikolov Dukov		Ludovic Abollivier (TC)
Canada	John Crawley		Rose Lounes
Great Britain	Mel Sharp		Bernard Nivelt (observer)
Hong Kong	Gideon Mowser		
IMA	Andrew McIrvine	RORC	Michael Boyd (Commodore)
Japan	Akimitsu Hirai		Steven Anderson
Japan	Haru Hiko Kaku		Eddie Warden Owen
Malta	Godwin Zammit		Dr Jason Smithwick (TC) (JETS)
Netherlands	Erik van Vuuren		Jenny Howells (TC)
Netherlands	Yvonne Beusker (observer)		Mike Urwin (TC)
Turkey	Cahit Uren		Emma Smith
Turkey	Alican Turali		Sebastian Edmonds (RYA)
USA	Nathan Titcomb		Ian Macdonald (observer)
			Marcus Hutchinson (observer)

TC = IRC Technical Committee

- 1. Introduction and welcome from Peter Wykeham-Martin, Chairman of the IRC Congress**
- 2. Apologies for absence and proxy votes**
Apologies received from: Eric Baittinger (USA), Glen Stanaway (AUS), Rob Ouelette(USA), Simon James (SE Asia).
- 3. Minutes of the meeting of the IRC Congress 2016**
The Minutes were accepted as an accurate record. PWM advised that he would be standing down as Chairman at the end of the 2018 meeting, and asked the Policy Steering Group (PSG) to suggest nominees to replace him as Chairman, for a vote at Congress October 2018.
- 4. Matters arising not covered by the agenda.**
None.
- 5. To comment on IRC 2017 Notices**
IRC 2017 Notice 2017-01 (17 May 2017) related to IRC Rule 13.2 batten length for sail measurement. JETS explained the basis for the notice and advised a slight wording change (see item 10).



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6. To receive contributions from attending National IRC Representatives

A silence was held in memory of Frans Maas, Freddy Franssens and Hans Goedegebeur who died when *Capella* capsized in July 2017 during the Light Vessel Race, Belgium.

Notes below are in addition to the reports published at <https://www.ircrating.org/committees/congress>

In Belgium the general situation has improved as there is now only one sailing Federation. Many Belgian boats race overseas, including the Rolex Fastnet Race

IRC racing in Bulgaria and Romania is suffering due to ORC Club certificates being issued free of charge.

In Canada, 2017 was a very difficult year for the main IRC fleet in Toronto due to extensive flooding that lasted until August, preventing boats being launched. Those that were launched raced as usual.

Hong Kong and France both reported sportsboats drifting to ORC for their racing. JETS reported that the RORC Rating Office is working with the High Performance HP30 class in the UK to re-ignite their racing and offer technical advice, for instance about class limits. The Fast 40+ class is strong.

In France, cruising boats see IRC as too high level and ORC Club as lower level; similarly in Japan there is a barrier between PHRF and IRC. Belgium reported that they have a local system for the 'less ambitious' boats who only sail in local races. In France the main competition is the OSIRIS system run by FFV.

In Japan, new local designs are being launched and it is a long time since that has been seen. JSAF administers IRC and ORC. Offshore races are mainly IRC. The Japan Cup is the most prestigious annual event. Previously it has not had class divisions or groups, but next year it may have high performance and cruising divisions.

In Malta, club event participation is the biggest concern, though this is more likely a social issue rather than related to IRC. A similar situation was reported with club racing in Great Britain. RORC race entries had been higher in 2017 as it was a Rolex Fastnet Race year. The RORC programme works but they are trying new initiatives. The Hague Offshore World Championship and the IRC European Championship should have a positive effect on entries in 2018.

In Ireland the ISORA (Irish Sea) racing is growing, perhaps it is a sign that people like to escape from everyday life. Falling race entries is a trend around the world and distance racing should be encouraged. ISORA run 50-80 mile races so people arrive at the destination in time for social, they stay overnight and cruise back. Clubs and event organisers should ask the sailors what they want and offer variety.



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In the Netherlands, the World Championship in 2018 will mean more IRC certificate. Lots of Netherlands sailing teams travel for IRC races elsewhere, and a successful IRC National Championship was held in Breskens in 2017.

In Turkey they have seen 22 new boats. They are doing measurer training and are optimistic for the future.

In the USA, US Sailing supports a free market with rating rules (IRC, ORR and ORC) and does not promote one over the other. However, this does not work well and fosters a fiercely competitive culture between rating rules. Racing in the US is suffering and some events are disappearing altogether. Most premier races use ORR and no dual scoring is offered. At Block Island Race Week there was a last minute push to have ORC classes in addition to IRC and one-design; this creates smaller classes.

In Great Britain the desire is to develop the IRC brand or 'membership', and look for new ideas about benefits to owners and to promote IRC rating and racing generally. The Half Ton Cup held in Ireland had produced extremely close results, and this is one benefit of IRC that could be promoted more. Also, for clubs using IRC removes arguments about local handicaps.

Events are the strength of the brand - IRC needs to be used in events that people want to do. This is an issue for event organisers and Rule Authorities to consider.

The International Maxi Association reported on the recent Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup and Rolex Maxi 72 World Championship. The only class not racing IRC was the Super Maxis, which have a very different performance profile to other boats. The Wally class is very happy with IRC, and those with an option of ORC have used IRC by choice. A new offshore element has been added to the IMA calendar, with boats having to complete 3 out of the 5 races; the first event is the Rolex Middle Sea Race 2017.

In response to a question, it was explained that the Fast 40+ Class is a box rule based on IRC rating, DLR and other parameters. Boats are weighed and measured and an IRC certificate is required. The DLR limitation leads to a 40' fast, light boat.

7. To receive a report from the Policy Steering Group.

Michael Boyd, RORC Commodore summarised the PSG's meeting:

- Lift foils: a method has been successfully agreed by the IRC Technical Committee.
- Reduced crew: it has been **agreed to run a pilot study in Ireland**, in 2018 ideally.
- Code zeros: this is a complex technical problem. **It was agreed to support a survey of owners/skippers for their views.**

(these are discussed in later agenda items).

The Hague Offshore Sailing World Championship is the highlight of 2018, and has involved a lot of productive work by IRC and ORC.



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IRC European Championship and RORC Commodores' Cup: RORC is about to issue the Notice of Race. Rule Authorities promoting this should note the changes to the rules about teams for Commodore's Cup.

Other racing in 2018:

- RORC values the participation of overseas entrants in races such as the Sevenstar Round Britain & Ireland and Volvo Round Ireland Races.
- It was noted that the RORC Transatlantic Race destination has changed to Grenada, following the hurricane devastation of the BVIs.
- The RORC Caribbean 600 will be the 10th anniversary and RORC is hoping for 100 boats.
- Jean-Philippe Cau, UNCL President, introduced some new ideas for UNCL racing, such as the UNCL Challenge which will promote offshore programmes and a Crew IRC trophy.

It was agreed that exciting events are what drive participation.

Italy has asked to hold the Europeans in 2019; this would be very good for IRC, and encourage IRC rating in nearby countries such as Spain.

8. To receive a report from the IRC Technical Committee (TC), including IRC distribution worldwide

Dr Jason Smithwick, new Director of the Rating Office, reported. It is his third month working with IRC and he also introduced the new UNCL TC member Claude Charbonnier. Other members of the TC are: UNCL – Jean Sans, Ludovic Abollivier; RORC – Mike Urwin, Andrew Yates, Jenny Howells.

Almost half the worldwide IRC fleet is **Endorsed**. Australia and some other countries require Endorsement, and the percentage in the Southern Hemisphere is higher at around 70%. The reason for the increase in Endorsed certificates may be that some countries require it, or boats are measured anyway so can be issued with an Endorsed certificate. Also perhaps IRC is being used for more high level events. It was noted that requiring Endorsed certificates can turn people off as it is more expensive.

Technical IRC developments:

- Code zeros/gennakers and 'folding luff' spinnakers. It was noted that the TC is researching how these sails may be dealt with within rating system, so ratings may change in the future (but not for 2018).
- Jean Sans and Claude Charbonnier have been researching Beam effects.
- Jean Sans has been researching effects of windage and ergonomics .
- The TC is continuing to work on rating crew number.

RORC continues to work with **In-House Certification** (IHC) around the world for sail data. Also for the **Universal Measurement System** (UMS) RORC is working with Nicola Sironi at ORC and Nathan Titcomb at US Sailing. This is about data exchange between rating rules, and the need to continue to work on common data standards.



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MyIRC rating application portal. RORC is working with the developer to add tools to work with Rule Authorities, and have been having discussions with Ireland and the USA about its development. Jason invited other country representatives to talk to him if interested so he can discuss specific requirements for that country; it is still the intention to roll out MyIRC to other countries, but changes of personnel in the Rating Office have slowed things down. Every country has different requirements but we need to try and avoid too much customisation as that is hard to administer and very expensive. A flexible product is the aim.

It was agreed that transparency is needed about the treatment of technical developments to avoid unnecessary expense for owners. The TC is very aware of the implications of IRC changes. This is why the potential change to rating 'Code Zeros' is being notified now. With reference to the change in the rating of spinnaker area that has been phased in over 4 years, 2018 will be the final year of changes. Some software changes are too large to do in one year, so are phased in.

9. To receive answers from the Technical Committee to subjects pending from the last meeting.

Crew number weight. Or "crew quantum", ie. how we would rate different crew numbers. There have been differing opinions on how to do this, including using Righting Moment. The PSG has requested that the TC continues with research and a trial in Ireland. However the TC needs to proceed carefully, and check that Ireland is happy to continue.

It will be a major policy change if IRC has different ratings for 75% or 50% of crew. We have to be careful where we take IRC without confusing owners and event organisers; and also need to be clear what we do with the results of any trial in Ireland.

There was a discussion about female and young crews i.e. generally lighter. The Netherlands are experiencing a big increase in women sailing, and this aspect should be taken into account. The European Championship allows extra crew if under 25 or female. The other option is to use crew weight (as default in the IRC rule) instead of number. It was noted there are sometimes advantages of less weight, and there is an efficiency issue as well as ballast weight. The TC does not intend to rate boats with fewer crew advantageously. It was also noted that every member of the IRC fleet (and Congress) has a different opinion on the matter.

10. To receive, consider and decide proposals for IRC Rule changes for 2018.

10.1 From the IRC Technical Committee.

All proposals were agreed, with the following additional notes:

- Rule 21.5 Mainsails - this is a matter of consistency with the headsail data rule, and reflects actual practice as the Rating Authority already requests actual mainsail widths. Even for boats not needing Endorsement, in most cases the sailmaker who made the sail will know this data. Mainsails will not need to be re-measured for revalidation.
- Dayboats – noted corrected wording for Rule 21.1.6 (a) (ii).



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- Rule 13.2 Blue batten – noted updated wording.
- Hull Factor - Carl Sabbe pointed out that Rig Factor rule 21.2.1 uses similar words and should also be updated.

It was agreed to amend the wording of rule 21.2.1.

Foil measurement – the TC had been tasked by the PSG to improve the rating of foils. There were the options to use a surrogate method or to use actual data. The TC had chosen the latter so need definitions. It is hard to cover every future possibility hence the final paragraph, allowing flexibility in the definition for the Rating Authority, is included, but this is only to determine the chord and span to use. Regarding design development and the possibility of foils that change shape, the TC is trying to keep it simple but is open to future development.

It was confirmed that the definitions apply to all types of foils including straight and curved ones, and that lift is included in the calculation. Regarding the definition of ‘upright’, this means zero degrees of heel. It was confirmed that the rule text is only the blue section in the rule changes document, and does not include any specific names such as ‘DSS’ or ‘Dali’.

8.2 From IRC Rule Authorities.

FRA – Philippe Serenon presented the submission regarding more allowance for cruising features such as high coachroofs, small cockpits etc. Cruisers are feeling left behind by rating rules.

The TC was asked to lead on a Working Group, including Congress members, to report to the PSG and Congress; not to stop development but to reflect reality in the fleets. This is a question of definition not rating.

There was a discussion about the difficulties of definitions as designers will always push the limits of a definition. Also there is the danger of typeforming undesirable characteristics to ‘cheat’ definitions, such as cockpit size or headroom. It may also affect safety and Offshore Special Regulations compliance. It was agreed that specific definitions would be harmful for IRC.

However, IRC needs to cater for this major part of the fleet, and does already take cruising features into account in Hull Factor. In response to a suggestion of using drawings to determine cruising features, the Rating Authority must be careful how much IRC is pushed into the digital world, and consider its resources.

Race organisers can split fleets using features as appropriate, such as HF or DLR. For advice on how to split fleets, attention was drawn to the Notes to Race Organisers (NRO) in the RORC IRC Yearbook (also on IRC website).

It was agreed that the NRO should be expanded in the online version.

Jean Sans has already done some work on the subject of windage and ergonomics and TC would also like to look at the treatment of cruisers in the software. However, it was undesirable to have a definition of ‘cruiser’ in IRC.



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Alp Doguoglu explained that Turkey had used racer /racer-cruiser /cruiser labels, starting in 2013. UNCL had looked at features of the boat to determine this, and TORC had split the fleets centrally. However, this caused discontent and affected the legitimacy of IRC. TORC later abandoned this approach and let race organisers decide on fleet splits.

Andrew McIrvine suggested that the issue is boats that plane or not, which is not compensated by rating, and that this should be included in the discussion paper.

Bernard Nivelt pointed out that profile windage and front windage are already required for classification in France.

It was agreed that the TC would produce a discussion paper for Congress next year.

BEL – this was not an official submission but Carl Sabbe comments on rule text. Weight condition Rule 17.1 is confusing as it suggests owners cannot weigh/race without cushions? That is not the intention but the problem is recognised.

It was agreed to add words such as 'if carried while racing' to the relevant part of rule 17.1.

11. To discuss and consider the future direction of IRC.

11.1 IRC Marketing

Two presentations were made:

Bernard Nivelt, yacht designer.

Bernard started designing boats in 1975 and there were the same problems as now with rating rule v. handicap rules. With a rating rule, designers may produce a very bad design just to win. In handicap rules boats can use tricks to get a better handicap for future races. For production boats you use the system as best you can to sell boats.

IRC is good because there is little data taken on the hull which gives freedom to designers, and IRC boats cover a wide spectrum of types. IRC is not like other rules where you have to change boats every year to stay competitive, also some owners think they have to. In type-forming rules (such as in IOR) the boat designs converge, and it costs owners more money to get an advantage, but IRC offers more options to designers. Owners do not understand the difference between rating and handicap. At the moment there are fewer people commissioning new prototypes, as it is expensive and risky, when you can buy a used TP 52 or GP 42 to win at a good price.

Marcus Hutchinson – marketing consultant.

Marcus worked at Humphreys Yacht Design in the early 1980s. The decline in numbers of boats racing is due to common problems: competition in social time, increasing costs, organisation.

What we need to do is identify and remove the excuses that stop people going racing.

A rating certificate for any rule is basically a licence to go racing. The promotion of events drives people, for instance the 2017 Rolex Fastnet Race entry was sold out in a record 4 minutes, it was well organised and promoted. But local club racing numbers have dropped in the last 10 years.



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It is important to take lessons from other parts of the sport and ask 'why do people go to some events and not others?'. For instance the Mini Transat changed to split the fleet into prototypes and production class, and there are now a small number of prototypes and the best competition is in the production class. Bernard commented that it is the same in the Class 40 fleet.

11.2 IRC/ORC World Championship

Yvonne Beusker presented as a marketing strategist and double-handed sailor, she is in charge of the marketing for the Hague Offshore World Championship:

Dual scoring is normal in the Netherlands and to have the racing ORC & IRC is exciting.

The Hague should be the place people want to be in July and the marketing team is happy to help with encouraging entrants.

Race organisers can invite people doing the Worlds to go to their events, as they will now have IRC certificates.

Since registration opened (mid-September) 85 boats entered including 9 big boats and 2 Fast40s (max entry is 150). There was a discussion about class distribution, eg. if one class has a lot more entries than the others. This would be an issue for the working party to resolve if necessary. **This point will be put to the working party.**

1st June 2018 is currently the decision date for accepting entries. It was suggested this should be brought forward by 2 or 3 months to give sailors more time after knowing if they've got an entry. **This suggestion will be passed on to the working party.**

Marcus Hutchinson pointed out that it is important for the online community set up for the 2018 event to be retained for future events, otherwise they are lost and each event needs to start again building the community. This needs to be discussed with the Worlds 2018 organisation to make it seamless for future events.

Michael Boyd thanked Yvonne & Erik for their efforts and talked about future events:

European Championship:

2018 Cowes combined with RORC Commodore's Cup.

2019 Had been considering Scandinavia but Italy is a good idea.

2020 is the 300th anniversary of the Royal Cork YC and they had requested to host Europeans.

Nb. There has been no formal bidding and these are expressions of interest.

World Championship:

IRC now has right to hold its own World Championship. The RORC position is to review the situation after the 2018 event. It was felt that the Worlds should be held every two years.

Olympics:

An offshore mixed double-handed event has been proposed for 2020 in Japan in one-design boats and is awaiting approval. This would be a showcase / demo event with no medals. This would be a



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great opportunity for offshore sailors to take part in the Olympics. RORC races are offered as training ground, and prizes are already offered for mixed double-handed entrants.

Proposals for World Sailing conference 2017:

Olympics 2024 in France (Marseilles) with World Championship beforehand.

The ORC has proposed a world championship based on classic offshore races (Fastnet, Sydney-Hobart, etc.). This is not supported by RORC as it would only open to very wealthy sailors.

12. To discuss any proposed amendments to the IIRCOA Constitution.

None

13. To discuss general submissions and Special Regulations submissions to World Sailing.

There are 38 submissions, mainly from France.

The two most relevant ones are about Survival suits and AIS beacons – for Cat 2 and above everyone should have one. The Survival suit requirement may be going too far for Cat 2.

14. Any Other Business.

JETS noted that the Rating Office is reviewing the fee structure for RORC-administered countries. Currently there are two bands, up to 17.99m and 18.00+ (charged in GBP per metre). Proposed change is to encourage smaller boats and includes adding a 11.50m-17.99m additional bracket with slightly higher fee. Boats up to 11.50m make up 60% of the IRC fleet.

It was noted that in Europe, regulations apply 12.00m and above so that would be a better split. JETS acknowledged this. There were no other comments. No final decision has yet been made.

Alp Doguoglu asked about the proposal to rate code zeros, should he wait before buying one? JETS explained the current rating situation up to or over the 75% limit (SFL/SHW), if a code zero rates as a headsail or spinnaker the rating changes substantially. The TC wants to investigate this rating step but it will not be changed in 2018. There is no intention to penalise code zeros, just rate them more fairly and the intention is for a smoother rating line between spinnaker and headsail. Any change may be phased in over 3-4 years.

The meeting closed at 1530.