



MINUTES of GBR IRC Committee Meeting

Thursday 12 September 2019 - Royal Lymington Yacht Club

Present:

MS - Mel Sharp (Chairman)
AP - Andrew Pearce (Poole & RORC)
BM - Barrie Martin (Classics)
SP - Stephen Parry (SIRCOA)
ST - Stephen Tudor (Wales)
RW - Richard Woof (Weymouth)
CB - Chris Brown (co-opted)
JF - Jack Fenwick (RYA)
JETS - Jason Smithwick (Rating Office Director)
JH - Jenny Howells (Rating Office Technical Manager)
ES - Emma Smith (Rating Office Technical Team)
SM - Sally Moss (Rating Office Technical Team)
AY - Andrew Yates (IRC Technical Committee)

1. Welcome from the Chairman and introductions

Sally Moss was introduced as the most recent member of the Rating Office team, having joined the office in February 2019.

2. Apologies for absence

Michael Webster, Andy Hill, David Murrin, Des Balmforth, Richard Babbe, Nick Jones, Simon Britten, John Stewart, Laurence Mead, Paul King, Ian Macdonald, Peter Wykeham-Martin, Eddie Warden-Owen, Chris Stone, Janet Grosvenor, James Hall.

3. Committee membership

New members are needed from West Sussex and the Solent. Current members will look for possible candidates.

Frank Reed, Honorary Member and long time CHS/IRC Committee member, sadly passed away during 2019. JH read a tribute to him written by Mike Urwin.

4. Minutes of the meeting of the GBR IRC Committee Thursday 13 September 2018

The 2018 minutes were signed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

5. GBR Rule Authority (Rating Office) Annual Report

JETS highlighted that there had been a levelling out (improvement) in IRC numbers since

he joined 3 years ago, though some specific areas had seen a decrease in numbers. It was noted that a change in club management, personalities and club focus can have a significant effect on participation and IRC engagement, either positive or negative.

There has been an increase in weighing and measurement this year. The Rating Office has purchased two new loadcells (7.5T and 12T). There was a discussion about the effect of the loadcell capacity on weighing results for light boats, however the effects of conditions and weather are probably more significant.

Issues raised

Following a question from CB about differences between RORC and UNCL ratings, JETS confirmed that RORC and UNCL use the same server and that new boats or queries on hull factor are agreed between the two rating offices. Applications are based on owner declarations in both countries. It was also noted that UNCL get comments about RORC-issued ratings being favourable.

A discussion was held regarding:

- a) Boats changing ownership and being found to not comply with their IRC certificate.
Proposal to remove Endorsement on change of ownership was suggested by the committee. To be taken to IRC Tech Committee, IRC Congress, Policy Steering Group. ACTION R.O.
- b) Equipment inspection and/or spot checks being carried out on boats at events. It was agreed that this is desirable and it was suggested by MS that this is taken back to individual areas to encourage informal checks before and during events.
ACTION (Committee members) [nb. this has also been added as a recommendation for GBR IRC Championships with immediate effect]
- c) Sail stickers on measured sails, in particular spinnakers. **Proposal to require SPA to be written on measured spinnakers was unanimously supported.** JETS suggested that this would be best integrated into the IHC Scheme. A Rule change would be required, but maybe it could be introduced in the UK as a start. **ACTION R.O.**
- d) The information included on the IRC listing. Hull factor is not included on the listing; ST reported that they split out a 'silver' cruising fleet using HF and currently have to ask the owner for a copy of their certificate. It was pointed out that owners are obliged by IRC rules to carry a copy of their certificate aboard.

Rating Office note - Update listing headers – LOA (LH), LR (DLR) ACTION R.O. (JH)

6. IRC Incentive and Support Schemes

a) IRC Advocate Scheme

IRC Advocates are now those who are in clubs and co-ordinating applications within the Advocate Scheme. This is a replacement for Start Up/Club Loyalty Scheme with a simpler structure offering 15% discount to any club involved. The previous list of 'advocates' (representatives around the country) no longer exists but those on that list are also encouraged to become part of the new scheme with clubs in their area. An IRC Advocate conference is planned for later this year. Committee members are still advocates for IRC in the broader sense of the word.

Add contact details of committee members online (with permission) ACTION R.O.

b) Single Event Ratings (SERs)

SERs continue to be limited to 6 specific events. There is no intention of adding more clubs to the list. As well as discouraging more widespread IRC participation, producing SERs is the same amount of work for the rating team for a low income which is not fair on the rest of the fleet.

JF asked how many boats get an SER year on year, and suggested replacing it with a general one-use certificate (not for specific events), after which a full certificate must be purchased.

It was agreed that the SER scheme should be continued in some form and JETS agreed that JF had a valid point [about not allowing boats to have an SER every year].

The Rating Office will explore the details and possible forecast of changing the scheme, including looking at how many boats only have an SER every year ACTION R.O.

Also noted:

- Remove 'Panerai' sponsor name from SER list from 2020
- Correct typo RSYC to RYS on SER list in Rating Office report ACTIONS R.O

A discussion was held regarding the rating of classic boats. BM thought that the Corinthian spirit has been lost in classic events, that classics cannot compete against modern boats and that the IRC program changes have not gone far enough, although it works within classic events.

MS pointed out that this is not a problem related to classics as there are other boats that are considered uncompetitive in mixed fleets. eg. small, performance boats racing with larger cruiser racer boats.

JF pointed out that this is generally a race management issue.

It was also pointed out that IRC makes no allowance for design flaws.

7. Development of IRC

a) mid-level club racing and b) IRC and UK rating systems

- A discussion was held about local initiatives. Various thoughts were: The less committed are the ones less likely to join in with IRC and want an element of crew skill factor included.
- Those who enjoy quality racing are the IRC supporters. It is more important to grow keen members than drag people into it when they are not interested.
- Promoting a local fleet of light, exciting boats helps encourage the younger crews (example of Weymouth)
- North Wales initiative is to run several types of class (eg. silver class) so more people feel they are playing for a class win; this sees 60 boats racing.
- Keep everyone involved; use introductory race types to get people into racing.
- Make events attractive – people are less likely to travel these days and are therefore more selective about the events they do.
- Youth yacht racing should be made more fun, it is too serious with coaching etc.
- Dual scoring use to introduce people to IRC racing.

Re an IRC Club system

JETS envisions a system run by clubs, licensed to a club. It would be a very simple, possibly a subscription model based on standard production boats. The question is, how much should it be cross-compatible with IRC?

There was concern that clubs might continue to use the ratings after the first year, but without paying; and there would be difficulties differentiating between it and full IRC. JF thought that a mid-level system would be good to encourage more people.

ST suggested that no intermediate system was needed if the introductory system (NHC) could be improved. JF felt that NHC is being treated as a rating system but it is not, it is a handicap system.

Younger people are more interested in experience than ownership and systems need to respond. More one-off events will become of interest.

It was agreed that a variety in course types is required, though some members did express a preference for windward-leeward courses.

It was noted that the RORC IRC Nationals were W/L courses except one round the cans race. It was felt that those with W/L optimised boats are very influential with race officers. Regarding different ratings for different courses, JETS confirmed that there was no desire to see multiple TCCs on certificates.

SP said he would like to take the issue of course types to the RYA Race Management Committee.

JETS pointed out the published **Race Management Guidelines** that include advice on course types and other aspects to take into account:

<https://ircrating.org/irc-racing/race-management/>

For GBR IRC Championships there is currently a recommendation: “*It is specifically recommended that a mixture of course types is offered as outlined in point 5. of the NFRO, to cater for different types of design, so that one type does not dominate because of favourable course types (eg. all windward/leeward or predominantly reaching)*”

Proposal that this should be changed from a recommendation to a requirement.
Agreed that some consultation to be done and RO to look at wording **ACTION R.O**
[Nb. this has now been done with immediate effect]

c) Promotion and development of IRC in the UK

MS felt that the member offers are a good incentive and invited ideas for more benefits.
This was agreed. **ACTION (Committee members)**

CB questioned whether Sail Sense is included in the Spinlock members' offer; the Rating Office was not aware of any exclusions. [Note: JH has now confirmed with Spinlock that the discount applies to all products including Sail Sense, there are no exclusions. If anyone has difficulties with obtaining the discount please let the Rating Office know].

RW pointed out that IRC is sold on the competitive racing compared with local

systems/handicaps.

8. IRC Championships 2019 & 2020

a) UK Nationals, June 2019, Cowes

AP talked about a proposal from Poole Regatta for an IRC Nationals 2022 or IRC Europeans 2022. The Nationals has historically been fixed in the Solent, but the Europeans alternates between RORC/UNCL countries and the next opportunity for RORC option is 2022. This would be a 5-day event including 3 days of Poole Regatta. A lot of Poole Regatta entrants travel from outside Poole and a UK south coast European Championship would attract French, Dutch etc. Max berthing is approx 250.

There was unanimous support for a Poole bid for Europeans 2022.

AP to send the draft proposal to MS and CB.

CB suggested a poll of competitors regarding the Nationals.

b) IRC Europeans, June 2019, San Remo, Italy

JETS reported. It was a successful event with 2 days of pre-race equipment inspection, 7 races and a varied fleet.

c) IRC/ORC Worlds, Late September 2020, NYYC, Newport, RI, USA

JETS reported. RORC believes that alternate years is appropriate for this event. For 2020 it is proposed there will be a new scoring solution to reduce confusion, this will use time deltas instead of average placing.

d) General Review of Championships

It was agreed that combining an IRC Championship with an existing event helps with entry levels.

e) 2020 Dates and Events

The following events were approved unless stated:

- East Coast – Ramsgate 29-31 July 2020
- Autumn - Hamble Winter Series. This was not considered suitable as a Championship and maybe should not be titled as such. **ACTION R.O.**
- Solent – new plan to rotate the Championship weekend and have just one event, this is a change from the previous format. 2020 will be the Portsmouth Centenary Regatta.
- National – RORC Cowes 26-28 June 2020.
- Southern – Poole 23-25 May 2020. AP noted that Weymouth would be applying for 2021.
- Scotland – Scottish Series 22-25 May 2020..
- South West – Falmouth application for August 2021. 2020 should be Torbay and this would be good as they are RYA club of the year. **ACTION R.O. (ES)**
Note: Emma has been in contact with Torbay who are intending apply for 2020. If Torbay don't apply for 2020 then it should be at Falmouth. If Torbay apply then Falmouth 2021 approved.
- Inland – Windermere winter series.
- Welsh National – Pwllheli (Celtic Regatta) 14-16 Aug 2020. ST noted that they had hosted this even since 2015 and the event is growing. They would like to also apply for 2021.

JETS suggested we should encourage applications 2 years in advance as events take a while to organise, this would allow for planning, sponsorship, PR etc. **ACTION R.O.**

f) UK Nationals – format and location

See point a)

g) Guidelines and suggestions

JETS reminded members of Race Management Guidelines.

SP asked for Word version to copy/paste into RYA Race Management Guide

ACTION R.O. (ES done)

9. Rule changes to IRC

a) Proposed 2020 IRC Rule Changes from the IRC Technical Committee

JETS presented a very early draft of proposed rule changes.

- Certificate validity clarification re north/south validity
- Allow no. of spinnakers change for short-handed certificate
- Bunk cushions inshore category – administrative change
- Whisker poles definition and rating
- Bulb weight definition

Final proposed changes will be presented to IRC Congress in October.

10. Meetings and Submissions

a) IRC Submissions to World Sailing

No IRC submissions.

Amongst others there is an Offshore Special Regulations submission regarding halyard locks (to be operated from deck level).

b) Proposals from the GBR IRC Committee and any Submissions to the IRC Congress

Endorsement expiry to be brought up in GBR report to Congress.

c) IRC Congress Chairman

Michael Boyd (from October 2019)

d) GBR Report to the IRC Congress – 5-6 October, Antibes, France

As reported under item 5.

11. Area and fleet reports – reports received before the meeting

To note the reports received:

Andrew Pearce	Poole
Richard Woof	Weymouth
Mike Webster	Dartmouth/Devon
Mel Sharp	Cornwall/South West
Richard Babbe	Channel Islands
Stephen Tudor	North Wales
Des Balmforth	Scotland
Chris Brown	High performance fleet
Andy Hill	JOG
Stephen Parry	Solent

No further comments or questions arose from the reports except that CB expanded on

some points from his report. CB said that generally the rule works very well, but there were some specific issues he wished to raise.

Bilge keels – concern over their rating. JETS confirmed that the Rating Office takes note of them as with any other features.

Deck/sheeting angles could be rated to reflect the ease or difficulty of deck use. JETS argued that the Rating Office does not want to get into detail of rating ergonomics, and it is difficult to measure sheeting angle.

Auto pilots – JETS reports that RORC is preparing a paper regarding allowing auto pilots in more than just short-handed racing. There is a concern about hi-tech autopilots. It was noted that since the 2019 change in rating deep draft, some boats in the 30-40 foot range are now reducing draft.

Lifting rudders and adjustable rudders are not currently rated. This is on the IRC Technical Committee agenda but there is no outcome yet.

AY noted that the IRC TC is also looking at boats putting in outboards when it may not be appropriate for the size of boat. JF thought IRC should be careful about how electric engines are treated (re publicity).

12. Proposed date of 2020 meeting

JETS asked for Committee opinions about venue and timing. It was agreed that Lymington/Southampton and fitting in with the Southampton Boat Show works well.

13. Any other business - As agreed at the beginning of the meeting

None

JH note – send 2020 rule books to Committee members and Advocates. ACTION R.O.

POST-MEETING NOTE

Following the meeting it has been agreed between the chairman and vice-chairman that Michael Webster will stand down as vice-chairman of the GBR IRC Committee and Stephen Tudor will take over this role. Both Mel and the Rating Office would like to thank Michael for the significant contribution he has made to the GBR Committee and his continued support of IRC in the Dartmouth area and beyond. We welcome Stephen from the Wales IRC region as vice-chairman and thank him for agreeing to undertake this role.

The confirmed date for our next meeting is **Thursday 10th September 2020**.