



GBR IRC Committee annual meeting
Thursday 15 September 2016
Royal Lymington Yacht Club

Minutes

Present:

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| Full members | Ian Macdonald - Scotland (Chairman) Mel Sharp – South West (Vice Chairman) David Cooper – JOG Peter Wykeham-Martin - Solent Barrie Martin – Classics Stephen Parry – Solent Stephen Tudor – Wales Andrew Pearce – Poole/RORC |
| Co-opted Members | Chris Brown |
| RYA Nominee | Jack Fenwick |
| Observers | Stephen Homan-Berry – Weymouth Mike Webster - Dartmouth Stacey Clark - RYA James Hall - Spinlock |
| RORC Rating Office | Emma Smith - Technical Team (Secretary) James Dadd – Technical Director (morning only) Jenny Howells – Technical Manager Mike Urwin – Consultant |

NOTE: Minutes and Appendices are online at: <http://tinyurl.com/gbrirc2016>

1. Welcome from the Chairman and introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone and each member introduced themselves.

2. Committee membership - new members and other changes

There was a discussion about the increasing size of the Committee and the areas represented. RORC representation was also questioned; the Rating Office is aware of the issue, but it was agreed that it is useful to have RO staff present. Mel Sharp thought the Committee structure was fine, this was agreed.

3. Apologies for absence

Jason Payne-James, Des Balmforth, Richard Babbe, John Stewart, Terry Hunt, Frank Reed, Andy Hill, Charlene Jackson, Andrew Yates, Rob McLean, Paul King, Nick Elliott, Eddie Warden-Owen. James Dadd had to leave after lunch to attend a Swan meeting in Sardinia, which is important for future of IRC.

4. Minutes of the meeting of the GBR IRC Committee held on Thursday 17 September 2015

Approved.

5. Matters arising:

a. Offshore Special Regulations. Mike Urwin presented an update. OSRs have been reviewed. Cat 5 has been re-written, and is now being adopted more widely for appropriate racing. Full, user-friendly documents are on www.sailing.org. New submissions include rewrite of MOB requirements by RORC and improved wording for tether requirements.

b. Rating Office/IRC representation at UK boat shows. This would be expensive and was not considered prudent use of the Rating Office's limited PR budget, but the Rating Office (RO) are considering small IRC pamphlets to distribute and have on boat show stands.

c. IRC/RYA seminars. James Dadd reported. Combined with the RYA (Jack Fenwick & Bas Edmonds). Seminars were about encouraging owners to go racing, and providing tools for clubs to get people racing, so an educational re mindset rather than technical. Positive feedback received and several clubs have adopted the suggestions on dual scoring with NHC and using different courses. The attendance varied around the country but consistently got the sailing managers or representatives from different clubs. It was agreed that follow-up sessions would be useful where requested. Stephen Tudor reported that in N.Wales self-recorded finish times and making things fun are what have worked. Mike Webster reported that they were replacing Byron with IRC and their local Commodore's Cup prompted people to get IRC certificates.

There was discussion on NHC and other local handicap/rating systems. James Dadd thought that a lot of local handicaps are based on simple boat data, or even an IRC rating, so are really a rating system and not progressive like a performance handicap. Using progressive handicaps is the way to get people out racing without being put off by always coming last.

Is IRC cost really an issue? A certificate is about the same cost as one spare jib sheet. It was agreed that certificate cost is not the real issue and is used as an excuse rather than a reason. Complexity of application is more of a disincentive and the Rating Office is working on making it simpler to get a certificate.

Mel Sharp suggested that there is too big a gap between local handicap/NHC and IRC for those who can't afford to compete with those with new laminate sails etc. Suggested a lower level IRC club system for local use only but realised that the Rating Office does not support this. There was discussion about race organisers catering for what sailors wanted. However, concern was expressed about changing programmes and course types to suit 'the loudest voices'.

d. expenses for Committee members. It was suggested by the Rating Office that full members should be eligible for one free IRC certificate per year, once their annual report has been submitted. Vote: For 6, Against 3.

ACTION RO

6. GBR Rule Authority (Rating Office) Annual Report [See appendices](#)

James Dadd summarised. The trend worldwide is that there are fewer boats but the average size is larger, creating a stable numbers of sailors; there is a different trend in offshore as it's more difficult to get crew, plus in the RORC fleet numbers vary in Fastnet year v. non-Fastnet year.

Mike Webster pointed out that IRC needs to run as a business, so should look at boat numbers rather than size, also we need to encourage classes 4, 5, & 6. It was agreed that a regional breakdown of different sized boats would be useful for business model.

ACTION JH

David Cooper asked about an analysis of Hull Factors in the IRC fleet. James Dadd pointed out that HF is one of 103 factors in the IRC rating calculation and is not the major factor; it is only on the certificate for classification for event organisers to put similar types of boats together. The HF calculation evolves with design developments.

James Dadd talked about the 'Round The Island Race problem': boats with IRC ratings are not allowed to enter the ISCR class, so boats were not getting IRC ratings because they wanted to race in ISCR. The Island SC is looking at relaxing this rule for 2017; all agreed that would be a good step.

The MyIRC online application system had moved to web-based applications for 2016, and brand new standalone software is being created for 2017. The new system is much faster and easier to complete than the Excel based forms and it is hoped that its use will also expand to other countries. It may be possible in the future for Advocates to have an admin logon to show applications for boats local to them.

Stephen Parry suggested taking payment for 2+ years in advance? There would be administrative issues to address and it was not thought that there would be many takers. However, the new MyIRC is being built to allow possible future developments such as direct debit revalidation.

7. Proposed and possible changes to IRC

a. Proposed 2017 IRC Rule Changes from the IRC Technical Committee. JJD summarised and explained proposed rule changes:

STL: There will now always be an STL on the certificate (it is effectively now Sail Tack Length although not officially named). The change probably only affects a dozen boats in the world. AGREED.

Aft rigging: The Rating Office will send out drawing with examples shortly. The change will allow spar designers to design rig configurations without worrying about IRC rating. AGREED. **ACTION JJD/ES circulate drawings**
Chris Brown said that some boats have checkstays that are not used but are still on the boat. Jenny Howells confirmed that they should be rated for checkstays unless they actually remove them.

Lead in keel fins: This only applies to keels with separately defined bulbs (Keel Types 10, 11, 12 in the IRC Rule, Appendix 1 – 2016 Yearbook page 54). The rule change for 2017 is about sending a message, as it is not easy to remove lead already in fins. Want to discourage the trend spreading to Fast 40+ Class. Chris Brown suggested adding “eg. lead” after SG 9.0 to make it clearer. AGREED **ACTION JJD: Update rule submission text**

Peter Wykeham-Martin suggest that James Dadd should write about the rule changes and rationale in future Seahorse articles. This was agreed. **ACTION JJD**

2017 new Equipment Rules of Sailing (ERS). The Rating Office and the RYA have done a lot of work to get more definitions into ERS eg boat weight/measurement condition, as this leads to more consistent measurement worldwide. These were to be confirmed at November 2016 World Sailing conference. Ian Macdonald was concerned that we need to make sure owners have easy access to information for eg. weighing condition. *[Note: We will look into how we can make these clearer on the IRC website. JH/RO]* **ACTION JH**

b. IRC Submissions to World Sailing. IRC World Championship submission, slightly modified from last year’s. The submission is about equality between international rating rules, and includes that IRC World Championship would be on a different continent every year.

Chris Brown asked about the effects of dual scoring ORC and IRC results. James Dadd reported that ratings are generally well aligned, as they are both based on the laws of physics.

c. Proposals from the GBR IRC Committee and any Submissions to the IRC Congress – no proposals were put forward

d. GBR Report to the IRC Congress – 7-9 October, Cowes – James Dadd confirmed that he would prepare this and discuss it with IM.

e. GBR Representative to the IRC Congress – IM as Chairman confirmed that he would attend Congress as the GBR representative; this was agreed

f. 2017 IRC Congress arrangements – not discussed. IM and JJD will report back to the Committee after Congress.

8. Area and fleet reports [See appendices](#)

a. issues raised:

i. autohelms and short-handed certificates – re IRC Rules 8.2.1 (short-handed certs) and 15 (manual power). Chris Brown raised the issue of the success of double handed boats, as new advanced auto-helms are very good. He had done 4 hours testing of autohelm v. human, and the autohelm consistently won. There was discussion about whether IRC should rate autohelms but there were concerns about different autohelm capabilities. Fully crewed boats don’t realise they can use an autohelm in IRC (nb. RORC bans it for fully crewed boats). James Dadd suggested that IRC rules could say autohelms are only permitted for short handed races, but it was argued that this is a race management issue. James Dadd offered to consider the issue and discuss with UNCL, and propose to Congress if necessary. **ACTION JJD**

Andrew Pearce pointed out that 2-handed Fastnet winner “Night and Day” sailed 30 miles less than his boat Magnum in that race, ie. there were often other reasons for their success.

ii. bowsprit/asymmetric conversions. Chris Brown asked about the advantage of retro-fitting a bowsprit and using asymmetric spinnakers, the specific example was a Farr 30 that did very well in Cowes Week. James Dadd confirmed that there is no difference to rating whether it is a conversion or from original, and pointed out that Cowes Week is

good for an asym/sprit configuration. There was a general discussion about the rating of sportsboats. James suggested that owners should ask themselves “how do I make my boat work better?” and Farr 30s have been around long enough that owners have worked out how to make them work well.

Stephen Homan-Berry asked about Code Zeros and the classification of headsail v. spinnaker. James Dadd said that sailmakers could not achieve 75% width headsails (rated as ‘spinnakers’) without cheating; he didn’t think the width limit should be reduced to 65%. Some sailmakers’ quotes for ‘cruising’ code zeros included small print ‘not legal [as spinnaker] for IRC’. The IRC Technical Committee had been trying and failing to define a ‘Code Zero’ since 1997. The ORC defines it but sailmakers can easily get around the definition. James Dadd said there had been two protests at a recent Maxi event and it was proposed that for equipment inspection the measurer should also ask for spinnaker with smallest SHW. **ACTION RO: Add to advice to race organisers/equipment inspection articles**

9. Development of IRC, PR and publicity

At Ian Macdonald’s request, James Dadd set the scene briefly of what is planned for IRC. The media is full of glamour boats, and there are improvement in how IRC deals with light boats eg Fast 40+ and HP30, but they are not IRC’s main focus. IRC needs to evolve as boat designs have developed, cruiser/racers are now a healthier boat than they were in 1990; we want to encourage wholesome all-rounders. For example, the JPK 1080 has a good layout, nice design, practical galley etc. If that is what IRC is encouraging, then IRC is doing the right thing.

Lunch break. James Dadd left the meeting.

IRC Future – paper from Mel Sharp (included in area reports See appendices).

Mel Sharp introduced the idea of IRC becoming a brand that offered membership or a ‘passport’ to make owners feel more involved and included. Discounts could be negotiated for IRC ‘members’ with eg. Spinlock. (Mel confirmed he did not mean IRC should become an RYA affiliated sailing club).

James Hall confirmed that Spinlock had already been in discussions with the Rating Office about possible offers, and already do discounts for various groups/members which are very successful but it does have to be controlled carefully. Mel Sharp asked that members each emailed him with ideas for three non-conflicting offer suggestions by 15 October, for a pilot scheme. **ACTION: Committee members**

It was also suggested more should be made of the value that comes with the IRC certificate ie. the development, research, skills and efforts (of the Rating Authority and Rule Authorities). James Hall agreed that it was important to publicise good news stories and show what you get for your certificate.

Jack Fenwick suggested having regular profiles of advocates / measurers on Facebook to show how many people work behind the scenes. **ACTION CJ: (Already in progress)**

Mel Sharp suggested videos of boat measurement. Jenny Howells said that videos are already on the ‘to do’ list and the Rating Office would work on the idea. **ACTION RO**

Stephen Tudor & Stephen Parry suggested emailing snippets of news to clubs for their newsletters (the Rating Office had an email list of UK clubs); also possibly RYA Regional newsletters (need to get contact details). **ACTION JH**

Stephen Parry suggested that each Committee member write to Mel about “what being a member means”. Agreed. **ACTION: Committee members**

Yearbook. Stephen Parry thought that the IRC Yearbook does not cater for the ‘middle ground’ and lacked local news. It was pointed out that the Yearbook is an international publication and it was not be logistically possible to include local news for each country (in addition to what was already included).

10. IRC Incentive and Support Schemes:

a. IRC Start up. The scheme has been very successful (particularly Weymouth and Dart) and is getting people back into local racing, credit to the local people who deal with it and to Charlene Jackson who runs it in the Rating Office. Mike Webster wants to expand it to other clubs in their area, would that be acceptable? There had been a similar question from Des Balmforth in Scotland. It was agreed that the rules aren’t set in stone and it could be expanded less as an individual Club start up and more of an advocate system, to be more flexible. Ian Macdonald stressed the need

to encourage other Advocates to be “IRC champions” too, although it was recognised that some are in areas with IRC already. It was agreed that the technical basis of IRC rating is best selling point.

b. Single Event Ratings (SERs). The Single Event Rating does not appear to be working except for few core events, otherwise it is a lot of work (both for owners and the Rating Office) for not much reward. There was a discussion about the Rating Office proposal ([See appendices](#)). Stephen Homan-Berry asked why would you go through all the effort of an application for one event? Jack Fenwick suggested that club publicity gained from advertising SER might help their IRC entries generally. Every club/event is different.

There were concerns about limiting SERs to the few events in the proposal (RTIR, Cowes Week, Panerai British Classic Week, Little Britain Challenge) and not to other clubs/events. Stephen Tudor said that all GBR IRC Championships should be eligible for it (except the RORC National Championship which requires Endorsed certificates). The Rating Office confirmed that if it went ahead with the proposed limitations, it would retain the right to approve other events if especially appropriate.

Mike Urwin argued that SER can now only be seen as a service to regattas and the sport, not to increase the IRC fleet as was originally intended. David Cooper voiced concerns about how to encourage more boats in IRC in the Solent. Peter Wykeham-Martin thought clubs could put more effort in to get more people out racing.

No decision was made about the proposal. Jenny Howells agreed to email clubs that accepted SERs in 2015 & 2016 to ask for their feedback, the results will be emailed to the Committee members. **ACTION JH: (Already in progress)**

c. IRC Advocates. It was agreed that the IRC Advocates list should be reviewed and updated. **ACTION RO**

11. IRC Championships 2017

a. Review of Championships generally. Mel Sharp was concerned that there are regattas using the IRC name when it isn't a championship as these detract from the official Championships. Stephen Homan-Berry agreed, as there was some confusion this year regarding small boat events. The Committee/ Rating Office don't have any control over what people call their events, and official Championships are only those approved by this Committee. David Cooper said that the RORC National Championship is poorly supported by smaller boats and wondered whether the title 'championship' puts people off? Other members did not think so.

The Yearbook could point out that the Spinlock IRC Championship logo is only used for specific special events each year. **ACTION JH**

b. Dates and places.

Scotland – Ian Macdonald said that the two applying clubs will talk about it and he will report back.

South West – Mel Sharp reported that there are no applications as it is on a rotation (see 2015 minutes: Plymouth 2016, Torbay 2017 TBC, Falmouth, Fowey), but Dart should now ask to join the rotation. Fowey probably won't reapply so Dart could take their place. It was pointed out that an application should still be lodged by the nominated club on the rota for 2017.

Welsh - Stephen Tudor said it would be good if clubs were able to say at the prize giving when the next Championship will be (if possible). Pwllheli SC are working with other local clubs. Mike Urwin suggested that the Welsh National Championship could be approved now for 2017 & 2018 and this was agreed (it allows the next year's event to be announced at the prizegiving).

Solent – Stephen Parry confirmed an application will be coming from SIRCOA. An application for a double-handed championship is also expected

Southern - Weymouth approved for 2017. Poole is a biannual event and will want to apply for 2018, this was supported by Stephen Homan-Berry (Weymouth) and agreed so that 2018 Poole publicity can include the IRC Championships. Suggested rotation between Weymouth (2017) and Poole (2018).

[Note post meeting: other applications are Guernsey (rotates with Jersey), Ramsgate (East Coast)]

It was suggested the deadline for applications should come forward to 30th June. **AGREED.**

ACTION (ES): Update app form & email championship organisers past and present.

12. Encouraging yacht racing

a. ideas from area reports. Stephen Parry opened a discussion about encouraging fun racing for cruisers with families, and the requirement for a rating system that doesn't involve emptying the boat to be competitive. Mike Urwin

said that it would not be practical to allow for extra gear and if sailors are concerned about their results they will make the effort to empty surplus gear from the boat.

Re NHC, it is not being actively developed. The starting number is not as accurate as IRC but this is immaterial as with progressive handicapping the rating works itself out after 2 races.

Other subjects discussed were:

CLUBS COMBINING for racing. Mel Sharp and Mike Webster reported that this works well.

STYLE OF RACING. It was agreed that clubs should continue to put on a variety of racing/courses.

The SOCIAL SIDE of racing is important.

SPLITTING CLASSES by HF. Works well but you need a large enough fleet to do it.

The various suggestions in reports are worth trying, and members should report back next year.

ACTION: Members/clubs

b. input from RYA. Stacey Clark reported on the RYA's plans to encourage young dinghy sailors to continue with racing on keelboats: British Keelboat Academy (BKA) and the National Sailing League. Trying to set up bedrock of club racing in 10 years time. Andrew Pearce recommended BKA crew as he has used them. It was argued that the BKA is good for technical boats but not suitable for lower level club boats. What owners need is a list of potential crew to match with their boat. PWM recommended the Cowes Week crew match model.

Mel Sharp asked about the problem of clubs closing their doors to non-member crews (even when racing in a club race) and did the RYA have any influence? However, the RYA cannot and should not force clubs to do things. It was agreed that fun basic skills training and competitions (eg. Royal Harwich YC cadets learning spinnaker packing) are a good idea.

13. Proposed date of 2017 meeting

Thursday 14 September 2017. Members agreed that Lyminster is their preferred venue. Post meeting note: The meeting will now be held at the **Lyminster Town Sailing Club**.

END