

2022 GBR IRC Committee



MINUTES OF THE GBR IRC COMMITTEE meeting held on Tuesday 20th September 2022 at 1000 at Lymington Town Sailing Club

In attendance:

Stephen Tudor - Chair
Jon Pegg - Vice Chair
David McGough (JOG)
Andrew Pearce (South Coast / RORC)
Mike Richards (Racing fleet)
Richard Moxey (RYA)
Jeremy Wilton (RORC CEO)
Richard Woof (South West)
Simon Britten (Bristol Channel)

RORC Rating Office:

Jason Smithwick – Director
Jenny Howells – Technical Manager
Emma Smith – Technical Team
Sally Moss – Technical Team

By Zoom:

Ruaridh Wright (Solent)
Barrie Martin (Classics)

1. Welcome from the Chairman and introductions

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting, and paid tribute to the Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family:

“It is with great sadness that we mark, through our minutes, the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Our condolences go to King Charles III, to the Royal Family and to Princess Anne who is a great supporter of our sport, particularly at grassroots level, supporting youngsters into our sport.”

2. Apologies for absence

David Murrin – Classics
Paul Jackson – East Coast
Peter Wykeham-Martin – Honorary member

3. Committee membership

Paul King’s retirement from Honorary Membership of the Committee was noted, and the Chairman recorded the committee’s thanks for his service.

Chris Browns’s retirement from the committee as racing/performance representative was noted, and the Chairman recorded the committee’s thanks for his service

Mike Richards is appointed as racing/performance representative and was welcomed to the meeting.

The Chairman thanked Jack Fenwick for his services and welcomed Richard Moxey, his replacement at the RYA as Keelboat Development Manager.



Members are invited to suggest suitable additional members.

4. **Minutes of the meeting of the GBR IRC Committee held on 21st Sept 2021**

The minutes were signed as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by Andrew Pearce, seconded by Jon Pegg. There were no matters arising for items not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

5. **GBR Rule Authority (Rating Office) Annual Report**

It was noted that IRC Congress will be held on 16th October in Malta and that Stephen Tudor will be attending.

Notes and issues raised:

There is still a problem in some areas with owners struggling to get good crew, and this was no longer residual from Covid but a general trend. The rise in 2 handed sailing was noted. Certain styles of boats such as the Cape 31s attract crew as they are exciting to sail.

The IRC Advocate Scheme in Weymouth is a good example of how it can work well for both owners and the club. Mike Street does a very good job as the local Advocate.

Single Event Rating – it was noted that Hamble Classics, that was added on a trial basis, did not run this year as they ran a memorial cruise instead.

There are no class rule changes for the HP30 class for 2023.

The Cape 31 class rules no longer require IRC certification, but 70% of the fleet have IRC ratings and enjoy their racing.

Inshore racing is most popular within classes such as the RC1000, RC35, HP30, P40 etc. This type of close rating band class should be encouraged.

Equipment Inspection discussion

Members supported the idea of more Equipment Inspection at events in the UK, or spot checks. It was recognised that protesting a competitor for non-compliance with their IRC certificate was difficult in the context of a local racing community. The risk of being spot checked after racing would help with compliance.

RORC will look at Equipment Inspection for future IRC Nationals. For events where safety inspection is done a few simple rating checks could be incorporated.

6. **IRC Incentive and Support Schemes**

The IRC Advocate Scheme and Single Event Ratings (SERs) were covered in item 5.

7. **Development of IRC**

IRC and UK rating systems; Club racing; Promotion and development of IRC in the UK

The YTC rating system was taken on by RORC Rating/RYA during 2022, in partnership with SWYTC management group, with the Rating Office issuing the certificates. It is a very simple system and RORC consider it positive for IRC. It has grown this year and the next step is to work out the flow into IRC. The advantage for the Rating Office is that it is now in contact with those getting YTC ratings.

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The Chairman affirmed that the committee has been talking about an introductory system for IRC for many years and YTC performs this role.

Clubs can change the YTC rating locally for their own club racing but the base issued rating stays the same. Plymouth has adopted YTC from 2023 and will use a maximum adjustment of 3% either way.

There was a concern that there is currently no stepping stone to IRC. [Post meeting note – the Advocate Scheme could fulfil this role.](#)

In response to a note that YTC doesn't work well for some types/features of design, Jason Smithwick noted that the Rating Office has a large database and has tried to improve quality of data going into YTC rating, however it only has a small number of inputs. Regression analysis has meant we can improve the performance factors for certain designs. We want to make it as simple as possible for owners to apply; also in future the YTC application form could invite people to add more information and get an IRC rating. Any development of the rating calculation can only be done within the scope of the data inputs.

It was agreed that YTC rating should be kept very simple, to encourage people into IRC. To counter the problem of 'pot hunters' in YTC, clubs should recognise this and push those boats to IRC. The relevant club should play a part in controlling this and take some responsibility, with the aim of growing the sport for all.

JOG only accepts IRC rating, despite people have asked about cruisers using a simpler system; the Rating Office recorded its appreciation of this. JOG has seen a 5-10% increase in participation in 2022 compared with 2019.

In Poole VPRS is still strong, and unfortunately the yacht clubs have become disjointed and local owners had varying levels of interest in meaningful racing.

In Plymouth a survey showed that most people are willing to give one weekend a month for sailing. An issue in the Plymouth area was too many races scheduled, it would be better to reduce the number and strengthen each event.

It was agreed that communication to clubs was needed about the different rating systems and explaining their differences. Chris Davis of the YTC management group will be talking at the RYA Associated Clubs' Conferences, and the progression trajectory from YTC to IRC will be explained.

Suggestions from committee members for promotion of YTC / IRC

- A simple flyer to clubs explaining the progression from YTC to IRC
- A push of YTC in specific locations to counter other locally used systems (e.g. Poole/VPRS).
- More promotion about YTC being a step to IRC and that both are administered within the same group.
- Encourage Round the Island Race to use YTC instead of ISC.
- Education about splitting classes (where there are enough boats) to give better racing. This can help encourage smaller boats as in a single class they get left behind/finish late.

It was noted that RORC has increased references to IRC in their event press releases.



Participation discussion

Some areas are losing smaller boats, while others report a loss of big boats. A sportwide issue is the lack of youth participation.

'Generation JOG' encourages sailors under 30 to race with Henri Lloyd as sponsor. Gen JOG sailors on winning boats get a voucher representing a significant contribution to HL kit. 28% of JOG membership are under 30. They do not offer the increased IRC crew number option for youth/female crew.

JOG racing is destination sailing so there is a party when you arrive.

ISORA has used the youth/female IRC crew addition and it has worked well.

It was noted that many under-20s go down the dinghy route and may not meet yacht owners, although the RYA now has keelboat academy to encourage youth into yachts after dinghies; clubs can also encourage that and allowing a 'free' youth/female on the boat helps with that.

Many skilled crews want to do fewer, quality events. The RYA has seen increased participation in the number of people racing, but less often (once a month). Many are multi-discipline so have to choose between yacht/dinghy etc.

The Cape 31s have a weight limit and it has encouraged a lot of female/youth crews, 80% of boats have at least one female aboard.

It was agreed that the recommendation for clubs to change the crew rule in their NORs could be publicised more.

8. IRC Championships 2022 & 2023

General Review of Championships; 2023 Dates and Events; UK Nationals – format and location; Guidelines and suggestions

The Rating Office sends Championship organisers information which includes setting a variety of courses as guidance.

For the Welsh Nationals a variety is requested race officers tend to set windward-leeward and crews request them. It was suggested that the guidance should be stronger.

Post meeting note - this is already in the GBR IRC Championship requirements:

It is specifically required that a mixture of course types is offered to cater for different types of design, so that one type does not dominate because of favourable course types. For more information see point 5 of the Notes for Race Organisers which can be found online at <https://www.ircrating.org/racing/race-management>

A mixed round the cans / box course may be harder to set but gives better, more balanced racing.

2023 GBR IRC Championships

There are no competing clubs for any of the championships. All applications that had been received were approved.

See appendix for list of events.



GBR IRC National Championship format and location

2023 Cowes RORC as before.

2024 it will be moving to Poole at IP Poole Regatta, 25-27 May

A discussion was held about where it might be held beyond 2024. It should continue to move but also recognise the magnet of the Solent. Cowes alternating years with a different venue would be an option to provide interest but retain continuity.

9. Rule changes to IRC

Proposed 2023 IRC Rule Changes from the IRC Technical Committee were presented, but are not yet final as they need to be approved by IRC Congress in October.

Additional comments:

The secondary certificate has been tested in Australia with no negative feedback so will be rolled out worldwide from Jan 2023. This was fully supported by the Committee.

Sail stamps for Endorsed certificates are proposed from 1/1/2024 for sails certified after 2023. All sails carried to be stamped. The rule may be amended by NOR.

IRC will publish / send out the sticker design to sail lofts.

The existing IHC / RYA measurement stickers will still also apply for largest sails.

It was suggested that IRC minimum width spinnakers should be measured and declared even if not the largest spinnaker, to check they comply with the 75% SHW/SFL ratio.

The committee agreed with the proposed rule change

Rating the number of headsails aboard. IRC Congress members will decide whether to apply the new rule in 2023 or 2024.

The reasons for the proposed rule are sustainability, fairness and cost.

The furling headsail rule will be absorbed into the rule change but we still need to retain rules about using the same sail during an event and the 95% HSA limit on using a smaller headsail. Heavy weather jibs will be counted, otherwise people will increase the number of staysails that qualify as a heavy weather jib.

The committee's recommendation is to wait until 2024 for the rule change as owners are already ordering sails for a specific configuration for 2023 based on the 2022 rules.

10. Meetings and Submissions

IRC Submissions to World Sailing - None

Proposals from the GBR IRC Committee and any Submissions to the IRC Congress - None

The GBR Report to the IRC Congress was approved

Keel inspections

A discussion was held, prompted by the recent loss of two keels on new boats (Farr X2 and Class 40).

Regular inspections are important as they mean potential issues can be solved before they become a problem, as often failures are caused by simple issues. It was noted that the inspections requirements can be a disincentive for those going coastal racing.

There are no signs from World Sailing/OSR committee of anything changing from the current situation. The feelings of the committee were noted for the RORC Special Regulations committee.



11. Area and fleet reports

To note the reports and any questions as necessary.

Reports had been received from:

Bristol Channel (Simon Britten), Classics (Barrie Martin), Poole (Andrew Pearce), Scotland (Des Balmforth), Solent (Ruaridh Wright), South West (Jon Pegg), Weymouth (Richard Woof).

Additional notes:

JOG - see previous notes about racing numbers up. Boats are finding crews OK. There is an increase in 2 handed racing.

ISORA report - same as JOG!

Bristol Channel has seen an increase in IRC racing and confidence. Boats exchange crews via WhatsApp and have travelled to IRC events in Ireland and the South West. Communication has really helped the IRC racing grow.

Ruaridh Wright, Solent - there was a discussion about communication channels and engagement with clubs regarding IRC.

Richard Moxey, RYA - a more visible mission statement would be beneficial; as a crew he didn't realise how involved RORC is with grass roots sailing e.g. YTC.

Jeremy Wilton (RORC) - there could be more communication about IRC catering for every kind of boat and racing, and an improvement in how the Rating Office and IRC are marketed.

RORC is looking at running a Commodore's Cup in 2024.

Richard Woof (Weymouth) - IRC is not a commercial entity and needs a marketing plan to counter the commercial presence of other class fleets.

12. Proposed date of 2023 meeting

The date will be a similar to this year, to be advised.

13. Any other business

1. Scanning of boats had been suggested by David Murrin in the context of classic boats. This is not supported as from an IRC perspective we cannot use that data; it is also difficult to set up and there is an issue with repeatability and cost.
2. A possible page 2 for IRC certificate was shown, which includes a picture of the boat/sail plan and the data. This was received well by the committee.
3. Richard Moxey is involved with environmental and inclusion and offered RYA PR help with this if required. Jason Smithwick outlined sustainability/environmental subjects that IRC is working on:
 - Number of sails limitation.
 - Expanding age allowance.
 - The rating of hull materials e.g. flax, environmentally friendly resins, etc.However he noted that IRC is reluctant to give a rating benefit to sustainability

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It was agreed that sustainability would be improved if things were built well and lasted longer rather than e.g. superlight sails.

There are no new true cruiser/racer designs, and IRC has kept older boats competitive.

The Chairman thanked Jason and the Rating Office team for their ongoing work. He thanked members for a good meeting and felt that things are looking positive for next year.

The meeting finished at 1530.