

Friday, 5th August, 2016

Asociación Española de la Clase Internacional Raceboard
Alicante

To: International Raceboard Class Secretary - raceboard@internationalwindsurfing.com

Object:

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the International Raceboard Class, IRC, Association – Thursday 26th August 2016. Brest, Brittany, France.

Proposal:

Dear International Raceboard Class Board,
The official Spanish International Raceboard Class Association (Asociación Española de la Clase Internacional Raceboard) affiliated to the Spanish Royal Sailing Federation (RFEV) asks to register this proposal to amend the IRC Association Class Rules at the next annual meeting in Brest.

We seek to remove the Production Board Scheme from Class Rules and become a Measurement Controlled Class to open the class to as many builders as possible. We seek to remove the current requirements by the IRC regarding Production Board Registration and Approved Series Boards.

Basically we want IRC hulls to be treated like sails are treated now, they just have to be within dimensions to be allowed to race.

Specifically we seek changes in the IRC Association Class Rules to the following:

1. Introduction.
2. A.9 Licensed Manufacturers.
3. Section B –Equipment Eligibility.
4. B.1 Hull Markings.
5. B.2.1 (b) Equipment Inspectors.
6. C.5.2 (a), (b) and (c) Modifications, Maintenance and Repair.
7. C.5.3 Hull weight.
8. D.1.1 Hull identification.
9. To replace all “ISAF” wording by “World Sailing”.

Background and Rationale:

The above proposals stem from the fact that the IRC has been stagnant for several years while other classes have grown in numbers and appeal like the International Moth.

The reality is that the Raceboard market has evolved into a monopoly, tightly controlled by a single builder, COBRA, which sells IRC boards under the brands Starboard and Exocet.

It's a fact that because of an ongoing cost cutting exercise, the build quality of the Cobra products has been diminishing year after year to the point that a 2016 Starboard Phantom 377L Race has a lifespan of only few months. Compare this to the lifespan of old Mistral One-Design, Mistral Equipe, F2 Lighting, Fanatic MegaCat, etc. that are still racing today after more than 10 years of sailing. To make things worse, prices have doubled, inflation adjusted, and hull weights haven't improved over the years.

This monopoly situation with short lifespan boards and expensive products is not helping the IRC as clearly shown by the evolution of fleet sizes and the average age of people racing in IRC. They indicate that boards don't last, that we don't have new sailors coming into the IRC and that the most impacted are the youth who don't transition into IRC after leaving the Bic Techno Class.

The arguments against amending the IRC Association Class Rules to allow more builders into the market have been so far:

1. It would encourage a rise in prices rather than a reduction in them.
2. It would favour some sailors who have the support of a shaper at the expense of others who do not have access to a particular proto board.
3. Lack of continuity of a particular brand/proto as financial reality sets in.

Point 1 is contrary to basic free market economic theory taught at all universities and schools in the world. Point 2 assumes that we now have a free market which will deteriorate into a cartel/mafia controlled market while ignoring that a monopoly is what we currently have with Cobra. Point 3 ignores the fact this has already happened under the current Production Boards Scheme as we have one single manufacturer left because financial reality has already set in to all the 12 other brands existing in 2005 that have disappeared. Overall, the IRC situation continues to deteriorate while the arguments opposing changes are wrong on all levels. They are based on imaginary fears, they are not backed up by fleet size or fleet evolution and they are oblivious of the current quality problem of Cobra products.

Finally, if approved by this General Assembly, the expected results of this proposed amendment would be:

- Increased quality of the Raceboard hulls with longer lifespan driven by free market forces.
- Decreased price of Raceboard equipment driven by free market forces.
- Increased fleet sizes in general and youth participation in all countries and in international championships driven by easier access and longer lifespan of IRC equipment.

Amendments to IRC rules:

1. To delete the following paragraphs off the IRC Association Class Rules INTRODUCTION:

“The object of the International Raceboard Class Rules is to establish the Class as one in which many different types of production windsurfers, which are available internationally, can compete. Raceboard hulls are manufactured controlled and shall only be manufactured by ISAF registered manufacturers.

Hull appendages, rigs and sails are measurement controlled.

Raceboard hulls may, after having left the manufacturer, only be altered to the extent permitted in Section C of the class rules.

Rules regulating the use of equipment during a race or event are contained in Section C of these class rules, in ERS Part I and in the Racing Rules of Sailing.

This introduction only provides an informal background and the International Raceboard Class Association Class Rules proper begin on the next page”

2. To delete in full off the IRC Association Class Rules current A.9 LICENSED MANUFACTURERS:

This will accept in to the IRC any custom board complying with a rule box with the current IRC dimensional specifications that define a Raceboard without the necessity to produce at least 50 identical boards to expect a homologation. Each custom board must be measured by an official IRC measurer to be approved. This will allow approved custom boards to race in any IRC event.

3. To add the following paragraphs under Section B –Equipment Eligibility reading:

“All IRC registered boards up to 2016 are grandfathered to perpetuity into the IRC Association”

“It is the competitor’s responsibility to ensure that their equipment complies with the rules when racing.”

4. To delete in full current B.1 HULL MARKINGS off the IRC Association Class Rules:

No need to display World Sailing logos in the hulls, just like we do with sails.

5. To amend current B.2.1 (b) of the IRC Association Class Rules to read:

“The role of IRC measurers at an event is to ensure compliance with these class rules. IRC measurers can only be appointed by IRC national associated members.”

6. To delete in full off the IRC Association Class Rules current C.5.2 (a), (b) and (c) Modifications, Maintenance and Repair:

No need to stop boards from being modified as long as they comply with class measurements.

7. To modify the current C.5.3 (a) of IRCA Class rules addressing hull weight to read:

“The hull weight including footstraps, centerboard, fin and air ventilation screw shall not be less than 15kg.”

This means an actual increase of 1kg from the current requirements set at 14kg. This new 15Kg weight lower limit would allow wider use of cheaper building materials in the hull with minimal impact on overall performance of the board and therefore keep retail prices low. At present, all board productions weight at around 18 kg with fin and centerboard so they would all comply and wouldn’t be affected by this change. Alternatively, this weight could be chosen at 15.5 or 16 kg.

8. To delete in full off the IRC Association Class Rules current D.1.1 Hull identification:

No need to carry a permanent serial number on each hull.

9. To replace all “ISAF” wording by “World Sailing”.

Thanking the IRCA Board for his attention to these proposals to this AGM 2016,

Sincerely Yours,



Marc Leutscher
President of Asociación Española de la Clase Internacional Raceboard.
www.raceboard.es