

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.

For this we propose the following: Setting up a Working Party (WP) that will design new class rules in the time frame of 1 month. These new class rules will be written up such that Hulls, Sails, Rigs and Hull Appendages will all comply to measurement controlled Rules. The new rules will be voted for in an Extraordinary General Meeting during the IRC World Championship 2016 in Australia.

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 the Extraordinary 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.

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