

Progressing

The 2015 ORC World Championship at Real Club Náutico de Barcelona is almost upon us and is shaping up to be one of the most competitive editions to date. Among more than 100 entries are teams coming from 22 countries spread over five continents.

What is unusual in historic terms is that this is a very balanced fleet, with 30-40 boats in each of the three classes. This balance could be a positive consequence of the introduction of ORC's new CDL system, which mandates division splits for major international events. Regardless, this balance in class sizes will make race management a little easier; the format is to have at least seven inshore and two offshore races over six days of racing.

The CDL splits used this year have created some interesting scenarios: one Swan 45 owner, for example, withdrew his entry because he (not unreasonably) felt uncompetitive against the six TP52s lurking on the entry, yet six other 45s have remained – including two from far-off Ecuador. Class A will be tough, for sure, with entries including Alberto Rossi's TP52 *Enfant Terrible* defending their 2014 title, as well as 2013 Class A winner *Hurakan*, the TP52

but I'll be looking closely at reigning Class C champion Giuseppe Giuffrè, who with his Low Noise team sailing an M37 have dominated this class in the past few years. Giuffrè's *Low Noise 2* is a new Matteo Polli-designed Italia Yacht 998 – a little lighter, a little shorter, but maybe in the hands of this seasoned Italian team no less effective. Another frontrunner will be Italy's *Scugnizza*, perennial rivals to *Low Noise* and world champions in 2012 and 2013 as well as *Sugar2* from Estonia, 2013 ORC European champions.

With this line-up the ORC system will surely be pushed to the limit: there are some 60 different boat designs – production, semi-custom and custom – represented in the fleet...

Evolving

At the request of the Superyacht Racing Association (SYRA), further refinements have been made to the ORCs after its debut in the Caribbean and prior to its use in the Med season. The rule is now on Version 42 from its initial formulation last autumn, but this iteration is intended to stay in place through the end of 2015. A

'designer' version of the VPP is also now available for download at the Superyacht page of the ORC website.

In this V.42 there are several improvements including: a new treatment of effective rig height to make split rigs more competitive; a refinement to the treatment of the number and type of headsails carried that addresses the unique nature of the Superyacht foretriangle (for example, when beating upwind, some of these boats need to partially furl their larger headsails); a distinction made between upwind and reaching headsails; the windage of furled sails has been adjusted; and a deduction from the mainsail area based on P and E measurements is applied when there is a boom furler.

Other improvements include an adjustment in the pitch gyration of very large and very heavy MCA-approved yachts and a new treatment of the 'SY factor', where it has been acknowledged that not all true



At the other end of the scale from ORCs is the ORC Sportboat Rule, which held a successful 2015 European championship on Hungary's Lake Balaton. The event drew a variety of designs from the culture of trailerable fast boats that frequent the lakes of Europe... and some interesting sailplans

now in the hands of Roberto Monti's Airis team. The other team to watch in this division are the young guns from Germany on Heinz-Peter Schmidt's GP42 *Silva Neo*, third last year in Kiel. For the first time in a decade there is also a competitive US entry with Bill Coates and his carbon Ker 43 *Otra Vez*.

At the top of Class B are the Swan 42s, one of which won the Class A European title last year in Valencia and which this year has been chartered by one of Spain's most influential sailors, Pedro Campos, runner-up in the 2001 IMS worlds and a winner in 2003, back when IMS racing was at its peak in Spain. Campos will be challenged by an interesting mix of entries including Bernd Kammerlander on *Koyama*, which with help from Inaki Castener won bronze at last year's ORC Europeans. This year Kammerlander has switched from an XP44 to something faster... a Soto 40.

Class C could very well prove to be the most competitive with no fewer than seven teams who have been champions or on the podium at recent ORC world or European events.

Who among these are the favourites? This is really hard to say,

cruising 'Superyacht' features were properly captured by the VPP, and that big, heavy cruising-oriented boats were disadvantaged, mainly due to dynamic effects that cannot yet be modelled by a steady state VPP.

Lastly, a fourth wind range has been added to the two sea states to create eight options for race managers to choose for ratings: light (<10kt TWS), light-medium (10-14), medium-heavy (14-18), and strong (>18kt) winds, in either Flat or Rough seas.

A challenge seen in Porto Cervo at both the Dubois Cup and the Loro Piana was not in the rating system per se, but in the format where in patchy conditions pursuit starts proved increasingly problematical due to the irregular nature of the breeze. Gathering correct certificate data also remains a challenge for the ORC measurement team, yet more than 70 ORCs certificates have been issued to date.

Much more important, however, is the fact that in Porto Cervo the sailors and owners were finally talking in the bar about racing rather than ratings.

Doobs Davis

