



No doubt about which will be the most closely watched new racer going into the new season... the Verdier-VPLP designed *Comanche*

Improvements for 2015

Amid a 10 per cent growth report based upon having issued over 9,000 certificates worldwide in 2014, the mood at the ORC AGM in November in Palma was quite positive, but not complacent, as several new innovations to the system were approved for the upcoming season.

Probably the most significant of these was the invention of a new parameter by the International Technical Committee (ITC) named Class Division Length (CDL). This is a new and improved approach to grouping together boats of equal performance, since it more accurately assesses a boat's upwind performance than using just the boat's GPH. Since most races start upwind this approach should provide a more even playing field for future ORC events.

The advent of CDL is also intended to provide some universal guidelines for organisers on how to divide their fleets into suitable class divisions. For the near term CDL will only be required for use in the ORC World and European Championships, but it may be adopted by any national or local authority that finds it useful for their fleets.

The reason for this new approach is based upon the ITC's observations on two fundamental issues related to class divisions based on GPH:

1. The remote possibility to design fast yachts in lower divisions (for example, Classes B and C in the last world championship) without being compelled to make them too small to fit into the GPH limits. The consequence is that the usual winners of the lower divisions are hitherto medium/heavy-displacement boats, most often the largest in their class.

2. The first windward leg of any inshore race is a fundamental part of the race and it should therefore be better to have as many boats as possible with similar windward speed grouped together in the same class.

In the past, to solve the first issue the smallest boats of the larger class were moved according to a fixed length limit, or conversely pushed up into the larger class with boats exceeding a certain length... but this caused complaints, so a new approach was needed.

CDL guidelines will also provide a framework for designers and owners to find a suitable niche for optimising existing designs or devising new ones for participation in their target class.

'I like it,' says Italian designer Matteo Polli, who optimised the design of current ORC World Class C and European Class B Champion *Low Noise*. 'It will allow us to have more interesting and faster designs in this size range, rather than just focusing on only upwind rated speed relative to GPH.'

After an examination of the ORC fleet, the ITC has therefore suggested the following CDL limits, which will be printed on

2015 ORCi certificates:

17.0m ≥ Class A > 11.6m

11.6m ≥ Class B > 9.7m

9.7m ≥ Class C > 8.5m

These parameters will be used in Barcelona at the 2015 ORC World Championship in June, with the NOR for this event already posted.

Improvements to the ORC VPP for 2015 include better treatment of headsails set flying, with a smaller minimum area for headsails set flying, plus updated aerodynamic coefficients for a smoother transition in rating changes between 110% jibs and 130% genoas. The beta version has been released for comment, but trials runs on the ORC test fleet indicate only minor changes in ratings for 2015, with less than 1% change for most boats.

The 2015 ORC Green Book of rules and standards for ORC championship events has been updated to include use of the same scoring coefficient of 1.0 for all inshore and offshore races. And while one discard is still allowed, an offshore race can be discarded only when two offshore races are completed, either as two separate races or as a long offshore race with a mid-course scoring gate.

Another important update is approved for the use of Implied Wind in Performance Curve Scoring, where the Implied Wind speed of the winner of the race will now be used as the wind speed to score the remainder of the class. This will replace the current practice of calculating the Implied Wind for each entry in the class. Besides being intuitively correct that all boats race in the same wind speed on an inshore course, this new approach will also produce results that are more fair for light boats that are rated fast in light wind conditions. A re-scoring test of events in 2014 with the new method showed no significant change in the overall results, yet gave some better results to the lighter boats that were struggling to reach their rated performance potential in 6-8kt of wind.

Scoring software programs will be reprogrammed in 2015 to reflect this new and more accurate approach to PCS scoring.

Among measurement items, the stability measurement procedure is now updated with an option to have the boat inclined by using weights positioned on the boom in addition to the standard procedure using poles. This will be particularly helpful on boats that would require very heavy weights to be suspended, as well as boats without any spinnaker pole.

Lastly, in Palma ISAF approved a new ORC class to be raced in corrected time, with the target audience to be the growing interest in HPR-style boats in the 40ft-ish range. Definition and development of this new class are currently under discussion, so watch this space.

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