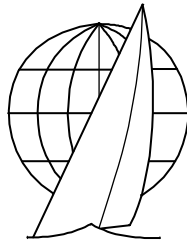


OFFSHORE RACING CONGRESS

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MINUTES of the **Club Working Group** held at 10:00 Wednesday on the 3rd November, 2004 in the Bojensen, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Present: Ken Weller (Chairman)
Jean-Louis Conti
Boris Hepp
Marcel Wagenaar
Nicola Sironi (Chief Measurer)

Regrets: Axel Mohnhaupt

Observer: Sten Edholm ó Sweden

1. Fleet Activity Review:

Although the Club Working Group's main functions are on the technical and administrative side rather than promotional, the Chairman asked for a brief review of Club activity and any notable issues in the member's countries. The introduction of Club for the late season St. Tropez event had increased the French processing load by nearly 100 new certificates. In Holland the fleet size had remained roughly the same as some boats dropped out, new ones took their place. Germany had had a clear increase in the Club fleet, partly due to a growing sportboat Club fleet. Sten Edholm reported also on the Scandinavian situation, where Norwegian and Danish handicapping activity was dominated by their respective national rules, Finland had decided to promote largely IMS and Sweden's Club fleet had remained in net at the same level, but there was evidence that the Club activity was somewhat at the expense of IMS certificates.

Two members noted some evidence of owner perception of a VPP bias favoring heavier yachts. Although this was an ITC issue and would presumably not be specific to Club, it could be that it was more apparent in the Club fleet, which tends to be composed of a wider range of design types.

2. Certificate Print Issues:

Club certificate printing issues were itemized for program correction, including the following:

- The backstay graphic is still not displayed correctly for some configurations
- Asymmetric spinnaker dimensions do not print from the new DAT-file datafields
- The spinnaker foot dimension (SF) does not print
- The Club office comment line previously agreed is not printing
- Where freeboards have not been measured, the wrong LPS message appears

With regard to the submission involving PIPA, it was noted that it is not an acceptable practice to enter PIPA directly when processing Club certificates and that the propeller installation printed correctly when the propeller input was entered as intended.

The Chairman noted also that it had been his intention to have the mainsail girths (which do print correctly) moved to the leach of the mainsail, but that the programmer had encountered difficulties in making this revision. There was some indication that the print program should be first converted from Access 2 to Access 2000 and there had not yet been time to do this. This should be solved before 2005 Club certificates are printed.

The Working Group confirmed its intention that the Club certificate should remain simple, uncluttered and flexible with regard to national preferences for scoring options. This flexibility was felt to be strongly attractive in new fleets taking a decision to introduce Club handicapping as these fleets often have firm and long-standing preferences for a particular type of scoring, be it time-on-time, time-on-distance or even an interest in trying the variable handicapping provided by the VPP.

In the case of spinnakers smaller than the minimum spinnaker size rated by the VPP, Jean-Louis Conti felt that the spinnaker dimensions displayed on the rig graphic should be those on which the yacht was rated, rather than the measured values. The Chairman felt that the graphic should be true to the actual measurements found on the sail. Discussion led to the conclusion that it would be beneficial to provide a backside (or second sheet) for Club certificates which provided additional information similar to that provided on the "unofficial" extended IMS certificate. The Chairman recommended designing a backside printout similar to the useful sheet Jean-Louis was currently using for French Club certificates. Among such information as the yacht's sail inventory limits, this could include the minimum/maximum sail dimensions as they might apply. It was agreed to pursue a suitable format for a Club information sheet which could either be printed on the back of the certificate or as a second sheet.

3. Model Club Application Form:

The model Club Application Form had not undergone revision since its introduction at the time Club was introduced. In the meantime, several new measurement items had developed under Club and there was a need to provide for these on the Form. These items were discussed and the Chairman reported that he had already made arrangements with Scott Graham to update the graphics and missing information for a new Form. The Chairman observed that experience with the original form had shown other areas where improvements could be made to reduce errors in owner use of the form. It is noted that the model Club Application Form is not intended to be mandatory and the Rating Offices are welcome to tailor a design appropriate for their national administration of Club. The model Form is the default displayed on the website and in the Club Rule booklet. It does, however, get a fair amount of use in practice.

Items specifically to be added are, Mainsail Girths, the new Asymmetric Spinnaker inputs, Spinnaker Foot and the new Jib Luff length.

4. Offset Files for Club:

Various methods and tools for supplying Club offset files were discussed. Software tools to aid in producing near-fit offset files for Club yachts had been introduced at the outset of the Club programme but there existed a few program or installation bugs and other matters which required attention to improve the tools and make them somewhat more user-friendly and effective. Several schemes for alternatives for quick, simple hull measurement to a lower quality for Club use had been tested over the years, but each had its fatal flaws and no simple solution had yet been identified in this regard. The workload and confusion associated with requests for exchange of offset files between rating offices, Ken and Nicola had become a significant time-consumer and was prone to delay, confusion and errors. Several rating offices had employed their ingenuity to develop procedures to assist creation of IMS-format offset files in special cases. Obtaining designer lines or offset files had helped in some instances and the cooperation of designers in providing offset files for Club use had improved considerably as regards new designs, but older designs could not easily be dealt with by this method.

Except for the fleet database work covered in the next item below, the problems and remedies were so varied that no specific plan for developing new solutions emerged from the discussion, but two or three tools requiring improvement were already in the process of being followed up to make them more useful. It is likely that improved additions of these can be ready for presentation and distributed to rating officers at the planned spring Measurers Conference.

5. Fleet Database ó Organization and Access:

Recent developments with regard to the fleet database of measurement files were explained. The fleet measurement database had been extensively processed using Access tools for screening and distilling the body of data into available production-class offset files suitable for Club and IMS use in 1998. However, the programming resources to maintain this system had become unavailable shortly thereafter and, although the periodic collection of files from rating offices had continued, the systematic distilling could not be.

Recently, Panayotis Papapostolou, experienced in database software development, had generously volunteered his time to re-establish and further develop the screening and organizing of the current database. Nicola and Ken had met with Panayotis in Ipswich to outline and begin the work of processing the files. Considerable progress had been made, best described as a first pass at distilling the entire database. Already, a large number of available files have been identified and organized, but there are a number of refinements to be developed in the short term.

The system will be setup for secure access by rating offices in order that they can conveniently obtain the files they require on an as-needed basis and also submit their new measurement files on a more timely basis. There were conceptual plans for various other uses of the organized database which were beyond the scope of the Working Group's immediate attention, but could be pursued in the future.

In addition to rating office needs, a new, considerably expanded listing of available measured boats for Club (and IMS) certificates can be published on the web and should help the promotion of ORC programmes. It was considered likely that the full system would be available for presentation in time for the spring Measurers Conference.

6. Club Fees

The subject of Club certificate charges, both to owners and National Authorities was discussed. Since levy increases are in most cases passed on to owners, either directly or indirectly, and had already been increased slightly last November, it was agreed that it would be undesirable to increase the Club levy at this time. It was felt that the current levy and pricing practices made conversion to Club an attraction to fleets and owners and that the fee structure should be viewed as an investment in the future of a building fleet.

It was also agreed that Ken would circulate a survey to rating offices in regard to their pricing schemes because little was known about actual costs of Club as presented to owners in various countries round the world.

7. Submission:

DSV1 ó Corrections to the Club Certificate Print Program ó See item 2 above.

KNWV5 ó Display Triple-Number System on Certificates ó The Working Group agreed that flexibility for national preferences should be maintained in ORC Club, but that the certificate should remain clear and simple and that extensive redesign or significant programming changes were difficult, time consuming and not recommended. It is more practical to incorporate such a change on the Club Optional Scoring Sheet as a mirror of any changes agreed for the IMS certificate.

SWE4 ó Introduce Guidelines for International Measurement Practices -- The Club Administration Manual is in the process of being revised with special attention to administrative recommendations and the subject would be incorporated as might be appropriate along with the other revisions.

8. Matters Arising:

Sten Edholm asked the Working Group to clarify its policy with regard to the level of competition for which Club was intended. The Working Group was unanimous in their recommendation that Club not be used for high level championships and that such championships are intended only for IMS.