

2022 Equipment Committee report to Council

27 October 2022

2022 was a tipping point, being the first year we were able to get back to 2 face-to-face committee meetings a year.

Our mid-year meeting in May emphasised the importance of safety and concerns about the quality and compliance of certain Olympic equipment.

The application process for obtaining designation as a World Sailing class was clarified and steps were taken to regularly check the status of the existing World Sailing classes. The new procedure for class rule changes was also discussed.

During the Mid-Year Meeting it was decided to postpone the implementation date stated in RRS 50.1 concerning "Quick Release Harnesses" to 1 January 2025 in order to align with the current market situation. At the moment we see that the market is starting to evolve, and provided we monitor further evolution, the new date seems to be a good choice as it also provides a reference for manufacturers to work towards.

Our express request to hold a 2022 face-to-face meeting for the ERS working party, was not followed up by the organisation. During this Annual Conference, that request was therefore explicitly repeated in order to have such a meeting take place no later than early 2023. For the publication process of the 2025-2028 rules it is of utmost importance that this meeting takes place.

The submissions of the World Sailing Classes Committee have been discussed and the Equipment Committee supports the idea of creating a working party to look into this topic.

Submissions 056-22 till 059-22 from the Equipment Committee chair were discussed and approved with following exceptions:

057-22 / proposal 1: while the Equipment Committee agrees with the principle of removing the exemption clause, it was deemed appropriate to work first on a new set of SCR-templates (multiple versions to accommodate different categories of classes) which allows for the use of one of those templates rather than removing a majority of content from a single general template. As a consequence, proposal 1 was withdrawn.

058-22 / proposal 2: following initial dialogue with the Racing Rules Committee (RRC) the submission was split in two proposals with a first proposal purely linked to the Equipment Rules of Sailing and a second one working towards a single publication of RRS/ERS with two main sections. During further dialogue with the RRC, they requested to create a possibility for more analysis of practical feasibility, possible document structure, ... Taking into account it is a joint project of RRC – EQ, proposal 2 has consequently been withdrawn following the discussion at the annual conference.

Alastair Fox provided the Committee with an update on the Olympic Vision (drafted with the pro bono help of McKenzie) and how it links further to the ongoing work of the Regulation 23 working party. As part of his report on the preparation status for The Hague 2023 and Paris 2024, the Committee discussed the work to be done together with the Olympic Classes on their class rules, the penalties to apply and the measurement rules and protocols. The request of the audience has been noted to take into account timeline impact in different regions (for example when defining eligible equipment).

Thanks to the efforts of the Executive Office, the Committee was able to present the outlines of the Olympic Equipment Quality Workstream, including the consultation with the different stakeholders through surveys, a whistle-blower system and evolution of tools and methods. Upon request from the audience, the Committee noted the need to link this to “technical doping” in general and how that links to our current rules, with many applying “while racing”.

While a lot will depend on the upcoming IPC decision, the Committee noted the need to get by earliest possible convenience in touch with the classes listed in the LA 2028 Paralympic Reinstatement proposal. Several of those classes currently aren't yet designated, but in order to run a good The Hague 2023 event at least a review of their (draft) class rules shall take place.

Although the Personal Safety Equipment Working Party encountered some difficulties to work in the last year, following topics were listed as top priorities with the purpose of making proposals by the time of Mid-Year-Meeting 2023.

- high visibility helmets – criteria on applicable colours, areas, ...;
- harnesses – not only trapeze harnesses, but also the types used by the boards community (including also weight aspects);
- impact vests (including material and weight aspects).

Those proposals shall help defining uniform requirements among classes.

During the discussions on incident reporting it has become once more clear that many of the reports are still made and added in a reactive way, rather than by own initiative. Also a clear definition, taking into account that high speed divisions of our sport may see additional types of incidents, would help the process and as a consequence the Committee together with the other relevant committees shall make a proposal for such a definition by Mid-Year-Meeting 2023.

The application of the Persico 69F has been deferred as there was no agreement that this class actually serves a unique aspect of our sport. In order to facilitate the process the Committee will work on a clarification what is considered a unique aspect and will at the same time review the tables listing distribution and worlds participation numbers to see whether they align with the different event concepts such as bring-your-own, pay and play,...

Following the class association review, 2 classes are recommended for withdrawal to the Council. It shall be noted that WS Regulation 10 lists a number of requirements to be met, such as but not limited to:

- active class/owners association;
- payment of annual fee;
- demonstrate that it is actively racing, with at least a defined global distribution;
- submitting changes to constitution;
- request approval to World Sailing for changes to class rules, one-design specifications and registration schemes;
- ensure that its equipment control procedures properly maintain the objectives of the class rules; appoint a technical committee; have at least one WS class IM;...
- send an annual report including specific information required by World Sailing;
- ...

In this first review 3 main criteria were used i.e. payment of fees, submittal of annual report and meeting global distribution requirements. Both the International Byte Class Association and the International Farr 40 Class Association fail to meet all 3 criteria.

With regard to Class Rules an issue was raised by one of the members on how to cope with an OA/MNA that amends, suspends or overwrites without prior approval of the Class / World Sailing. The Committee and the Board will look into possibilities to report those situations and sanctions that can be imposed on the offender.

The Committee will also work, together with the WS Classes Committee leadership, on a policy to be published for endorsement by the Board by Mid-Year-Meeting 2023. That policy seeks to clarify for example that:

- the Equipment Rules Sub-Committee shall review at the time of a Class Rules Change request also the Class Rules as a whole;
- certain types of feedback with regard to Class Rules for example linked to evolution of the rules (RRS, ERS, ...) and/or change of reference standards (e.g. new editions of standards for PFDs) are subject to mandatory implementation rather than voluntary. This kind of feedback may be given both at the time of a Class Rules Change request and at the time of class association review.
- ...

The Committee received an update on World Sailing's sustainability agenda and how it links to the Committee's activities.

The staff gave an update on the In-House Certification programme and the Board registration scheme. It has been noted that the current way of reporting allows for a KPI-like follow up, both in terms of the services provided by committee, sub-committee and Executive Office and in terms of reactivity of classes to feedback given.

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Jurgen Cluytmans

Chair

Equipment Committee