

SIGHTING THE LINE



ISAF IRO Newsletter Issue 1, December 2006

Dear Colleagues

The ISAF Race Management Sub-committee met in early November during the ISAF Conference in Helsinki, Finland and one of the key decisions was to increase our communications via regular newsletters with this first issue comprising of a brief summary of the Conference meetings.

It is difficult to get Race Management truly on the map as a very important part of our sport. Traditionally we are governed by the rules which keep us together. In our self policing sport Juries were sitting on the shore whilst we did the on the water work. Much has changed since, with the increasing professionalism of sailors and the subsequent demand for higher standards from officials, Judges (and later Umpires) got more and more involved in on the water activities. I think it is fair to say that Race Management lagged behind. Now we have to make our point loud and clear and with your support this will be done. I invite you all to comment and to give your input so that we can share our thoughts and improve our work.

An example of where we need to assert our role is that it is a strange situation that many people give an opinion on our work, such as the difficulties they see with the Medal Races when we should be much more active in this field and air our opinion.

The best way to move forward is via the submissions process and ensuring items are on the agenda. No decisions by Council can be made unless they are based on a formal submission or an agenda item. To this end I have agreed with the Chairman of the Race Officials Committee that any submissions we as the RMSC would like to put forward will be accepted by him and be included on the agenda (unless of course we suggest to start sailing backwards...). So this is the time to start drafting submissions and items for the agenda and I invite you all to do so and mail them to me. Especially now just after the meeting when we will all know what is burning in our minds. So let it all out and come forward with ideas now so that we can develop considered submissions well in advance of the submissions deadline which is not until 1 August.

The RMSC presented their report to the Race Officials Committee meeting and the following is a summary of significant matters discussed during the ROC meeting and the outcome of the Council meetings.

The ROC generally agreed with the proposals of the RMSC which will be reflected in the minutes. There was in depth discussion regarding submission 066-06 on the proposal for ISAF to appoint an IRO to Grade 1 events in addition to the Olympics Games and ISAF Worlds especially with regard to why such appointments are necessary and what would be the defined responsibilities and costs involved?

The RMSC's viewpoint was put forward very strongly that the Race Officer in charge of a course should be assisted by a high standard ISAF appointed IRO as they officiate alone and are required to make many decisions based on their own judgment and cannot consult with fellow officials unlike judges and umpires who always work as part of a jury, panel or team. The final outcome was that even

though the recommendation of the ROC was to support the submission, but with the amendment for Olympic Grade 1 events only, the decision of Council was to reject the recommendation which

effectively means the situation remains the same. The Council gave a number of reasons, such as costs involved, bureaucracy and the dilution of the importance of local people.

However the RMSC position has not changed and we will continue to pursue our objective for ISAF to appoint at least one IRO at the most important multi Olympic class grade 1 events. We feel that the costs involved would be justified as a strong IRO appointment would result in more confidence in decisions made on the water and therefore fewer protests for the jury. Furthermore, we feel that the role of the appointed IRO should be rotated over the courses to ensure the same standard of equality and fairness, rather than to support the PRO onshore. This is what sailors around the world are demanding and rightfully so.

The other major discussion focused on submission 074-06 and the proposal for an ISAF World Cup and after much debate it was decided that this will go ahead and no later than 2008 using Olympic equipment and will comprise of the following events: Melbourne, Miami, Palma, Hyeres, Holland Regatta and Kiel. The inclusion of the Class Worlds and a potential final are subject to further discussion.

The discussion of the World Cup lead to the proposal for a nominated IRO to attend the World Cup events and possibly other Grade 1 Olympic Class to ensure, amongst other things, that events procedures and philosophy are harmonized between events and between courses events in much the same way Bill O'Hara did with regard to Rule 42 at major events in 2006.

The ROC approved this proposal and Nino will prepare a detailed paper for the approval of the Executive and for the funding for this to progress without delay.

The use of technology was a major focus of discussion not only relating to OCS but in its broader application to the analysis and promotion of our sport in general. It has to be understood that technology is key to popularizing our sport. No sport can grow without in depth analysis. This is true for soccer, basketball, football, tennis, judo etc. Articles written on these sports always include analysis of the game. Unfortunately this cannot be said of sailing. Notification of results is as far as it goes. Sports that take place within the confines of a pitch, track or arena already use technology to their advantage and technology is even more key to making our sport media friendly since the action takes place on the huge arena of open waters. Tracking and tracing will show the tactics used by competitors to make their way to the next mark and thus make it more exciting. The advancement of our sport is in many ways dependent on the technological resources available and this is being recognized more and more. Patrick Bergmans is the RMSC member who is dedicating his efforts in this respect with assistance from Annika Ekman.

These were the main race management issues covered at the ISAF Conference.

Shortly after the conference I attended the Race Management clinic in Cascais, Portugal, run by Nino Shmueli (ISR). Preparations being made look set for a fantastic ISAF Worlds in 2007:

Five IROs have been appointed by ISAF as Course Representatives:

Jeff Martin	GBR
Luky Serrano	ESP
Nino Shmueli	ISR
Paul Ulibarri	CAN
Per-Olof Ekstrand	SWE

Finally 26 IROs have been invited to be part of the race management team at the Test Event in China in August 2007. Not all roles are typical IRO roles, but all relate to race management. The issue is that these IROs have accepted to spend considerable time at this major event to exclusion of other principal events, but their appointment other than IRO will not necessarily meet the strict requirements of the regulation for renewal of status. We feel that these IROs should not be penalized and that the regulation should be amended if necessary. This matter has already been brought to the attention of the ROC for action.

Please email any comments/ input to me at: Henri.van.der.Aat@trefpunt.nl

Warmest regards,
Henri G C van der Aat
Chairman
ISAF Race Management Sub-Committee

THANKS To:

Helmut Jakobowitz for coming up with the title for the Newsletter

We invite you all to submit articles concerning Race Management matters to:
Nino Shmueli : ninos@netvision.net.il

Happy New Year, Happy Sailing Year