

## **MINUTES – EMPIRICAL HANDICAP SUB-COMMITTEE**



A Session of the Empirical Handicap Sub-Committee of the International Sailing Federation met at 1430 – 1800 hours on Sunday 9 November 2008 in the Jardin Room, at the Hotel Melia Castilla, Madrid, SPAIN.

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#### **Present:**

Nils Nordenstrøm (Chairman)  
Ken Kershaw  
Paul Ansfield  
Daniel Pillons  
Carlos Gastelu

#### **Apologies:**

Denis Kiely

#### **Not Present:**

Miguel Rosa

#### **Also present:**

Rob Taylor (Technical Co-ordinator)

*Please refer to the ISAF Council minutes of 13-16 November 2008 for the **final Council** decision on all recommendations and opinions contained within these minutes.*

## **1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

### Minutes

The minutes were approved by earlier correspondence and there were no matters arising not already covered on the agenda.

## **2. STATUS REPORTS**

The general feeling was that the amount of empirical handicapping is increasing or stabilizing throughout the world and that areas such as in South America are also becoming increasingly interested.

There was no report of empirical handicapping from Sweden or Ireland as there was no representative of these countries present.

### **(a) NORLYS – Norway**

The Chairman updated the committee on empirical handicapping in Norway which has developed a web-based system for dealing with sail numbers and where there are currently 13,000 yachts registered with the MNA. There was a brief summary of the rule changes that have been made during the year regarding spinnaker area and the number of sails permitted on board.

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### **(b) USPHRF & North American**

Paul Ansfield gave a brief report on USPHRF activity and noted there were approximately 28,000 boats using the USPHRF system in 53 registered fleets. It was noted that some events were using the PHRF system without using the full US system which led to sailors being unnecessarily penalised due to its improper use. USPHRF were in discussion with these event organisers to address this situation. There were similar rule changes imposed on spinnaker area to that of LYS as well as penalising code zeros; however, roller furling headsails would gain a rating credit if fitted after production. It was also noted that USPHRF is now being used in other countries such as Taiwan and Mexico and Paul described the relationship between the different fleets around the world. Interest in personal handicapping was reported to have grown over the year with most interest coming from fleets in San Diego and the ECHO rating system in Ireland.

### **(c) RYA Portsmouth Yardstick**

Ken Kershaw spoke on the developments of the RYA Portsmouth Yardstick system which include an online returns system to make it easier for clubs using the RYA PY system to report on the rating numbers being used across the country. A web-based version has also been developed which uses commonly used race results programs to extract the raw data which can then be displayed on a national website for clubs and classes to see and update. Ken also spoke about how the issue of getting the raw data is common to all empirical handicap systems and that reliable returns from clubs and classes is a real problem, one that will hopefully be reduced as the process of returning raw data is made easier and less time consuming.

### **(d) PHRF Argentina**

Carlos Gastelu informed the committee of an increase in rating certificates issued in Argentina year on year and that these ratings are centralised in one office in Buenos Aires. This office also issues certificates to Uruguay. Ratings are based on a standard boat, rather than adapting individual certificates and ratings for boats that have been modified. Unlike a number of other rating systems, the number of sails on board were not counted in the calculation of the rating although the use of code zeros was penalised.

### **(e) HN France**

Daniel Pillons reported that the number of returns and results using the HN system had been generally increasing year on year since 1998. Last year there was a large drop in certificates issued, however, the number of boats using this system had increased again in 2008, largely due to an improved on-line system. There are currently 10,843 certificates issued.

## **3. EMPIRICAL HANDICAPPING WORLD WIDE.**

The Chairman presented an overview of empirical handicapping world wide and

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explained that the data was updated at the end of 2007, but was not yet up to date. The Chairman noted the need to share information from other Countries to build up a concise database.

### **4. STANDARD PARAMETERS AND NOTATION FOR DESCRIPTION OF BOATS**

Ken Kershaw showed his concern about the fact that some of the definitions proposed in a submission for the Equipment Control Sub-Committee may have serious consequences for the handicapping system if they go ahead, and it is agreed that this part of the submission should be withdrawn before the meeting takes place.

### **5. STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Chairman exposed the difficulty in finding information in general and on the ISAF website about handicap related issues and how to improve it. The ways in which this can be progressed are:

- Publishing
- Communications of handicappers worldwide
- Creation of a Forum to discuss related issues
- Standard format

The Chairman also suggested the creation of a working party on notations, and asked for volunteers to take care of each one of the issues mentioned above. It was agreed that:

- The Chairman will be in charge of the work plan and terms of reference.
- Paul Ansfield will study the feasibility of creating a forum and agrees to give an update on the progress by the end of March.
- Daniel Pillons will be in charge of the standard format.
- Denis Kiely will try to find ways to improve the communications of handicappers worldwide.

### **6. PRESENTATION OF SPECIAL TOPICS**

The Chairman gave a presentation on Assignments of Empirical Handicap Numbers and the content was discussed.

### **7. LISTED EMPIRICAL HANDICAP SYSTEMS**

Ken Kershaw made a presentation on how the Empirical Handicap System has improved in the last 30 years by the use of software with algorithm programs and how the figures obtained are more meaningful now than they were before. He also asked for advice to the Committee on how this can be improved to minimize errors.

### **8. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE OFFSHORE COMMITTEE**