

## Those tectonic plates (again)

The big news for *Seahorse* readers was the agreement made by the Stan Honey-chaired Oceanic and Offshore Committee at the World Sailing meetings in Barcelona (firmly chaired, one should add, both accurately and also with some sense of relief) that ORC and RORC will now co-operate on organising future world championships which will be run using both the ORC and IRC rating systems, with the debut regatta planned for 2018.

This first 'twin' event will take place at the well-known Netherlands port of Scheveningen, which appropriately sits at the intersection of current ORC and IRC cultures. This is a proven popular and successful venue that has hosted countless major regattas and will also host the next Volvo Ocean Race finish in 2018.



Two contrasting looks at Maxi72 sailing. *Proteus* (top) sports the latest fashion with a 'faced-on' code zero; the aim of allowing a smaller mid-girth measurement is the flip-side of the big, floppy, sacrificial roaches that were added to the first Code 0s 20 years ago on the Whitbread 60s. Space to operate (above) as the new Bolin-designed Maxi72 Cannonball has her maiden sail in Dubai

It's early days yet to confirm the details of the first event format, measurement, class splits, scoring and so on, but a working party is being assembled from both groups to agree these items, with the goal of announcing decisions as early as possible to maximise participation in what is sure to be a popular – and important – event.

Already those on the sidelines are scratching their chins... If dual scoring is decided upon, as opposed to parallel IRC and ORC classes racing alongside each other before a single champion is (somehow) identified, then what would the ideal IRC/ORC boat look like?

At the 2016 Yacht Racing Forum, in Malta, Maxi72 and TP52 class manager Rob Weiland speculated that working within two rule frameworks would be an interesting exercise for designers and may even prompt new projects that diverge in concept from design and build activity that is currently routed into both existing ORC production yachts and IRC-based racing classes like the Fast 40+, TP52 and Maxi72, as well as into the newest one-designs like the recently launched Melges 40.

Whatever path this overdue ORC-IRC initiative may take is certain to be both interesting... and significant.

### No hiding

In Barcelona the ORC VPP for 2017 was also revealed, featuring few major changes other than to improve the treatment of today's popular mid-sized wide and light designs. Other tweaks include...

- a redefinition of headsail rules to head off the lace-up style of luffs (left) on those unusual code zeros seen deployed in Porto Cervo at the Maxi72 worlds. The large void between the sail luff and the tack allows for a shortened foot measurement, thereby reducing the 75% prescribed minimum mid-girth limit and resulting in a smaller, flatter sail that more closely resembles a masthead upwind headsail than a spinnaker.

- One of the ORC system's distinct features is its multiple scoring option; but under any system if scoring is mishandled then results always suffer.

The ORC technical committee has therefore recommended against further use of ORC's Performance Line scoring option following a study that revealed some strange results from its use. As a result of the study, along with the polling of race managers, it was agreed that better guidance is now needed in making the appropriate selection of scoring options, particularly for non-windward/leeward races.

- In some cultures (including Italy, Spain, Greece and Germany) the most accurate method – Performance Curve Scoring – is well known and, if handled well with solid race management practices, generates reliable results. Other cultures prefer a simpler system, including the Netherlands where organisers now choose one of three single-number GPHs – one for each of three different wind bands (the triple number system).

However, where a wide variety of competitor and race manager abilities exist, guidance is needed not only for making the correct choice of scoring system but also in the appropriate choice of software. To this end ORC programmers now offer a new scoring package that is PC-based and calculates scores for all ORC scoring options.

A new ORC race management guide will also shortly be published that specifically addresses options in courses and scoring and makes relevant recommendations for regatta organisers.

- The Sportboats Rule was still under debate as the Barcelona meetings closed, prompted by the wide variety of interests in the cultures that have been using this rule. The debate centres around sizes and styles of boats since this size range typically sees the most active development and the ORC system is being asked somehow to embrace everything on offer.

With the deadline for publication of the 2017 rules now fast approaching, this debate is converging towards a three-part solution: (1) boats that are extremely light and fast and that allow trapezes; (2) high-performance keelboats with high SA/DSPL ratios; and (3) older designs with SA/DSPL ratios lower than those in group (2).  
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