

Positive signals

Bruno Finzi has been chairman of ORC for, well, a long time – since Hans Zuiderbaan left this position in 2002. As a member of many Italian teams on the international offshore circuit in the 1980s and 90s, including being a regular onboard Pasquale Landolfi's series of *Bravas* in the heydays of the Admiral's Cup, Bruno's current role as a yachting politician is driven by continued enthusiasm to see his sport grow and prosper. Meanwhile, a busy day job as head of a Milan civil engineering company also gives him appreciation and insight for ORC's technical approach to handicapping. And, unlike politicians who just shake hands and kiss babies, Bruno is often out in the trenches including sitting on the jury at ORC regattas.

Seahorse: You were in The Hague on the jury for the first combined ORC/IRC World Championship. Your overall impressions...

Bruno Finzi: I would say it was very good. We did not have the same large turnout of entries we have had in recent years at other world championships, but this is the first time it has been held in Holland. The competitive level was high – the teams that were on the podium were well-prepared and sailed extremely well and earned their awards. The collaboration was also a good indication that we can work with RORC and local host partners to create an event that has all the features of a good world championship.

SH: How about the technical matter of every entry needing both an IRC and ORCi certificate...

BF: This was not easy, for sure. ORCi certificates require some more complex measurements and in some areas there are not measurers trained yet for this task. But the technical teams from ORC and RORC had been collaborating for almost a year in advance, anticipating the likely hurdles, and they had clearly worked through the problems extremely well. By the time everyone was together in The Hague everything was operating efficiently.

It was awkward for the race office to be handling certificates for both systems, so early on ideas were floating around about having certificates issued that were specific to the event to simplify things. As it turned out, by having both teams in the same place they quickly learned about each other's methods of handling measurement data and I'm told are now finding ways to co-operate even further for the future through common use of software platforms.

In fact, Jason [Smithwick, IRC chief measurer] and Zoran [Grubiša, ORC chief measurer] will meet again this weekend at the Middle Sea Race, and will continue their discussions about common technical solutions at the World Sailing meetings in Sarasota.

SH: Were there any problems with the rigorous process of measurement control at a world championship event?

BF: Aside from one question about an offset file, there were basically no problems that affected the results. We were fortunate to have a great location and good weather, but above all to have measurement teams who worked so hard to ensure a fair regatta. Ten measurers trying to check the top three in every class after every race...

SH: As Matteo Polli described in the September edition of *Seahorse*,

there was broad similarity between the dual-scored results... but inevitably at times the IRC and ORC results turned out differently.

BF: Yes, but this was mostly in Class C – which is the most crowded class with the highest number of rule-specific design optimisations. Classes A and B did not seem to be that different, and the top teams seemed less affected. The best crews usually won! But in Class C this was not the best situation and some owners from both IRC and ORC cultures were confused and not happy. The teams from IRC were confused about the use of multiple ratings, and the teams from ORC were confused by having only one rating for all races and conditions when they were used to using Performance Curve Scoring (PCS). We chose not to use PCS, in part because of the strong tides at The Hague, but instead used the Triple Number scoring that is common among Dutch ORC fleets and elsewhere.

My view is that we need to learn from this event and develop a different approach from dual-scoring, because whenever you take this route then any system is going to deliver some inconsistencies.

A solution to consider may be to use IRC ratings and scoring for the distance races and ORC for inshore races – this is more consistent with common use of these systems anyway and can better harness the power of each technical solution in an appropriate way.

SH: Other pointers from The Hague...

BF: The International Technical Committee met after the regatta to begin to evaluate the results and that analysis continues. This is an important process to improve the ORC VPP because at these championship events we know the sailing and race management is at a high level so the performance data is of a good quality. The Hague also gave us data from boats that are not normally found in ORC fleets which can only help improve our VPP for the future.

SH: The atmosphere in The Hague was very friendly between the two rating cultures.

BF: Yes, absolutely. People forget many of the members of the ORC management committee are also members of RORC, and we have been racing with and against each other for years, so we have the same goals to improve the sport and bring unity to international offshore sailing. This regatta in The Hague was an important step forward.

SH: Bottom line, will there be more world championships using both?

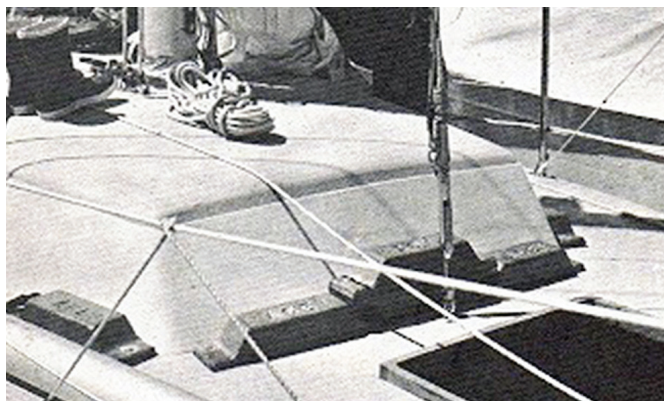
BF: This is certainly under discussion now and I'm hopeful – it is one of my reasons for going to Malta to talk through the possibilities with Eddie [Warden-Owen, RORC CEO] ahead of our own planning discussions in Sarasota for next year's worlds in Šibenik.

It's important to let World Sailing know that an annual World Championship event is important – 9,000 ORC boats and 5,000 IRC boats represent a huge number of competitive sailors and a significant sector of this sport. We are doing pretty well managing it ourselves with fair, competitive racing and an enthusiastic demand for future events; if we continue to work together then I believe that we have a great future ahead of us.

Dobbs Davis



SANDER VAN DER BORCH



Plus ça change, as our French friends will say, but in this case it was still a bit of a surprise when the Waarschip 36 *Hubo* (left) turned up at The Hague Worlds in July with 83kg of lead bolted to the coachroof in order to hit her ORCi stability numbers. Doug Peterson aficionados will quickly recognise this shot (right) of large lead ingots similarly bolted to the deck of Peterson's breakthrough design *Ganbare* when she presented for measurement at the 1973 One Ton Cup – which she dominated then lost through a navigation error