



Responding to the market

The Offshore Classes and Events Committee of the ORC is one of the oldest in the organisation, which itself was founded over 50 years ago in a marriage of interests between RORC and CCA in the US. A little later in the era of the Ton Cups and great offshore team events (for example, the Admiral's Cup, Kenwood and Sardinia Cups) it was this committee that set the standards and formats for competition at championship levels. Their annual published product is still known as the Green Book for its iconic colouring and ready use as a reference for the myriad details that both boat captains and race team managers had to know to ensure compliance and avoid costly and/or embarrassing protests.

Another important role of the Green Book was and still is to ensure that the standards and formats of these regattas meet the published criteria for championship events. Thanks to the diligent leadership of the late Paolo Massarini as chair of this committee for the past several years, this is still very much the case; so when an organisation wants the blessing of ORC to be approved to host a Continental or World fully crewed Championship, applications are often submitted, debated and approved years in advance. This has helped maintain the enduring value and interest in these events, which are routinely filled to capacity with as many as 100-150 entries from around the world.

Today, in response to the strong and growing interest in double-handed offshore racing, the Green Book is shifting to also encompass new criteria for organisations interested in hosting a Continental ORC DH Championship; an ORC DH World Championship has yet to be approved by World Sailing and may take a while yet to wrangle through the political process! Massarini's successor is, however, Bruno Finzi, who with many years' experience as ORC chairman already has intimate knowledge of exactly this kind of

wrangling... he believes that getting some successful European or North American championships under the belt first will be needed before taking on that endeavour successfully.

In the meantime the Green Book committee is going through the effort of agreeing on formats and scoring while addressing key competitor issues like safety, outside communications and the use of autopilots. For instance, for the latter there has been considerable debate: ban them, limit their use, or open it up to anything. Different events around the globe currently make their own decisions on autopilot use but always at issue is the balance between safety, practicality and cost... not to mention the longterm good of sailing.

Outgoing World Sailing Offshore and Oceanic committee chair Stan Honey has, meanwhile, weighed in with some detailed suggestions of his own on defining the dos and don'ts...

Autopilot usage

- Supplied equipment fleets: heading function only; supplied remote controls only; limit to only changing accessible menus; no changes permitted to firmware on the pilot. Similarly no changes to firmware on the instruments.
- Bring your own boat fleets: probably OK to not have limit on autopilot functionality and permit all modes including optimum wind angle from polars. (This of course is nothing new; my own pilot has been doing this since 1992 and I think all commercial pilots can now similarly interface to the instrument systems). Remote controls permitted.

Communications

- Supplied equipment fleets: consider limiting weather data to scheduled public VHF voice forecasts. Race organisers might



The die is cast: the virus will pass but the double-handed racing movement that received such a tremendous boost in 2020 is not going anywhere. The two-handed discipline is firmly established in French waters but in the past 12 months circumstances forced the rest of the racing world to join in and they liked what they found. Easier staffing, cheaper racing and a competitive scene where an older, heavier design, more than capable of looking after itself in rough conditions – such as the S&S Sagitta 35 *Ugly Duckling* (left) – can enjoy a new lease of life. A more modern design that offers value for shorthanders yet remains capable of pulling off some big wins is the Nivelt-designed Archambault A35 (above), an example of which won the 2020 UK IRC Nationals

re-broadcast translations. This changes RRS41.

- Bring your own boat fleets: all data used must be available to everyone. Having to pay is OK but every competitor must be able to similarly pay and access the data. This permits the use of Predictwind and Squid subscription grib files. No custom or private routeing or weather advice. This changes RRS41.
- All boats to continuously monitor DSC and VHF CH16 with a deck speaker (and mic) for safety.
- All boats to run a Class B AIS Transponder (permanently) on active transmit via a masthead antenna shared with the fixed VHF via a splitter, meeting Special Regs antenna and coax requirements. Unfortunately it is necessary to require all of this because there is an incentive for boats to put their AIS transmit antenna in the bilge (and during round-the-world races, occasionally beneath an upside-down saucepan – *ed*).
- Every sailor to continuously wear an AIS MOB beacon.
- No restrictions on communications of any nature between boats on a single VHF channel specified in the SIs such as VHF 68. This changes RRS41. This adds to safety as the fleet can warn one another about approaching fronts or squalls. It also makes it more fun.

Even as these details are being ironed out ORC DH European Championship events are already approved for the next two years. The first is in July in Greece as part of the Aegean 600, where the week-long format includes a short-distance race of 10-12 hours worth 1.0 points, and a long 60-72 hour race worth 1.5 points. Eligible entries cover a wide span, from the rated speed of a Class Mini to boats with the rated speed of a fast Class40. The first two entries demonstrate the expected diversity of boat types: a Dehler 30 and a Swan 45!

Next year's 2022 ORC DH Europeans is also approved and will be run at the Gotland Runt Race in Sweden. This too will be expected to have a wide diversity of boats commonly seen in these Baltic fleets. For both events it will be interesting to see in post-Covid times if they attract the recent more specialised DH designs such as the Sun Fast 3300s which have proved to be so successful in Anglo-French cultures.

Will these new DH championships help determine who represents their nation in the 2024 Olympics? At the very least they could be convenient tests for thinning the herd until more clarity comes from World Sailing on the equipment choices... Either way they offer interesting, accessible, fun and popular new events to challenge keen amateur sailors.

Stan Honey and Dobbs Davis



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