



## PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### Meeting

held from 14:30 – 18:00  
on Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 in Dun Loaghaire

### MINUTES

**Present:** Thomas Nilsson (NOR) - Chairman, Fabrizio Pirina (ITA), vice-chairman, Stratis Andreadis (GRE), Steve Benjamin (USA), Thomas Blixt (SWE), Dobbs Davis (USA), Willem Ellemeeet (NED), Zoran Grubiša (CRO), Piret Salmistu (EST)

**Apologies:** Qu Chun (CHN), Christian Frers (ARG), Luke Scott (RSA), Chris Theodosios (GRE)

#### 1. Approval of the Minutes from the 2024 Meeting

The minutes from the 2024 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.

#### 2. Submissions

##### a) FIN 4 – Search functionality in Sailor Services

The Committee approved proceeding with submission. The proposal aims to expand the ORC Sailor Services platform with flexible, multi-criteria search and analysis tools to unlock significant potential for sailors, designers, and organizers. A facelift aligning the platform with the main website has already been developed and is ready for implementation on the live server. Additional funding will be required to complete deployment and ensure full return on investment.

##### b) SWE 4 – ORCmh rule promotion

The submission was supported.

##### c) MANCOM 1 – ORC Light Certificate

The Italian Sailing Federation (FIV) requested the development of a simple, entry-level certificate by retrieving boat data from the existing ORC database. Alberto Pindozi provided a walkthrough of the “Light” certificate concept, which has been implemented as a pilot project in cooperation with FIV and UVAI.

The initiative is designed to introduce new participants to the ORC system before progressing to an ORC Club certificate. It was noted that the current implementation follows the Italian model and may be adapted for use in other countries in consultation with ORC.

The English presentation has been published on the ORC website, and an addendum will be attached to these minutes.

The submission was supported by the Committee.



## **2. 2025 Committee Report**

### **a) Website Update**

Thomas Nilsson presented Google Analytics data to review the platform's performance. While growth is moderate rather than exponential, the metrics indicate a steady upward trend.

### **b) Social Media Report**

Piret reviewed social media performance data. Key points include:

- Facebook: Metrics have shifted due to changes in Meta's algorithm.
- Flickr: Achieved over half a million organic views, demonstrating strong engagement with images.
- ORC Worlds 2025 – Tallinn: The primary traffic source was the website, followed by social media and news updates. Flickr remains the leading social media platform, reaching 600,000 views.

News and event coverage were published across multiple channels. TracTrac noted that this was their second-largest event worldwide. Event photographers provided daily coverage. Exceptional digital exposure this year significantly benefited sponsors. All reach was organic; further growth potential exists through paid campaigns.

Strategies:

- Development of new stories.
- Cleanup of national contact lists in Constant Contact (CC).

### **c) Report on Seahorse partnership discussions**

Thomas Nilsson met with Seahorse to explore a stronger partnership. ORC currently maintains a column in Seahorse publications highlighting ongoing activities. Further collaboration and development are planned for 2026.

### **d) Growth and development trends in the US and New Fleet in Ireland**

Dobbs Davis reported on marketing strategies in the US, including national and regional presentations and technical support through US Sailing. He also outlined new events for 2025 and 2026, noting continued growth in participation and engagement.

### **e) Newsletter planning and strategy for 2025**

Dobbs Davis presented the newsletter strategy. Piret contributes content focusing on longer, in-depth pieces. Constant Contact remains the primary email platform. Key strategies:

- Align news with calendar milestones, not only events
- Ensure formatting is responsive across devices.
- Leverage Constant Contact's targeting features for more precise audience engagement.

## **3. Review of Ongoing Work and Projects**

### **a) Sailor Services Refit (SaS Relaunch)**

The SaS platform will be refitted and integrated with banners for advertising and upselling additional services (e.g., polars).

### **b) Sail Cross Over Chart**

We will invest in a new SaS product to be launched in combination with RaceFlow to enhance user experience.



c) Banner Campaigns on Sailor Services and ORC.org

These campaigns will be self-service and generate revenue to reinvest in Sailor Services development.

d) Cooperation with TracTrac:

Development of a new TCF live scoring system in partnership with TracTrac. Thomas Nilsson presented the system to the audience. The system will be extended also to SYRA regattas.

e) Introduction of the ORC Marketing Team

The team will operate under the ORC ManCom to coordinate marketing initiatives and communications.

f) Marketing Strategies for the Sportboat Class

The Committee agreed to adhere to the 2025 plans and maintain consistency in implementation.

g) Partnership with the Yacht Racing Forum

ORC has established a partnership with the Yacht Racing Forum. ORC's presence will be valuable for both organizational development and networking, offering an excellent offline engagement opportunity.

#### **4. Weather routing scoring (WRS) – 2025 Discussion and 2026 Development plan**

The Committee reviewed progress made in 2025 on the development of the Weather Routing Scoring (WRS) system and associated digital tools, recognizing its potential as a major step forward in offshore race management and fairness.

During 2025, RaceFlow has been tested as a web-based platform connecting the ORC database through an API to the PredictWind weather forecast and routing engine. This integration enables organizers to set fleets and courses and automatically generate Time Correction Factors (TCFs) - including Time on Distance (ToD) and Time on Time (ToT) — for any defined start time.

While RaceFlow cannot yet produce scratch sheets or HTML track outputs, this functionality remains available through ORC Scorer, which also performs the final scoring calculations. To support future scaling, the Sailor Services (SaS) system will be adapted to include a credit-based access model for WRS and RaceFlow use. This will allow flexible payment for individual races and annual subscriptions, creating a sustainable framework for service expansion.

Additionally, the WRS analysis tools, currently operating as Python scripts developed by Andy Cloughton, will be integrated into a unified digital environment that connects RaceFlow, ORC Scorer, and SaS. These tools will provide pre- and post-race performance analysis to validate WRS accuracy and fairness.

Committee members noted the importance of regulatory clarity and user accessibility. The US12 submission establishes that WRS should be defined as a scoring tool or mechanism rather than a rating, ensuring alignment with the Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) and World Sailing precedents. The GER7 submission further clarifies that WRS may be applied for long coastal or offshore races, with a fallback to All-Purpose Handicap (APH) scoring when routing data is unavailable or unreliable.



Based on testing results from over 68 scored and 51 shadow-scored races, WRS has demonstrated improved fairness by producing more balanced elapsed-time distributions across fleets and conditions. PredictWind's data reliability and support have been key to this success.

#### 2026 Implementation Plan

- Decentralization: Expand RaceFlow access to trained race organizers for direct scoring or shadow scoring of events, reducing the load on the central ORC technical team.
- Integration: Combine RaceFlow, ORC Scorer, and the SaS credit system into one cohesive digital ecosystem with shared user management and analytics tools.
- Validation: Continue pre- and post-race testing with statistical review of WRS performance, supported by the integrated analysis scripts.
- Documentation: Update the ORC Race Management Guide with new sections on WRS and APH-based scoring, reflecting the GER7 proposal.
- Education: Develop online training modules and documentation for Race Officers and National Authorities to standardize WRS use.
- Communication: Promote WRS success stories through ORC channels to encourage adoption among race organizers globally.

The Committee endorsed this plan as the framework for full operational rollout of WRS in 2026, subject to continued collaboration with PredictWind and the ITC.