



INTERNATIONAL MELGES 24 CLASS ASSOCIATION

## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT for 2022

November 16, 2022

### **Spar Update:**

The situation with the spar is moving in a positive direction but as per most things in the marine industry, progress is frustratingly slow, especially in Europe. After the unsuccessful attempts to dial in the bend characteristics of a spiral wound carbon spar, it was determined that it was not going to cost effective to continue developing the prototype Selden spars. With that development Melges Boat Works decided to reset and investigated the possibility of acquiring the original Southern Spar tooling and IP (build documents) from the Hall Spars (North Sails Group). We can now report that MBW has successfully purchased the tooling and building rights and has shipped these assets to Ceilidh Composite Technologies. The last update indicates the first prototype spar will be available for testing before the end of December. Assuming they are able to duplicate the original black mast characteristics, once approved (and if everything goes well), the first production run is hoped to be finished in January. However, it is important to temper expectations as we (the class) (and the even MBW) have little control over the timing. The good news is that now MBW owns the black mast tooling, it should just be a matter of finding a builder (and there are potentially other manufactures we could consider) who can build to the class standards. So far Ceilidh looks more than capable of building what we need.

We are also totally aware of the increasing frustration level of our membership as more and more boats are becoming orphaned without masts. But as this is a “manufacturer’s class”, MBW has to take the lead in finding a spar supplier. While the class has the “right” to approve that manufacturer (or not), it has become obvious that our black mast is a unique Melges 24 One Design part, perhaps almost as much as the boat is itself. It is apparent that we can’t simply use another off the shelf mast and expect it to match the performance of our original mast. So, unless the class is prepared to accept completely different types of spars and spar performance which will be nothing like the original, the technical committee is confident that MBW is on the right track (albeit much slower than any of us hoped). There is no other logical path for the class but to let this play out. Be assured that MBW is acutely aware of the situation and is doing everything they can, including investing a substantial amount of money to resolve this.

### **Boat Builder Update:**

Last year MBW (Zenda) produced a single boat - Hull 866 (and even this boat did not have its own new spar or trailer). We can also report that MBW is also negotiating with a European-based manufacturer to build hulls and potentially supply parts. At the moment the only reliable source for parts supply is to go directly to Zenda. The last update suggested that this potential new builder is close to completing the first boat. However, until that boat is complete, tested and approved, this has to be considered a project under development as MBW wants to be assured this is something that can remain sustainable and economically viable into the future. We should know more about this early in the new year.

### **Class Rule Interpretations:**

One of the primary roles of the Technical Committee is to interpret the class rules. Occasionally a ruling is required and indeed this occurred on a few occasions this year. As a result of one of these rulings, it was determined that our CR C.7.1 (c). which is the section related to “fairing and maintenance” needed

some clarification. After careful consideration, it was found that CR C.7.1 and its related sections were unenforceable in their current form and that the rule needed to be reworked. The technical committee focused efforts on updating those class rules and accordingly, the technical committee has submitted 5 individual rule change proposals covering related changes to C.7.1, C.7.2, C.8.1, E.2.3 and D.2.2. These 5 proposals will have to be considered as “all or none” as the individual proposals will not stand separately. We have also created a new H4 Approval Form which is intended to help owners navigate the approval process.

#### House Keeping:

There are 2 additional H4 proposals this year which are just edits to correct hardware descriptions. Neither is a new rule but is simply intended to correct the rule to match how the boat has always been. We have also revisited of the 2019 Canadian proposal to change the way the class measures the placement of the keel within the “Measurement Box”. After two years collecting supporting data to confirm the new rule does not orphan any currently legal boats, the Technical Committee is now confident the original proposal, with a minor alteration, is now ready for full implementation once ratified.

#### Constitution and the Event Manual:

This past year a sub committee was formed to update the “Championship Rules” and the “Event Requirements” documents (collectively known as the “Event Manual”). After close review, we feel that the class might want to consider reviewing how these documents pertain and relate to the Class Constitution as not everything is as clearly defined as it could be. In addition, there also appears to be a discrepancy with how our NCA’s conduct business internally, as not all appear to be bound by the same rules. This is also something we feel could be revisited.

#### Focus for 2023:

After spending considerable time on foil measurements to support the new CR C.8.2 KEEL proposal, the Technical Committee will now shift its focus to the issues of foil and bulb control templates. Our intention is to find a way to make patterns more widely available prior to re-implementation of control compliance at championship level events. It remains to be seen how long this will take but it is our intent to have the templates to make an active return to championship level events as soon as practical. As always, if you have any questions we are here to help. We also want to be clear that this tightening of the Class Rules will not be done quickly or with a heavy hand. Initially we will concentrate on making templates available to owners using the H4 Approval Form to repair damage to the foil or bulb and develop a strategy from there. Random checks over the last few years suggest nearly all boats are compliant so we do not expect this to be a major concern for the majority of the fleet.

#### Data List:

Tracking and archiving of Measurement Certificates and Measurement Form continues to improve. Most OAs of the major events have been kind enough to share certificate data and we currently have a considerable backlog to be filed and hope to update the class on our progress in the new year. With all the other business we had to contend with this year this unfortunately, found its way lower on the priority list.

#### FAQ Section:

Assuming the class ratifies some of these rule change proposals, we intend to augment the Frequently Asked Questions section of our web site to help our members understand and interpret some of our more complicated Class Rules. You can help – if you have a question, please feel free to ask our

Technical Committee for an opinion. Chases are that if you don't understand, many others will not as well. Don't be shy.

**Technical Committee:**

It goes without saying that none of this would have been possible without the dedication of the Technical Committee members. The class should recognize Kevin Nixon, Harry Melges, Branko Parunov, Arto Kiiski and Piret for their contributions and working knowledge of the Melges 24 Class.

Sadly, this year we will lose some people with Kevin Nixon stepping back to concentrate solely on his executive committee duties. Admittedly, the class has been working Kevin pretty hard and we would like to acknowledge Kevin's effort over the years. Thank You Kevin!

We would also like to thank Jan Schmidt for his past contributions as a committee member.

Finally, I am very pleased to nominate long-time class supporter Duncan Stamper to the position of Technical Committee member. Duncan is a well-known and respected older boat owner (Hull 11) and is uniquely qualified in constitutional matters having been part of the team that drafted the current version. Now that Duncan is free of his executive committee encumbrances, we are very excited to put him back to work helping us!

Mike Gozzard (CAN)

IM24CA Technical Committee Chair