

## **MELGES 24 Class Rule Change Proposals and Highlights for 2024**

**November 14, 2024**

### Technical Committee Chair Comments:

I am happy to report that your Technical Committee had a relatively uneventful season this year. Other than some last-minute modifications to the wording of the newly minted Pro Sailor Rule for World Sailing, all the new class rules were accepted as written before going into effect a little later than usual. We had a hand full of requests for rule clarifications, a couple of requests for permission to repair, and one member asking to experiment with non-class legal equipment. But more interesting was this was the first full season into one of the class's biggest rule changes in years... the long discussed and often feared removal of the maximum crew weight rule. Honestly, I thought it might have been a bigger deal, but teams quickly got to work experimenting with different weight combinations and it seems it didn't take long before everyone had it mostly sorted out. I was a little surprised to see the best results posted by boats at the World Championships sailed in higher wind ranges were carrying something in the 385-to-400 Kilogram range. In lighter air events including the European Championships, lighter weight teams often seemed to prevail. If you are interested in studying the data, team overall registered crew weights for these events are listed on the IMCA web site.

The annual technical committee meeting was well attended, and participants seemed to welcome the open discussion format of these meetings as there is ample opportunity for members to voice their opinions and be heard by a broad constituent of the class. A few of the new rules are more or less house keeping with minimal discussion but 3 of the proposals dominated the conversation.

First of these was that the class was surprised to learn we didn't have enough space for title sponsors on the bow of the boat. The OA for the European Championships managed to get more sponsors than we legally had room for – given the lack of interest in sponsorship over the last few years, this was a nice problem to have to resolve!

The second proposal was an issue brought up by the ITA NCA regarding their wish to be able to control the fees they charge for their membership. Initially they wanted B.2.2 (the Pro Sailor Membership Rule) repealed but after some discussion with the USMCA representative, we were able to come to a solid compromise that served both NCAs to good effect. I was particularly pleased to see class members from both sides of the world working together to make our class rules better for everyone. I am hopeful this proposal will pass with little opposition.

The third major point of discussion was the forestay issue. Finally, after a lengthy discussion, the Technical Committee decided to withdraw the forestay proposal in favor of drafting a white paper on the issues to educate the membership. This will allow the conversation to build some momentum as

everyone has a chance to understand the problems. It is clear however that we can expect changes to come to this rule early next year.

Finally, it was agreed that we should revisit the impact of all these new rules on the class at regular intervals to make sure the intent of the changes has been fully realized. Like the Pro Sailor Rule, there are sometimes unforeseen consequences of a new rule and we need to be mindful that the change is actually better for the class.

As always, I encourage members to speak up and be involved... it's your class. I would like to thank the Technical Committee team for their efforts again this year, I am particularly proud of the composition of this group and the relevant skill sets they bring to the table. They are:

Branko Parunov (SLO)

Arto Kiiski (FIN)

Duncan Stamper (CAN)

Jan Schmidt (GER)

Harry Melges III (USA)

Piret Salmistu (EST) Class Administrator

Mike Gozzard (CAN)

Technical Committee Chair