

MELGES 24 Class Rule Change Proposals and Highlights for 2025

November 10, 2025

Technical Committee Chair Comments:

The Technical Committee's main focus this year continued to revolve around the systemic jib halyard issues and the implementation of automated race management systems. Other business included an increasing number of approvals for various repairs which also included increased consultation with the class regarding "how best to do" various repairs and upgrades. And lastly, we continued to improve the collection and consolidation of the "Where Are All the Boats" project with the class database.

Starting with the **forestay** - discussions carried over from 2024 and as promised, the technical committee created and issued **a white paper** on the subject to help bring awareness to the problems, potential solutions and to report on the various testing programs that had been undertaken. If you have not already read the paper, it can be found on the class website – [CLICK LINK HERE](#). It seems that once the discussion became more widespread within the class, this led teams to be more diligent and increased monitoring of the condition of the halyards. This, in turn, may be the reason we appear to have reduced the number of actual failures being reported. While it has done nothing to reduce the number of replacements, at least things have calmed down on this issue.

It has been encouraging to see more members asking for permission and by extension advice on how best to repair and upgrade the boats while maintaining one design status. If you do not already know, the technical committee has been focused on understanding the issues, especially with the older boats, and documenting the correct ways to repair and maintain the competitiveness of the fleet. Please feel free to reach out and know we are here to help, not hinder.

But perhaps the biggest issue this year was the emergence and increasing **use of automated race management systems** such as the Vakaros Race Sense System. While it is fair to say that it seemed our class was playing catch up on this issue, I would like to assure you that there was a lot more to it than just adopting the technology. And this all came clearly into view at the 2025 World Championships where it was obvious that the use of the system would have been very beneficial.

It was hard to read some of the comments being posted such as "other classes are using it why aren't we?" First, we must understand that it is one thing for the class to want to use the system, but it is completely another thing to have the OA willing and able to use the system, and especially for a World Championship. Smaller regattas, such as regionals, all the way up to Nationals can use the system, which was not legal under the current class rules at that time, by using an RSS87 which is the rule that grants permission to amend class rules for an event. Unfortunately, an RSS87 can't be used for Continental or World Championships, which are far more stringently governed by World Sailing. Additionally, World Championships are expensive to run, and the cost of implementing the race sense system was something the OA had not budgeted for in the run-up to the event. This, coupled with an acute shortage of units available to purchase and rent in the EU (as documented in March 2025 when this subject was addressed), put a damper on the thought of using the system at that time.

Nonetheless, be aware that the technical committee started looking into what might be required for the class to legally use the system very early in 2025. By March, we had identified that we would need to change the class rule C.5.1. to make the system legal for use at all events. But after consultation with the OA, they made the call not to use the system and the class agreed. By the summer of 2025 the availability issue had been resolved by the manufacturer and once again the class revisited the issue with the OA. But in the end the class agreed with the OA that this was simply not achievable in time for this event.

While a growing number of well-known classes were already using the race sense system in Continentals and Worlds, few were doing so completely legally. While some classes play loose with the rules, our class does not. Nonetheless, we continued to move forward with an Emergency General Meeting (EGM) where this rule change was proposed and approved. We then asked World Sailing to ratify this rule change out of their regular cycle of reviews. We are pleased to report that World Sailing has approved the rule change, and we are free to use automated race management systems legally going forward as of a couple of weeks ago.

Finally, it was agreed that we should revisit the impact of all changes made to the class rules on regular intervals to make sure the intent of the changes have been fully realized. If there are any thoughts or comments on the most recent changes, please share them with us. It seems one of our most contentious class rule changes (removal of the weight limit) has been adopted by the class without much fuss... two years in I wonder now what all the fuss was. But clearly it is an example of how we can grow our class rules and make sailing the Melges 24 more enjoyable. I encourage you to continue to explore ways to make our class even better. Let's hear from you! Speak up and be involved... it's your class.

I would like to thank the Technical Committee team for their efforts once again this year. I am particularly proud of this group, and the relevant skill sets they bring to the table. They are:

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