

Report, IRC Finland 2009

This is a brief report from the second IRC season in Finland.

The short news is that we managed almost to triple our numbers – from 13 certificates to more than 30. Yes, the total is still a bit low, but at least the trend is clear. We do have room for improvement. The certificates are concentrated in the 35-40 feet range – which keeps the racing good for them – but for some reason we have not been able to attract but very few smaller boats. Maybe one reason is that the boats are a bit older in that range, and they seem satisfied with the existing rating systems. On the faster (and newer) end of the spectrum we were happy to get the new Classe 40 Akilaria “Tieto Passion” racing with us with Jouni Romppainen & Sam Öhman in the Suursaari race.

Tripling the numbers went surprisingly smoothly, with Pekka Lopmeri and Olof Rytövaara using the skills acquired last year. IRC measuring processes were also Caroline served us perfectly, even when the entry deadline for the season starter, and popular, Volvo Suursaari Race created what now seems to be an inevitable rush-hour. We also had our first rating review –issues, which were solidly handled by Mike U. & rest of the RORC/UNCL crew.

On the racing side, we had our first IRC class championships (Hanko), with 11 boats attending, among them two Estonians. Lauri Tammik / EST-608 Archambault A40RC “Charisma” was crowned as winner. We also ran a season-long ranking series, which consisted of two of the major “offshore” races in the Gulf of Finland, Volvo Suursaari Race and Helsinki-Tallinna Race, plus two other coastal/W-L races. The list shows now 25 boats (two from Estonia), ranging from a Platu 25 through a Henderson 30 to Swan 45 and the aforementioned Classe 40, not forgetting those more conventional racer/cruisers. Lauri Tammik & crew with their A40RC proved to be the undisputable “king of Gulf of Finland”, with three wins out of three regattas! Most of the offshore races were also run under what we call the double scoring system, ie. the boats were given to participate in two rating rule classes, and thus have a “second opinion” on their rated performance.

Gotland Runt (Sweden) is of course also an important IRC event for us. This year we had nine Finnish boats racing in the 27 boat IRC fleet, with Jaakko Olkkonen on his Swan 45 SD “Two Fast” finishing fourth as our spearhead. In numbers, the Finnish fleet was second only to Sweden’s home team of 10 boats. It’s perhaps worth mentioning that this race will be remembered for the notoriously weak winds, the fastest IRC boat on course Charlie (363 nm), Landmark 43 Air IV spent 73h04min, and the last finisher 102h13min!

For the 2010 season we are expecting to growth to continue. Tripling again might be a challenge, but twenty new certificate boats is a good target. From the preliminary interest we have received there seems still to be certain potential. The boat market seems also to be surprisingly livid this fall, and many of these new or newly purchased boats are clearly well suited for IRC racing. The Finnish Offshore Racing Association is also working to fine tune the racing calendar, regatta format and the rating range divisions to create an even more attractive series for the next summer! There have also been some talks of a Finnish team for the Commodores Cup 2010, but as this is written it remains to be seen if that idea will materialize.

Br,

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Secretary

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