

OFFSHORE RACING CONGRESS

World Leader in Rating Technology

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ROLEX IMS Offshore World Championship in Mahon, Menorca July 11th-17th

In total, 41 boats from 13 countries participated. Winds were weak to moderate, so was the sea state, competition was however just as fierce as expected in a world championship. The World event was this time split into one Corinthian and one open Class according to ISAF regulations. In the Corinthian category only one crewmember who works professionally in sailing is allowed, however not at the helm. The windward/leeward races were run southeast of Mahon harbour and the long offshore race was run clockwise around the beautiful island of Menorca east of Spain.

The trophies of the ROLEX IMS World Champions in the open category were awarded to the Spanish boat Azur de Puig owned by Marta Mas Borrell and helmed by Jose Maria Torcida, and in the Corinthian division to the Uruguyan GS 42 R Andalucia owned by Santiago Mesa and skippered by Ricardo Fabini.

It may be noted that several traditionally designed boats participated, some of them quite a few years old, which shows confidence in the IMS rule. The arrangements by Yacht Club Costa Smeralda and Club Maritimo de Mahon were also much appreciated by the sailors.

Full results and comments can be found at www.mundialrolexmahon.com

IMS European Championship in Sweden June 27th– July 6th. King Harald of Norway the winner !

The Swedish Royal Yacht Club offered a much varied championship with long offshore races and a spectrum of weather conditions. Around 45 boats participated. The Championship started with a 120-mile offshore race in 20-30 knots of average wind, continued with windward/leeward races in Sandhamn and ended with the 360-mile Round Gotland Race in fairly weak or moderate winds. The competition was fierce among the top five boats – H.R.H. King Harald with the Farr 53 “Fram XV”, Einar Sissener with the Grand Soleil 42R “Al Capone III”, German skipper Mattias Blumencroon with the IMX 40 “Moonshine”, Swedish skipper Gutta Johansson with the Grand Soleil 42R “Hagströmer&Qviberg” and last year's Swedish Champion Ralf Aspholm with the Synergia 40 “Data Communication”. Sissener led the overall scoring before the final Round Gotland race, however a fourth place for King Harald was sufficient to make him overall winner.

New ORC Level Class Rules

Progress continues at the Offshore Racing Congress on schedule for development of the new box rules. The provisional class rules were presented recently at the ROLEX IMS Offshore World Championship in Mahon, Menorca. To avoid confusion with former projects, it has been decided to officially use the name "ORC Level Class Rule". Recent work has been focused on backstays, stability, accommodation and the principles for measurement. Considerable emphasis has been given to aspects to keep operation cost down, like number of crew members, sails, annual certificates, etc. Measurement will be straight and simple with no hull measurement. ORC Chairman Bruno Finzi has stated "The boats are not supposed to be extreme, however they will be extremely fast". The boats will also be provided a second life in the IMS class.

A box rule means special challenges for the designers. There are already two major manufacturers that have tasked several design bureaus to present designs. One of these, Botin & Karkeek, was happy to see one of their designs, the Spanish Azur de Puig, win the World Championship in Menorca.

Luke Shingledecker, one of the naval architects at Farr Yacht Design who has examined the ORC's new box rules summarizes: "They are a little like smaller TP52s. They are light for their length and they have a moderate amount of sail area for their length, but plenty of sail area for their displacement. Their stability is not high stability - it isn't on the TP52s either - it is probably enough to get good performance in a range of conditions. They definitely have more stability than a typical IMS boat, but they are also so much lighter for their size, which really changes the kind of boat they are."

The ORC Level Class Rules project team is now focusing on the administrative aspects of the rules, such as Owners Associations and certificate procedures. Work is also in progress to define the first race circuits for 2006 and 2007. These will not compete with the existing IMS events. At least five regattas in each class are foreseen. These will not have to be coordinated between the three Level classes, ORC 26, ORC 33 and ORC 42..

The finalized rules will be published on ORC webpage www.orc.org within a few weeks. Presentations are planned at the ORC IMS Championships (see below) in Neustadt; Aghios Nikolaos and Cres.

Upcoming ORC Events

The next major ORC events are the IMS 600 World Championship in Neustadt, Germany 20th -27th August. So far 20 boats from 6 nations including Russia have registered. After that follows the IMS 600 Baltic Championship on Bornholm, Denmark 1st -4th Sept and the IMS 670 European Championship in Cres, Croatia 3rd-10th September. Finally there is the IMS 600 European Championship in Aghios Nikolaos, Crete, Greece 17th-24th September.

Other major events for IMS boats are Copa del Rey in Palma de Mallorca 30th July-6th August and the ROLEX Maxi Yacht Cup in Porto Cervo, Sardinia 4th-10th September.

IMS Mediterranean Championship in Punta Ala 28th May-4th June

A fleet of 24 of the top boats from the Mediterranean gathered the last week of May in Punta Ala to race for the Mediterranean Championship. The big boat class was won by the J/V 57 Tau Ceramica owned by Javier Dominguez with Olympic medallist Teresa Zabell at the helm, the medium sized boat by the Grand Soleil 42R Man owned by Fausto Farneti with Matteo Ivaldi at the helm after a strong fight with similar boats, and the smaller boats class by the Vrolik 37 Porto di Venezia owned by Manuel Constantin, after a strong competition with the Russian boat "Synergy".

Central European Championship in Croatia 18th-25th June

This event gathered about 45 boats from six different countries in beautiful Croatia. Boats ranged from the larger Sydney 46, IMX 45 and Grand Soleil 42R down to the Benetau 31,7 . Altogether, the quality of boats was high with only eight boats from 1999 and older. The largest number of participants came from Italy and Croatia.

The Italian Beneteau 40,7 "Mataran" was the winner at the end, actually very convincingly, with four victories in six races. Skipper was Stefano Di Properzio. The second place went to the Italian Dufour 44 "AOL Shaula" of Andrea Collina, whereas the third place went to the Rodman 42 "SCOR Team" of Darko Hajdinjak and his crew from the Sailing club of Rijeka.

This championship in Croatia has attracted several important entries from countries like Austria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The Central European Championship have proved to be an increasingly popular platform for further development of IMS and ORC CLUB in the Eastern Mediterranean and southeast Europe.

Kieler Woche 2005 18th-26th June

An impressive 223 IMS and ORC Club boats participated in this year's Kieler Woche. Despite moderate winds and nine days of sunshine, all of the races were completed successfully. The "Hanseatic Loyd" won the IMS 1st Division over "Unique" and "Extacy". "Niramo" was announced winner in the IMS 2nd Division and "Froschkönig" won the IMS 3-4 Division.

IMS 670 World Championship in Alicante, Spain 19th-24th July

A total of 32 boats from four countries gathered in Alicante for the first World Championship of the Class, reserved for production classes with at least 10 boats built. The regatta was organized by Real Club de Regatas de Alicante .

Light to moderate winds prevailed throughout the series, but all races scheduled were finished with fair winds. In the last day's competition, there was a slight mist due to the heat. The windward/leeward course of 11.7 miles was as on the previous day. The race started around 13:00h, with slight winds between 6 and 7 knots, typical of the entire week. In the second downwind leg there were windless areas in the race course, which favoured some of the boats. "Card & Oil" made a mistake, but made a great recovery to finish up in third position, which put them third overall.

At the end of seven races, the winner was "Quum Sevilla", a Dufour 40 owned by Javier Goizueta of Seville. Second, and first of the "Corinthian" Division, was "Aquasonic" from

Valencia and Card & Oil from Malaga, who got in the third place on the last day, overtook the local crew of "Ciudad de Alicante". The young English crew of "John Merricks", sailing on a chartered X-332 managed to do very well in the early part of the series and ended 7th overall.

German IMS Championship 23rd-27th July – Last year's three winners did it again !

The international German Offshore Champions in the IMS classes remain the same as in 2004. It was Horst Mann's JV 42 "L+M Hispaniola" defending the title in IMS Division 1 after a week of successful racing and a bit of trouble in the jury room. Their hardest rival, the new Grand Soleil 42 Racing "Al Cap One III" from Norway, helmed by former Europe dingy ace Peer Moberg, followed 1.5 points astern. "They really gave us a hard time on the water", said L+M Hispaniola tactician Thomas Jungblut, "and sailed very well." Christian Plum's Rodman 42 "Hanseatic Lloyd" came third. The IMS Division 2 victory went to Jan Hinrichs's Dehler 29 "Lollipop" from Berlin for the third time in four years. Hinrichs was really hurt by the Beneteau 40.7 "Vihuela" and won just by two points. In third came "Westwind", a brand new Grand Soleil 37, which finished the ROLEX World Championship in Mahon as number ten. The brothers Lars and Sven Christensen from Flensburg were the best IMS Division 3/4 yacht with their X-332 "No Limits".

Nearly 50 yachts competed for five days in the bay of Luebeck in the three IMS Classes. The event started with a long distance race on Saturday with a 120-mile course to Denmark and back, and finished four days later after six windward/leeward races. The winds were moderate and only a blizzard gust in the third race brought the crews really in trouble. "Just as we were changing the jibs, we suddenly had 32 knots. Then we tacked only with the main and suddenly we were on the right side of the course. "Tactics by nature", Thomas Brügge commented, skipper of the X-43 "Extasy". A few teams were not happy with the scoring and some decisions of the Race Committee in the first days, but in the end all problems were resolved and the races were altogether highly competitive.

The Nord/LB Baltic Sprint Cup 8th-29th July - scored under ORC Club !

A total of 45 boats from four countries participated in the Nord/LB Baltic Sprint Cup that carried the participants over 1150 nautical miles in seven legs visiting eight countries, starting from the Swedish sailing metropolis Sandhamn to Helsinki, Tallin, Riga, Klaipeda, Gdansk, Copenhagen and finally Travemuende in Germany. The race was scored under ORC Club.

The final winner after the seven legs was the German X-442 "Emil Reiseschwein" (Emil the Traveling Pig!) skippered by Stefan Hummelt, followed by the Estonian Akton 395 "Ladybird" skippered by designer and owner Jaanus Tagu. Third was "Schuddelfrost" skippered by Friedrich Böhnert, Germany. The races altogether provided many opportunities to meet new sailors and visit clubs around the Baltic Sea.

Hungary joining ORC cooperation

Hungary has announced their interest to start racing in IMS and ORC Club. Work will start soon to organise the Rating Office and run courses for measurers, etc. ORC Rating

Offices are also being planned in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. A course for measurers was recently held in Lipno Lake, Czech Republic.

ORC Club in Texas

The ORC Club system seems to receive increasing interest in North America. The Pacific North West has a growing and hope also to add the rule for some of the signature ocean races in the region.

Now Don Genitempo of Houston reports that end of July, Texas Galveston Bay sailors and PHRF committee members gathered at his Lakewood Yacht Club for a presentation of the ORC Club handicapping system. Scott Graham, former yacht designer and formerly on the staff of the US Sailing Offshore Office, addressed a group that had become increasingly interested in looking at alternatives to PHRF. It was felt that a more technically based rule was needed to restore the confidence of the existing sailors and rekindle interest in a dwindling fleet. Following Scott's delivery of a clear and concise explanation of the simplicity, accuracy and flexibility of the Club system, it was agreed the VPP-based Club rule provided the characteristics they were looking for. The Fleet representatives and PHRF committee voted to implement ORC Club, targeting as the first event the 158-mile Harvest Moon/ Barcardi Cup October 13. The event typically attracts upwards of 200 yachts

Further development of IMS in South America

A successful IMS FORUM was recently held at the Iabela Racing Week in Brazil. Chairman and sponsor was Eduardo Souza Ramos, owner of Cristabella. The main organizer was Gabriel Borgstrom from North Sails. Additional distinguished contributors were Nelson Ilha (ISAF) as the agenda organizer, and the Argentinean designers Nestor Volker and Javier Soto. ORC Chief Measurer for Argentina and Chile, Javier Mendez, as well as Abe Rosemberg, ORC Chief Measurer and Rating Officer in Brazil.

Javier Soto gave a technical presentation of IMS, showing in his view the strong parts as well as matters that could be further developed. Nestor Volker gave an overview of his work as designer of the majority of series boats racing in ORC Club and IMS in Brazil. Javier Mendez explained how IMS and ORC Club are managed in Argentina and Chile and Abe Rosemberg gave a broad overview of IMS and ORC Club programmes worldwide and the prospects and plans for the future.

It was decided to organize a South American IMS/ORC Club Committee to make submissions to ORC Annual General Meeting and to discuss ORC/ISAF matters relating to Offshore Racing in South America. The objective is also to unify the requests for ORC Club in South America.

The IMS 670 European Championship, Cres 3rd-10th September

After the successful organization of the IMS Central European Championship, another big event is coming up in Croatia. So far, boats from Croatia, the Czech Republic, Italy, Israel and Slovenia have signed up and it is expected that final number of entries will be 25 - 30 boats.

Cres is well recognized (besides the best lamb) as a venue of great events. As usual, lots of social events are being prepared in ACI Marina Cres during the event with parties, fashion show and concerts. You can find all the details on the IMS 670 European Championship at www.scor.hr/ims670.

Submissions for ORC Annual General Meeting 2005 in Singapore

The AGM will take place at the Grand Compthorne Hotel in Singapore November 2nd – 8th. Hotel reservations can be made via the ORC website. Submissions from national authorities are required to be at the ORC Secretariat no later than Tuesday Sept 6th.

Changed venue for the next ORC Management Committee meeting.

The venue for the next Management Committee meeting September 23rd-24th has been changed to Aghios Nikolaos, Crete, at the end of the IMS 600 European Championship.

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