

Chairman of the Technical Committee

Report to the 2020 AGM

In October of 2019 OKDIA undertook an email vote for a number of class rule changes. Some proposals were new and some were left over from the 2019 AGM in Auckland. The process showed how much better the process of an online vote could be as we had replies from every member. Many countries also used the time to discuss the options rather than the hasty decisions that are sometimes made in an AGM. I think that the lesson was valuable and that as a class we should adopt these procedures as standard practice.

Of the fifteen proposals last year all were passed with a two-thirds majority of the members in accordance with the OKDIA Constitution. Ten of these proposals were simply clarifying rules or slightly changing them to properly cover their intent. A new rule was also introduced to allow a mast to be in three parts and this should help encourage sailors to travel and charter boats knowing that they can take their own rig with them.

Of the remaining five, two were concerned with adjusting the allowed mast movement rules to control the permitted movement when a mast is rotated. At the 2019 AGM there was a wide ranging discussion on the recent trend of having masts fitted, and often retro fitted, with off centred deck bearings in order to obtain extra masthead movement when the mast is rotated; in effect the rake of the mast changes as the boom is let out towards 90 degrees. Ironically most alloy masts had an off-centre deck bearing. However almost all carbon masts built since 2004 have the mast roughly centred in the deck ring. The question was asked whether the class wanted to allow this practice to continue, which in effect allowed possible performance gain through extra costs. The Meeting was undecided on the course of action and asked the Technical Committee to come back with a proposal later in the year. After some testing with mast movement when the mast was at 90 degrees to the centreline it was determined that the mast crane itself added 50 mm to the measured movement, hence the new rule for maximum movement of 150 mm when the mast is rotated. Boats that have fitted an off-centre mast bearing need to be careful that their movement in the deck bearing added to the rotational movement is now not infringed and may need to add an extra chock to limit this movement.

Two more rules were changed to limit the number of masts, booms, centreboards and rudders permitted to be used at major events to one. The reasons behind this are cost and the time saved at equipment inspection. These rules need to be invoked in the NoR or SI in order to be used. The Sailing Instructions for any such event will also need to include a process for exchanging damaged gear for when an Equipment Inspector is not readily available to approve such a change; e.g. between races.

The remaining rule change concerned the tow rope. At the meeting of measurers and builders in Auckland in 2019 it was agreed to propose that tow ropes should be kept outside the buoyancy tanks. It is very rare that a boat needing a tow will sink because the tow rope is inside a watertight hatch and the removable of that hatch lets the water in. But this is a possibility and so the correct safe practice is to keep the tow rope outside. The tow rope needs to be a floating line so any fears that it will soak up water and increase in weight are fairly groundless.

After converting our Class Rules to the World Sailing Standard Format using the Equipment Rules of Sailing (ERS) in 2017, there were inevitably going to be a few missed loopholes and some rules that needed refining. We are slowly fixing them and there is certainly still more work to do. The intention, as always, is to create a set of Class Rules that maintain the value of your OK Dinghy by keeping the boat as close to the original concept as possible and by not allowing developments that would change performance at extra cost.

Alistair Deaves
Chair OKDIA Technical Committee
June 2020