

IACA Technical Committee

**Re: Proposal to change Class Rules E.3 and E.4**

As the Australian National Measurer and long time A Cat sailor I have some general comments and specific technical questions which I'm hoping may be addressed by the class Technical Committee.

At this stage our National Committee has received the proposal and is planning to distribute it to all Australian members so that they may direct our President to put a position at the upcoming EGM in Italy.

It is unfortunate that the proposers did not formally seek analysis of the proposal by the Technical Committee prior to it being lodged. From my perspective as a Measurer and Class administrator, it contains a number of flaws which would make it's implementation problematic. I feel it is difficult for our members to reach an informed view of the proposal based on the material presented by the proposers. While that group has obvious sailing prowess, I suspect they have not taken in to account the broader potential implications for our class rules, the practical issues in measuring to the proposed rule and the ability to get World Sailing to endorse such a change.

It would be really helpful to the members in Australia if the Technical Committee were able to comment on the technical matters I raise below.

**Firstly my general comments:**

I wonder what problem we are trying to fix with this proposal. There was an issue with both major manufacturers delivering boats with Z boards which did not measure to the 2.3 rule just after the emerged from the hull. Despite a number of discussions with the World Measurer both continued to produce boats which often did not comply with the class rules. Finally that problem has been fixed with the introduction of the W board from Exploder and more recent boards from DNA. A potential problem emerged with the W board when it was found to be quite close to the internal .75 rule midway down as being inserted in the boat. However, I have personally measured three such boats and they complied. My understanding is that eight were measured at the Houston Worlds and only one was found to be non-compliant in that board measurement. This strongly suggests to me that there was a manufacturing mistake with that particular boat. It seems overkill to propose a rule change to account for one boat while all the others comply.

A number of the claims made in support of the proposal don't stand up to scrutiny. Measurement won't be simplified as there is no definition of racing position. That could be a range of positions depending on the preference of the skipper, wind and sea conditions and uncontrolled movement of the board up or down during sailing. Some foilers use board positions other than fully down depending on conditions and preference. Most Classic sailors sail with boards fully up in very light conditions and sometimes slightly up to reduce lift in very windy conditions. As a measurer I would have difficulty determining what the sailing position is for each individual boat and invalidate the platform certificates for all current boats around the world.

The claim that subjective pressure on boards by the measurer is a problem doesn't hold up. The measurement guidelines are clear on the procedure to be used to ensure they are measured accurately to the position duplicated by sailing. They prescribe that "undue pressure" is not to be used and it would be hard to bend a carbon board using one finger. In addition I always show the boat owner what pressure I'm using on the board and I've never had a complaint.

This rule change has a strong potential to outdate current platforms in the foiling fleet. It allows the possibility for many different shapes which could extend large distance outside the 2.3 on the way down but be compliant at certain points. There would be a cost to such complexity and if successful make existing designs redundant.

Sailors already have certainty that their boats are class legal if they have a valid certificate.

International Juries are not always consistent in applying the principle of “gaining an advantage”. Our class rules do not contain a tolerance for measurement but rather specific numbers. We would be on a slippery slope if as a measurer I issued certificates to slightly longer, or wider, or bigger sails etc. based on my judgement that it had no impact on performance because it was only “a little bit”. There was a case in the last Olympics where the Jury found a boat which changed their trapeze after a breakage and it was a slightly different weight to class specifications. It could be argued that it made no difference to performance and yet the Jury ruled it out.

Easier construction and cheaper prices is an attractive concept for our boats. I suspect this has the potential to lead to more complex shapes and greater cost to develop and construct them as designers explore the possibilities. Not to mention outdating existing foils and even platforms.

**Now to the technical issues I see:**

If this proposal is accepted I understand that it must go ahead exactly as worded.

Therefore I’m wondering if the new wording for E.3 would conflict with Class Rule D.4.2 regarding boat beam, remembering that the ERS definition of boat includes appendages. If that is the case we surely would have difficulty getting World Sailing approval for the proposed E.3.

Secondly as a Measurer I would see the lack of a definition of the term “while racing” and “through the racing range of motion” difficult to measure. I would not know what those positions are other than if the boat owner individually decided an exact position. That then means that every boat is potentially different. How would other competitors or a jury on the water know the position defined for that day’s preference.

Hoping you can provide some comment to assist both myself as Australian Measurer and Australian Class members to reach a view on this proposal.

Regards  
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