

Summary of ILCA World Council Meeting

The ILCA World Council recently held its mid-year meeting in London, England. Due to the length of the agenda, the meeting took place over two days on November 17-18, 2012.

Attendance: Tracy Usher - President, Heini Wellmann - Past President, Carlos Palombo - Chairman South America, Jean-Luc Michon - Chairman Europe, Ken Hurling - Chairman Asia-Pacific, Allan Clark - representing North America, Jeff Martin - Executive Secretary, Bill Crane - Builders' Advisory Council, LaserPerformance, Peter Hedge - Builders' Advisory Council, Performance Sailcraft Australia, Takao Otani - Observer, Eric Faust - General Manager.

President's Report: Tracy Usher noted that although there remain several challenges for the ILCA, the future of Laser sailing is bright. This year's events, including the Olympics, have again demonstrated the Laser's position as the premier sailing class in the world; one where the world's best sailors rise to the top of the field while at the same time remaining the boat of choice for amateur club level racing. Notably, Radial gold medalist, Lijia Xu of China, was recently named ISAF's Female Rolex Sailor of the Year. The rise of top Laser sailors in Asia highlights the fact that the Laser is well positioned to take advantage of the potential for growth, particularly in the emerging economies of the world where it can be perceived as providing an accessible path towards the Olympics.

Elections: Nominations were taken for the position of Vice President. The result of the subsequent vote was an unbroken tie; therefore Hugh Leicester retains his position as the appointed Vice President of the ILCA.

Membership and Accounts: ILCA membership remains strong with over 15,000 paid members worldwide. The audited accounts from 2009-10 and 2010-11 were approved unanimously. In addition the 2011-12 unaudited accounts were reviewed along with a proposed 2013 budget and 2014 forecast. The ILCA again experienced a significant loss for the most recent fiscal year. It was noted that there were again several unusual expenses as well as an apparent structural deficit. The World Council remains dedicated to managing costs while providing service to all ILCA members and it was decided that budget approval would be deferred until December pending further revisions and a full analysis of expenses. Factors for review include the previously approved inflationary increase in membership dues and sail buttons as well as the plan for liquidating the charter boats purchased for the 2012 World Championships in Argentina.

2013 World Championships: The 2013 schedule is now set with contracts in place with each of the event organizers. Oman will host three championships including the Masters' and Senior in November and the Radial Youth Worlds over the Christmas holidays in December. The inclusion of a GGM Standard division at the 2013 Masters' Worlds was provisionally approved pending final approval before the end of the year. The Women's Radial Worlds are scheduled for Rizhao City, China in September, and will immediately precede the ISAF World Cup event in that country. A large turnout is anticipated in July for the 4.7 and Under-21 Standard Worlds in Hungary.

2014-15 World Championships: In September, 2014 ISAF will hold the Sailing World Championships in Santander, Spain, which will serve as the Senior and Women's Worlds for that year. The Masters' Worlds will be in Hyeres, France on September 20-30, 2014. Poland will host the Radial Men and Youth Worlds in July, while the 4.7 Worlds will be held on August 9-15, 2014 in Japan. The bidding deadline for the 2015 Laser World Championships was extended until December 31, 2012, after which the final venues will be selected.

Review of Reports and Submissions: The ILCA World Council was pleased to receive reports from two invited guests. Bruce Kirby, designer of the Laser, and Farzad Rastegar, of LaserPerformance, separately gave an oral presentation to the council regarding their ideas about the future of the Laser Class. Each gave a 30 minute oral presentation followed by a brief question and answer. The World Council is optimistic that a continued dialogue will result in improved relations among all parties.

A report was also received following the meeting of the Technical and Measurement Committee (TMC.) Currently there are no recommended changes to the Class Rules, but several items are being studied for future rule change proposals. The new developments planned to improve the sails and spars are being pushed forward as possible and the ILCA continues to work with the ISAF and the builders to establish a plan for future implementation. Reports were also received from each of the regional representatives in attendance and several submissions relating to specific regions were discussed by the council including the nomination of Regional Measurers.

A report from the recent ISAF annual conference noted that the Laser and the Radial have both been named as "core equipment" for the 2020 Olympic Games. It was agreed that this is a great benefit to the class, but that the ILCA needs to remain vigilant in maintaining this preferred status going forward.

Next Meeting: The next World Council Meeting is slated for the summer of 2013, possibly to be held after the 4.7 World Championships in July. The final dates and location will be determined after the new year.

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