

MODEL YACHTING ASSOCIATION

SIX METRE CLASS

POLICY AND INTENT OF THE RULE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. When a problem of interpretation of a class rule occurs people almost inevitably discuss the intention of those who wrote it. In practice this is unimportant as it is the meaning of the rule, as it is written, that is paramount. The intention does become important only if the wording that has to be interpreted is ambiguous. However it is useful to know something of the intent and the reasoning behind the intent, particularly at times of revision, if only because this may bring the rule into clearer focus and may help to establish where a class rule is failing to work properly and assist bringing the rule back into line.
- 1.2. With the Six Metre Class Rule the intent is less problematical. From the start the policy has been to base the model rule very closely upon the (full size) International Six Metre Class rule with the intention of allowing the designer and builder freedom, within the scale rule, to produce models in their own right and not necessarily scale models of full size craft.

2. ORIGINS

- 2.1. The full size "Metre Rules" came into being as the result of an international conference held in London in 1906. The model 6M rule was devised in the 1920s and adopted by the MYA in the late 1930s. The scale chosen was $1\frac{2}{3}$ inches to the foot (5:36). Why this peculiar scale was used is not clear, however it has produced boats of a very convenient size and weight which are easily handled by one person. All the hull and rig dimensions used in the model rule were scaled down exactly from the full size rule.
- 2.2. Though popular in England and Scotland during the 1930s when several hundred were built, few boats were built elsewhere. During the period 1945 to 1975 the enthusiasm for the class fell, as that of the Marblehead rose, and outside of the Midlands and Scotland there was little interest with only a couple of designs published during this period. In the late 1970s the class began to slowly revive as several new designs were produced. The development of these boats lead to the rule revision worked on by the MYA in 1983 and adopted by IMYRU (later to become IYRU-MYRD) to come into force on 1 January 1985.
- 2.3. In 1988, an embryonic Owners Association came into being. At that time there were few, if any, radio controlled boats but it was quickly realised that the class was very suitable for radio control and the boats ideal for match racing. During the next few years due to these reasons and the enthusiasm of the 6MOA, the number of boats grew apace.

- 2.4. In 1991 IYRU-MYRD (later to become ISAF-RSD) dropped the class because the only Divisional Member sailing the boats was the UK. Currently the MYA maintains its own version of the rule. In 1992 the MYA recognised the 6MOA thus ensuring the owners' influence in the development of the rule.
- 2.5. In 2008 the 6MOA was wound up as nobody was prepared to run it and total responsibility for the class was returned to the MYA

3. THE 1983/1985 REVISION

- 3.1. This appears to be the first major revision since the inception of the model rule. The full size rule had been revised over the years at fairly regular intervals. In 1981 the IYRU full size revision had amongst other things improved the clarity of the rule by introducing dimensions in place of %ages of the rating. The intent of the model revision was to introduce such dimensions in both metric and imperial units; to add further rules from the full size version with new hull measurements (e.g. Stern Station 2); to remove the salt water measurements; to remove the optional addition of 0.9kg "crew weight"; to restrict the rig to one mast and main boom; and to introduce a restriction for the mainsail roach width.

4. THE INTENTIONS OF THE 1996 AND THE 1997 REVISIONS

- 4.1. The main purpose of the 1996 revision was to write the rule in a language and using terms that model yachtsmen would know and to put the rule into the standard ISAF-RSD format - dealing with the hull, rig and sails in a logical order. Where specific terms were needed for the rule they were defined before use or reference was made to the source of these terms. The revision also took into account amendments stemming from the 6MOA and ratified by the MYA as follows :- permissible minor hollows when checked against a straight edge; bands of a contrasting colour rather than black bands; allowing a permanent set in the mast; IYRU/MYRD sail markings (August 1994). And the redefinition of the deck edge/sheerline; units of measurement to be metric units only, along with their precision and recording instructions (September 1995).
- 4.2. Unfortunately the final 1996 version was unsatisfactory and led to so many requests for interpretations that it was decided to rewrite the 1996 version in 1997. As it is almost impossible to differentiate between the intent behind the two versions they are considered as one for this purpose. Where there are clear differences in the later rule (e.g. the method for controlling the mainsail leech) these came about after a survey of the 6MOA members in March 1997.
- 4.3. The rule was written for Radio Controlled rather than Free Sailing boats. The differences that Free Sailing boats require are dealt with in the MYA National Class Supplementary Rules.

- 4.4. The major rule changes introduced into the revisions (including the 1994/5 amendments)
- a) General - removal of imperial units and replacement of unrealistic measurement requirements.
Reason: to limit cost of measuring equipment and to facilitate a common standard of measurement.
 - b) Hull - introduction of the bumper as an integral part of the hull. ('96 new boats, '97 all boats)
Reason: sailing rules require a bumper which should thus be included in measurement.
 - c) Hull - definitions of deck edge and sheerline.
Reason: i) to prevent the development of extreme turtle decked boats - and ii) to improve consistency of measurement.
 - d) Hull - introduction of the same controls on the number and positions of appendages as the ISAF (IYRU) version.
Reason: to limit uncontrolled development in this area.
 - e) Hull - introduction of permissible 1mm hollows when bridged with a 300 mm straight edge and a hollow to accommodate the bow bumper.
Reason: to permit a reasonable tolerance for hull manufacture and repair work and to cater for the introduction of permanently fixed bumpers not faired into the hull.
 - f) Rig - introduction of limits to mast and boom curvature similar to the ISAF version. (These are the only non-scale dimensions used for the hull and rig) Reason: because one cannot obtain perfectly straight spar material.
 - g) Rig - prevention of swing and una-rigs.
Reason: owners did not want swing and una rigs as they are inappropriate for the class.
 - h) Rig - introduction of spar band colours that contrast with the spar colour.
Reason: the previous black band rule was rarely conformed with.
 - i) Sails - introduction of the ISAF Sail Measurement Rules.
Reason: to use standard, well known, definitions and improve consistency of measurement.
 - j) Sails - introduction of quarter width mainsail measurements and other controls redefined.
Reason: to control unmeasured sail area obtained by unusual mast shapes and improve ease and consistency of sail measurement and allow additional sails to be measured without the hull being present.
 - k) Sails - introduction of controls to the upper and lower mainsail leech shape.
Reason: to blend with the ISAF SMRs so preventing extreme sail shapes and avoiding the necessity to crop many existing sails.
 - l) Sails - introduction of battens for headsails set on a boom.
Reason: to allow improved sail setting and length of sail life.

- m) Sail markings - introduction of ISAF-RSD ICACR Sail Identification Marks Rules.

Reason: to i) to improve boat recognition whilst racing and ii) to improve the consistency of measurement by using these standard rules.

- n) Sail area measurement - introduction of the B measurement along the top of the boom.

Reason: to simplify accurate measurement.

5. THE 2007/8 REVISION

5.1. After a 10 year gap this revision brought into the rules the interpretations and rulings made by the 6MOA and also recognised that Sail Marks rules are now part of the Racing Rules of Sailing. The rule was also adjusted to remove the negative camber limit introduced earlier.

5.2. The changes introduced were:-

- a) Remove reference to the International Class Administrative rules which no longer have any bearing on sail identification marks.

Reason: to bring the sail marks rules into line with International classes.

- b) Require the boat to be measured with the heaviest rig available at the time and to allow a tolerance of 100 grams for new or replacement sails and jib booms.

Reason: Under the previous rules even a very small increase in sail weight would require the boat to be measured again.

- c) Permit the use of a jack line as a means of attaching main sails to the mast.

Reason: To make it clear that this method is not considered to be a double luff.

- d) Clarify that cabins, hatches and radio pots etc. are not to be considered as part of the deck.

Reason: To make it clear that such items are not part of deck camber.

- e) Remove the limit of 5mm of negative camber.

Reason: To remove uncertainty about what constitutes recesses, openings, depressions etc in the deck.

6. THE CURRENT NATURE OF THE CLASS

6.1. General. The class is a development class within certain absolute limits. The rating formula permits a wide range of hull sizes to compete on relatively equal terms.

6.2. Hull. The hull shape is restricted by the inclusion of penalties so that hull size and speed potential is limited by trading off some of the speed enhancing factors against sail area.

6.3. Rig and Sail Plan. These are limited to one mainsail, one headsail and one spinnaker. Certain sail construction details are tightly restricted (e.g. soft sails, batten lengths).

- 6.4. Materials. Materials are generally unrestricted but high costs are avoided by several features of the class rules - the single mast and main boom; the relative stability of the boats means that few alternative smaller sails are required; the relatively high displacement length ratio does not demand super-lightweight hull construction; the independence of hull design from construction weight leads to a long competitive life for successful designs.
- 6.5. Sailing characteristics. Even the most enthusiastic owner could never describe the performance of the boats as "electrifying" however, and perhaps because of this, a fleet of boats of varying age and design invariably provides closely matched racing. Because of their physical attributes the boats are quite suitable for sailing well in exposed waters.
- 6.6. Although the rule is very complex and great care is required in the construction and the trimming of the boats to obtain their maximum potential the class seems to encourage a very high class loyalty factor amongst the owners.

7. POLICY

- 7.1. Judicious use of the ISAF (full size) rule to provide the basic hull and rig dimensions has stood the class in good stead for many years and provided solutions when it seemed that the model rule was failing to curb peculiar developments. Whilst care should be taken in the selection of clauses in the ISAF rule to apply to the model rule, the ISAF rule should be used as a guide for any future revisions but tempering this when there are good positive reasons for introducing variations for the model boat e.g. at present we have introduced jib battens but not construction controls. Whilst the class has traditionally relied on owner/builders it is the increasing number of commercial and semi-commercial hulls available that has fuelled the expansion. Whilst commercialism should be encouraged, care should be taken with the rule to see that this encouragement is not achieved to the detriment of either the rule or the one-off builder in whose hands the experimental development of the rule ultimately lies.

1st June 1997
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