PHRF Meeting Minutes - September 2020

Members: Rick Sinclair (Chair), Rick Royce, Charlie Powers, Paul Kueffner, June Kendrick, Mike Colucci, Charlie Hurd and Alistair Duke.

Guests: Chris Johanneson.

Meeting was called to order at 7.05pm, via Zoom.

- Chris Johanneson presented observations on the apparent inequity of the whisker pole credit which is only available to boats with large overlapping genoas if they choose to forgo an LP length whisker pole in favor of a shorter J length pole. The argument presented several perspectives in which it might seem that the genoa boat is actually advantaged in non-spinnaker configuration, and hence a credit is the opposite of what is warranted. This case included analysis of (a) the basis of ratings being spinnaker ratings hence when starved of that spinnaker the genoa boat retains more sail area than the jib boat; and (b) course configurations rarely presenting dead downwind conditions when a poled-out genoa is favorable hence the credit is awarded even though whisker poles are frequently not used; among others. The proposal recommended that the Committee consider revising this part of the rule to change it from being a credit that can be claimed for J length whisker poles to a penalty of similar size for boats which elect to use a whisker pole of length greater than J. The Committee reviewed the argument and countered that the most advantageous method of sailing downwind with the whisker pole was excluded from the analysis and sheds light on the reasoning for the credit: When used to project the clew forward of the forestay and create the conditions for flow to reverse over the genoa, that is a proven powerful formula. Since this technique opens up more angles of sailing than just dead downwind, this perspective challenged some of the other core elements of the argument. However, it is also true that this section of the rule predates the modern sprit-boat era and was introduced at a time when all spinnaker racing was symmetrical. These IOR era boats, which were already carrying a J-length pole in most cases, had limited appetite for carrying a second whisker pole and that gave rise to this adjustment being offered as an alternative. Given that a majority of spinnaker racing is now asymmetric, there are only a minority of owners facing this dilemma and most owners should be optimizing for LP rather than J which has no particular significance absent a pole-flown spinnaker. Given this reality, and noting that gamesmanship of the rule seems to be creeping in, the Committee committed to consider the proposal at greater length over the winter. No decision taken, tabled to a future meeting.
Letter received from the Beneteau 36.7 fleet requesting clarification of the reasoning behind the 3s/m offset between distance ratings and W/L ratings for that class given a lack of particularly potent reaching performance inherent to the design and the large base of W/L performance data available which supports the 81 rating. The fleet further noted that none of the sister designs the 40.7, 44.7 and 47.7 carry this offset. The successful 36.7s that won silverware in prestigious races in the 2007-2013 period were significantly optimized exclusively for distance racing and carried modifications which would likely see adjustment if they were active today. The fleet requested a better explanation of the offset and its applicability to the standard boat and suggested removal was an equitable outcome. The Committee considered the request and granted the appeal. 81/78/78/78 > 81/81/81/81. Note, Alistair Duke recused himself from voting on this item.

Thomas 35, Sawtooth. Sprit conversion including increased ISP to get around the jumper stays but short of masthead. Midgirth and foot measurements slightly in excess of limits. —3 for the combination of ISP, SMG and SF overages.

Custom R/P 42 - Rikki. Chesapeake & NE certificates shared. IRC custom design with a growing list of results in the Northeast region. Note retractable propeller system was a challenge to record on the standard PHRF form and could lead to errors if adoption of such systems grow significantly - Committee to investigate adding a category in the future. Custom design, add to database -36/-30/-36/-30

Letter received from a guest requesting clarification from the Committee on how it would rate a proposed keel modification on a production vessel in order to make it Newport to Bermuda Race compliant. The Committee advises that it does not offer specific guidance on proposed changes, and only rates those modifications which are presented to it, as built. However, as a general rule, and since owners rarely make adjustments which slow their boats down or make them harder to sail, any modification to a keel should be expected to attract an adjustment of at least -3, and the extent to which that modification improves righting moment, increases draft, or improves foil shape would dictate the extent of the adjustment.

Figaro 2 - Group 5. Sprit conversion, masthead ISP and fathead main. Standard base rating includes a penalty pole for the symmetric which should be netted out in the conversion. Symmetrical spinnakers not to be used. This boat is permitted to use water ballast. This sum of modifications net an adjusted handicap of 33/45/33/45

X4.0 - Xenios. Owner declared an oversize spinnaker of 206%. -6.
- Catalina 425. Comparisons to other boats of similar type, particularly the Catalinas that it replaces. More powerful rig and lighter displacement suggest this could be a slightly quicker boat than previous generation. New design, add to database: 87/93/87/93.

- The Committee has received an enquiry advocating for the modification of the PHRF rule for doublehanded boats such that they have an adjusted rating with credit for the lack of crew weight and hands available. Less crew weight and fewer bodies place double handed entries at a natural disadvantage to crewed boats and the Committee were asked to consider an adjustment factor to make this more equitable, especially when Organizing Authorities score all divisions together for the purpose of overall awards. The advocates point out that other rating rules have a crew size declaration and that this does have a bearing on the final rating. They further highlight recent successes of double handed boats in races such as the Fastnet to highlight the popularity of this style of racing, noting that it has grown significantly due to Covid-19. The Committee discussed the request but is wary of re-opening the crew-weight credit discussion given the well documented challenges that it presented. And while this may benefit a small number of members it would create an enormous volume if handicapping work that the Committee is not resourced to undertake and open up other niche appeals that would complicate the Rule and the PHRF Certificate. At this time the Committee is unwilling to incorporate such a change.

- Andrew Weiss has expressed interest in joining the PHRF Committee. The Committee appreciate this interest and welcome Andrew following reassignment of his role as chairman of the Technical Committee.

- The Chairman once again welcomes expressions of interest from members willing to volunteer their time and expertise to the PHRF Committee. In particular, the Committee is actively seeking greater representation from the following areas:
  - Western LIS, including Eastchester Bay and Manhassett Bay.
  - Eastern Long Island including Port Jefferson.

Next Meeting - October 8th, 7pm. Via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 9.30pm.

Respectfully submitted

Alistair Duke