

Election of Vice President Technical

It greatly saddens me to see the discord regarding the election of my successor and as a somewhat interested party I initially felt that I should gracefully retire and not comment. However, as retiring VP Technical, and the author of the new FD Class bye laws, I now feel that I should provide some background which hopefully will contribute to a better understanding of their application.

The object of the new bye laws was to make the IFDCO more democratic, specifically to have members of the Executive elected by the members and not appointed by the executive, as previously. With this in mind we wanted as few restrictions on candidature as possible, however, some requirements were deemed essential. Clearly the class president has to have had some experience of how the class is run (6.6.10), the foundation rules require the President, the Secretary or the Treasurer to be Dutch (6.2.3), and the VP development shall be nominated by members from countries not represented by Commodores (6.6.12), but can be from one of these countries.

The requirements for the Chief measurer and the VP Technical are somewhat different in that they have to be technically competent. Together with many other ISAF classes we require the FD chief measurer to be an IM, and in the past the VP Technical had been or was the chief measurer so had the IM qualification. The first thought was that VP Technical should be appointed as this should not be a popularity contest. Then the initial draft of bye law 6.6.11 required the VP Technical also to be an IM, as measurement experience is an essential part of the job. However, as this was seen as somewhat restricting the pool of candidates it was softened to only require “[the Vice President Technical shall have experience of FD regatta inspection with a view to becoming an International FD measurer.](#)” The intention was to give someone time to qualify as an IM, but clearly required him to have significant experience of FD regatta inspection and to commit to gaining experience of all aspects of FD regatta inspection so that he can become an IM.

The bye laws section 1.7 lay out the duties of the Vice president Technical among which are:

- I .7.1 Ensure that General Committee is aware of any changes in the ISAF Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) and the Equipment Rules of Sailing (ERS), and advise on the implications for the Class Rules.
- I .7.4 Ensure that the Class Rules and regulations are in conformity with ISAF regulations 10.5(g).
- I .7.5 Formulate class rule changes, and liaise with ISAF for their approval.
- I .7.6 Aid the Chief Measurer in arrangements and implementation of regatta inspection at championships.
- I .7.7 Present an annual technical report to the AGCM as well as technical and rule change articles for the website and bulletin.
- I .7.8 In conjunction with the General Secretary and ISAF oversee the issuing of FD building licences.
- I .7.9 Maintain the technical and Class Rules content of website

It can be seen that in order to do this the VP technical has to have a good knowledge of the ERS and ISAF regulations as well as a good working relation with members of the ISAF measurement committee. You only get free copies of the ERS and ISAF regulations if you are an IM. The FD class has always been a leader in measurement, the VP technical represents the class at ISAF Measurement symposia and has always in the past made a presentation, as well as generally attending the ISAF November meetings. It therefore goes without saying that someone without this

background should at a minimum be prepared to actively participate in regatta inspection at World or Europeans and become an IM.

The new bye laws have been in development for more than 3 years, with a first proposal in Malcesine, discussion of a number of drafts between Malcesine and Santa Cruz, a detailed revision of my draft by Alberto and me in Santa Cruz, together with meetings with those committee members present. It was however decided that there should be an AGCM in Abcode in November 2012 to consider these bye laws in detail. At this meeting the new bye laws were adopted, with only minor details to be clarified, and it was agreed that they should be posted on the FD website by 1 January 2013, at which time they would come into effect. This left just enough time for the proposed election procedure to be implemented. Thus, as notice of the new bye laws was given in November 2012 there is clearly no excuse for anyone not knowing what was agreed and applies in the present situation.

The class secretary, who acts as the returning officer, applied the 2013 bye laws to the election for the three vacancies, except that due to the newness of the procedure he was lenient on the deadlines for nominations to be completed. In two cases there was only one candidate, so these posts go by acclamation. In the case of the Vice president Technical there was one candidate, Paul Hemker, who met the requirements and one, Hans Genthe, who did not. The secretary made repeated efforts to ascertain Hans's measurement experience and his intentions of becoming an IM. Hans effectively said that he has no regatta inspection experience and he did not give any indication of an intention to gain IM qualification. The secretary copied the e-mails and informed the Class President of his efforts to clarify the situation. When the secretary then, in his capacity of returning officer, correctly judged that there was only one candidate who met the requirements for VP Technical, and wished the results together with brief descriptions of the elected candidates to be posted on the FD website, not only was this incorrectly refused but some less than polite e-mails were sent which has led to the resignation of the class secretary and the withdrawal of the Vice president Development. It is very disappointing that this is the outcome of so much hard work designed to democratize the IFDCO and that more sailors have not come forward to serve the class.

I would like to emphasize that to my knowledge I have not met Hans Genthe, or if so only in passing in 2004, as in the last ten years he has only attended the 2004 and 2009 Worlds. This is a great pity, as now knowing his background; I would definitely have invited him to be a member of the technical committee. I am sure he would have been and hopefully becomes a great asset to IFDCO. My experience of trying to simultaneously sail competitively and be a measurer has convinced me that that is not possible, and it is therefore completely understandable that Hans, who also has a young family and a business to run, has not been able to participate in measurement. I sincerely hope that the present furor will not discourage him from participating in the future. Paul has said he will only serve for 3 years so the class has 2 years to find another Vice President Technical, which is not long, essentially only two Worlds at which someone can gain regatta inspection experience and become an IM.

It is very unfortunate that this situation, in which the class does not adhere to bye laws which were agreed less than six months ago, has been allowed to develop. If the behaviour exhibited by some members of the executive is allowed to continue the class will have great difficulty recruiting any members to stand for election to the General Committee.

Cheers
Peter

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