



Received: 02/26/23

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Summary: Small Countries with small Fleets

Affects:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Constitution	By-Laws	Class Rules
	Deed of Gift	Rules of Conduct	NoR or SI Template
	Other		

Objective:

Summary and chronology

(I)

In 2016 Proposal 16-04 was submitted by the then Vice Commodore and approved by the Board.

This proposal was to add the last paragraph (shown below in green) to Section 9 of the Constitution.

Section 9. Fleet Formation

Whenever there are five or more boats of the Class, all built to conform to the rules, a Fleet may be formed. Such fleets shall be headed by a Fleet Captain, elected by the members. There shall be a Measurer or Measurement Committee for each Fleet, also elected by the members. Meetings may be called by the Fleet Captain either at regular intervals or at the request of three or more members of such Fleets. A quorum shall consist of at least 50% plus one of the members that have paid dues for the current year. Vacancies occurring among the officers of a Fleet shall be filled by an election as soon as possible after the vacancy. In other respects each Fleet shall be entirely self-governing except in matters conflicting with the rules of the Class. It is recommended that Fleet officers be elected for a 2-year term, taking office January 1st of each even-numbered year.

A new Fleet may organize with a three-boat minimum under a temporary charter for one year; the second year, they can have an official fleet with only four boats; the third year, five boats or no fleet; the charter to be granted by the Association.

A new Fleet can be formed in a new SCIRA country regardless the number of boats. Departing from Section 7, such Fleet may be granted a charter and Fleet number from the

¹ Proposals can be made by the Board, Technical Committee, National Secretaries or 5 fleet captains up to 1st March.

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Association upon application to the Executive Director through the Board of Director. Such "special status" lasts until another fleet will be formed in that Country.

Before 2017, strictly applying the Constitution, small nations with few boats (and therefore without a fleet) could not be recognized.

In fact, Section 18 states:

Section 18. Recognition of Nation

Once a Fleet is chartered and a National Secretary is elected, a Country is recognized by the Association. To represent a Nation, a Member shall be associated to that Country's Association and citizen or bona fide resident from at least one year of the Country he/she represents.

Therefore, before 2017, a nation could not be recognized if it did not meet the requirements (minimum number of boats) to form (and then continue to have) a fleet.

The "objective" of proposal 16-04 was:

"According to the current SCIRA Constitution whenever there are five or more boats of the Class, all built to conform to the rules, a Fleet may be formed. A new Fleet may organize with a three-boat minimum under a temporary charter for one year; the second year, they can have an official fleet with only four boats; the third year, five boats or no fleet.

Snipe sailors from a small/new country cannot form a fleet and cannot form a new SCIRA country.

Times have changed and while fleets are important, we need more people sailing snipes, even in small and new country where there aren't Snipe fleets. We need to be inclusive and to welcome in our organization new sailors and new countries.

The proposal consists of creating a "special status" for small/new SCIRA country (they can form a fleet and become SCIRA country even with only one boat)."

With the approval of proposal 16-04, the new (green) paragraph (last paragraph of section 9) became effective in 2017, allowing new countries to join the SCIRA, despite having few boats.

(II)

In 2022, the then Commodore submitted a proposal 22-05, for the modification of Section 9, with the stated intention of: "to encourage fleet and country growth".

For this reason the minimum requirement of boats in a fleet was lowered: one boat for the first year, two boats for the second year, three boats for the following years (instead of three, four and five respectively).

However, the last paragraph relating to the "special status" of a fleet within a Small Country was deleted.



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Below, you can read the Proposal 22-05 and all the changes (changes in red) and amendments (parts deleted with the words crossed out by a line) on the previous Section

Section 9. Fleet Formation

Whenever there are five or more boats of the Class, all built to conform to the rules, a Fleet may be formed. Such fleets shall be headed by a Fleet Captain, elected by the members. There shall be a Measurer or Measurement Committee for each Fleet, also elected by the members. Meetings may be called by the Fleet Captain either at regular intervals or at the request of three or more members of such Fleets. A quorum shall consist of at least 50% plus one of the members that have paid dues for the current year. Vacancies occurring among the officers of a Fleet shall be filled by an election as soon as possible after the vacancy. In other respects each Fleet shall be entirely self-governing except in matters conflicting with the rules of the Class. It is recommended that Fleet officers be elected for a 2-year term, taking office January 1st of each even-numbered year.

A new Fleet may organize with a **one** ~~three~~-boat minimum under a temporary charter for one year; the second year, they can have an official fleet with only **two** ~~four~~ boats; the third year, three or more ~~five~~ boats ~~or no fleet~~; the charter to be granted by the Association.

~~—A new Fleet can be formed in a new SCIRA country regardless of the number of boats. Departing from Section 7, such Fleet may be granted a charter and Fleet number from the Association upon application to the Executive Director. Such “special status” lasts until another fleet will be formed in that country.~~

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(III)

Proposal 22-05 was approved in December 2022 by the Board and the new Section 9 went into effect in 2023.

Current Situation and Effects on Small Countries

According to the current 2023 SCIRA Constitution whenever there are five or more boats of the Class, all built to conform to the rules, a Fleet may be formed (current Section 9 - first paragraph). A new Fleet may organize with one boat minimum under a temporary charter for one year; the second year, they can have an official fleet with only two boats; the third year, three or boats or no fleet (Section 9 - second paragraph).

First of all there is a contradiction between the first paragraph (minimum requirement of 5 boats) and the second paragraph (minimum requirement of 3 boats from the third year).

However. Moving to the heart of the topic, on the one hand, it is good that the minimum requirements for creating and keeping up a fleet was lowered.

But, on the other hand, the particular case of small countries wasn't carefully considered: currently, applying rigorously, as it should be, the Constitution, after three years, if small countries don't have 3 boats, they disappear. Why was the last paragraph of Section 9 deleted - after just 5 years? "To encourage country growth"? In reality, the effects are opposite: making small countries disappear.

A sailor (citizen or bona fide resident from at least one year of the Country) can represent a Country recognized by the Association, BUT a Country is recognized by the Association if a Fleet is chartered and a National Secretary was elected (Section 18).

Now Snipe sailors from a small country cannot keep up a fleet and represent a nation recognized by the SCIRA if they don't have two boats in the second year, and in the following years at least three boats.

Considering the data as of December 31, 2022, at least 5 countries could disappear in the next 3 years; 3 others countries are at high risk having currently 3 to 5 boats; 6 other countries must be on alert having from 6 to 10 boats.

Is this fair or is it punitive towards these sailors? If in a SCIRA Country with many fleets a fleet loses the minimum number of boats, the remaining sailors in that fleet can easily become members of a neighboring fleet. What happens to a sailor, citizen or bona fide resident in a country, with fewer than three boats? He/she cannot represent his/her country (not recognized by the Association) and must choose another fleet (and another country), despite not having any connection with that Nation.

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Times have changed and while fleets are important, we need more people sailing snipes, even in small and new country where there aren't Snipe fleets. We need to be inclusive and to welcome in our organization new sailors and new countries.

Surely the Snipe Class is present and active with many boats in many countries with big numbers (Japan, Spain, USA, Brazil, etc.). But why deny what is actually the real number of Nations present, reducing the number of them because the boats are less than 1 (the first year), 2 (the second) or 3 (in the following years)?

For the international sailing community, the strength of a Class is also measured by the number of Nations and Fleets.

When we present the Snipe to World Sailing, to Pan American Sailing Federation, to other organizations, to a sailing club, to potential sponsors, to potential interested sailors, when we promote our Class, we must show where the Class is present and active, in which countries and in how many countries. On our website we read: "SCIRA (Snipe Class International Racing Association) is celebrating its 90th year of competition with fleets in more than 30 countries and over 31,000 boats built." On the "business card" is it better to say that there are more than 30 countries or that there are for example 20? The strength of the Snipe Class International Racing Association is that is really an international Class.

Furthermore, is it fair that a country/geographical area cannot be represented and cannot express its opinions, cannot discuss, participate in the decision-making process on a continental level (at meetings of the European National Secretaries or the WH&A) or at the National Secretaries meeting during the Senior Worlds?

In order to have more boats, small countries must be encouraged and supported by SCIRA and by large countries.

An (unexpressed) reason behind Proposal 22-05, for deleting the last paragraph of Section 9, seems to be that of wanting to avoid that any sailor represents (without having the technical qualities) a small nation in the Senior World Championship, thus decreasing the level of competition.

Generally we should keep in mind the "big picture": the quality of the fleet at the Senior Worlds is a minor problem, compared with the promotion goals that we have. Our Class needs big numbers and we need to welcome sailors, not prevent them to sail.

Hypothetically, if we have to look also at the quality of the fleet, we should exclude nations with medium-low level of sailors (but a good number of boats, in some case 20-50 or more than 100) and allow only top teams from Brazil, Spain, Argentina, US and some others to compete. A criterion could be the Snipe ranking. But this criterion is good for the Class and for having a wider participation of sailors and nations?

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Also, in other International Classes (not anymore Olympic Classes), if we look at the bottom of the standings at their Worlds, the level of the competition is quite low, compared to the top guys.

Looking at other sports, for example at the recent World Championship of Alpine skiing there are also some athletes from very small countries with zero tradition in skiing (from Africa or Asia). Why? Because it is a real World Championship with athletes that represent many Nations. It is not clever to have a World Championship only with the traditional Alpine countries (Austria, Switzerland, France, Italy and a few others) and not a wider group of nations.

If the reason behind proposal 22-05 is to exclude some guys (who move from a Nation to another just for sailing the Senior Worlds), a rule to prevent this from happening already exists (Section 18 - Constitution: "To represent a Nation, a Member shall be associated to that Country's Association and citizen or bona fide resident from at least one year of the Country he/she represents.").

Conclusions

The proposal consists of creating a "special status" for small/new SCIRA country (they can form a fleet and become SCIRA country even with only one boat) and they can keep their status for the following years. When more than one fleet is formed in that country, the general rules on the minimum number of boats for each fleet will apply.

The future for our Class is to be inclusive and open minded. We need to attract new sailors that can have the opportunity to sail a major regatta and represent their Nation, recognized by the Association, even if they sail in a small country. They can have the opportunity to sail in an open Class and the Class member should welcome them.

Proposal (include current & proposed changed wording- changes to be shown in red): Example: By Laws: **Section 1. Racing Season**

The official racing **sailing** season of this Association shall extend for the full twelve months of the year starting on January 1st and ending on December 31st.

Section 9. Fleet Formation

Whenever there are **five three** or more boats of the Class, all built to conform to the rules, a Fleet may be formed. Such fleets shall be headed by a Fleet Captain, elected by the members. There shall be a Measurer or Measurement Committee for each Fleet, also elected by the members. Meetings may be called by the Fleet Captain either at regular intervals or at the request of three or more members of such Fleets. A quorum shall consist of at least 50% plus one of the members that have paid dues for the current year. Vacancies occurring among the officers of a Fleet

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shall be filled by an election as soon as possible after the vacancy. In other respects, each Fleet shall be entirely self-governing except in matters conflicting with the rules of the Class. It is recommended that Fleet officers be elected for a 2-year term, taking office January 1st of each even-numbered year.

A new Fleet may organize with one-boat minimum under a temporary charter for one year; the second year, they can have an official fleet with only two boats; the third year, three or more boats; the charter to be granted by the Association.

A new Fleet can be formed in a new SCIRA country regardless the number of boats. Departing from Section 7, such Fleet may be granted a charter and Fleet number from the Association upon application to the Executive Director through the Board of Director. Such "special status" lasts until another fleet will be formed in that Country and, therefore, the general rules on the minimum number of boats for each fleet will apply.

Reasons:

To be inclusive and to promote our Class in small and new countries.

To attract new sailors that can have the opportunity to sail a major regatta and represent their Nation.

To allow a small country to be recognized by the association.

To allow a small country to take part in meetings of National Secretaries.

To show the sailing world and third parties the real number of countries (where there is at least one Snipe).