

Hi All fellow 2.4mR Sailors

Another year is soon to pass giving new prospects for us in 2018. It seems appropriate to take stock of where we are currently and to remember the good things in the last twelve months.

The highlight of this year must be the excellent Worlds in Sneek worked for by the enthusiastic Dutch team to give us a memorable week's sailing with all wind and water conditions on offer including the latest ever evening Worlds race. Well done to all involved and to the sailors especially the worthy new World Champion. At the same time none of that week would have been so well handled had we not had the enthusiasm and skill of the race officer, Beer van Arem, and everyone who knew him were shocked to hear of his untimely death. A great loss for sailing and our class.

Earlier in the year we enjoyed a well attended Kieler Woche followed by the Eurosaf Para Europeans both excellent regattas and great to see that World Sailing continues to support the 2.4mR as the boat of choice for a future Paralympics. However nothing is certain on Para Sailing's selection to rejoin the Games but I am certain that all that could have been done has been done to this end. We must await a decision in the coming year. Word on the street is that if there is a positive response for 2024 then there will be a demonstration regatta in Japan at the same time as the next Paralympics. So many of the Paralympic sailors and hopefuls are marking time during this uncertain period and it is great that our class can offer racing of the highest quality outside that specific discipline to keep their skills well honed. Underpinning the possible selection of the 2.4mR is the decision for all Paralympic and associate regattas to be held under the OD rule.

As an International class we are obliged to have an active set of measurers worldwide including international measurers. To be frank we continue to be thinly supported on this front and although last year the list of names was joined by a new German measurer we should be thinking of encouraging other measurers plus a movement to augment the international measurers currently so that we can call on other names when it comes to measurement at future Worlds.

The mainstay countries in Scandinavia and Europe continue to be well run NCAs but it is hard to ignore the great efforts in Germany to raise their game and to encourage more sailors and boats across the spectrum of sailors. Their brand is 'inclusion' as it must be for our class overall - well done Ulli and his team. A great national championship in Hamburg followed by a nice number of new boat orders. Norway is also increasing boat numbers and I am expecting a high turnout in Gavle from that country.

Earlier in the year it was necessary for me accompanied by Rikard to visit and talk to our OD class builder, Charger Technology, in Kokkola. We were both delighted to find that the new company is very solidly founded now with a more diverse product range plus moving to new premises and increasing their work force. For our class to continue to grow there must be the possibility to buy with a short lead time a fully competitive and well built boat. With the move to the new layout Charger have enhanced their position as the main class builder and I am hopeful that numbers of new builds will increase - they certainly deserve our support. It should also be remembered that sailor numbers are also increased by an active secondhand market so if you are considering trading up then this will not only benefit you on the water but also the class.

Your EC continue to meet regularly, as do the TC, and our main focus so far this year has been the granting of a longer term licence to Charger Technology. Our issue on that is that the ICAs licence from Norlin Yachts is very tightly worded and no longer reflects the demands of our new boat buyers. The terms of that licence only allows us to sub licence the builder to build only complete and measured OD boats. Over the past few years and traditionally a large proportion of new builds have been part complete, that is sold without fittings and rig. I would venture to say that the majority of those investing in new boats will want to include fitting layouts and systems to reflect their personal choice all of which precludes full measurement at delivery time. Our present challenge is to get acceptance from Norlin Yachts to a review of their licence to us with a wording to reflect the demands of our sailors but at the same time not to weaken the OD rule compliance of the measured hull. We believe that shortly we will know if this is possible after which we can swiftly move to a better worded sub licence to Charger giving them a better certainty for the future.

At the same time we must never forget that the original metre rule allows for a diversity of designs in our worldwide fleet within the strict confines of the rule to give competitive competition for those who wish to experiment.

Moving back to the sailing front apart from a good spread of regattas for us in Europe, including Kieler Woche next year running concurrently with the Eurosaf Para Europeans - the website for entries is open now - and culminating at the end of the season with the Worlds in Gavle, Sweden - hopefully the entry site will be open shortly - and this looks as though entry levels will exceed previous Worlds fleets. When countries put on a Worlds Championship their efforts are underpinned by as many early entries as possible to give them certainty on expenditure so I am hoping this will be the case again this year. Your efforts on that would be appreciated.

I am conscious that I don't mention either the USA, Australia or the other NCAs in this context and it must be a goal for the World class to know and appreciate their progress. Our class website is always open to submission of interesting overviews which should bring us closer hopefully and to encourage sailors to travel further and to show we are a true international class.

For 2019 we have received an application from Genoa, Italy to hold the Worlds in the first week of October. It looks like a great location and yacht club and an early acceptance by the EC will follow after debate in the next meeting.

All that remains for me to say is to thank all those worldwide who continue to support and work hard for the best outcome for the class, and above all to enjoy racing our unique and challenging 2.4mR boat.

I wish you all an exciting but peaceful New Year on and off the water.