

Chairman's Report to ISORA AGM.

11th November 2023

2023 was another challenging year for ISORA and offshore racing generally. The challenges arose from extremes of weather that dissuaded many boats that had entered particular races, from taking part in the race. Many of the races were exceptionally long and this prevented the collegial ISORA "Apres Sail" from taking place.

The schedule to host 19 races that included 7 offshores, and 6 coastal races on each side of the Irish Sea only attracted 42 boats, similar to 2022. A significant reduction on our highest number back in 2018 when 67 boats took part.

An issue that requires consideration is that despite reasonable numbers of boats entering most races the numbers of boats taking part in each race rarely exceeded 12.

Many of our "regulars" were missing and some who entered races, did not race at all. A few of our "regular" boats are either up for sale or sold. It is hoped that these boats and skippers will reappear and participate in ISORA.

On a more positive note, the highlight of the offshore racing was the very successful D2D race in June. While there was a record number of entries, many boats had to retire due to strong winds. As is the ISORA spirit this did not take away from a great social scene in Dingle. In August, in conjunction with Quoile Yacht Club, an offshore weekend was arranged that took the fleet from Holyhead to Strangford and from Strangford to a mid-Irish Sea finish. Again, very bad weather caused many boats to pull out of these events. Those boats that made the races were rewarded with a great reception in Quoile YC.

Coastal racing is now an accepted part of every major racing event. This is mainly due to the constant promotional work of ISORA.

The use of "staggered starts" continues to prove very successful, particularly in the coastal races. This practice will continue in 2024.

Things are not "healthy" in big boat racing in Ireland and the UK. Numbers taking part have been decreasing particularly since Covid. The Irish fleet has been badly affected with only one Irish boat taking part in the last offshore. On the other hand, the fleet numbers in Pwllheli are growing.

Prior to creating the race schedule for this season, the feeling from the fleet was that there was a preference for more coastal races. This was included in the final race schedule for 2023. However, the effect of having more races in the ISORA series, appears to have resulted in a dilution in the number of boats taking part in each race.

Subject to the decision of the AGM, it is proposed that the points for coastal races will not be included for the Overall Wolf's Head trophy next season. The Wolf's Head will be decided by points from offshore races only.

The sailing season is already crammed for 2024. The highlight in the offshore racing is the Round Ireland race in June. In Dun Laoghaire there are four regattas taking place. There are also two new events and the ICRA Nationals taking place in Dun Laoghaire at the end of August / start of September. The Welsh IRC Nationals are taking place in May next year. Cork Week takes place in July while Calves Week takes place in early August. Considering all the above events, it is very difficult to thread a race schedule through that calendar without some clashing. In considering our schedule for 2024 serious consideration needs to occur about the clashing with these events.

A huge thank you to our title sponsor for this season, **Musto**. I also want to thank our continued sponsors on the Irish side, **Viking Marine**, **Hendrick Ryan Associates** and **Jack Ryan Whiskey**; and on the Welsh side, **Plas Heli** and **Tudor Auctioneers**.

With reduced entries being received and most of our costs being fixed, we now have to rely on our sponsors to help us fund our racing. I would, however, like to appeal for other possible sponsors or benefactors for 2024.

ISORA is run by volunteers who generously freely give of their time during the season. They are as follows:

- Website Manager – Stephen Tudor.
- Race results – Stephen Tudor.
- Online Entry – Olivier Proveur.
- Bernard McGranaghan - ISORA CrewManager App.
- Race Officers - Larry Power, Barry MacNeaney, Richard Tudor, Robin Evans, Dawn Russell and Ross Boyd.
- Safety Officer - Anita Begley
- YB Tracker Manager – Grainne Ryan
- Facebook Page Manager – Vicky Cox.
- Trophy Secretary – Michael Horgan.

I would like to thank the Officers and committee of ISORA:

- Vice Chairman – Peter Dunlop
- Hon Secretary – Stephen Tudor
- Hon Treasurer – Grainne Ryan
- Committee: Mark Thompson and Vicky Cox.

I would like to thank our two committees – The **Race Management Committee** and the **Sailing Committee**. The Race Management Committee dealt with the back of house work. The Sailing Committee decided on courses and details associated with races. This committee had representatives from each class and from both sides of the Irish Sea.

For next season it is hoped that a formal Race Organiser will be appointed for each race. They will be responsible for arranging starts and finishes associated with that particular race. This person will be on land and not taking part in the race. I am asking for suggestions from all boats taking part on how this might work for 2024 to ensure that all participants are actively engaged in providing support to the sailing we all enjoy.

The ISORA website continues to grow in content and is managed solely by **Stephen Tudor**. It is the main information source for ISORA. Our Newsletters are circulated to over 1000 people. I would also like to thank **Vicky Cox** who looks after the **ISORA Facebook** page. This is proving to be a huge success and a great way to communicate within ISORA.

The social highlight of the year is tonight's annual ISORA prize giving dinner in the NYC. Over 130 people are expected to attend.

I would like to thank the **National Yacht Club** for their continued support and assistance for ISORA. They are the **Organising Authority** for our races. The Vice Commodore of the NYC, **Rosemary Cadogan**, is attending the dinner tonight.

In finishing I would particularly like to thank our Hon Secretary – **Stephen Tudor**. Without him, ISORA would not run as efficiently as it does.

Wishing ISORA a safe and engaged year in 2024. As Chairman since 2007 I wish to thank all of you for your support to me. I look forward to handing over the stewardship of ISORA in good stead in the near future.

Peter Ryan
Chairman ISORA

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