

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING HELD BY THE NATIONAL SQUIB OWNERS ASSOCIATION AT RUTLAND SAILING CLUB OF FRIDAY OCTOBER 5TH 2012

The purpose of the meeting was to consider, discuss and vote on a proposal to a change to Class Rules E.3 Keels and to remove the major anomaly in the design of Squib keels and help improve the one design nature of the National Squib Class.

Proposer - Malcolm Blackburn, Chairman of the Technical Sub-committee

Seconded - Tony Saltonstall, Technical Adviser and Chief Measurer to the Class, and Mike Budd

INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIRMAN JENNY RILEY

Welcome to you all to our Special General Meeting. We are here to discuss and vote upon a proposal put forward by Malcolm and the Technical Committee to change the Squib Class Rules regarding Keels. As everyone has had plenty of time to read and discuss the proposed Rule Change and the notes explaining the reasons behind the proposal, I intend this meeting to be brief and efficient. This meeting will be followed by a Racing Briefing in this room at 7.15 and our Welcome Supper will be served in the clubhouse from 7.30.

The format of the meeting will be as follows.....

First I will ask Malcolm to briefly explain his proposal, then I shall allow a short time for people to ask questions and put forward brief observations. Malcolm may then sum up the meeting and we will then vote using voting slips. These slips and proxy votes will be counted by Chris Stonehouse and Fran Blackburn. Please may I see a show of hands for all those in favour of asking Chris and Fran to count the votes. Anyone against, anyone abstaining?

Before I ask Malcolm to speak, I wish to say that no rule in the Squib Class Rule book should be changed lightly. We have a good recipe for our class and the quality and enjoyment of our racing reflects this. With this in mind, our committee wrote some pointers and advice for times when we might consider changing our rules and to promote discussion. Our Guidelines are on Page 6 of the handbook, and I would like to read them to you.

In 2012, the NSOA committee, in accordance with the 'Objectives' of the Association Rules, discussed its policy for caring for the future of the Squib Class and agreed with the following statement:-

"We believe that we should spend our effort in maintaining the class as a simple, inexpensive boat that provides the greatest inclusion and level racing for the maximum number of sailors"

It also agreed that the whole membership should be made fully aware of any formal proposals to change any rules and the counter arguments for such changes and with this in mind the 2012 NSOA Committee presents here a few questions to prompt discussion before voting on a change to the Class rules.

1. Does it enhance the boat and make it more fun for the majority of sailors?

2. Does it cost more money?

3. Can the average owner make the necessary modifications himself?

4. Does it make the boat more complicated to sail?

5. Does it make the boat easier or safer to sail?

6. Does it make the racing fairer...on open sea, rivers or lakes; for light or heavy crew; for old or new boats?

7. Is it in the spirit of one-design racing?

Jenny finished her report by asking for two volunteers to act as counters for the vote. Gerard Dyson and Ricky East offered to do this and they were accepted unanimously.

She then introduced Malcolm to briefly explain his proposal.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL

Malcolm firstly explained that it was categorically about measurement and not performance.

He went on to say that although the vast majority buy a boat and go sailing, there are those who wish to push the boundaries. The one design boat has a hull identical to all other Squibs, coming as they do from the same mould, but unfortunately over the years control of keels had not been so efficient, resulting in three keel patterns and three keel shapes – not wildly different but not identical, as could be expected.

Interpretation of our current rules means that what you buy is what you get and any alteration or grinding of keels is forbidden. However, a perception has grown up that the original keels with a thinner trailing edge give improved performance, although this has never been confirmed. It is impossible for measurers to police any alterations and thus rule infringements. By removing the plus/minus tolerance of 8mm and replacing the trailing edge measurement with a minimum only based on the original specification, it would be easy and quick to check whether boats were still in class, by using a specially designed u-shaped metal template. This would slip over the keel and any sloppiness or movement would indicate an over-faired keel, that would need building up in order to be in Class.

It would effectively level the playing field for all owners and there is no intention to put any boat out of Class.

OPEN FORUM

Moving on to the Open Forum, Jenny asked for a show of hands to indicate those present who wished to speak, in order that fair time be allocated to each. They were Eddie Harper, Toby Taylor, Brian Holland and Tony Saltonstall.

Eddie Harper: Would other sections of the keel be included in the rule change?

Malcolm: It was the aft trailing edge that is thinner in the original keels that caused the most contention.

Eddie: Would a new keel pattern be changed to the new measurement?

Malcolm: It can be done in the future.

Toby Taylor: Was much concerned that the difference in performance by altering the aft trailing edge needed to be proved first. Before there was a change to the Class Rules he would like to see experts in the field investigate this perception and drawn conclusions.

Malcolm: The purpose of a one design class is to make all boats the same. At the Nationals he felt that some 15/20 keels had been modified slightly, but the Class does not have the capability to control those who disregard the rules. Measurers cannot police both old and new keels on different measurements and the only solution is to remove the minimum/maximum tolerance, leaving an accepted minimum for the aft trailing edge.

It was his personal opinion that it made no difference to the performance of the boat. The rule change concerns measurement and the ability to police rules, not the perceived performance of the boat.

Brian Holland: If the proposed change is found to improve performance, is it right that owners have to spend circa £1000 having modifications made?

Malcolm: It is not a difficult task for the DIY owner and therefore there need be little cost involved.

Malcolm Hutchings: Although he would never touch the keel on his boat Lady Penelope No 819, he would nevertheless vote in favour of the proposal, because he felt that it would be beneficial to the Squib Class overall.

Tony Saltonstall: Over the years he had looked at loads of keels, finding that the old and new keels were a different as chalk and cheese, and he would definitely vote in favour of the change.

Brian Holland pointed out that the Rules ban altering keels and **Tony** replied that he considered it vital to the ongoing viability of the fleet that the builder should be allowed to fair and fill keels to the new measurements. Otherwise he felt that no new boats would be sold and Parkers would be out of business. He also commented that it would be a boost for the second hand market.

David East: What is the origin of the keel drawing displayed?

Malcolm: It is signed by Oliver Lee and carries the wording Design No 763. It is not dated. The plan of the keel has not changed.

Bryan Riley: Is it practical on a production basis to change the measurement?

Malcolm: The current pattern could be fettled to reflect the new trailing edge measurement.

Peter Greatrex: If the class allows the grinding of the aft edge, would it encourage other alterations elsewhere?

Malcolm: This proposal does not go that far.

Peter: Will the existing 22mm thickness rule from the centre section still apply?

Malcolm: the current proposal only relates to the aft trailing edge.

Questions from other fleets: How do we know if a boat complies?

Malcolm demonstrated a simple laser cut gauge which would be inexpensive to copy and allow all fleets to have their own. It would take approximately 30 seconds to check the measurement.

Would modifications devalue boat?

Malcolm: No boat will be made out of class. **Tony** added that it could possibly increase the value of the boat.

How could a keel be made thicker again if over-faired?

Malcolm: Add epoxy.

What if the keel had been altered by a previous owner?

Malcolm: The Class Rules clearly define measurements to bring the keel into line.

There being no further points for discussion, **Jenny** asked the Secretary to explain the voting system. Appropriate personal or proxy slips had been issued on arrival to paid up FULL members of the NSOA and she asked that they clearly marked their preference for or against the proposal and hand them to **Gerard** and **Ricky**.

THE RESULT

The count resulted in 85 votes in favour and 17 against, including confirmed proxies.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING

UNCONFIRMED PROXIES

Jenny, Malcolm and Chris Stonehouse had been considerably concerned and aware that prior to the meeting, it had been impossible to confirm some of the proxies sent from Ireland, owing to anomalies on the database and their late arrival. They felt strongly that the meeting and vote should continue, but were unanimously in agreement that the result might have to be put on hold, pending confirmation. There was no real indication as to how the members might vote and the landslide in favour of the proposal came as a surprise.

In the event the position after the vote was as follows:

IN FAVOUR – 46 votes cast at the meeting plus 39 confirmed proxies Total 85

AGAINST – 2 votes cast at the meeting plus 15 confirmed proxies plus 12 unconfirmed proxies Total 29

The three unconfirmed proxies in favour were not counted at this stage, as it was the total against that was considered the most important in order to judge whether the two thirds majority had been definitely achieved.

This majority obviously had been reached and over the weekend Membership Secretary Andrea Holland was able to confirm a further eight proxies from Ireland making a final total of 25 against the proposal.

It was this final total of 85 votes in favour and 25 against that was posted on the website on Monday October 8th by Malcolm Blackburn confirming that the proposal had been carried.