

29er Class Association Committee Meeting

Minutes

9th September 2025 @ 7.30 via Google Meet

Apologies: Chris Turner

In attendance:

Officers of the Association:

Samantha White, Dougal Scott, Lee Sydenham, Anne Sydenham, Doug Walker, Melissa Heppell, Helen Alheid, Steve Sinfield, Clive Grummett

Other attendees:

Alice Thorsby, Jo Powell, Louis Hiscocks, Gavin Homer

Meeting was quorate.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for June were approved.

Committee vacancies

Clive Grummett is to stand down in April 2026 as webmaster. Clive has served on the committee for years and his contribution has been invaluable on his technical ability but also his knowledge across the classes.

Other vacancies: DW will talk to the person who has shown interest in the vice chair role. There is interest from another parent in the transition/training role and to assist with social events but not to lead. There are other parents who could be recruited. DW to discuss with Alice whether the training/transition roles can be merged or should stay separate.

It was agreed that Hannah Bristow would be given the rolling rankings to do. There was discussion about ensuring that they reflected sail changes etc. LS to circulate a policy proposal and put off to the next meeting to be discussed with the Worlds proposal (*see point 3*).

Regarding results: The contribution of Huw Pearce was once again noted.

Sailor reps

Louis will put something out to the sailors to get them involved. In the meantime, Jo Walker has shown an interest in doing the role. There is still confusion with the sailor sec role. There was discussion as to how we can get more reps and defining the role

Sailor reps proposals are for the committee to consider whether there should be more trophies awarded; the extra ones would be daily for races/days won.

There is also a proposal as to whether bibs could be worn for the leading boats at all events.

Sailors (in general) did not want to go to South Shields for the GP.

There is a proposal to have downwind finishes; decision is to trial either in one race or one event/day depending on how easy it to manage from a recording of finishes point of view.

Sailing secretary

Worlds: the international class are going to cap numbers and GBR are to be allocated 33 boats (number confirmed after the meeting). There was discussion about how to allocate the places (qualifying events or rolling rankings) and how to deal with boats that change partnerships and overall fairness. DW has circulated proposed policy – EOI open but only 6 signed up

GP1 class and RYA/class observation agreed for the purpose of all squad selections. There was discussion about what to do if the weather came in as forecast which led to discussions on potential for cancellation. Post meeting update: GP1 went ahead with the coaches observing.

Support vessels at GP's/events generally [LS]. An email had been circulated about whether we should allow support boats to be extra safety cover. At the Nationals the weather was such that the support boats that were there were used for safety and had they not been then there may well have been no sailing that day. It allows for a greater boat to safety ratio on windier days. This does mean that there will be coach support at GPs. Looking at international events most don't go sailing without a coach. And to get to that level perhaps that is reason to allow it.

Observations included that these people should be volunteering to be on the safety fleet, that the same people who already volunteer would be doing so and not being able to coach/observe their own sailor's and there would be certain boats that would have a permanent private rib. In that case all boats need to be part of the safety fleet and can coach when AP is flying. We are an inclusive class and encourage a whole range of abilities. The international sailors are not coached at home events. In a growing class, we run the risk of scaring people away from GP's. At the 49er Nationals it was non coached and so participation was higher and welcomed new people into the class. It would be the wrong message to say that a sailor had to buy a boat and get a coach to be competitive. Another view is that it would raise the standard for the top end of the fleet. It might also encourage the lower end to attend if they knew they had support. It means there are more boats out if the conditions deteriorate and makes the event safer. Another view is that it will just attract the wealthy. This goes against the attempts made by the RYA to get people in from diverse backgrounds – it becomes a pay to win. On the other hand, some might be attracted in that they would otherwise be worried about taking the safety out of action because they aren't experienced. One proposal was a RIB that could be out there with parents as reassurance to their children and offered as a class or encourage vol by saying can see on water. It's the balance between providing support and coaching. Those that can't afford a coach or a RIB will be disadvantaged. The issue is where we might be shorthanded. Changing the ratios would be additional cost.

Disadvantage with parents non sailing to Olympic sailors and whether those experienced ones would help everyone out. If we don't want coached events then the question is whether there is a way of bringing more boats for potential safety cover. If the back of the fleet is what we are worried about, maybe get a coach for that. LS to look at the wording to see what the middle ground is without professionalising the fleet.

There would need to be rules but it puts us in a difficult position to do it informally

RYA report (Youth Nationals) [DS]. It was agreed that DW and DS would write a letter and SW would edit to find out when the report would be published and that they needed to take the issues seriously – done.

Treasurer's Report

Steve Sinfield had circulated the last report via email

Next date: 24th October 2025

There being no other business the Chair closed the meeting thanking all for their attendance.