Class Rule Interpretation

International Optimist Class Association

Effective Class Rules at the time of the Interpretation: 04th February 2025
Interpretations Effective Date: 16th June 2025

World Sailing Class Association

QUESTION 1

What forms of post-demoulding surface treatment or maintenance, including sanding, are permitted on GRP Optimist hulls under the Class Rules, both at the time of manufacture and for maintenance after delivery?

INTERPRETATION 1

The conformity of any sanding or surface treatment may be assessed in context by an official measurer, considering the rules and the intended one-design standard.

a) Prior to certification:
In accordance with Class Rules 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, and 3.2, and the principle in Class Rule 1.2 that the Optimist is a one-design class where variations are only allowed if explicitly stated:

- Builders are permitted to undertake post-demoulding surface treatments necessary to ensure compliance with the class tolerances and specifications (CR 2.2.2, CR 3.2.2.1).
- These operations must not result in local or global modification of the hull shape beyond the permitted tolerances and must not intentionally or effectively alter the as-moulded design shape,
- In accordance with CR 2.5.1 and 2.5.2, measurers officially recognised by the National Authority where the boat is produced may report whether a surface treatment or manufacturing process constitutes a departure from the intended nature or design of the boat.
- In accordance with CR 2.4.6 and 2.4.7, World Sailing or the National Authority, (and IODA where there is no National Authority or in where the National Authority does not wish to administer the class) may refuse to grant or withdraw a certificate. Any work that affects the intended nature of the design, even if the numerical tolerances are preserved, can be grounds for refusal of a certificate.

b) Maintenance after delivery:

- Owners may carry out repairs and maintenance as necessary to preserve the boat's compliance with the class rules and measurement certificate (CR 2.5.5).

QUESTION 2

What authority do Class Association representatives have under the Class Rules to validate equipment and participate in the certification of equipment?

INTERPRETATION 2

According to Class Rule 2.2.2, builders are responsible for ensuring that each boat and its components comply with the Class Rules at the time of manufacture. Each hull must be accompanied by a builder's declaration confirming compliance (CR 2.2.4).
Certification of equipment is based on measurement carried out by measurers officially recognised by the relevant National Authority (CR 2.5.1). These measurers verify compliance

with the Class Rules, relevant tolerances, and measurement instructions. A valid measurement certificate is required for a boat to race (CR 2.4.1).
The Class Rules do not assign class representatives the authority to carry out measurements for certification purposes or to approve or reject equipment for certification. These functions are specifically assigned to official measurers.

The Class Rules however provide the following:

- CR 3.2.2.1 allows class representatives to inspect work at any time during production of hulls. World Sailing or the National Authority may consider their reports to refuse to grant a certificate under CR 2.4.6.
- CR 2.4.7 provides that in countries without an active National Authority administering the class, IODA or its representatives may fulfil those functions.

Note (not to be considered interpretation of class rules):

- This interpretation addresses the certification process and does not cover event inspection processes.
- Regulation 15.12: Class Rule interpretations may be requested by Class Associations.

QUESTION 3

Does a competitor need to own the boat to compete in a championship?

INTERPRETATION 3

For context: The Racing Rules of Sailing state:

RRS 78.1: While a boat is *racing*, her owner and any other person in charge shall ensure that the boat is maintained to comply with her class rules and that her measurement or rating certificate, if any, remains valid. In addition, the boat shall also comply at other times specified in the class rules, the notice of race or the sailing instructions.

RRS 46: A boat shall have on board a person in charge designated by the member or organization that entered the boat. See rule 75.

Class Rules state:

4.1: Only one person shall be on board while racing.

2.4.1: No boat is permitted to race in the class unless it has a valid measurement certificate. This rule may be suspended in the case of charter boats at any event with the permission of the IODA Executive Committee.

2.4.4: Change of ownership invalidates the measurement certificate but shall not necessitate remeasurement. The new owner shall apply to his National Authority for endorsement of the certificate/Registration Book returning it with any re-registration fee required and stating the necessary particulars. The measurement certificate/Registration Book shall then be returned to the owner.

4.6: If there is a national Optimist Class Association of the country in which the boat is registered, the owner shall be a member. Where a boat is sailing in an international regatta, the competitor shall be a member of a national Optimist

association or other body which is itself a member of the IODA as defined in IODA Article 3(a).

The class rules do not require the person on board to be the owner of the boat.
If a boat is loaned for temporary use, provided a boat has a valid certificate, the certificate may remain valid under the registered owner.

QUESTION 4

Do the Class Rules permit for the mainsheet to be attached to a piece of rope (such as a soft loop or span) that is itself connected to a fixed boom fitting?

INTERPRETATION 4

The use of a rope loop attached to a fixed boom fitting, where the mainsheet itself is then attached to the loop, is permitted under CR 3.5.3.8 provided the system does not "slip along the boom", that the maximum clearance to the boom complies with the rule and that the system is not adjusted while racing.

QUESTION 5

Do the Class Rules permit the application of friction-reducing products or coatings (also referred to as low-friction technology) on the underwater surface of the hull?

INTERPRETATION 5

No, the application of friction-reducing products or low-friction technology to the hull are not explicitly allowed under any class rule and therefore are prohibited under CR 1.2. Cleaning and polishing for maintenance purposes may be carried out using products that do not alter the hull's surface characteristics beyond restoration of its original finish.

QUESTION 6

Do the Class Rules permit the creation of a pattern or texture on the mould to be replicated onto the hull surface during moulding, with the intention of reducing water friction?

INTERPRETATION 6

No, Class Rule 3.2.3.2 states that *"any laminate shall only have one mould side, which shall be smooth."*. It further specifies that *"moulded patterns are not permitted except for an optional anti-slip pattern not exceeding 1 mm thickness at the gunwale aft of the midship frame."*

Therefore, any pattern on the mould intended to be replicated onto the hull surface, except as specifically allowed for the anti-slip pattern in the defined location, is not permitted under this rule.

QUESTION 7

If a hole is drilled fully through an aluminium mast in a horizontal plane, from one side to the other in such a way that it enters through one wall, passes through the internal cavity, and exits the opposite wall, how many holes would this result in for the purpose of rule 3.5.2.6?
Do the class rules permit the use of a non-metallic fitting (bushing) connecting both sides?

INTERPRETATION 7

A through-hole drilled in a horizontal plane, even though it creates two physical openings (one on each side of the mast tube), constitutes a single “hole” under CR 3.5.2.6. The rule uses the term “hole” in a functional sense; a point through which lacing passes. If it serves to pass a line through the mast, it is functionally equivalent to a single drilled hole in a solid wooden mast (which similarly has an entry and exit but is viewed as one hole).

Therefore, a through-hole that exits on both sides of the mast is considered one hole, as long as it is continuous and used for lacing. Two such through-holes (each at the correct height) could comply with CR 3.5.2.6.

Class Rule 1.2 states that 'unless the rules specifically state that something is permitted it shall be assumed to be prohibited.' A non-metallic fitting (bushing) connecting both sides of the mast is not specifically permitted and is therefore prohibited. Class Rule 3.5.2.11 provides a specific exception by allowing a fitting for securing the wind indicator, which may also be used to help secure the lacing lines from the throat of the sail. As the question does not refer to this specific use, a non-metallic fitting (bushing) whose purpose is to connect both sides of the mast remains prohibited.

End.