

Oceanic and Offshore Committee – November 2025

Sailor Categorisation Commission Report

At the time of preparing this report, there were 17040 current Group 1 (corinthian) categorisations in the system, and only 763 with Group 3 (professional) categorisation. This reflects that there are a significant number of events relying on the Categorisation Code. Sailors who are professionals, or those who do not need to be treated as corinthian do not need to apply for categorisation, hence the very small number of Group 3 sailors in the system.

The Commission has been reformed with a much-reduced membership. There are now five members, all of whom are experienced, expert and applied. The members are:

- Stephen Jeffries (USA)
- Andreas Christoforou (CYP)
- Neven Baran (CRO)
- Dave Meagher (IRL)
- Glen Stanaway – Chairman (AUS)

The team is thanked for always being available and never letting us down. Bunmi Fatunla from the office is also thanked for his constant efforts and support.

The class most engaged on how the Categorisation Code is used is the International J/70 Class Association who are running very successful corinthian events. The J/70s value the corinthian ethos of these World and European championships and have invested heavily in ensuring that sailors' categorisations are scrutinised. The class uses the Commission to interview sailors in advance of, and at their key events.

Another class who was asked to use a similar process is the Cape 31 class. The representatives of the class were in dialogue with the Commission concerning the integrity of categorisations at their events. Unfortunately, the Cape 31 Class has declined to use similar processes to implement and administer the Code.

Instead, the Cape 31 class has begun a trial of an additional control at the Cape 31 European Championships which has a requirement for each member of crew to obtain a 'SailorPass' in addition to a World Sailing Categorisation. This appears to be a development contravening the Code clause 1 which states, in part: *"Events and classes are not under any obligation to use a Categorization system but should they wish to do so the World Sailing Code is the only system that shall be used. When using the Code, they are under an obligation to properly administer and implement the Code."*

Improper categorisation of a sailor is a significant integrity risk to the sport. A reasonable view is that it is second greatest risk behind measurement compliance under rating and class rules. Whilst the Commission recognises that rating and class rule compliance have been, and remain the biggest problem, having 'professionals' competing in events ringfenced for corinthian crews creates a gross unfairness in favour of the boats crewed by those expert professionals who have managed to secure Group 1 categorisations. There have been several misconduct matters dealt with in this regard.

Integrity of competition ultimately sits with the organising authority as articulated in the Code, and the competitors themselves. The former implements and administers the event's framework, and the competitors use it. Nonetheless, the misconduct matters have highlighted some difficulties in the Code. The Code's general provisions and the Commission's authority, for

example, denying categorisation and/or reporting under the RRS to an International Jury are clear. But matters encountered out of the jurisdiction of an event with an International Jury seem not to have been envisaged. There is still a need to establish an agreed process and understanding of what the threshold is for a breach of the Code.

The Commission has met twice in 2025 and identified the following priorities:

- Software / programming improvements.
- Improvements to the application web interface.
- Changes to the questionnaire.
- Training in use of the system so it can be more self-sufficient.
- Amendments to the Categorisation Code (Regulation).

It is understood that the office has new staff assigned to these areas of the business and that changes to the website and underlying databases are being planned. A workshop is being organised for the Commission to get these matters into order and contribute to the website and database work being planned.

As with all volunteer commissions and committees, succession remains a challenge. The right people to take on the Categorisation Commission are still being sought. The right person needs to be able to understand and apply regulations, use their nous to assess sailors' backgrounds, be I.T. literate, and, importantly, be willing to make tough decisions. People with interest should bring themselves to the chairman's attention.

Glen Stanaway

Categorisation Commission Chairperson