

**Can the International 2.4 mR Class Association  
become a One Design Class?**

**Report of the One Design Committee**

**April 2, 2007**

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## Summary

The possibility to evolve the 2.4 mR construction class into a OD has been investigated. The committee has approach relevant parties with a number of questions and has received a formal answer form IFDS. We have not received any formal answer from the ISAF but informal discussions with members of the relevant ISAF committees have provided valuable insight. Discussion with different members of the 2.4 m community has also been valuable.

It is absolutely clear to the committee that if the 2.4 m or rather the NIII shall remain the paralympic single hander the current appendix K must be superseded by a proper OD-rule. It is also the opinion of the committee that it is technically possible to transform the 2.4 m R class into an OD-class while keeping the large majority of the current boats in class and that the ISAF will probably accept such development. However, there are relatively strong groups in the current 2.4 m community that will strongly oppose this development and they may or may not be able to stop it. Other possibilities that may satisfy both the “OD-believers” and the “Construction class conservatives” should therefore be considered and some options are discussed in the report.

The committee finds it likely that the future of the class will be both an OD-class and the current construction class. If “Believers” and “Conservatives” both come to this conclusion they can go through the process of creating these classes together. This will certainly benefit both parties particularly on a local level.

## Introduction

The question of the 2.4 mR Development Class becoming a One Design has been discussed within the class for a long time. There are widely different opinions about this issue and at the 2006 class association AGM a committee was appointed for the purpose:

“to thoroughly investigate the opportunity to evolve the 2.4mR from a construction (development) class to a One Design class. The committee will establish facts, assess the issues, and make a written recommendation, in concert with the Technical Committee, to the World Council within six

months. The scope of the committee's work must include formal discussions with ISAF and the exploration of potential one-design rules that would minimize the obsolescence of existing boats.”

The committee has discussed the issues within itself, with IFDS and with individuals within the relevant ISAF committees. We have also written a formal inquiry to the ISAF but they have, so far, not responded despite several attempts to contact the Secretariat.

This paper gives a brief history of the class and outlines the most critical issues that need to be resolved before any decision can be made. The different views among the class members are presented as well as the possible future development routes. The paper summarises official input from the IFDS as well as unofficial input from individuals in the ISAF equipment committee, Equipment Control subcommittee and Class Rules subcommittee.

We like to stress that the one design issue is a political issue not a technical one. Constructing class rules for any of the described scenarios or classes is not difficult technically. However, decisions on what restrictions such as rig position in the boat, adjustable shrouds or not, material restrictions and restriction on tuning shall apply is a delicate task, but it also more “political” than technical in nature. Deciding on the future development is a matter of belief in or taste for one design or a development class. Technical arguments and discussions obscure this issue.

## **History of the Class**

The 2.4 mR Class traces its root back to the early 80's when a number of different “Mini 12's” were designed and sailed around Stockholm. An early version of the class rules were suggested by Peter Norlin around 1983 and used unofficially until 1986 when a more formal rule was developed. The Class was accepted by the Scandinavian Sailing Federation in 1988 and by ISAF 1993. The current rule is a metre-class development rule and as such accepts boats of different design as long as the rate 2.4 mR falls within a number of limitations on the rig, construction material, flotation, keel design, etc.

In the early years of the class, a relatively large number of different designs competed together and there was a relatively quick turnover in design generations. The Norlin Mk III turned up in prototype form in 1988 and showed that a boat with a proportionally larger hull and larger displacement was superior to earlier designs that were close to scaled down 6-meters. The design development to a large extent ended in the mid 90's when the commercially produced Norlin Mk III boats reached the market in large numbers. This superiority of the Norlin Mk III was reinforced around 1996 when the Norlin Mk III was allowed to increase their ballast by 6kg. This has later (2005) been shown to be in error and not in accordance with the rules.

Between 1990 and 1998, a number of alternative designs have been developed and built in relatively small numbers. These (post Norlin Mk III) designs include designs by S-O Ridder, Håkan Södergren, Umberto Felci, Hasse Malmsten and Ole Eide. These alternative designs have during the years only achieved quite modest results on the race course with the exceptions being the Stradivarie's with top 10 results in the 2001 and 2006 World Championships and Ole Eide sailing his own design to a 6<sup>th</sup> place finish in the 2001 worlds.

Up to the mid 90's the Class was strongly marketed as a metre-rule Development Class and the relationship to the large metre boats was stressed. After the mid 90's, the International Class association has become more focused on the Norlin Mk III design and more or less discouraged the development part of the Class. In a timeline, this development coincides with the inclusion of the Norlin Mk III 2.4 mR as the Paralympic single-handed boat where this shift of focus could well be related to demands of the Paralympic status. The traditions of the Development Class have been upheld in a few local fleets, mainly in the UK, Sweden and Norway.

Today the Norlin Mk III is licensed by Peter Norlin to four different builders, one in Finland, one in Australia, one in Canada and one in the United States. The major builder is the Finnish builder who produces 40-50 hulls annually. A portion of these hulls are reportedly sold to clubs and sailing schools and do not turn up in Class activities. The US builder is in single digits annually and the Australian builder has reportedly not built any boats since 2004. The Canadian builder is just starting up and has so far to our knowledge not produced any boats.

Currently there are a number of different projects running that have built or are building boats of different designs. In the UK, there are several Stradivari Mk II under construction with one sailing and two different amateur (both build and design) one-offs. There is the occasional boat built in the Stradivarie Mk I mould that you can borrow for free from the Swedish Class Association. The Södergren Mk VI is gearing up for production in Estonia with two prototypes sailing. One amateur designed one-off was built in Finland this year and currently there are two amateur one-off projects under way in Sweden of which one has started construction and one is a finished design where the designer/builder awaits the outcome of the One Design discussion.

The International 2.4 mR Class membership currently stands at about 330-340 members with a small growth annually. It is estimated that around 90% of these members sails a commercially produced Norlin Mk III. This does of course make the thought of One Design tempting. An attempt was made to form a One Design Class based on the N III design around 2000 which was unsuccessful for a number of different reasons.

The Norlin Mk III has been produced during a relatively long time period by three different builders that vary in their laminate specification (both single skin, divynycell sandwich and sorec sandwich laminates have been used) and internal structure. There are also small variations in shape where the Australian built boats seem to deviate being a bit fuller in the bow. The later Australian boats also seem to have the keel deepened to the maximum draft allowed by the 2.4 mR Rule (1000mm) whereas a "standard" Norlin Mk III has a draft of 976mm. Further, many boats have been modified by their owners and/or different "speed shops". The most common modifications are changes to the internal structure (ranging from small reinforcement brackets to complete rebuilds from the outer laminate inwards), deepening of the keel to a 1000mm draft as well as a relatively minor fairing of the foils and stern contour. All these modifications fall within the current Class Rule.

## **The Sailors Involved**

There are very strong sentiments in the parts of the Class about going One Design or not. One group consists of "Development Class Conservatives" and will never go into a One Design Class while their opponent the "One Design Believers" will probably go to a One Design one way or another.

Using a very broad generalization, the “conservatives” are found in northern Europe (parts of Sweden, Great Britain, France and Norway) and they are mainly focused with building local fleets and local racing. The possibility to amateur build and/or organizing local production of boats is seen as very important. A very important attraction is also the fact that the boat is a Development Class making it possible to customize and experiment with the boats. Being part of a larger International community is seen as very important while many only sail locally almost all dream of competing in a National or World Championship one day.

The “believers” are mainly found in North America, Finland, and in parts of Sweden where the active fleets are mainly Norlin Mk III. They are, again with a very broad generalization, more focused on having fun on the water on all levels. The boat is a tool for this and having to focus on the tool itself is an obstacle to them. They believe that the majority of potential 2.4mR sailors on any level are attracted by the simple sailing concept and disturbed by real and potential differences of the tool. They think the class would grow by removing the latter obstacle and controlling the builders. The “believers” considers a new innovative design as a threat to their current investment and the class. Some of them find the connection to Paralympic sailing of great value and likes to go along with the demands of that community.

An unscientific estimate is that these two groups with very strong sentiment each are between 10-20% of the membership. The silent majority, which then are between 60-80% of the membership is mainly interested in good racing at moderate cost and will probably go with the group that provides the best solution for that.

## **Future of the Class**

There are an almost infinite number of possibilities when creating a One Design Class, but after an internal discussion in the committee we see the following main routes for the class in the future.

1. Do nothing and continue as a Development Class.
2. Create a “open” One Design Class that includes the vast majority of existing Norlin Mk III’s and either:
  - a) Transform the current International and National Class Associations to a One Design Class Association and thereby possibly excluding the non Norlin Mk III boats and owners.
  - b) Create a new Class competing over membership with the current Development Class
3. Create a “restricted” One Design Class that does not have the ambition to include existing boats and let this Class supersede the current Appendix K and either continue to have a “class within the class” or start a new class and let future development show which class will dominate in the future.

## **The main questions**

1. Can an ISAF International Class that is a Development Class with open class rules by an internal democratic process transform itself into a One Design Class with closed class rules without affecting its status as an ISAF International Class?

2. In the case that the 2.4 mR Class becomes a One Design (based on the Norlin Mk III design), does ISAF see any possibility to grandfather other designs into the Class for championship racing on a National and International level?
3. Is it in the view of ISAF possible to create a “class within a class”, i.e. can the current Class Association administer the two classes in scenarios 2 and 3 above?
4. Does ISAF currently see any principal difficulty in creating the “open” version of the One Design Class?
5. If route 2.b was followed (please see above), would ISAF let the One Design boats compete in both classes if they would measure in both classes?
6. If route 2.b was followed, which Class would receive the ISAF status? The old class would without the One Design boats no longer fulfil the criteria for an ISAF class. The One Design Class would. Would they have to earn it or would they get it at once?
7. If IFDS decided to use the new One Design Class for the Paralympics, would that Class automatically be an ISAF recognized class? The Sonar is a recognized class today and I believe that is due to their Paralympic status.
8. What legal avenues must be considered when making a move from Construction to One Design?
9. When making such a move, what can an International Class do to avoid litigation and possible lawsuits?
10. If such a move is made, what specific areas of our Constitution must be changed to conform to the theme of One Design?

### ***The IFDS position***

Our communications with IFDS has made it quite clear that if the Norlin Mk III shall be considered (or at least not be disadvantaged in the selection process) as the single hander keelboat at future Paralympics (2012 and beyond) at least the current Appendix K should evolve into a proper one design rule that enables the class “to shift away from anything development related and towards strict OD classes with solid measurement protocols and governable manufacturing, design and distribution processes.” The IFDS does, apparently, not have a position on whether the whole class becomes an OD-class or not.

### ***The unofficial information from ISAF***

Here the information is presented as answers to the questions above. The answers are compiled from discussions with several individuals but does not represent any official position of the ISAF.

1. It is probable that the ISAF will accept a transformation to OD subject to acceptable class rules and most likely an amendment of the Class constitution.
2. In principle it would be possible to grandfather older NIII’s not conforming to the new rules in all details and other designs for limited amount of time (the figure 5-10 years was mentioned) but practical details have not been discussed and may prevent this.
3. No opinion has been received
4. The “open” class is a possibility but whether it is suitable or not is an open question.
5. There is nothing to stop a boat having valid measurement certificates in a OD class and a development class at the same time. This arrangement is quite common for larger boats.

6. The class that fulfills the requirements for international or recognized status at any given time can be an international or recognized class. The existing ISAF classes are reviewed yearly.
7. It is not likely that selection of a class by IFDS will automatically mean recognized status.
8. No opinion received
9. No opinion received
10. Some areas will likely need changes as there are several paragraphs that implies the class being a construction class.

### ***The community***

From our different conversations with different sailors it is evident that there are some strong sentiments on whether the class shall become a OD class or not and there are groups of sailors in both camps that will ,most probably, not stay in the “mainstream” whatever it becomes, i.e. if the existing class goes one design the construction class conservatives will reform a construction class more or less to the current rules and if the existing class stays a construction class the “One Design Believers” will form a OD-class. This means, in the opinion of the OD-committee, that a split of the class is more or less inevitable. There will obviously not be two classes in all nations, or not even very many and it is not really possible to tell in beforehand which class, if any will retain or acquire status an ISAF international or recognized class.

## **Discussion on the different scenarios**

### **Scenario 1)**

If the class decide to remain a construction class without developing appendix K into a proper OD-class it is very likely that the NIII will not be selected as the paralympic singlehander for 2012 and beyond. The class as a whole will probably decline somewhat when the paralympic sailors leave for their new class whatever it may become. It is however considered likely that the class will be strong enough to retain status as an ISAF recognized class at least. The risk of losing paralympic status makes this alternative very unattractive and also unlikely as it is almost certain that an OD-class will be created if the main class continues as a development class.

If the class shall be able to thrive as a development class it is considered very important to improve the technical management of the class and make sure that all boats actively racing really adheres to the class rules. This involves a substantial amount of work.

### **Scenario 2a)**

If the class decides to become a One Design Class according to alternative 2.a. above, a relatively large group of sailors will consider themselves excluded from the Class and community under not very friendly circumstances. It is certain that this group will strongly oppose a transformation of the existing class and even if the opposing group is not near a majority they will cause considerable noise and unrest and may even manage to block any changes to the class constitution and thus delay the transformation to a OD-class or even make the transformation impossible. The resistance will be active in the international class association as well as in some of the national associations.

If the transformation is successful, it is likely that the excluded group will suffer an economical loss due to depreciation of their boats as they are no longer useful. The possibility of grandfathering boats of non Norlin Mk III design might offer some relief, but it is probably safe to say that the majority of non Norlin Mk III owners are “development class conservatives” and as such not really interested in being grandfathered into a Class that they feel is uninteresting. If the transformation of the existing class is successful it is most likely that they will restart the Development Class on a national level in some nations and maybe even create a new international class association thus probably creating a fight over the name “the 2.4 mR-class”, if that name is kept by the transformed class. The process of restarting the real meter class with the current class rules should be very swift as the rules have been approved by ISAF already. In the worst case some national authority may demand translation.

This transformation would most likely leave the class status as an international ISAF class untouched if the membership are kept at the levels required for international status. The class could during the transition process continue management of championships in normal order.

The time line for transforming the existing class can possibly be that a principal decision is taken at the 2007 AGM and that a class rule and constitutional changes are finally voted upon at the 2008 AGM. ISAF can then formally accept the changes during the autumn of 2008 and the OD-class can start to function for the northern hemisphere season of 2009.



From a social point of view, it will in many places cause unrest as it is difficult to tell people who you have been sailing with and against for many years; “sorry mate you’re not welcome at the Nationals or Worlds any more.”

### **Scenario 2b)**

If the choice is made to start a new class which includes the majority of the existing NIII one avoids formal conflict with those opposing a change to OD. It is fairer to do it this way as the original class is left untouched.

The threat to the “excluded group” remains with this scenario. It is likely that they will suffer economic loss and in the long run lose their right to take part in world championships and in most countries also national championships. Their driving force for obstructing the process is the same as for 2a). They cannot block the process but delay it by strong lobbying on international as well as national decision makers, which the experience from 2000 shows.

The timeline for this scenario includes writing of new class rules and agreeing on them internationally. Realistically this will take 6-12 months. How long it will take for the new class to get ISAF status is uncertain. (See appendix A for the requirements on an ISAF class.) It’s not unlikely that new national class associations have to be formed and approved together with the new class rules by several national authorities before ISAF will start their process. Translation of the rule to local language may be needed. The new class can if the process is very swift start sailing the season of 2008, but the first worlds will probably take place 2009. The original 2.4mR class will be able to compete about competitors with the new class, offering both national and international championship status 2008 and probably 2009.

The OD class in scenarios 2 will have to be an “open” class but despite this it could be a closed type class rule, but must necessarily (as this is area where the current fleet is very varying) leave the internal structure free for modification. The hull and deck shell would have to be built to a building specification in moulds accepted by the Class. A certain amount of fairing of hulls and foils will also have to be allowed but shape can be controlled by “Appendix K” style templates. The building specification for boats built before the establishment of the One Design Class will also necessarily have to be rather “fuzzy” as construction methods have varied considerably over time; however, a tighter specification can be developed for new boats. From a technical point of view a class according to scenario 2a or 2b may be considered too “open” by the IFDS thus requiring a new “Appendix K”.

### **Scenario 3)**

Creating a new class without the ambition to include the older boats has the advantage that the “restricted” class can be started from a clean sheet of paper and could be made either a manufacturer or measurement certified class. A building specification with stricter tolerances and including the internal structure can be developed which makes a Class of this type more suitable for top-level competition such as the Paralympics. If this is done with some finesse, the “restricted” One Design could also be a competitive 2.4 m in the Development Class, at least for the time being. The idea from the Technical Committee that the current appendix K could be used to grandfather boats, for a limited time, into the new OD-class is, in our opinion, quite ingenious.

The restricted NIII class will almost certainly start its life as “the Paralympic OD” except in North America where a broader introduction may be considered. Whether this class should be started within the existing class or as its own class from the beginning is a matter for debate but in the end we do not see keeping both classes in the same organization as a viable solution.

There are a number of pitfalls that should be avoided when creating this new class and we do especially not want to see a situation where we get “one season” boats or a situation like in the Laser Class where the top guys take their pick from any new batch of boats and/or equipment and the rest, of worse quality, are sold off to the unsuspecting public.

## **Some comments on the construction class**

In order for any class to be sustainable the technical management of the class must be performed according to the class rules. Today this is, unfortunately, not the case in the 2.4m R class. The class rules state clearly that all yachts are to be measured individually but the case with the NIII's are that they are delivered from the builder with, more or less, identical measurement forms. The different National Authorities accept these measurement forms and issues certificates. Sample measurements indicate that the NIII yachts are not as identical as their certificates suggest and moreover these measurements revealed direct errors in the certificates. The suspicion that the builder is using a “domesticated” measurer to produce identical measurement forms is not unreasonable. When such a situation occurs the Certification Authority is, according to the current class rules and the ISAF regulations, more or less, obliged to revoke the certificates of the boats in question pending re-measurement according to the class rules. The international and national class association must acknowledge this fact and start working on rectifying the situation with the ambition of individually measuring every boat in the class. A starting point could be to completely measure all boats taking part in the world championships for a number of years (possibly 3). At the same time the practice of the builder to deliver measurement forms not based on individual measurement must stop.

There is however one possibility to allow a builder of series produced boats to deliver a “ready” measured boat based on standard measurements. This would involve a change of the class rules to allow such scheme not unlike the OD IMS certificates that are granted some classes such as the X-99 or X-35. If a builder produces a consistent product to a known building specification it would, in our opinion, be possible to allow series certificates after a number (maybe 5-10) boats of a series have been measured. The series certificates should then be based on the “worst” measurement of the sample yachts.

The current class rules are considered to be quite good but there is one weak point in them that is very difficult to monitor and certify class rule compliance and that is the limitation of building materials and panel weights. While the current limitations are very sensible they are difficult to monitor and some deviations from the allowed materials have been found in different boats while working on them. Today the only reliable possibility to verify a boats construction is destructive in the sense that you must cut small but not insignificant samples from the boat. Naturally an owner will object to this. There are ongoing development work carried out within the ISAF with the aim of developing nondestructive methods to measure laminate thickness and composition but so far we believe that no reliable and affordable equipment exists. The OD-committee is of the opinion that the responsibility of the builders, both of series and one-offs, should be emphasized by introducing a builder declaration where

the builder confirms that the hull and deck are built using materials and panel weights according to the class rules. Further it could be considered to introduce a minimum hull weight and restriction on vertical center of gravity for the entire hull without ballast for all new boats.

## Conclusions

As long as there are sailors with paralympic ambitions that want to sail a 2.4m type boat scenario 1) is not considered a realistic option and it will not be discussed further.

Scenario 3) This scenario will exclude the majority of the believers from racing with their current boats. Therefore the interest in this route will be limited.

Scenario 2a) is considered to be technically possible but trying to reform the current class into OD will meet determined resistance from “construction class conservatives” and it will cause a lot of bad will. The “conservatives” may or may not be strong enough to stop an attempt to transform the existing class but they could well make the process relatively drawn out in time thus increasing the risk that IFDS considers the NIII class a to uncertain bet for paralympic competition 2012 and beyond.

Scenario 2b) Is formally more complicated but it is fairer to the “conservatives” and consequently less risky in the terms of their resistance. It may be a faster process.

Scenarios 2 a and b probably provides a class that still needs an “appendix K” to be considered suitable for paralympic competition. All exceptions made for old boats should be removed by this appendix. This will however make a much better rule than the current appendix K. It will be closer to the situation in the Sonar class.

If “Believers” and “Conservatives” both come to the conclusion that the future will see 2 classes, they can go through this process together. This will certainly benefit both parties particularly locally. Would it even be a possibility to follow the example of the 6mR or the 5.5? They have one association and 2 or in the case of the 5.5 even 3 classes, classic, modern and evolution.

# Appendix A

## ISAF REGULATIONS

### PART V - CLASSES AND CLASS ADMINISTRATION

#### 26. ISAF INTERNATIONAL AND RECOGNIZED CLASSES

26.1 Classes which offer a high standard of international competitive sailing and satisfy the respective criteria set out below may be designated as ISAF International or Recognized Classes.

##### ***Obtaining designation as an International or Recognized Class***

26.2 To be designated as either an International or Recognized Class, a class shall be recommended for designation by the Equipment Committee to the Council and must receive a majority vote of the Council.

26.2.1 In order to be so designated a Class must be able to meet the following criteria, detailed in an application to the Secretary General, for consideration by the ISAF Council at the next scheduled meeting,

(a) an active Class/Owners Association;

(b) a Constitution passed by a pre-existing Class/Owners Association and approved by the Equipment Committee and the Constitution Committee containing at least:

(i) the name of the class,

(ii) provision for control by a Class/Owners Association,

(iii) an elected Board and Executive Committee,

(iv) an Executive Committee, including at least the Executive Officers,

(v) a statement of the objectives of the class,

(c) a set of class rules in the ISAF Standard Class Rules format, and adopting the Equipment Rules of Sailing, approved by the Equipment Committee. The Equipment Committee may approve an exemption to either requirement if in its opinion the class rules are satisfactory and well established;

(d) demonstrated, either by confirmation from the requisite number of Member National Authorities set out below or a listing of registered boat owners, that it is 'actively racing';

(e) (i) in the case of International Classes, in at least six Member National Authorities which are from at least three continents and meet the following criteria as to the number of boats per country according to size:

LOA Boats per country

Up to 7.6m 20

7.6m to 9.0m 10

9.0 to 12.0m 6

12.0m to 15.0m 4

above 15.0m 2

Windsurfers 50

(ii) in the case of Recognized Classes, in at least four Member National Authorities or three Member National Authorities which are from two continents and meet the following criteria as to the number of boats per country according to size:

LOA Boats per country

Up to 5.0m 20

5.0m to 6.5m 15

6.5m to 7.6m 8

7.6m to 9.0m 7

9.0m to 12.0m 6

12.0m to 15.0m 2

above 15.0m 1

Windsurfers 30

**LOA Boats Worldwide**

Up to 5.0m 100

5.0m to 6.5m 80

6.5m to 7.6m 60

7.6m to 9.0m 30

9.0m to 12.0m 25

12.0m to 15.0m 20

15.0m to 20.0m 12

above 20.0m 8

**Windsurfers 100**

(f) The requirements of 26.2.1(e)(ii) may be waived by the Council, upon recommendation of the Equipment Committee, when considering a class which serves a unique aspect of sailing.

For the purposes of these regulations “continent” means any one of Europe, North America, South America, Asia, Africa and Oceania.

(g) paid an application fee as established by the Council from time to time;

(h) its constitution and class rules available on the ISAF website or with a link from the ISAF website.

26.3 There shall be an executed agreement between the ISAF Ltd., the Class/Owners Association and where relevant the Trademark, Trade Name and the Copyright Owner. This agreement shall include at a minimum the following matters:

(a) define, if any, the ownership of the Copyright, Trade Name and Trademark and establish the rights granted and the responsibilities, obligations and restrictions that apply to the use of such rights generally and among the parties to the agreement;

(b) where a licensed builder system is to be adopted, establish the procedure for granting licences and the control of the licensed builders;

(c) agree on the amount of the ISAF fee for each boat which is recommended as 0.4% of the average retail price of a complete new boat without sails as a guideline for negotiation;

(d) define the method of issuing and using ISAF plaques, if any, Sail numbers, Measurement forms, Measurement certificates, changes to class rules and any other documentation affecting the ownership and the use of the boat;

(e) provide that the Class organization and members of the class shall act in accordance with the ISAF Constitution, Rules and Regulations.