



International Etchells Class Association  
Andrew Cumming, Chairman  
acumming@bell.net

22 January, 2021

Dear IECA members,

I am writing today as the Chair of the newly-elected International Governing Committee (IGC) of the International Etchells Class Association (IECA). As most of you know, having recently voted this past November, we have just started a new two-year term with a fresh slate of IGC members. Additionally, as our first order of business we have appointed a new One Design Technical Committee (ODTC) which works closely with the IGC in order to monitor and preserve the strict one-design ethos of our class. Every one of these people is donating their time and skills for the greater good of the class, so if you see them around the boat park say hello and a thanks. The members of these groups are as follows: Besides myself the IGC consists of Stuart Childerley (Vice Chair), Peter Duncan (Treasurer), Steve Benjamin, Jay Cross, George Francisco, Don Jesberg, Scott Kaufman, Marty Kaye, Andrew Palfrey, Chris Pratt, Ray Smith, and Mike Tyquin with Jim Cunningham co-opted as an advisor. Chris Hampton was voted back onto the IGC but has stepped down due to increased demands on his time from his work. Sherri Campbell will continue as Executive Secretary. The ODTC, expanded to seven members and two advisors from the previous four and one consists of: Scott Kaufman (Chair), David Clark, Grant Crowle, Andrew Palfrey, Chris Pratt, Jamie McWilliam, and Jud Smith, with Bill Abbott (Chief Measurer) and Bruce Nelson (previous ODTC Chair) advising. Every person listed here is also on our class website [www.etchells.org](http://www.etchells.org) along with their email address.

There are several important developments that have occurred in the Class during the final couple months of the previous IGC administration and over the past few weeks of this year:

**Change to the Class Rules regarding sail acquisition and royalty payments.**

The membership voted in November/December 2020 to adopt a new sail management regime. In a nutshell, as of March 1, 2021, there will no longer be limits as to the number of sails that can be purchased. Accordingly it will no longer be necessary to maintain a sail card for your boat. Additionally, every new sail will have a royalty collected by the sailmaker and remitted to the IECA. Affixed to the sail will be a non-transferrable "Royalty Sticker" indicating that the royalty in the amount of \$50 USD has been paid. The royalty will apply to all sails made, whether for competition or practice. The International Etchells Class is regulated by World Sailing (WS) according to its foundation documents created when the Class gained its "International" status in 1974, and so any changes to Class Rules must be approved by WS, whom are in the process of reviewing and approving this change. We fully expect that approval to come well in advance of the proposed March 1, 2021 effective date for the new sail management rules.

955 Rosecrans Street, San Diego, CA 92106 USA  
Phone: +1 619-250-0640

## **Status of the Mould 11 (M11) controversy.**

As many of you know, the hull mould used by Innovation Composites as a subcontractor to Pacesetter Yachts in Australia to produce boats since approximately 2011 has been the subject of considerable controversy over the past couple of years. Our Class Rules provide that for a boat to be called an Etchells, it must, according to Rule B.1.1 (a) be in compliance with the Class Rules. One of the Class Rules (D.2.6 (b)) stipulates that “All moulds shall be constructed by builders licensed for that purpose and approved by ISAF (now WS)”. There is a well-defined protocol that WS follows in the approval of a mould involving certification that the mould was created in accordance with the strict one-design ethos of the Class. What has emerged in the investigation of the history of M11 is that it was not approved by WS at the time it started to produce hulls. To this day, WS has no record of Pacesetter or Innovation Composites building and using a mould other than Mould 9, which was made directly from the same plug used to make the other current Etchells moulds being used by Ontario Yachts in Canada and Heritage Racing in the UK (Moulds 8 and 10 respectively).

An exhaustive assessment of the facts surrounding the provenance of M11 has been undertaken by the previous IGC and a series of Resolutions passed (in October 2020) in order to deal with this situation. It is the position of the IGC that until and unless the International Etchells Class Association of Australia, which owns M11, in concert with Pacesetter Yachts have that mould approved and registered by WS, the boats it has produced are effectively not Etchells Class yachts. Section 1(a) of the measurement certificate contains the signed declaration that the “yacht has been constructed from officially registered, numbered and measured mould.” As this is not the case the validity of the measurement certificates for M11 hulls is called into question.

The new IGC has deemed it appropriate to frame and adopt two further resolutions in order to reaffirm its commitment to dealing with the M11 issue and to make the requests of WS more direct, succinct and actionable. Those resolutions were unanimously supported by the IGC. As at this writing the IGC has been unofficially informed by WS that they do not have any record of official registration or approval of M11. Additionally they have undertaken to instruct Pacesetter to cease construction of new boats pending approval of their mould. We await official confirmation of both steps.

Skip Etchells, when he designed this boat and then took the further step of having it designated as an International Class, firmly enshrined in the foundation documents an adherence to strict one-design principles and charged the IGC, the ODTIC and WS all working in concert to preserve that one-design ethos. Specifically, our Association Rules ensure that shape of the boats is strictly controlled (within manufacturing tolerances) to be an exact copy of the official plug owned by the IECA.

It has recently been discovered by scans and floatation tests of boats from all three moulds that M11 produces boats which have a longer water line, less rocker, are flatter in the middle and fuller in the ends. The differences are material, far greater than can be explained away by minor variances due to manufacturing tolerances. In evaluating M11, WS and the ODTIC must assess it as if it is a new prototype with full protocol specified in our Class and Association Rules for qualifying a new mould, including scan data comparing it to the official shape. M11 was not made directly from the official plug owned by the IECA. It was produced instead by massaging scan data which came from the official plug, obviating the need to ship the plug to Australia. If M11 had been produced by the method approved by the IGC at the time of its manufacture, it would have been (to within manufacturing tolerances) exactly the same as if it had been made from the official class plug. That it is not represents a deviation from our rules-based one-design ethos. And therein lies the essential problem with M11.

What is left for us to determine, and is the reason that this is such a profoundly important issue for the Etchells Class, is whether or not we, as Governors representing you, the membership, are willing to abandon the strict

one-design ethos that has been at the heart of the success of this Class for over 50 years. Even without asking the question as to whether the M11 boats represent a performance improvement over the official shape, we all have to ask ourselves if we would like to see the Etchells Class embrace the “development model” (any boat that fits in the templates is an Etchells) or to preserve the “one-design model” (all boats have the same hull shape). Do we value the fact that a sailor’s skill in rig tuning, sail control, steering, strategy and tactics determine the outcome of a race, not the hull shape? There is a lot at stake. Accepting M11 as legal effectively makes us a development class.

Moving to the development model would render obsolete every Etchells boat produced to date which does not come from M11, as well as ignite a development war between builders as each in his turn tries to tweak the shape within the template tolerances to make a faster boat. I know that I personally do not wish to see this happen, but this is just one man speaking. I can say that the vast majority of the Governors do not wish to see this happen. I also believe that the vast majority of you, the membership, also want to see the Etchells remain a one-design class. Please feel free to let your thoughts be known on this issue by emailing me, another governor you know or your national association representative. I do believe that the future of the Class lies in the balance.

### **Governance and Class Audit**

With the widespread adoption of virtual meeting technology because of the Covid pandemic, the IGC has decided to have much more frequent meetings (initially monthly) via Zoom in order to develop and prosecute an aggressive agenda in the furtherance of the health of our Class and the vitality of its membership. One of the October Resolutions speaks to a Class Audit to seek inconsistencies and shortcomings of our Class Rules and Association Rules, Plans and Specifications. This is an enormous undertaking that is just now being started by this new IGC. Another Resolution commits us to undertake a Governance Review of our Class. Both of these Resolutions represent a renewed attempt to further codify and enforce our strict one-design ethos, an ethos that many of us consider the true strength and distinguishing feature of our Class, and the reason that so many sailors love to compete in it.

With that I wish to thank the members of the previous IGC who finally and tirelessly sought to get to the bottom of this M11 issue and get the October Resolutions passed and into the hands of WS. And kudos to the new IGC for unanimously endorsing the latest January Resolutions. In an effort to better keep the membership apprised of developments at the IGC and ODTC level I undertake to make periodic communications of this sort with you.

Respectfully,

Andy Cumming  
IECA IGC Chair