

Project future Fireball Report August 2024

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Introduction

For some time Dave Winder and I have been concerned over the lack of new boat orders. After some discussions it was agreed I could make a presentation at the Europeans in Slovenia. At the open forum I spoke about how we see the current situation and possible reasons for it. I also put forward some ideas regarding the boat – some simple and some radical. It should be noted there was not a complete dismissal of our thoughts but a realisation of where we are. There were also some ideas from the floor. I did a similar presentation in Geelong with much the same response. Following that, at the Council meeting in Geelong it was agreed that the class would set a budget for some development and testing. This was to include to see if a self draining cockpit will work along with money to be available for design work on other ideas.

Action

A wide bow epoxy /wood Winder boat was purchased. A floor was put in at the height needed for water to drain out the back. So far teams from the UK and Australia have sailed it and seen it. Most UK teams have seen it.

Views on test boat.

It drained well
No noticeable difference of performance of the boat through the water
No big step over for the crew when tacking
High floor will make it easier for crews to put pole on.
Boom feels very low for crew.
Helms knees very high – this was a big issue.
The high floor means the helms legs have to either be tucked high or crossed Laser style to the other side of the boat.
Crews felt they were standing on the boat not in it.
Crew very cramped in light airs.
It may appeal to younger teams but need to be mindful of the age of the majority of sailors.

Conclusion

It appears that the general view is the double floor to make it self draining is impractical and will make the boat difficult and uncomfortable to sail. Therefore, this idea has been discounted.

Proposals going forward

We suggest that we get Phil Morrison in conjunction with Dave Winder and myself to come up with modifications to the deck and internals – cost of £1000 to come from FI budget. This is to simplify construction, take away some of the ‘wood’ rules and make the cockpit more open and modern.

The suggestions for deck and internal modifications are:-

1. Remove the side deck corners and replace with an angle to improve comfort and give more room for the crew.
2. Flatten side decks
3. Shorten aft deck
4. Integrated jib sheet cleats to cockpit sides

5. Allow a tube from the back bulkhead to run back to the spinnaker sheave at the back corner rather than the channels.
6. Remove the thickness of the thwart edges rule.
7. Look at the possibility of a chute incorporated into the foredeck moulding.
8. Allow carbon in the foils but keeping the weight.
9. Allow carbon in the hull and deck mouldings.
10. Larger drain tubes

Other options to consider; -

- 1 . 2 poles
2. Longer pole length to allow full use of spin measurements
3. No numbers on spinnaker
4. Adjustable shrouds lead to centre and joined.(See the system used on the Scorpion class)
5. Carbon boom

Actions

Class Associations to be circulated with a questionnaire on each of the above proposals. We suggest this is done with haste as time is critical now.

FI to decide how to go forward in respect of who will own plugs and mould. Therefore, who will pay for it. It is our suggestion that FI owns the plug/ master mould allowing other builders to use it to make their own moulds.

Subject to approval from the council and class associations around the worlds a new plug, mould and boat to be built.

A new supplementary set of rules to be written and submitted to World Sailing

Fireball International questionnaire on updating the Fireball

Remove the side deck corners and replace with an angle to improve comfort and give more room for the crew.	Yes
Flatten side decks	Yes
Shorten aft deck	Yes
Integrated jib sheet cleats to cockpit sides	Yes
Allow a tube from the back bulkhead to run back to the spinnaker sheave at the back corner rather than the channels.	Yes
Remove the thickness of the thwart edges rule.	Yes
Look at the possibility of a chute incorporated into the foredeck moulding.	Yes
Allow carbon in the foils but keeping the weight.	Yes
Allow carbon in the hull and deck mouldings.	Yes
Larger drain tubes	Yes
2 poles	Yes
Longer pole length to allow full use of spin measurements	Yes
No numbers on spinnaker	Yes
Adjustable shrouds lead to centre and joined together. (See the system used on the Scorpion class)	Yes
Carbon boom	Yes