



29er

Presented by: International 29er Class Association

STRATEGIC REVIEW

Findings and recommendations

- The 29er class is a maturing class with growing global participation. It continues to be the obvious feeder class for the 49er and 49er FX Olympic classes, and many other fast boat sailing classes. The 29er class continues to grow, particularly in Europe.
- Several changes have been made in how the Class is run in response to feedback from the last two World Council meetings in 2024 and 2025. The Class remains open to continuous improvement in how its activities are run.
- Sailors, their families and coaches have high expectations about access to events with increased participation and competition. The International 29er Class Association has been adapting to keep up with demand, especially in how the EuroCup is run. This approach needs to continue as the Class continues to grow.
- The Strategic Review makes recommendations on six key themes based on feedback received as part of the review process, and to ensure the Class continues to evolve.
- The Strategic Review is timely to ensure management arrangements keep pace with growth in the class and expectations of sailors, families and coaches.



Governance

FINDING: The work of running the class is left to too few people, most are volunteers. Role of NCAs beyond attendance at World Council meeting is not clearly articulated. Frequent turnover of NCA representatives creates challenges for continuity.

PROGRESS TO DATE: A review of the Class Constitution and Class Rules has identified areas for reform. These include changing the structure and composition of the Executive structure for the International 29er Class Association.

It is intended to propose amendments at the 2026 World Council meeting to ensure greater representation and opportunities for continuity in the composition of the Governing board.

Increased engagement with National Class Association (NCA) representatives has commenced to ensure a more inclusive approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS: G1: Finalise review of Class Constitution and redefine roles and expectations, and consider how to ensure it is, and remains, fit for purpose.

G2: Provide a 'welcome pack' for NCAs to ensure continuity in knowledge re roles.



Transparency and accountability

FINDINGS: Calls have been made for increased transparency and accountability of the International Class Association in relation to bidding and budget management. Some gains have been made in recent months. However, ongoing efforts will be needed to restore the trust of some NCAs.

PROGRESS TO DATE: Following a request at the 2025 World Council meetings, minutes of Executive meetings are now published on the Class website after each meeting. The audited financial year accounts are provided annually at the World Council meeting and available to NCA chairs on request preceding the meeting. In the lead up to the 2026 Worlds, the International Class Association provided an opportunity for consultation on the proposed approach to managing an issue ahead of finalizing its position. This practice was used in relation to communicating information about the upcoming Worlds' allocation policy outlining the number of boats per country able to enter the 2026 Worlds.

RECOMMENDATION:

T&A: Continue to publicise activities of the International Class Association, including meeting outcomes.

T&A: Develop a strategic plan of short, medium and long term ambitions and provide a report back on progress at World Council meetings.



Engagement with NCAs

FINDINGS: Mixed views concerning NCAs, and level of understanding of role of international class. Most engagement with NCAs is without response, providing little alignment with membership base and feeling of disconnect from both sides.

PROGRESS TO DATE: Bi-monthly newsletters sharing information and class updates. Surveys sent to NCAs to encourage engagement. It is proposed to hold regular calls with NCAs to ensure they remain up to date and across new developments. It is intended to commence these calls in the first half of 2026.

A sub-committee of NCA representations was formed to provide input and evaluate bids received for hosting of Worlds and European Championships for 2027 and 2028.

RECOMMENDATION: N1: Establish a regular call with NCAs, alternating between a regionally based and world scale to encourage dialogue to encourage regular engagement and sharing of information.
N2: Clarify role and expectations of NCAs.



Membership

FINDINGS: Membership of the International Class is Euro-centric due to participation in EuroCup. Membership should be aligned with NCA membership to establish a true picture of the scale of the 29er as a youth class at a global scale. This also imperative for event allocations.

PROGRESS TO DATE: Investigations have commenced about how to align the membership database and achieve better representative membership for sailors who do not compete in European regattas.

As a proxy for membership, an allocation policy was devised for managing the number of boats entering the 2026 Worlds based on 2025 Worlds and European entries being the only indication to date that we have of which countries have the most members wanting to compete in our Championship events. We recognise this strategy does not work long term.

An additional administrative assistant has been employed within the Central Executive team to assist with managing membership and other duties.

RECOMMENDATION: MI: Engage with NCAs to seek agreement for all 29er sailors to have international membership when they join their NCA.



Communication

FINDINGS: Increased social media presence has driven renewed interest in the Class. However, communication schedule is reactive. Opportunity for a regular cycle of communications, and a mechanism for contribution of relevant content.

PROGRESS TO DATE: An additional communications assistant has been employed, and is providing regular updates to the Executive.

Three coaches have been employed by the International Association to attend regattas in different parts of the world, and train new coaches. These coaches are present at major regattas and are able to assist the class in communication with sailors and other coaches.

Bi-monthly newsletters sharing information and class updates.

RECOMMENDATION: C1: Develop a communication strategy with proactive and publicized timing and information to maximise engagement.

C2: Invite newsletter content from sailors and NCAs, to be moderated by International Class Association communications officers.



Jib

FINDINGS: Some frustration has been expressed about the length of time it has taken to finalise the new jib design.

PROGRESS TO DATE: A scientific approach is well advanced in relation to testing of a new jib. 29er class coaches have been gathering data and performing repeatable experiments to understand the life expectancy. Testing shows significant improvements from the first round of modifications. The final testing phase (Mod V2 jibs) has already started, with results evaluated through June 1.

RECOMMENDATION: J1: Confirm the proposed timetable and next steps and advise of the proposed release date.

J2: Submission to World Council meeting 2026 inclusive of proposed changes



Recommendation	Timing
G1: Finalise review of Class Constitution and redefine roles and expectations, and consider how to ensure it is, and remains, fit for purpose.	First half 2026
G2: Provide a 'welcome pack' for NCAs to ensure continuity in knowledge re roles.	Second half 2026
T&A: Continue to publicise activities of the International Class Association, including meeting outcomes.	Already commenced, ongoing
T&A: Develop a strategic plan of short, medium and long term ambitions and provide a report back on progress at World Council meetings.	Report back – July 2026
N1: Establish a regular call with NCAs, alternating between a regionally based and world scale to encourage dialogue.	First half 2026
N2: Clarify role and expectations of NCAs.	Second half 2026
M1: Engage with NCAs to seek agreement for all 29er sailors to have international membership when they join their NCA.	Second half 2026
C1: Develop a communication strategy with proactive and publicized timing and information to maximise engagement.	Second half 2026
C2: Invite newsletter content from sailors and NCAs, to be moderated by International Class Association communications officers.	Immediate and ongoing
J1: Confirm the proposed timetable and next steps, and advise of the proposed release date.	First half 2026