

National 18ft Class....Ready for the Future.....



Introduction

In 2014 the Class took a bold step adopting the Morrison National 18 now know as the “Ultra”. This was not a leap of faith but rather a considered decision based on a proven prototype and an overwhelming mandate to modernise to survive. In January 2017 our current state can be summarised as:-

- 20 Ultra’s built (or in construction)
- Continued interest in Ultimate & Classic racing
- A growing recognition that we have an exciting product producing competitive results
- Positive progress with our digital infrastructure.

In the “Fit for the Future” white paper three guiding principles were outlined:-

1. The class must find a way to retain its existing demographic of sailors whilst attracting new members of all ages, ability and gender.
2. The class must have an ability to construct new hulls in the future
3. The class should have an ambition to provide equal racing in the principal fleet.

We have achieved so much, now we must realise the potential of our great new boat by growing our membership and complete the modernisation process for our historic and much loved association.

The Strategy.

- Grow the Class membership by selling 100 new Ultra’s within UK & Ireland by 2021. (65 UK, 35 IRL)
- Support an energised and vibrant legacy fleet of Ultimate’s and Classics.
- As a stretch target:- develop a broader international presence by establishing an additional twenty memberships/boats in Rest of World (ROW)

What’s the Plan..?

Five focus areas have been identified:-

1. Technical

Produce excellent boats and build our reputation as a well controlled class.

- a. Close out and document building specifications absorbing all snags and enhancements
- b. Put in place a rigorous measurement and control process for new boats and implement measurement checking for class championships.
- c. Appoint UK and IRL approved measurers
- d. Ensure Class Rules are up to date and published on the RYA web
- e. Publish technical manuals and tuning guides (Print and digital)

2. Sailing & Social

Develop a vibrant program in UK & IRL providing sailing for all divisions in attractive locations

- a. Create a sailing and social program (UK & IRL) updated regularly to reflect class events and mixed dinghy leagues. 12 months (detail) 2-3 year look ahead.
- b. Target results delivery at high profile regattas such as Sail Juice, Battle of the Classes etc.
- c. Ensure inclusivity across a broad spectrum to retain current members and attract new.
- d. Retain our core class hubs (Cork, Findhorn, Tamesis/Blackwater) and expand to new guest locations to grow opportunities in our regions and beyond (Italy, France etc).
- e. Grow the sailing program for Ultimate and Classic divisions
- f. Utilise the opportunities to share venues with other complementary classes
- g. Develop and approve standard Championship Sailing Instructions
- h. Formalise and publish class handicaps across the fleet divisions
- i. Agree distribution of class prizes across the divisions.

3. Administration

Be excellent in our administration, fund raising and communications.

- a. Drive membership fee collection and manage a detailed membership database across Fleets and National Class
- b. Maintain control of class finances with continuing governance in place.
- c. Identify and execute fund raising opportunities generating capital reserves and revenue for regatta / event support and marketing budgets
- d. Maintain effective relationships with governing bodies (RYA, ISA etc)

4. Media

Continue to modernise our digital media platforms and grow our profile with ongoing updates.

- a. Create our digital CV via movie and online / printable flyers to describe the N18 class
- b. Continue to develop and update our digital infrastructure (Web Site, Official Face Book page) ensuring we have effective access to standard communications platforms.
- c. Consolidate our media library to ensure open access to high resolution media material such as pictures, movie etc.
- d. Utilise social media to build an active presence that grows followers. Leverage industry contacts (e.g. White Formula)
- e. Keep our profile current and deliver ongoing updates via local story editors who ensure that we realise all available opportunities.
- f. Invest in media capture technology such as GoPro and smart phone bags to grow the media library.

5. Marketing & Sales

Implement a plan with a clear sales message taking advantage of key contacts and targeted marketing platforms.

- a. Utilise our digital CV and media infrastructure to generate profile with a clear sales message focussing on the Class, the Boat and value of a Team.
- b. Sponsorship. Build class credibility by association with the primary focus on brand association and product / revenue support of events and marketing.
- c. Boat shows. Continue our presence at the RYA Dinghy Show and Soton enhancing our stand design and audience capture opportunities such as receptions, VIP meets etc.
- d. Host road shows and invitational's linked to the boat shows to provide opportunities to try the N18.
- e. Key Contacts:- Utilise known to advance our profile. (examples include M. Spillane, White Formula, J. Pudney, P. Lyons etc). Grow new strategic contacts (e.g. Sports Boat World, WF agents). Realise the value of the association with White Formula and deliver results at high profile regattas.
- f. Agencies:- Explore new (and existing) markets via the use of agencies to increase market access, support financing etc.
- g. Micro marketing via local targeting of existing class members or known followers.
- h. Clubs:- Build a stronger club presence via opportunities such as the RCYC Try Sailing program and RYA equivalents...

This is an ambitious plan to realise the strategy. We need to be effectively organised with clear accountabilities, responsibilities and targets. Volunteers are sought to lead the development and execution of each focus area.