

Technical Chairman's Report

64th AGM of the UK Folkboat Association

15th March 2025

Technical Chairman's Report: Cy Grisley

Introduction:

There have been several significant changes to the NFIA class rules this year as the new rules for 2025 to 2028 have just been published. These can be found on the NFIA website, and I would encourage all sailors to have a look at these new class rules. All the changes are marked in red, so it is relatively easy to navigate the changes. In this report I will try to highlight some of the changes that may affect UK fleet sailors in order to assist you all.

Spinnakers:

At the last AGM, a question from the floor asked why we were sailing under a different spinnaker in the UK to the rest of the international fleet who sail under the NFIA rules. We as a committee took the action to ask this question at the NFIA AGM held in Helmsted during the 2024 gold cup.

As a result of this question a spinnaker working group was formed that included representation from, Finland, Sweden, Netherlands, Estonia and UK.

The rules were discussed at length over 4 meetings and a new design was commissioned with the assistance of North Sails. Rich Bell played a key role in this process and as a result we have had a great influence on the new rule.

At this point we continue to have a dispensation to use the old British Folkboat spinnaker however, it is your committee's intent to race under one design rules and therefore we would like to adopt this new design in the future.

As a pathway toward this our two main sail suppliers (North Sails and Sanders) have agreed to supply a new spinnaker under this updated and revised rule. The aim is to allow boats to try the new spinnaker throughout the 2025 season with a view of voting at the 2026 AGM to remove our dispensation and for us to adopt the NFIA spinnaker.

It is important to note that the new rule is stated as a maximum size so technically our current British Folkboat spinnaker fits within the new rule and given that two spinnakers can be carried while racing the possibility to continue using this spinnaker (British folkboat) in the future is not removed.

The aim of trials would be that any boat could use the new spinnaker for a maximum of two races but not in Folkboat week or any of the three-regatta series. (Therefore, restricted to Saturdays and Thursday evenings).

We would have a feedback session where people can give feedback to the committee and sail makers at the Thursday forum during Folkboat week. We would then go for a vote at the 2026 AGM.

I'm sure that this will be a fiercely debated subject, but I would remind you all that we are responding to the question raised at the last AGM and an overall desire to sail under one single set of rules as a one design class of international standing.

Jibs:

Following on from this both North Sails and Sanders Sails have recently been developing sails for the class. This is extremely good news for the class as it shows that our class is seen as worth investment to help improve performance. I'd like to thank both Rich Bell from North and Chris Sanders from Sanders Sails for their support and hard work to help push class and our performance.

Both North and Sanders have agreed to make one of their new sails available through the Class for people to try and see which they prefer. A very rare opportunity to try before you buy.

Again, we would like to get feedback from any sailor who tries them at the folkboat forum in Folkboat week so we can give value back to the sail designers for the future.

Both these jibs sit within the rules so they can be used in all competitions, but we would like to restrict your trail to two races, or one day in the three-regatta series or nationals, to give all the boats a chance to try the sails throughout the season.

Rule Changes for 2025 -2028:

As I stated in the beginning of this report there have been some changes to the rules, some of these changes are aimed at stopping a trend towards the marginal gains of performance. Specifically, around sail plan position and weight distribution.

1.60 Application of Rules and Re-measurement

1.61.1 Generally, the hull including deck, cockpit, cabin, internal moulding, interior, the keel, the rudder, and all other components shall comply either with the current Class Rules or the rules in force at the time the yacht's original measurement certificate was issued. Except that spars, rigging, sail and weight shall comply with the current Class Rules at all times.

1.61.2 If a yacht is to be re-measured (see rule 1.64 below) this shall be carried out in accordance with the current Class Rules at all times.

1.61.3 Before a yacht is subject to a major repair, a major renovation, or an alteration an official measurer from the National Association shall be consulted prior to any work being undertaken. In all these cases the yacht shall be considered to have been altered unless the owner or the builder is able to establish that the yacht has not been altered in the course of the work undertaken.

1.61.4 In all cases subject to rule 1.61.3 the yacht shall be fully re-measured in accordance with the rules as stated in rule 1.61.2

1.62 Re-measurement of the hull after a major repair, a major renovation or after an alteration shall be carried out in accordance with the current class rules.

1.63 Replacement of spars, rigging and sails shall be measured in accordance with the current class rules at all times.

1.64 Re-measurement may be carried out on the instructions of the **owner**, NoSF, a NA, the NFIA or the race committee.

A re-measurement shall **only** be permitted if there is reason to believe **that**:

1. the hull shape **or weight** has been altered, or
2. the yacht had been incorrectly measured before the measurement certificate was issued, or
3. **the yacht was not re-measured after a major repair, a major renovation, or an alteration.**

2.405 Internal Moulding

A separate internal moulding to take the floorboards shall be bonded to the exterior hull moulding and it shall extend at least from station 3 to station 12.

The top edge of the moulding shall not be below a continuous fair curve on each side of the yacht between the minimum points. No part of the moulding shall extend below 1000mm from a line joining the two sheerlines nor shall it, at any point, extend higher than 200mm below the deck.

The internal moulding may incorporate a web or frames, at its forward and aft ends. The weight of the laminate in the internal moulding shall be not less than 8.1kg/m². Example of construction:

Gelcoat

5 layers of 450g/m² glass

0.60 kg/m² 7.50 kg/m²

thickness 4mm

Horizontal surfaces shall be of sandwich construction with no less than 10mm closed cell foam or balsa of not less

Total

than 60 kg/m³ between the third and fourth layer of glass.

within the weight requirements of rule 2.403.

The space below the cockpit shall be filled with closed cell foam or balsa in accordance with the drawings.

Floors in not less than 10 layers of 450g glass mat per m², in a thickness of 8mm, and forming a Z, shall be fitted in accordance with rule 2.407.

The internal moulding can in section no. 11 be constructively integrated with the forward berth.

According to the principle shown on drawing GRP 6 Longitudinal arrangements. The weight of the laminate in the forward berth shall be not less than 8.1kg/m².

A small bulkhead along the sides of the hull to separate the forepeak and main cabin are allowed, but the opening area between the spaces (cabin and forepeak) shall not be less than 0.55 m².

The bulkhead shall consist of: Wood not less than 12 mm and not more than 16 mm thickness.

3.10 Cabin

3.11 The length of the top of the cabin top shall not be less than 1850mm. Measured from the aft face of the main bulkhead to the intersection of the deck and the forward edge of the cabin top. The length of the top of the cabin roof shall not be less than 1785mm, measured horizontally from the aft face of the main bulkhead to the intersection of the cabin top roof and the forward sloping face of the cabin top.

3.12 The aft end of the cabin top and the main bulkhead shall not be more than 300mm forward of Station 6. The cabin hatch shall have a clear opening of not more than 600mm x 600mm fwd of the main bulkhead.

3.13 The height of the sides of the cabin above the top of the deck shall not be less than 190mm at Station 8. The arch of the cabin top measured at the same station shall not be less than 150mm. The camber of the cabin deck may be altered only as necessary to prevent double bended surfaces.

3.14 **The cabin shall be totally enclosed.** The shape of the cabin shall be in accordance with the drawings. Its breadth at Station 8 shall not be less than 1550mm. At this point the vertical height of the cabin from the cabin floor shall not be less than 1230mm.

3.15 The internal arrangements of the cabin and cabin fittings shall be in accordance with the drawings.

The interior in the cabin shall consist of at least two fixed berths, at least 1800 mm long and at least 550 mm in greatest width. The interior may be freely extended beyond the mandatory. The total weight of the interior (excluding internal floor moulding, bulkhead and floorboards) shall be at least 35 kg or a maximum of 60 kg. The interior may not be oversized or orientated with the intention of achieving a more favourable weight distribution in longitudinal direction. All spaces must be inspectable.

3.16 The fwd cabin bulkhead may be vertical. At the C.L. it shall have a height of not less than 200mm.

3.17 The cabin sides may extend fwd of the fwd cabin bulkhead.
3.18 The sliding hatch shall be so constructed that it is retained permanently on its slides and be made in accordance with the drawings. It must be on board together with the doors while racing.
3.19 The shape of the portholes is optional.

3.20 Cockpit

3.21 The arrangement in the cockpit can be designed freely. The cockpit shall contain at least two lockers, at least 750 mm long and at least 700 mm in its greatest width. The lockers should have access from the top or from the front side and be in accordance with the drawings GRP 7 and 9.

6.1.6 The clear opening of the mast hole in the deck shall not be larger than 120mm diameter. The mast hole shall be fixed in the deck, not able to be slideable. The diameter of the mast at the top of the deck shall not be less than 100mm and not more than 110mm.

6.1.7 The distance from the fore side of the mast, with the mast in the center of the mast hole, to the intersecting point of the center line of the forestay or its extension with the deck shall not exceed 2000mm and be not less than 1990mm.

7.21 The Forestay shall intersect the deck not less than 800mm horizontally from the Intersecting point of the centre line of the forestay, in its extension, to the bow point at deck level. And be in accordance with the drawings no. 5 and GRP 9.

8. FITTINGS

8.10 Fittings are optional except where specifically restricted or prohibited by these rules.

8.20 A headsail furling device may be fitted instead of a fixed forestay deck fitting. Furling of the jib is prohibited while racing.

8.30 Winches, tackles, levers and other devices not specifically prohibited are permitted for any purpose on board, except for the adjustment of shrouds and forestay and mast foot.

8.40 The arrangement and the method of sheeting the mainsail and headsails is optional except that fittings for sheets shall be placed so that they do not protrude outboard of the sheer line.

8.50 Devices for the measurement of depth, speed through water, heading, timing and devices making use of the Global Positioning System (GPS) are permitted. All kind of digital devices for measurement of windspeed and wind angle are prohibited.

8.60 No other devices than a topping lift and a rigid boom vang are permitted to apply vertical lift to the main boom. The mounting points of a main boom topping lift shall be above the M.B. No. III and abaft the boom M.B. (boom point).

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The foot irregularity of sails first measured after 1st January 2013 may not exceed 30 mm. The foot irregularity is defined as the maximum distance between the edges of the foot when first the lowest point of the luff and then the lowest point of the leech are superimposed on any part of the foot.

Spinnaker

MATERIALS

(a) Body of the sail permitted material is woven ply with polyester or nylon fibres.

(b) Primary and secondary reinforcement permitted material is woven ply with polyester or nylon fibres.

CONSTRUCTION

(a) The construction shall be: soft sail, single ply sail.

(b) The sail shall be symmetrical about a vertical centre line.

(c) The sail shall be tabled with stretch resistant tape

(d) The body of the sail shall consist of the same woven ply material throughout. This limitation does not apply for the colour of the ply, which may differ from panel to panel.

(e) The following are permitted: Stitching, glues, tapes, corner eyes, tape eyes, tell tales, sail shape indicator stripes, sail identification, sailmaker labels, sail button/sticker, certification mark. (f) The spinnaker shall not embody any device capable of altering its shape.

Not more than two spinnakers may be used in any one race

DIMENSIONS

Leech lengths

Foot length
Foot Median
Difference between diagonals Half width
Upper width (upper leech points at 250 mm from head point) Three-quarter width
Primary reinforcement
Secondary reinforcement
Ply weight of the body of the sail Dimension of corner eyes, in any direction
minimum
37g/m²
maximum 7000 mm 3750 mm 8000 mm
50 mm 4400 mm
400 mm 2600 mm unlimited unlimited
38 mm

These are the main changes to the rules, there a few others that are less significant but might be worth reading.

Clarification on 13.2:

Further to this, over the winter a question was asked about hiking and what is permitted and not permitted. This is a very good question and is answered by rule 13.2

13.20 Hiking in accordance with CR 13.20 is the action of moving the crew's body weight as far to windward as possible on an upwind course. It means it is acceptable to have the crew's body between the middle of the thigh and feet outside the sheer line on a reaching or downwind course.

When hiking it is permitted to use the boat's normal equipment in normal position to assist a member of the crew moving the crew's body weight to windward but the crew's body between the middle of the thigh and feet shall not be outboard of the sheer line.

Examples of normal equipment in normal position: Sheets, vang, seats, trim lines, rudder, and tiller.

Loose or fixed handholds outside the cockpit coaming, not further forward than 200mm from the main bulkhead, are permitted, minimum distance to sheer line 100mm."

Examples of equipment not permitted as assist when hiking: Lifting straps, equipment mounted with the purpose to assist when hiking and trim lines installed but without function.

So, to clarify:

Loose handholds located on the coach roof handrail would fall outside of the 200mm from the bulkhead and therefore aren't allowed under 13.2. The coach roof handrail is approx. 260mm from the main bulkhead. For those of you that may use this area for a loose hand hold I'd suggest you move your location to somewhere within 200mm of the bulkhead and 100mm of the sheer line for you loose hand hold.

Measurement:

Just a reminder to all boat owners that it their responsibility to ensure they have a valid measurement certificate. So, if you have had a significant repair (removal and replacement of material from the boat), replaced your rig including just boom, changed ownership, replaced your old man seat for a lighter one and or replaced your rudder or installed a pedestal you need to have your boat remeasured. This is not an exhaustive list.

Measurement isn't just about weight, and we have identified a few key areas that we will

want to measure as part of the process. However again I reiterate it is the owner's responsibility to ensure they hold a valid measurement certificate.

If you wish to arrange measurement, please make contact and I can give you the best options on location. There are other places we can measure your boat that are considerably cheaper than the Royal if you are not a Club member. Contact me for more details.

I have a mental list of those that require measurement so if you are not sure if you should be remeasured feel free to contact me and we can discuss.

Measurement Stats:

I have collated all the measurement data back to and including 2018 to get some data to help us all.

Average weight of a boat over this period is, 1,960kgs (minimum is 1,930) so on average boats are 30kgs heavier than the minimum.

Total number of measurements since 2018 equals 52.

In 2024 a total of 6 hulls were measured and in 2023 the number was 9.

Over the period from 2018 the split of reasons for measure are as follows:

Change of ownership 56%
New Mast and or Boom 19%
Refurbishment 9.5%
Other 15.5%

60 for 60:

This year is the 60th Edition of folkboat week and I look forward to seeing as many there as possible our aim is 60 hulls for the 60th year.

Good luck and may you all have a great 2025 season.

Cy