

2018 Optimist Sailing South Africa

Chairman's Report

I can't believe it has been 13 months since Andre Wollheim asked me to take over from him as President of Optimist SA. It has been an eventful year with many new sailors entering the class at beginner level and also a significant number of stalwart sailors aging out of many years of sailing and competing.

Unfortunately, I must report that overall the class numbers are reduced further from last year (and the years before that). There are many reasons for this but it is reflective across the junior classes in SA.

There are some proposed structural changes in the class by-laws and constitution which hopefully will streamline the class management, making it easier for incoming committee members. The proposed constitutional changes which I attach, are the first amendments since 2011.

Membership

The membership numbers are very low. KZN reports virtually no activity, and the EC none.

My own club Hermanus Yacht club has actually suspended its Optimist programme and hopes to resume in the 2019/20 season.

While dinghy sailing has proven cyclical over the years there are several factors that have come into play recently. In the WC we have had a number of coaches leave university / sailing / and in some cases left the country. The rise of the sailing 'schools' has also led to a preference for more sturdy and easier boats to sail such as the Pico & Terra.

Boats

There are over 200 registered Optimists in SA manufactured post 1995 (i.e. compliant with IODA) – yet only approximately 50 registered sailors. That means that after deduction an estimate 50 Optimists belonging to clubs and schools, there are around 100 unused Optimists in the country.

One of the many arguments I have had to field in the last year has been the importation of boats by the class. Craig Leslie and I have had to agree to disagree on this, but I am convinced that unless there is professional ongoing management of such assets, this is not the way to go. It is sailors we are short of – not boats! We must create the demand before enabling the supply.

The consequences of the class owning boats is two-fold

1. Additional supply will immediately devalue the boats currently owned. The selling of a kid's boat age-ing out of the class often forms the deposit for the sailor's next boat. Which leaves the argument that an Optimist is a good investment void.
2. Class owned boats require management. Over the last 4 years, I have managed 3 fleets of Optimists and I can say with some authority it is hard work. There is ever present pilfering of parts and the need to generate an income for the boats in order to maintain them. Added to that is the cost of storing them.

Worlds

Against some sentiment, I argued for the inclusion of a Spain based South African sailor into the Worlds team. Ian Walker is the son of Clive Walker, a South African based in Spain. This was done with the written consent of IODA and also the IODA African/Asian representative. The other condition was that he could only fill a slot on the team that was vacant after selections.

I am pleased to report that Ian was not only the top SA sailor, he also 2 divisions ahead of the next sailor on the team. He also finished ahead of 3 of the Spanish team – a team which he did not make the selection for. Clive Walker reports that this has led to a rethink of the Spanish Federation's selection policy.

On the down side, we struggle to make inroads in our performance at Worlds. There are several factors.

1. Our low class numbers lead to a lack of competition for the 5 places and there is a certain amount of complacency.
2. Low class numbers also leads to the ability to obtain a place on the Worlds team merely due to parent's ability to fund the exercise.
3. An exclusionary selection process. One cannot be selected unless one has attended numerous pre-selection regattas i.e. Youth Nationals + 2 Provincials before one even gets to the selection regatta. We do not have the numbers to support this policy – period, and it also becomes prohibitively expensive over time.
4. An inability to change our coaching approach which has proven itself many times to be ineffective. For the first time, we put the Worlds & Africans coaching out to tender and we got many replies from internationally recognized coaches who were willing to work for a stipend – including two that had been on coaching staff for their national teams. One coach from Spain even offered to supply boats, transport and organize alternative accommodation. Yet when put to the vote by parents, we wound up with the same coaching methodology as last year and the years before that.
5. Finally – it has been remarked to me by several international sources that SA sailors are too big. It is essential that our selection venues must reflect the anticipated conditions at the main event.

Africans

I am delighted to report that Matt Ashwell is the 2018 Optimist African Champion. Matt has attended 3 continental championships over 4 years, and this being his last regatta in Optimists, was the best possible way to end his involvement with the class.

Ingrid Holm placed 18th and picked up a silver medal for the second female sailor in the 66 strong fleet.

The Championship held at Maputo, Mozambique provided unexpectedly stiff conditions which for once favoured the SA team and all but one sailor finished in the top half of the fleet.

On the team racing day, which has proven disastrous in previous years, SA fielded 2 teams and things got quite exciting when both progressed to the 2nd round. Team 1 was eliminated in the quarter final but picked up the bronze medal in the sail off.

Going Forward

I have decided that after 6 years involvement with the class, it is time for me to move out of it's direct management. I will therefore step down and make way for the next generation, but will make myself available for the position of Class Manager.

I have proposed that the regional representation must be divided only into North & South. I appreciate there are suspicions about this, but one reads the proposal carefully there is nothing exclusionary in it – merely a way of streamlining the class management.

I have also proposed renaming the Class Manager position into 'President'. *Class Manager* is a misnomer as it is merely an advisory role with little or no management involved. Similarly, the currently named President's role will be renamed Chairman.

2018 has yielded some disappointments, but also some positives – particularly with the international results. I am always delighted to see us parents investing so much in their kid's sailing and only hope one day the young sailors grow and realise how lucky they were.

It has been sometimes hard work tying in everyone's interests, but equally rewarding. The 2018 EXCO for the greater part has been very hard working – more than the general class membership will ever realise and for that I thank every EXCO member.

Going forward, the only parting advice I will offer is to the clubs, and that is to remind them that the most important fleet is the B-Fleet. The A-fleet guys will always be able to manage themselves and should not need even a fraction of the encouragement that the more novice sailors need. Likewise on the coaching. Any reasonable sailor can coach a sailor of ability, but it takes real expertise to turn a novice into a proficient sailor.

And it will be the A-Fleeters who will soon leave to other classes and we will need sailors to fill their places.

Thank you,

Cal Tomlinson

Proposed Constitutional Amendments

These are listed below - please have a read through but in a nutshell they are designed to

1. Simplify the and reduce the numbers of the EXCO.
2. Consolidate the regions into North & South.
3. Rename and redefine the roles of the EXCO members.
4. Introduce a trustee system to safeguard the Class Constitution.
5. Liberate the regional committees to structure themselves (within the Class Constitution). - think Evelyn in GLYC.

7.1 The Executive Committee shall comprise of the President, Class National Manager and a Regional Representative for each SAS recognized sailing region, with the exception of the SAS Eastern Cape region which will be split into sub regions, namely the Southern Cape and Eastern Cape region, all of whom shall have one vote on the committee, and the non-voting positions of Secretary, Treasurer, Technical and Coaching representatives. Regional Representatives may fill the non-voting positions.

7.2 A quorum for an executive committee meeting shall consist of a minimum of the President and 3 voting members.

7.3 The President, Class National Manager, Secretary and Treasurer and Technical and Coaching representatives shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting

7.4 The functions of the Executive committee are:

- To discuss and approve the sailing calendar
- To discuss and approve coaches and coaching events
- To discuss and approve regional and national regattas
- To discuss and approve technical and coaching sub- committee recommendations
- To ensure the continuity of the class - to discuss matters pertinent to the class
- To confirm participation in world and continental regattas

7.5 The President, Secretary, Treasurer, Technical Representative and Coaching Representative shall retire at the Annual General Meeting.

To be replaced with

7.1 The Executive Committee shall comprise of the President , Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. There shall be regional representation from Cape Region (WC, SC, & EC) and the NR (Including KZN). The voting members shall be the Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and 2 regional representatives.

7.2 A quorum for an executive committee meeting shall consist of a minimum of the Chairperson and 2 voting members.

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- To discuss and approve the sailing calendar
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- To ensure the continuity of the class - to discuss matters pertinent to the class
- To confirm participation in world and continental regattas

7.5 The **President, Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer** shall retire at the Annual General Meeting.

7.6 The President and Chairperson shall jointly act as trustees of the constitution of the Optimist Class of South Africa.

8. CHAIRPERSON

In addition to the role of joint trustee to the Optimist Class of South Africa, the functions of the Chairperson are:

- 8.1 to act as the chairperson at all Executive Committee meetings
- 8.2 to represent the class at SAS
- 8.3 to manage the affairs of the Association
- 8.4 to present an annual report
- 8.5 to liaise with IODA
- 8.6 to ensure the adherence of class rules and constitutional matters
- 8.7 to promote the class locally, nationally and internationally

11. CLASS NATIONAL MANAGER

The Class National Managers function is to assist the President with the day to day running of the class. The Class National Manager may attend meeting and act on behalf of the President should the President be unavailable.

Replace with

11. PRESIDENT

In addition to the role of joint trustee to the Optimist Class of South Africa, The President's role shall be consultative to the EXCO and general membership. The President may attend meeting and act on behalf of the Chairperson should the Chairperson be unavailable, but will not be able to vote in place of the Chairperson unless by arranged proxy.

12. REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES and REGIONAL COMMITTEES

- 12.1 Each region shall be run by a Regional Committee.
- 12.2 The Regional Committee shall consist of representatives from interested clubs in the region, and local class members, ~~and shall consist of not less than 4 members,-~~
- 12.3 The Committee shall elect a Chairman, ~~Secretary and Treasurer.-~~
- ~~12.4 The Chairman is the Regional representative for that region on the Optimist Sailing South Africa Executive.-~~
- ~~12.5 Optimist Sailing South Africa regions are to hold at least 2 meetings each year. One of these meetings must be held at least 6 weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting of the class. This meeting must appoint the Regional representative and discuss and put forward any proposals for discussion at the Annual General meeting.-~~
- ~~12.6 At regional meetings, four members shall constitute a quorum.-~~
- ~~12.7 A Regional Representative shall not be re-elected for more than three years.-~~

~~13. TECHNICAL REPRESENTATIVE (Scratch entirely)~~

14. COACHING REPRESENTATIVE (Scratch entirely)

15. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 15.1 The Annual General Meeting is the highest authority of Optimist Sailing South Africa
- 15.2 The AGM is formed by the official paid-up members present or the appointed proxy,
- 15.3 The AGM is held every year in conjunction with the Optimist National Championships,
- 15.4 At least ~~eight~~ (4) weeks prior to the start Annual General Meeting a notice of meeting will be sent to the Regional Representatives by the Secretary.
- 15.5 At least ~~3 weeks~~ 1 week prior to the start of the Optimist National Championships an Agenda containing the following items will be distributed by the Secretary. All proposals and nominations must be received prior to the distribution of the Agenda of the Annual General Meeting.
- 15.6 The Agenda shall contain the following items:
 - Report from the President
 - Report from the ~~National Class Manager~~ Chairperson
 - Regional reports from the Regional Representatives
 - Reports from the Technical ~~and Coaching Representatives~~
 - Financial report from the Treasurer
 - Fixing of next years membership subscription
 - Proposals from the Executive Committee
 - Proposals from the members
 - Confirmation of the venue and dates for the next National Optimist Championships
 - Provincial Racing calendar
 - Report on IODA

- Report from International events attended
- Proposals for appointment of-
President

~~Manager~~ Chairperson

Secretary

Treasurer

~~Technical Representative-~~

~~Coaching Representative~~

- Election of an auditor ????
- General business

15.7 Proposals and accompanying motivations for the positions to be appointed must be received by the Secretary prior to the distribution of the Agenda of the Annual General Meeting.

15.8 Voting related to items on the Agenda is decided by simple majority of votes cast by paid-up members of the class or their representatives and by members or their representatives official proxies. A proxy shall be a signed authorization by a member and submitted 24 hours before the Annual General Meeting.

15.9 Each member or their representative or their official proxy has 1 (one) vote.

15.10 The president does not have a vote unless voting is equal, in which case the President has a casting vote.

15.11 A quorum shall consist of 1/5 of paid up full members of Optimist Sailing South Africa.

15.12 Amendments to the constitution shall require a 2/3 (two-thirds) majority of those present and eligible to vote.

16. LIABILITY AND BINDING BY SIGNATURE

16.1 The President, Executive Council and the association of Optimist Sailing South Africa are not personally liable for the association's obligations.

~~16.2 The President or National Class Manager and one Regional representative are authorized to sign on behalf of Optimist Sailing South Africa-~~

~~16.3 The Executive Committee may appoint other persons to sign on behalf of Optimist Sailing South Africa-~~

18. DISSOLUTION

18.1 The decision to dissolve Optimist Sailing South Africa can only be made by a 2/3 (two-thirds) majority vote.

18.2 The decision to dissolve Optimist Sailing South Africa can only take place at ~~an AGM.~~ **a General Meeting**

18.3 In the event of the dissolution of Optimist Sailing South Africa, any residual funds are to be distributed to SAS (South African Sailing) or if by 2/3rds majority vote to an elected sailing charity which carries and NGO registration.