



# OPTIMIST SAILING SOUTH AFRICA

## 2015 Annual General Meeting

Wriggleswade dam, Eastern Cape.

16<sup>th</sup> Dec 2015 18h30

**Welcome:** Craig Leslie welcomed all the parents and thanks them for attending.

**Attendance:** As per register **XXXXX**

**Apologies:** Dave Hudson, Tara Baum, Paul Leenstra.

**Past minutes:**

Note: Evelyn Loader corrected to Osborne.

**Manager's Report:**

Craig congratulated all the teams that participated internationally this year. The Worlds Team that participated in Poland in very challenging conditions and the Africa's team that was made up of a number of young sailors. Even though the participation numbers seem lower, the numbers have been consistent at nationals for a number of years. All regions have a large number of young sailors with the older sailors moving on quickly before aging out. Class reps have a lot of work ahead of them and should enlist the help of as many volunteers as possible. Thanks to Tara and Shellee for their time. Good luck to the sailors in 2016.

**International report-**

Worlds -William Brooks (attached)

African's- Shellee Nel (attached)

**Training and coaching-** Dave Hudson No report

**Financials** – Prepared by Tara and presented by Gavin Ashwell

Summary Optimist class accounts @ 01 Nov 2015

Opening Balance @ Nov 2014

Current	R 13 561.00
Money Market	R 318 650.00

Income:

Large sale of 300 royalty buttons R 66 000.00

Expenses: Similar to 2014

Bank Fee's, IT / website, IODA

Money Market closing Balance R332000.00

## **Regional Report:**

### **Northern Region-** Shellee Nel

Overall the participation in regional regatta's have been consistent. Training centres are growing. VLC has a large development program for mass participation to introduce a lot of scholars in a learn to sail program. Level one are using 09ers and level 2 are going on to Oppies. Children at private schools have too many activities to participate in. Children from the community don't have anything to do and are participating the program enthusiastically with a good retention. Regional Class needs to do some kind of fund raising to assist the sailors as well as acquire good equipment.

### **EC-** Mike Vonk- **Brett Weddel**

Brett Weddel will be taking over the reins of the EC region. There is a small group of young sailors which have an exciting future in the class.

### **SC-** Mike Vonk

The George Lake region now falls in the SAS western cape region. Mike will continue on as the Southern region rep to facilitate communication with the WC oppie class as it is such a big area to cover and more representation is better than none.

### **KZN-** John Gaughran

KZN is in a challenging position with the training centre directing the sailors towards the Tera. Working to rebuild the Optimist class. There are projects in Richards Bay, Midmar and in the Bay with Ricky. KZN needs people with time to put their energy into growing the class.

### **WC – William Brooks**

WC has programs growing participation in at MAC, Hermanus, TSC and Zeekoivlei. There is a new regional committee full of enthusiasm and commitment. A new regional chairperson is still to be decided. William is stepping down and the incoming committee thanks William for all his hard work in the past.

## **Confirmation of 2016 office bearers:**

Provincial Reps

WC – TBC

SC- Mike Vonk

EC- Brett Weddel

KZN- Sean Fennessy

NR- Shellee Nel

President- Cobus Bester

Class Manger- Craig Leslie

Class Secretary- Shellee Nel

Technical- William Brooks

Treasurer- Beth Jansen Van Vuuren

Training- Dave Hudson consulting.

## **General:**

### **Selection Process:-**

William drafted a selection process update to amend the current process.

At the Optimist Class AGM 2014 held at Aeolians in December 2014 I was asked to prepare an analysis of key issues relating to the selection of national teams. I referred the meeting to a previous report I had read on this topic which was published in 2010 (details below).

### **CURRENT SELECTION, COACHING & MANAGEMENT POLICY**

In order to be eligible for selection a sailor has to participate in two provincial championships. Sailors who meet these criteria are able to enter the selections regatta that runs concurrently with the national championship.

The top 5 sailors in the selections regatta form the Worlds team. The top 10 ten sailors in the selections regatta (of which 2 must be girls) form the Africans team.

The Optimist Class President appoints coaches and managers for the Worlds and Africans teams.

### **STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES OF CURRENT SELECTIONS STRUCTURE**

The current policy relies exclusively on the result of one regatta, the national championship. If a sailor experiences a problem at this regatta his chances of qualifying for either the Worlds or the Africans teams is severely compromised.

SA Sailing determines the venue for the annual Youth Nationals and therefore the optimist national championship not by the optimist class. You may therefore have the selections regatta sailed at a venue that has little or no similarity to the conditions expected at the Worlds or Africans championship.

In summary, the primary weaknesses of the current selections structure are the use of a **single event** and the **suitability of venue**. The primary strength of the current selections structure is **cost**; by combining nationals and selections into a single event, the costs to parents are significantly reduced.

### **PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS : COMMENTS FROM THE OPTI ELDERS 2010**

The following are some thoughts, resulting from discussions between David Booth, Pete Shaw, Hans Thijssse, Craig Leslie and Garth Barrett. David, Pete and Hans have extensive experience as OCRA Presidents, Team leaders and Coaches and IODA committee members, totalling probably close to 50 years of 'Optimist time'.

#### **Objectives**

- Continued participation in international events assists to keep OCRA and its members / skippers abreast of developments in the class, gives input on where RSA stands in the Optimist world and serves as a motivational input to skippers.
- OCRA will send a team to both the IODA World- and African Championship every year.
- The main objective of sending a team is to get the best possible performance at the regatta.

#### **Key recommendations**

- A 'national squad' of 25 skippers is selected using an agreed procedure that combines 2 provincial results and the national championship.
- The members of the national squad are invited for the selection regatta.

- The selection regatta is held at a location, which as far as possible mirrors the conditions, which may be expected at the world championship. In practise, this means that the selection regatta is usually held on 'open water' as world championships are normally held on open water.
- The course will be the 'Optimist trapezoid' as is used in IODA championships. Consideration should be given to one or more days of coaching for the entire national squad before the start of the selection regatta.
- Each province should actively seek out / approach potential coaches. Coaches are often (but not exclusively) ex- Optimist skippers who have performed reasonably well and are in their mid twenties. Older coaches should also be considered. It is important that the coaches have enough 'strength' to deal with parents and skipper alike.
- The OCRA 'coaching effort' should be aligned with that of SA Sailing wherever possible and practical.
- The coaches should be present at the National championship to coach their provincial skippers.
- From the coaches at the nationals, a national coach (or two national coaches) should be selected. The process should be driven by OCRA Exco, bearing in mind the qualifications, motivation, effectiveness and personality of the coach.
- The national coach(es) take responsibility for the coaching of the national squad from immediately after the nationals.
- After the selection regatta, the national coaches become the coaches for the Worlds and Africans. If a coach performs well (as measure by results, motivation of the team members etc), it should be considered that he immediately gets re-appointed for another year.
- From experiences of many team leaders in coaches over many years (and indeed from many countries), it is abundantly clear that presence of parents is not only ineffective but very often extremely destructive to the dynamics of the team (performance being the objective of sending a team) and to the enjoyment of the team as a whole. A high-level international sailing regatta is not a family holiday and the two are actually mutually exclusive. The team management (team leader and coach) must be selected in such a way that young skippers are taken into consideration. If a child is considered 'too young to be away from his parents', it is unlikely that he / she has the emotional maturity to sail in an international event and should consider not participating.
- No parents will be selected as either coach or team leader for the team their child is a member of. On joining the national squad, parents agree that the coaching is the job of the appointed national coach. During the international event, the team will be under the management of the team leader and the coach.
- The current practise where the parents of the skippers fund the entire operation is not optimal. If OCRA would fund a portion of the total costs, it would reduce the burden on the individual parents (which in turn would make this aspect of Optimist sailing more accessible) and it would create more ownership of the teams with the entire Optimist community.

## **SELECTIONS POLICIES FOR OTHER COUNTRIES**

Most of the countries reviewed have the key components of the management structure as recommended above in place. These include the following:

- Formation of a national squad based on individual ranking;
- Appointment of a national coach;
- Separate selections regatta/s to determine national team/s;
- National coach responsible for all training of selected national team/s;
- National coach leads teams at Worlds/Europeans/Asians/North Americans regattas; and
- National team funded and supported by national sailing federation and augmented by corporate sponsorship;

Countries reviewed include : UK, Australia, New Zealand and USA.

3 proposals were put to the floor

- 1) Remain with the current selection plan- NO Votes
- 2) A separate selection event at another time – 2 votes
- 3) A " hybrid" process (summary). Participation in 2 provincial championships and the National championships to be eligible to be invited to the selection event. Selection event will be held in conjunction with either a provincial championship in the first half of the year or one in the second half of the year to cut the cost of running a separate event. If the event is a multiclass event, the Optimist class must be assured of a separate course and start. It must also be an offshore open water event. – 12 votes  
The selection event for 2017 could be in June or July once the NOR for the worlds is published. **Shellee the selection would be at either wc champs typically in april or Kzn champs typically in june/ july the choice of venue would depend on whether worlds is midyear or at the end of the year.**

**General:** Stefan put to the floor for participation in any international event be included in the selection process and be exemption from meeting part of the selection criteria. The floor agreed that the athletes selected to and participating in the Worlds or Africans at the time of their regions provincial championships were exempt from that criteria. Other exceptions to the broken leg policy would be considered on application by the exco. **Special consideration must to what happens if there is a clash with the nationals and the second selection regatta, perhaps the sailor would carry a similar finish to one or other of the two selection regatta if there is a clash**

**General: Selection process scoring-** the members of the exco would be tasked with detailing the structure of the points system for the selection process.

**General: Funding-** Currently the Optimist class collects all the memberships fee's to cover the annual IODA fee's. The Class contributes R5000.00 to the managers entry fee for the Worlds team. Class needs to look at other sources of funding to assist with training budgets and international competitions.

**General: Appointment of a national coach-** Clair Walker has worked for the class as the national coach but was busy with her studies. Cape town parents recommend her appointment. The Class needs to call for CV's of coaches that want the appointment and will guarantee more continuity in the process. Each region needs the services of skilled coaches to plan and roll out the training programs. The class does not have the funding to appoint a full time coach to run the class program so the costs will need to be shared by the parents and thus the parents can choose which service providers they would prefer. Regional reps to please supply the contact numbers of possible coaches in their regions.

**General: Website-** the website domain has been renewed and John Jansen van Vuuren is working on archiving the history and developing a more user-friendly page. The facebook page will continued to be the main source of communication. **This was not what was agreed two other parties have offered to help and we agreed to seek proposals from all three for exco to approve**

No further business.