



Press Release
Friday 6th April 2018

IMOCA GENERAL MEETING

Three major decisions approved

This week was a busy and useful week for the IMOCA class. After the safety course organised in La Trinité-sur-Mer in Brittany on Wednesday 4th April, those involved in the class got together again on the following day in Lorient for the 2018 Annual General Meeting. Encouragement to use renewable energy on board the boats, agreement to continue talks with the Volvo Ocean Race, a new rule concerning radars... three major decisions were voted on and approved by a large majority.



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It was in the premises of the Lorient Football Club that the Annual General Meeting of the IMOCA class was held on Thursday 5th April to determine the direction taken by the IMOCA class. Around sixty people attended, including skippers and team managers. Several decisions were approved with an acceptance rate of between 85 and 90 %.

Encouraging the use of renewable energy on IMOCAs

Those attending the AGM agreed on a new rule, which should encourage the use of renewable energy aboard the boats to stop them using diesel. Some skippers have already announced their desire to modify their boats going from a combustion engine to an electric motor. This move towards eliminating fossil fuel use is certainly in keeping with the times and corresponds to the fact

that skippers are more and more aware of the need for boats to be increasingly optimised in terms of their sustainability.

Continuing the ongoing discussions with the Volvo Ocean Race

The IMOCA skippers voted in favour of the possible addition of the Volvo Ocean Race to the IMOCA race calendar. Those involved in the class have agreed in principle to allowing the next crewed round the world race with stopovers to be raced aboard 60-foot IMOCAs. It is now up to the Board to continue talks with the Volvo Ocean Race.

Antoine Mermod, President of the IMOCA class: "In general, the skippers voted massively in favour of bringing these competitions together. Discussions will now continue in the weeks ahead between the IMOCA class and the VOR, so the basic concept can be drawn up for this partnership. The skippers really want to move in that direction and we are ready. The ball is now in the court of the VOR..."

More efficient radars to cut the risk of collisions

Improving the safety of the boats is a major concern for the IMOCA class. A new rule has been put in place to install more efficient radar systems on board from the start of the 2018 Route du Rhum. The aim is to give solo sailors a better watch system to reduce as much as possible any risk of collision.

An international board

Apart from these three major decisions, the Annual General Meeting also saw the election of two new board members: the Swiss sailor, Alan Roura and the German, Boris Herrmann. They will be joining Louis Burton, Paul Meilhat and the New Zealander, Conrad Colman. Antoine Mermod remains president with British sailor, Alex Thomson vice-president and Charles Euverte treasurer. Among the eight members of the board, four come from outside of France, which reflects the desire to internationalise the IMOCA class.

Reaction of the skipper, Boris Herrmann after the IMOCA AGM:

"This annual general meeting was a huge success. All of the proposals concerning rule changes were accepted. Continuing to establish links with the Volvo Ocean Race is excellent news. If the two most prestigious offshore races (Vendée Globe and Volvo) are raced on IMOCAs, it will be a major help in increasing the popularity of the class internationally and setting up new projects will be even more attractive to sponsors. As for the decision concerning renewable energy, it is taking things in the right direction. Saying that it is possible to complete a round the world race producing one's own energy without diesel is very inspiring. By encouraging clean energy, we are contributing in our own little way to solving a much bigger problem, which affects all of our societies. It is in the spirit of the IMOCA class to search for innovation all the time in every area. Personally, I have a partnership with the BMW brand and they are doing lots of research into batteries for hybrid and electric cars. We are working on the installation of these batteries on my IMOCA and the decision taken about renewable energy at the annual general meeting will help me a lot. We hope to have the system up and running for the 2019 season."

Paul Meilhat talking about getting closer to the VOR:

"I am really pleased and extremely enthusiastic about this project aimed at drawing up an agreement, as the Volvo Ocean Race is a race I have been dreaming of doing for several reasons. Firstly, the race itself, as the VOR is without doubt the toughest race, which allows you to compete against the best sailors and it brings together a truly international line-up. For someone in charge of a project like me, it is something extra being able to offer the VOR, as its international dimension means you can attract the world's leading global brands. And for those who do not have a boat, it enables them to make the most of their know-how to get aboard. So it is all very positive..."
