



5/6/2018

Letter from the Commodore

It has been a week since the conclusion of the Hurricane Irma delayed 2017 E National Regatta in Charleston, South Carolina. Regatta Chair Walter Prause worked tirelessly with his Team at the Carolina Yacht Club to host a World Class Event, in the World Class Venue that Charleston once again proves to be. There was a lot of behind the scenes logistical adaptation that was beyond the usual scope of hosting the regatta due to the challenges that the hurricane presented last September. I personally want to thank Walter, and his team, for providing the E Fleet with an opportunity to have the National Regatta in Charleston. We love going to Charleston. The sailing was tough, but that happens when the best come together to compete anywhere - let alone in a venue as notoriously challenging as Charleston's currents and tides posed to all of us as competitors. In that regard, I think most attendees would agree — Charleston delivered big time.

Looking back at the overall event provided several take-a-ways from the regatta that your Executive Board of Directors of the NCESA have noted and discussed since the event. Action items are now being compiled. We all collectively strive to ensure that we provide each other as E Scow sailors the best on the water experience as possible - it is my major priority as the current Commodore of the Class. Further, I feel my major responsibilities are to keep abreast of the feedback that participants have about the venues to which we travel to race by listening to competitors and show respect for the protection of the investment of time and money that people make to be part of our class. We are all blessed to share time with family and friends playing the coolest game in the coolest boats that exist. What we enjoy as a class, the heritage and history of our class, as well as the direction of the class, is of utmost concern to me as Commodore. Proper respect, reverence and stewardship of these concerns are not to be taken for granted by those of us who have spent a lifetime making lifelong friendships because of what we share collectively together in the Class.

A few opportunities to make some adjustments to the way the Class conducts business of coordinating the Nationals has wide implications and sets the tone for regional events - which are the life blood of the Class. The regional events need to look to the Class at the National level for guidance, communication, and protocols which we need to collectively agree to adhere to, because what we have - what we enjoy and share together is precious - and can be fragile. Many of us follow what has been going on in other one-design classes elsewhere worldwide and, due to lack of foresight, for a host of reasons, their event and participation numbers are waning. As a class, we need to be cognizant of that. We need to protect and nurture what we have - the best boats, sailed at some of the most spectacular locations anywhere on earth, with people that we care about.



Comparatively, our Class is STRONG! The PROOF is in the pudding - we had 15 new first-time skippers at the Charleston event. As I mentioned briefly at the skippers meeting, this is a very healthy sign for our class. We do a lot of things well and have successfully cultivated enthusiastic support of competitors and the crucial support of volunteers at our events nationwide. As such, we are all extremely blessed to be part of this incredibly wonderful organization - and the BOD of the NCEA works together with this in mind. It is in our culture to recognize this - have respect for it - and nurture it for generations to come.

That being stated, the BOD has some questions for the class as a whole. We are going to be posting a survey for some feedback on the NCEA web site soon. We have to make some 'tweaks' to ensure we are respecting the class membership as a whole, again in an effort to provide the absolute finest racing experience on the water that we can and that competitors continue to want to spend their hard-earned dollars and vacation time. What happens off the water has a direct correlation to what happens on the race course.

Some things we on the Executive Board of the NCEA are reviewing are:

- Regatta Equipment — The NCEA is going to purchase, maintain and be responsible for providing everything to run the regatta. Historically we have left the hardware for the racing as a responsibility of the host club to provide. This will be a change. We are working with PRO Bruce Golison to compile a list of essentials to be owned and maintained by the class and brought to the National Regatta venues to utilize. This will be a substantial investment initially; however, our class deserves this protection.
- Boat Equipment and Sails — We are going to review our scantlings to assure that we have successfully and fairly 'boxed in' our one design. More sail makers are trending into the class because of the exciting competition, class stability and growth, and broad support Nationwide. However, as an example of my concern, we cannot, as a class, have some competitor source sails that measure in, but are made out of a newly developed experimental material that would create a hardship bridge that only some of the fleet could afford and gravitate toward, cost be damned. Further, I would encourage anyone wishing to modify their boats with different equipment other than what the scantlings allow - carbon fiber restrictions come to mind - to review prior to spending time and cost. Again, we have to preserve the true meaning of one-design status.
- Paid Pro's on the racecourse — The real effect or cost to the fleet - and what to do about it, if anything. As I stated to another competitor when the topic has come up before, I don't mind getting my ass stomped by the best - it is a good barometer to measure you and your teams sailing skills by. However, when people are racing for paychecks in any class, it can bring a host of other challenges to the regatta scene. I will venture to assert that the lengths to which paid pros will go to earn their pay checks from whomever has hired them - based upon final results - has had a negative effect on other classes. Again, the PROOF I point my admittedly subjective assertion to is the challenges of the decline of other sport boat classes that were all "pro'd up". This is a very emotional topic and point of contention for many who understand the fragility of



the game we play and the equally important social aspect we all invest in. There are many schools of thought on this topic. Feedback and comments from the class will be shared and posted once accumulated, discussed, and ruled upon.

- Coaches boats on the water, versus support/spectator boats on the race course — Look for updates on the Regatta Sailing Instructions. This is under review, and I am confident changes will be coming based upon feedback to the board since the Charleston Event. We all love when family and friends come onto the water to spectate in the Corinthian Spirit of the experience as a whole - and don't want to do anything to undermine that - but rules have been put in place to keep on-the-water coaches away from competitors in other classes. This needs some work and clarification by your BOD of the expectations to what is fair and proper, or a rules violation.
- PRO Judge to accompany the efforts of the Principal Race PRO — The Executive Board has discussed and agreed that due to the complexity of strict rule enforcement of the regatta, the class will be hiring a paid independent professional Judge from outside of the class to lead the regatta jury committee.
- Spot weight checking of boats — I heard **rumors** of competitors removing lead from boats even though attestations were filled out and signed stating the contrary. We will need to have a crane on sight and implement an audit system throughout the regatta to assure integrity. Personally, this is one of the more disturbing nuances to running this event, but currently I know of no other way to protect against this from occurring in the fleet.

Again, these are just a few of the immediate actions that are under review, and my intent is to get these changes implemented in time for the Oshkosh Nationals this fall. I hope to have all of your support as a class to succeed in this effort.

As the summer sailing season for all of us ramps up, I hope to hear from many of you with ideas as to what you feel is important to assure we keep our rocking class rolling along into the foreseeable future and beyond. Look for the survey on the class website in the next week or two. Your BOD welcomes and needs your feedback to preserve and **always celebrate** what we care so much about - keeping the E Scow Fleet the preeminent one-design sailing class on-and-off the water. Have a great summer racing and I hope to cross tacks with many of you in the near future.

Respectfully,

Brett Hatton

Commodore NCESA