



National Class E Scow Association

July 14, 2011

Dear Members,

The future health of our class is closely associated to the health of our builder. We are fortunate to have a builder who not only is dedicated to the E Scow, but also builds many other classes and improves their building process and competitiveness as well. For a few years, E Scow production has accounted for little if any of the Melges bottom line. Melges has been fortunate to not only have other classes to help make their bottom line viable, but also to improve their expertise in more modern building techniques. From what Melges has learned, they now want to apply that knowledge to the benefit of our class.

On July 13th, the NCESA Rules Committee approved a one year experiment for Melges Boat Works to participate in regattas with a boat that is a prototype for a new construction process. Melges has two main goals in this experiment request. Make the boat more watertight and much less likely to turtle, and therefore much easier and quicker to sail dry. Simplify the construction process. This would be accomplished in two ways: by reducing the overall number of internal pieces that it takes to join the deck to the hull, and by using an epoxy infusion method that reduces the amount of labor to lay up the hull and deck, which reduces the amount of finish work that is required after the hull and deck are joined.

It is "time" for Melges to build a new deck mold, so this is the perfect opportunity to try to make the building process more efficient and the boat easier to rescue. The goal is to have a single deck mold that would include sealed side tanks, thereby making the boat much more water tight, and reduce the amount of finish work considerably. Cleaning up the interior is currently very time consuming, and this new deck mold would virtually eliminate that, saving about 70 man hours per boat. This is obviously very significant cost. If you are familiar with the Melges 17, you will get a good idea of what Melges is trying to make the interior look like. This will mean the boards will be under deck, the spinnaker will have a centerline launcher, and a partial centerline backbone from the jib tack to the mast step.

There are 3 rules that are affected by this experiment:

One, the use of epoxy instead of resin. Melges did build some boats with epoxy in the early 90's. The boats were very stiff, but the skin tended to be more brittle. Melges (and other builders) have since used a methodology where the gel coat and first layer of glass uses resin, and the epoxy then goes on after. This is UV stable and less brittle to avoid the dock dings.



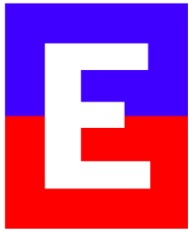
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Two, the current scantlings require the use of a three piece internal structure forward of the mast step. This rule goes all the way back to the wooden boat days, and has remained in place since. The new structure would have two more substantial fore and aft bulkheads that tie into the cockpit sides, and curve into the forestay attachment point. The result will be greater torsional stiffness in the hull. The fiberglass layup schedule will be significantly stronger to increase the skin stiffness and overall fore and aft strength of the boat. The old centerline backbone will no longer go from the forestay to the mast step, as physical access is required forward under the deck to rig the bow sprit, etc. and with the longer and stronger side bulkheads, room is considerably reduced. The members of the Rules Committee that met last week in Zenda spent considerable time discussing the possibility of “oil-canning” in the deck or hull in this area. The conclusion they came to is that even though some of the “flat panels” are bigger, the increased glass schedule and the use of epoxy will compensate for this, and the expectation is for the boat to be as stiff as or stiffer than the old design.

Three, due to a taller center backbone aft of the mast, a different vang configuration will be required. The typical inverted vang is being considered, which can be found on most performance dinghies and the Melges 20. It has an attachment point on the mast and goes to a track mounted to the top of the boom, and is adjusted by moving the car on the track with a purchase system. It is the simplest solution, and one that should reduce fabrication cost as well. This will also result in more area for the crew to pass under the boom. The rule currently states two fixed points of attachment, and this change would mean one fixed point and one sliding point.

All three of these changes will help reduce the cost of building the boat. This will allow Melges to avoid raising the price of the boat which is good news for us, the end user. It will make the boat easier to rescue which is also good news. Melges believes that because of this, the appeal of the boat will be broader, and we can hopefully strengthen our existing fleets and build some new ones. Again, all positives for the class and the individual owners. Plus, most importantly, we don't believe the new boat will in anyway have a competitive advantage over the existing one, unless of course you make a habit out of tipping over.

It is Melges' hope to have this boat built in time to sail in this year's ILYA Championships, The Nationals at Torch Lake, and hopefully at least one event on the East Coast. The intention of the NCESA Board is to keep the entire membership “in the loop” and give them an opportunity to see this boat first hand before a membership vote would be required. Remember, this first step is only an experiment, and ultimately for it to become legal going forward, it would require a 2/3rds vote by the membership.



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We plan on posting more information and pictures of this experiment on the website as it progresses in hopes of keeping you informed of the progress. Below is the description written for the Rules Committee by Matt Schmidt and Ted Beier, and I think includes a more detailed explanation. I am, of course, available and interested in hearing your thoughts and concerns.

Sincerely,

Art Brereton

TO-101

NCESA Commodore