

## Dragon Class Rules for “Classic” Dragons

**The phrase “Classic Dragon” has no meaning in terms of the Class Rules. It is, however, common usage to describe wooden carvel-planked boats built before the mid-1970s. In practice the rules also cover the very few later carvel-planked boats that have been built. I have used the word “Classic” in this note to describe all these boats.**

### **Applicable Rules:**

**As a first step, it is a good idea for “Classic” owners, even all Dragon owners, to read the Class Rules. These are available on the IDA website.**

The Rules that apply to a Classic are complicated and can be split up into different sections as Rule 1.61 makes clear. It states “Spars, rigging and sails shall comply with the current rules at all times. Hull(including deck, cabin internal moulding and all other components) keel and rudder shall comply either with the current Class Rules or those in force when the yacht was measured.

**Hull construction:** This is covered by the Rules at the time the boat was built and by the current Rules. Over the years the measurement process for hulls has become more rigorous, mostly through the use of a larger number of templates. As a result many “Classics” would be likely to find that their hulls would not measure under the current rules. This is a potential problem, even apart from cost, because the older hull shapes from certain builders are believed by some owners to be quicker than hull shapes built to the current rules. They are, however, protected by Rule 1.62 which states that “ re-measurement of the hull shall only be permitted if there is reason to think that the yacht has been measured incorrectly before the measurement certificate was issued or that the yacht was not re-measured after a major repair, a major renovation or an alteration.”

By now in their long lives many “Classic” Dragons have been through such a repair or renovation process or are going through one and their owners may be concerned. Rule 1.63 states that such work will normally be considered to be an alteration requiring re-measurement. However, it also requires that such work be brought to the attention of the IDA Technical Committee and gives the Technical Committee the power to waive re-measurement if “the owner or builder is able to establish that the yacht has not been altered in the course of the work undertaken.” In practice the Technical Committee has laid down certain guidelines for the work, notably insisting that there are always a sufficient number of deckbeams in place to maintain the shape of the hull . If these are followed it will normally waive the re-measurement requirement.

The plans for the “Classic” Dragon can be obtained from the IDA. Restorers should note that the hull construction rules specify minimums. It is permissible, for example, to put in extra floors to hold the boat together though this will obviously increase the weight of the boat.

The current Rules do give permission in some respects which was not available under the Rules likely to have been current when a “Classic” was built. Rules 2.191, 2.192 and 2.193 require a post-1991 boat to have buoyancy conforming to particular specifications. It is permissible to fit tanks in a “Classic”. However, they should comply at least with the 1,700 litres of buoyancy that is the requirement in 2.191 for a new wooden boat and also with 2.192 and 2.193. Similarly 3.30 and 3.31 post date most “Classics” and permit the fitting of a spinnaker hatch provided it conforms with 3.31.

Rule 2.22 permits that “carvel-planked yachts more than 20 years old may be sheathed externally with GRP cloth. This layer shall not exceed 2mm thick.

The current Rule 3.41 imposes a requirement on all Dragons whenever built to secure floorboards against floating up. However, the floorboards in a boat built before 15<sup>th</sup> November 1958 may be retained.

**Rig and sails:** If a "Classic" is being raced at all seriously it will need to comply with the current Rules for the rig and sails both for rule observance and in order to be competitive.

There are, however, Rules for those who want their "Classics" to be authentic as at the date of construction. The IDA website has the Rules for the construction of a wooden mast if required. The rig was altered in the late 1940s to permit the use of a genoa and a spinnaker. This also meant that the mast was moved forward by about 10 to 12 inches. In the 1970s the spinnaker was allowed to be larger and the spinnaker pole was lengthened and in 2009 the headsail shape was changed to make a more efficient sail. Details of all the earlier sails and spars are available.

The rules covering the mast movement at deck level were changed in 1991. The new rules are 6.103, 6.104 and 6.113. These gave a greater ability to adjust the rig and it is worth considering making these changes to a "Classic" which is likely to have less movement at deck level (probably 20mm rather than 50mm).

**Other Rules for consideration:**

**Measurement Certificate (Rules 1.81, 1.82 and 1.84) :** If a "Classic" is to be raced it should have a Measurement Certificate. These are normally issued by the National Authority unless it has delegated the function to the local Dragon class. In principle the Measurement Certificate should come with the boat from the previous owner and only require that the boat be re-registered into the new owner's name to be valid. If one no longer exists it may be necessary to enter into a discussion with the relevant National Authority about their requirements. The national Dragon class association and the IDA may also be able to help.

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