Dear Ice Boaters,

I hope you’re all doing well. I would like to support the active e-mail discussion regarding the case of Peter Hamrak’s equipment with my opinion from the perspective of over 45 years in this sport.

To begin with, I do not support the usage of equipment which would violate any official specifications, however, I recall various situations in which illegal hulls, masts, planks, runners, sails and more have been discovered.

In most of the cases, following such discoveries, the committee would assess and legalize such “innovations” to allow the evolution of our sport, for example through the implementation of new materials like carbon. The development of a pure carbon mast took years, however we can all admit it has brought new, positive levels to ice sailing. In contrast to aluminum masts, carbon masts solved many issues, enabled easier acceleration, higher speeds, allowed racing in very light breeze and what is more important gave all of us more pleasure and satisfaction.

The case of the carbon mast is just one of many which we have witnessed throughout the years and we should not forget how this type of advancements have been processed to be later implemented. Such advances would have not been possible without the creativity of passionate ice boaters and boat builders who often tested the rules, pushing them to the limits or over. Without these dedicated enthusiasts, the DN class would have remained in the “stone age”, representing a low sports level.

Therefore, I would like to encourage everyone, especially the TC to actively look into the future and consider the introduction of valuable changes to the rule book, especially in regard to the components. In the last years rarely did the TC adapt new materials or have solved important issues which have emerged e.g. the 2kg of led in carbon masts. While I respect a conservative approach to our sport, we must first understand that new technology and materials don’t have to cause additional expenses and can very often lead to a higher operational efficiency.

This should also not be forgotten in the context of the current global economic crisis, which may force many of us to use new, more affordable substitute materials. Wood is not the easiest and cheapest to build hulls, planks or runner bodies – even a hobby builder will find it easier to build certain parts using foam instead of wood. Building the components in a “vintage” way should be optional, not mandatory. I strongly believe that freezing the rules does not contribute to the development of the sport and that new approaches to boat building should be reasonably embraced and not necessarily eliminated.

Regards,

P 36