

Proposal from the **UK Fireball Association** ('UKFA') to permit trapeze harnesses to be worn by both helm and crew requiring amendment of International Fireball Class Rule 21.3

Introduction

The UKFA proposes that both helm and crew be permitted to wear trapeze harnesses.

Currently rule 21.3 states 'A trapeze belt or harness shall only be worn by one crew member'.

During the 1970s/1980s some UK teams both wore trapeze harnesses but, at some point and for reasons that are not clear, a rule was introduced prohibiting the practice.

Proposed amendment of wording to rule 21.3

UKFA proposes that rule 21.3 be amended to say "A trapeze belt or harness may be worn by either or both members of the crew. A trapeze belt or harness shall have positive buoyancy and shall weigh no more than 3.5Kg weighed as determined by RRS Appendix H. This rule changes RRS 49.1".

Reason(s) for the rule change

UKFA seeks to broaden the appeal of Fireball to club sailors. It is not considered this rule change will have any significant impact on teams who are already competitive at regional, national or international level.

It is generally accepted that Fireball crews weighing less 65 kilos are at a clear disadvantage when wind speeds are above 10 knots. UKFA considers that helms with trapezing experience would be attracted to the class if they were able to sail more competitively with children or female partners under 65 kilos. In particular, we are looking at ex or existing International 14, 49er, Laser 5000, RS 700, RS 800 RS 600 and Contender sailors. Permitting a heavier helm to have the option of trapezing instead of the crew at particular times during a race would go a small way to redressing this imbalance. As tacking and gybing are both slower and more difficult for trapezing helmspersons, UKFA does not consider top teams would consider using dual harnesses.

Disadvantage(s) of the rule change

There are no perceived disadvantages to this proposal. A second harness would be required for those crews opting to sail with dual harnesses but the cost is modest and many crews will have more than one harness anyway.

Conclusion statement

Amending rule 21.3 to permit dual harnesses will broaden the appeal of Fireball to club sailors and involves only modest cost.

The UKFA recommends this proposal to Fireball International for approval.

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