

Class Legal boats and equipment – by Alan Davis, EurILCA Master Coordinator

All you wanted to know about Class legal boats but were afraid to ask?

To coin a phrase – FAKE NEWS. There has been plenty written about Class legal boats ranging from good, factual information to incorrect information and, dare we say it, some deliberate mis-information. So, from a EurILCA perspective, we will try to provide some guidance so that we can all enjoy strict one-design racing in the best dinghy in the World!

BACKGROUND

The original concept of the Weekender was first launched as the TGIF in 1969 and it went into production as the Laser in 1970 with ILCA being founded in 1971. 2021 marks the 50th anniversary for the Class and the transition to a new name for the boat, an ILCA dinghy.

Q. Why is Laser Performance no longer a builder of Class approved boats?

- A. Laser Performance did not meet its commitments under the Class Construction Manual and lost its status as an Approved Builder as required by World Sailing and the International Laser Class Association. Laser Performance refused to allow inspections of their factory on multiple occasions as required by the Class Construction Manual.

Q. What is the “Fundamental Rule”?

- A. Quoting from the Class Rules. “The boat shall be raced in accordance with these Rules, with only the hull, equipment, fittings, spars, sails and battens manufactured by a World Sailing and International Laser Class Association (ILCA) approved builder in strict adherence to the boat design specification (known as the Construction Manual) which is registered with World Sailing. No addition or alteration may be made to the hull form, construction, equipment, type of equipment, placing of equipment, type of fittings, spars, sails and battens as supplied by the builder except when such an alteration of change is specifically authorized by Parts 2 or 3 of these Rules.” It is designed to ensure fair racing within a strict one-design class.

Q. Why do I keep reading about ILCAs, I thought the boat was called a Laser?

- A. There were 3 legacy builders; Performance Sailcraft Australia, Performance Sailcraft Japan and Laser Performance. Laser Performance was by far the largest builder with rights, through a sister company, to use the Laser and Laser starburst branding across about 80% of the world. Laser Performance has not approved the right to use the Laser and Laser starburst branding by the new Builders and so it became necessary to rename the boat – an ILCA. Laser Performance own a number of branding rights and the rig sizes Standard / ILCA 7, Radial / ILCA 6 and 4.7 / ILCA 4 are synonymous. All new Class legal boats will be branded ILCA.

Q. What is FRAND?

- A. Fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory. It is a World Sailing requirement for all Olympic classes that means any boat builder can apply to become an Approved Builder under competition laws. The approval process is challenging for new builders to ensure they are able to consistently build boats strictly in line with the Class Construction Manual to ensure fair racing.

European Circular

BUYING A NEW OR USED BOAT

It's important that when anyone is buying a new or used boat that they are completely aware of the implications of buying a boat that does not have a World Sailing plaque (details below)

The Fundamental Rule one-design concept relies on the strict control of the manufacturing process. World Sailing and ILCA audit the approved builders and the approved suppliers of sails, spars etc. Boat, sails, spars etc. supplied by non-approved builders may not be the same as the boats being built by the Approved builders - this undermines the universality of the one-design concept.

The Racing Rules of Sailing rule 78 requires all boats to comply with Class rules which may not be altered by the Notice of Race or Sailing Instructions. At larger events there is formal measurement but even at club events any sailor is liable to protest by another sailor or the race committee if their boat does not comply with Class rules.

The used value and marketability of a boat built by a non-approved builder is likely to be less than one built by an Approved Builder.

Q. Can you buy other approved boats in Europe?

- A. Yes, currently 3 new European builders sell their boats in Europe. Potentially all 9 new Approved Builders can sell their boats in Europe.

Devoti <http://devotisailing.com/ilca/>

Nautivela. www.nautivela.com

Ovington <https://ovingtonboats.com/ilca-boat/>

Q. How can you identify a Class legal hull?

- A. From sail number 148200 boats have a unique World Sailing (previously ISAF) plaque permanently affixed to the rear of the cockpit. Earlier boats have the identification number moulded into the deck below the bow eye or into the transom (a sail number or unique production number). Existing Lasers and new ILCAs can both therefore be Class legal, it is the plaque which evidences this. No World Sailing plaque means it is not Class legal.

Example plaques you may see. 216242 is the current style.

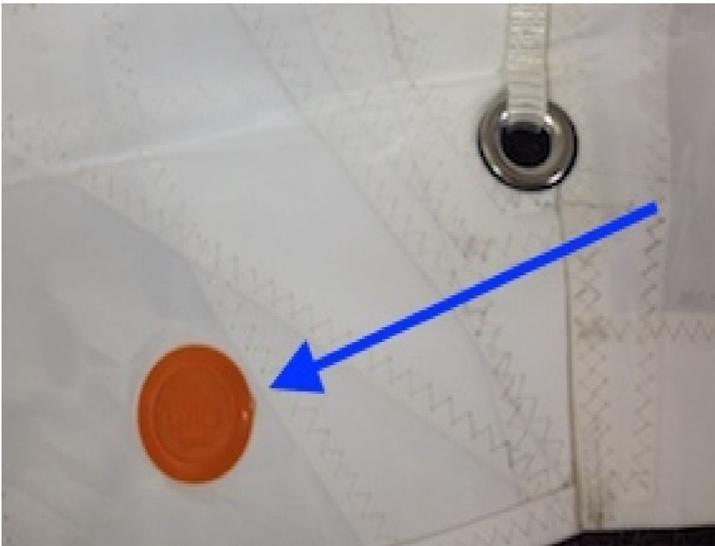


BUYING EQUIPMENT

Whilst you may not buy a new boat each year, sails need replacing and spars may bend. There are a range of shops and websites where you can buy Class legal sails, spars, foils etc. in addition to the Dealers. However, care is required to ensure what you buy is ILCA Class legal. Phrases such as “Class compliant” and even some websites stating “Class legal” may not be selling **ILCA Class legal** spares.

Q. How can you identify a Class legal sail?

- A. Sails manufactured after 1 January 2001 shall have an ILCA authorized sailmaker button attached near the tack of the sail. These are red except for MKII ILCA 7 / standard sails which are orange.



There are two different insignia you may appear on a sail. The ILCA logo or the traditional Laser starburst, each pictured below.



Class legal sails will also have a patch placed near the tack of the sail (above the button). Older sails may have patches with Laser markings which remain class legal.



Q. How can you identify Class legal spars and foils?

- A. Spars and foils will have a blue or red “International Laser Class Association” sticker on or an ILCA QR code sticker if supplied since the name change.



RACING

The Fundamental Rule defining the strict one-design principle has been at the heart of racing at Club, Regional, National and International events. Sailors who use boats or equipment that do not comply with the Class rules threaten the fairness of racing.

Q. Can Laser Performance boats without a World Sailing plaque be raced against Class legal boats?

- A. According to the ILCA Fundamental Rule enshrining the one-design principle, the answer is no. In addition, the Laser Performance hull, sail, foils and spars are not audited by World Sailing & ILCA. Laser Performance boats numbered from 217251 may duplicate the hull / sail numbers of Class legal boats, further adding to the confusion. Individual sailing clubs will need to make their own decisions about the fairness of racing. EurILCA, ILCA, ILCA Districts and World Sailing events will only allow boats that meet Class Rules to compete.

Q. Can I be protested at a Club or Open Meeting race for non-Class legal boats or equipment?

- A. Yes. The Racing Rules of Sailing rule 78 requires all boats to comply with Class rules which cannot be altered by the Notice of Race or Sailing Instructions. At larger events there is formal measurement but even at club events any sailor is liable to protest by another sailor or the race committee if their boat does not comply with Class rules.

Kind regards,

The EurILCA team