

IRC and Roller-furled Headsails

The IRC approach to roller furled headsails is quite different from PHRF's. It is an entirely different philosophy.

Background

IRC rates all boats - furler or not - based on the dimensions and area of the headsail used. A roller furled headsail is a little smaller than what the same boat might use without a furler. Thus, the boat with the furling headsail would rate the boat a little slower - independent of everything else.

Hence, there is no need to rate a boat with a furler slower based on the existence of the furler itself as the sail area difference provides the appropriate rating difference.

IRC has a Single Furling Headsail Allowance that is for those boats that want to use only a single headsail while racing; boats that want to partially furl the headsail rather than change down from a #1 to a #2 or #3 when the wind increases. It is a cruiser-oriented allowance.

Typically less than 5% of the US IRC fleet have the allowance. See IRC Rule 21.8.

On the other hand, PHRF declares a maximum headsail LP/J that a boat can have without incurring a penalty; then recognizing that a furled headsail with the max LP/J is necessarily going to have less total sail area, a nominal credit is given because of the smaller headsail.

Requirements

- LP/J must be greater than 1.3.

- a complete furling system must be installed - the drum, furling headfoil and upper swivel.

Full Credit limits the boat to using only a single headsail while racing. The one exception being that storm jibs that meet the ISAF measurement requirements are always permitted to be used while racing. The certificate will state: "**Single furling headsail only**". See IRC Rule 21.8.1.

Partial credit is received if one wants also to be permitted to use a heavy weather jib - again it must meet the ISAF definitions. The certificate will state: "**Single furling headsail plus H/W jib max area (sq. m) xx.xx**". See rule 21.8.2.

No credit is received if one wants to be able to use any headsails carried without restriction. The certificate will state: "**Multiple headsails permitted**".