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Yacht Club Costa Smeralda, Bucket Regattas and Superyacht Cup Palma select the ORC SuperYacht Rule for their 2015 regattas

Marblehead, MA – An initiative by the SuperYacht Racing Association (www.superyra.org) led to collaboration with the Offshore Racing Congress (ORC) and ultimately the creation of a new superyacht handicapping rule – the ORC SuperYacht (ORCSy).

Handicapping widely disparate superyachts represents one of the most formidable challenges any rule authority can undertake. With racing yachts that include schooners, sloops and ketches of varying lengths and with displacements ranging from 50 to 600 tons, it is a challenging task.

Selecting a handicap rule for any regatta is a decision that is made by each individual Regatta Organizer. It is not a decision made by the SYRA and the SYRA does not administer the rule. The YCCS, Bucket Regattas and Superyacht Cup Palma will use the ORCSy for their respective 2015 regattas.

“The superyacht racing arena has expanded and evolved quite significantly in recent years,” said SYRA Co-Chair Kate Branagh. “The number of regattas and participating yachts has grown and the competition is now a big part of the attraction for many of the yacht owners. What years ago resembled a parade of sail with an emphasis on the social component now has a sharper focus on competing. While it isn’t a ‘win at all cost’ outlook one often finds at the grand prix end of conventional sailboat racing, most superyacht owners would like to know that they have a chance at a podium finish when they sail a great race.”

It is not unusual for a century old cruising schooner to share the same racecourse with a newly launched, state of the art performance oriented cruiser/racer. It is the huge disparity in yacht type, size and shape that creates the biggest challenge to fair racing. Superyacht regattas have used a number of different rules over the years – the Bucket Rule, IRC, ORCi, and most recently the International Super Yacht Rule (ISYR).

“The Bucket Regattas have a major focus on fun as evidenced by our ‘win the party’ mantra, and that spirit of the Bucket will never change,” said Louis Hamming (Vitters Shipyard), long time sponsor and one of the four stewards of these renowned superyacht regattas. “That being said, part of the enjoyment for today’s superyacht owners is a good, fair competition.”

YCCS Sporting Director Edoardo Recchi will debut the ORCSy at the Loro Piana Caribbean Superyacht Regatta next March. “We have been listening to our constituents and there have been recurring requests for more transparency with the handicapping. The ORCSy rule delivers that and their working party continues to make great progress as they prepare for the 2015 regattas,” Recchi remarked.

Since 1969, ORC has provided the most scientific and transparent VPP-based rating system in the world, with ORC rating products and services now being used in 35 countries around the world. The ORC began development of the new superyacht rule last summer and their working party includes respected names familiar to many in the handicapping arena – Andy Cloughton, Nicola Sironi, Alessandro Nazareth Paolo Massarini, and Martyn Prince of the Wolfson Unit. ORC is fully committed to transparency and implementing and administering the ORCSy rule in the same professional manner that has earned them the reputation they have amongst yacht owners and program managers.

“Fortunately, we weren’t starting with a blank sheet of paper because of all the work that has gone into the ORCi VPP and Rule,” said ORC President Bruno Finzi. “That being said, early in the process it became apparent that superyachts present a unique handicapping challenge for a number of different reasons. The experiences of the SYRA and their sub-committee members has helped with the learning curve for our working party and has resulted in a very productive collaboration.”

The ORCSY handicap application is available now at the Superyacht section on the ORC website: www.orc.org/superyacht. On this page there is also an explanation of the background of the rule, how it works, and practicalities for the 2015 season. For questions or more information, contact orcsy@orc.org.