

AUSTRALIAN NCA

PROPOSED IOM CLASS RULES CHANGE

2026-6

Context

As IOM fleet sizes have increased, the difficulty reading sail numbers at distance has come increasingly into focus. While this has been a factor in several regattas, the issue was particularly acute at the recent 2026 IOM World Championship where the layout of courses and requirement for umpiring meant that, in many cases, identifying boats was very difficult.

Based on an extensive investigation conducted by the Australian National Class Association (NCA), a change to IOM Class Rule concerning sail identification is proposed.

Relevant Rules

- IOM CR C.8.4
 - (a) Sail Identification shall comply with RRS E8

Discussion

The Australian NCA, prompted by challenges at the recent 2026 IOM World Championship, conducted an extensive investigation into potential improvements to the legibility of sail numbers. That study - “Legibility of sail numbers.pdf”, attached – focused on two interrelated factors that were identified as being key to the legibility of sail numbers. These factors, a common consideration in the design of highway signs are:

1. Typeface (i.e. the design of the letter and number forms)
2. Vertical size

In summary, the study found that, for certain typefaces, a vertical size that is appropriate for IOM class sails leads to sail numbers that are significantly more legible at distance than those allowed by the current rules. It is accordingly proposed that the IOM Class Rules be modified to specify these typefaces and sizes.

Proposal

It is proposed that the IOM Class Rules be amended as follows:

1. IOM CR C.8.4
 - (a) Sail identification shall comply with RRS E8 except that E8 G1.4 is changed to:
 - a) National letters and sail number shall be in capital letters and Arabic numerals, clearly legible and of the same colour. The colour shall contrast with the body of the sail. Only sans-serif fonts with

legibility equal to or better than Caracteres or Highway Gothic are acceptable.

b) The dimensions and spacing of characters shall be:

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
Height of sail numbers	110mm	135mm
Width of sail numbers (except “1”)	70mm	80mm
Stroke thickness of sail numbers	18mm	21mm
Spacing of adjacent sail numbers	20mm	30mm
Height of national letters	60mm	70mm
Spacing adjacent national letters	13mm	23mm