

NA J/80 Class Association Annual Meeting Minutes

Date: 12/15/2025

Start: 7:05 p.m. EST

Adjourn: 8:15 p.m. EST

Present:

Chris & Julie Howell
Ramzi Bannura
Stephen Bardon
Peter d'Anjou
David Doyle
Matt Emerson
Janet Geisberger
Brian Gibbs
Doug Gibson
Jason Goncalves
Kevin Hayes
Russell Hopper
Andrew Jirat-Wasiutynski
Hugh McGugan
Steven Mikes
Richard Obuhowich
Jeff Rabinowitz
Martin Rutter
Owen Schneider
Dan Sullivan
Don Venn

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Opening Comments
2. Year in Review/Regatta Recaps
3. Upcoming Events
4. Class Office/Financial Report
5. Technical Discussion
6. Elections
7. Open Discussion/New Business

Description:

1. **Welcome & Opening** – Class President Hugh McGugan welcomed everyone to the 2025 J/80 North American Class Association Annual General Meeting.

Kevin Hayes made a motion to accept the agenda as presented, seconded by Andrew Jirat-Wasiutynski. The motion passed unanimously.

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules, especially with the holidays just around the corner! Hugh's "first year on the job" has been a busy one, always trying to see how the Class Association can best provide value to our J/80 sailors and owners across North America.

2. **Year in Review/Regatta Recaps** – On the water for 2025, Hugh praised that we have had a number of very well attended J/80 one-design regattas around the US and Canada:

--Lake Winnepesaukee to Ottawa

--Kingston to Annapolis

--Toronto to New Orleans

--Local PHRF and one-design fleet racing

The Worlds was in Nieuwpoort Belgium.

Our North American Championship was in New Orleans, LA...fantastic event!

The first ever J/80 Vakaros RaceSense event was at CORK in June. No general recalls, no black flags. This is the way of the future, glad we are embracing it. Hoping to make it standard to have Vakaros-enabled post-race debriefs.

There have been many other J/80 regattas and club racing events around North American in 2025, as well as a significant number of J/80s sailing PHRF and taking home lots of hardware. J/80 sailing is alive and well across North America!

There were two J/80 Class Magazine Articles:

--Chris Hobbs - 2024 North Americans

--Sarah Olivieri's J/80 team *Pi* at HHSW Annapolis

Hoping for more next year!

The Executive Committee has been working in support of the longer-term objectives and interests of the Class, including Regional Championships, in order to better link local J/80 fleets with J/80 sailing outside of their local venues, here are some Regional Championship ideas:

-East Coast Championship (already existing and held most years from Maine down to Virginia)

-Canadian Championship (held every year since 2010)

-a new Southern Region Championship (Carolinas, Florida, Texas, New Orleans, etc.)

-West Coast Championship for California, Oregon & Washington in the future (Ramzi noted they have a perpetual trophy)

A Request for Proposal was sent out along with the AGM notice. The Association invites interested clubs and sailing associations to submit proposals for hosting these events in 2026 as well as the annual North American Championship (for 2027). The idea is to help bridge the gap between local weeknight/club weekend sailing and the much larger North American and Worlds level regattas that attract large fleets of sailors from across North American and the world.

Regarding the 2027 NAC, Peter shared that Marion / Beverly Yacht Club is working on a proposal.

The other big initiative that the NAJ80CA has been working on this year is the re-establishment of a Technical Committee to help work through the myriad of technical issues, questions from Class members, and provide technical resources to members that will help everyone understand how best to set-up and maintain J/80s in competitive and legal racing condition. Hugh views the work that the TC is doing to be vital in allowing the J/80 Class to thrive going forward. Thank you Brian, Nat and the rest of the TC team for getting things off to a strong start!

3. **Upcoming Events** – In addition to the Regional Championships, 2026's main focus will be the North American Championship, July 8-12 at CORK in Kingston ON Canada (3 race days) and the World Championship, July 18-25 (five race days, ending on a Saturday) - again at CORK in Kingston ON Canada. Hugh summarized that hosting both of these events back-to-back at the same venue is a nod to the very successful 2022 J/80 North American and World Championship regattas hosted by Sail Newport. International sailors receive a "2 for 1" regatta experience, and hosting both events allows the OA to spread out some of the boat/sail logistics since measurement work done for the NAC will also apply to the Worlds. If you are not planning to race, please consider offering your boat for charter to an international team (there have been around 10 inquiries so far). This is a vital piece, and there are many people who will help you through the process. J/Boats will be bringing in two new hulls from China, hopefully one to be used for event charter and then to be sold in NA. The Worlds promotional video and brochure are available on the Class website. Ramzi noted nine entrants so far...please sign up to help with the "snowball effect." Hugh confirmed that mast-up storage is available on land between the NAC and Worlds. There is an International J/80 Class Association Meeting planned for February 2026. This is positive for cohesion with the IJ80CA and to forward the progress of our Technical Committee.
4. **Class Office / Financial Report** – Chris reported that the Class had 94 Full members in 2024 (83 reported at 2024 AGM) + 10 Associates. He circulated the Class Budget: Profit & Loss 2025 and Budget 2026. Kevin stated that we have sold 126 sail royalties in 2025 (\$75.00 each), and we have more than \$35,000 in the bank. The Executive Committee will review the travel/regatta budget for

2026 based on income.

Kevin Hayes made a motion to accept the P&L as presented, seconded by David Doyle. The motion passed unanimously.

Kevin Hayes made a motion to accept the budget as presented, seconded by Brian Gibbs. The motion passed unanimously.

Ramzi recalled extra insurance (beyond D&O) being purchased for the Newport NAC/Worlds, so he recommended investigating this option for Canada 2026.

5. **Technical Discussion** – Brian said the existing Class Rules have served the Class well for 30 years. As the boats are getting older and since we have been through several different builders/suppliers, he and the Technical Committee thought it would be a benefit to the Class to provide technical support to ensure that we maintain the J/80 as an enduring one-design. Committee members: Brian Gibbs, David Doyle, Dave Sprague, David Foscarini, Natalie (Nat) Baddour, Ramzi Bannura and Peter D'Anjou
- Actions this year:
- Technical committee terms of reference drafted and approved & team established
 - Master list of TC “to do” items drafted, including building a better relationship with the IJ80CA for Rules proposal discussion
 - Class Rules “dos and donts” guidelines document. The TC is reviewing and finalizing, with an aim to publish on the website around March 2026
 - Regatta Guidelines developed for Organizing Authorities. This document to be posted on website soon to help with consistency at events (inspections, weighing, etc.)
 - 'Ask the Tech Committee' will be published content on the website/social media
 - Establishing communication with the International Class via Jeff Johnstone

The TC is exploring options, with the help of Jason Goncalves, to facilitate the running of post-race debrief sessions using on-course competitor data from Vakaros units. We are looking for any interested people with appropriate analysis/coaching expertise to help out for the 2026 NAC and Worlds.

Friendly reminder that the J/80 Class Rules are CLOSED Rules: if it does not say that you can, then you cannot. Hugh thanked the TC for their diligence and passion!

Ramzi asked the TC to think about encouraging participation with perhaps an addendum to NA events. Brian requested examples offline.

6. **Elections** – Kevin Hayes, after many years of supporting the Class through volunteering in various capacities on the Executive Committees, has decided to “retire” as our Treasurer/Sail Royalty Coordinator. Thank you Kevin for all of your work and your commitment to the Class over the years! The EC had conversations with a number of different people who were interested in taking on the Treasurer role for this year and in the end, Steven Mikes from New Orleans has offered to let his name stand for the position of Treasurer. Steven was very involved in the 2025 NAC, and is excited to expand the Officers further south. With the rest of the EC still willing to continue on and not having exceeded their term limits in the Bylaws, the slate that is being proposed for 2026 is:

President: Hugh McGugan

Vice President: Brian Gibbs

Secretary: David Doyle

Treasurer: Steven Mikes

Jeff Rabinowitz remains Past President. No further nominations were made from the floor.

Kevin Hayes made a motion to accept the slate as presented, seconded by Peter d'Anjou. The motion passed unanimously.

Kevin will continue to crew and looks forward to staying involved with the fleet.

7. **Open Business** – David presented slides noting the J/80 fleet is seeing an increasing presence of World Sailing Group 3 (professional) sailors at our major events. People in the industry have been very valuable in the Class over the years. However, there have been increasing occurrences of all-pro crew, which has caused some discord among amateur sailors. The IJ80CA currently has no limitations on Group 3 crew. Other Classes have implemented guidelines to address this topic. For example:

J/70: no limit on pros, pro may helm if 100% owner, all pros must be Class members

J/111: Limit of 1 pro

J/88: Limit of 1 pro + owner, if pro is owner

The NAJ80CA Executive Committee has been discussing proposing to the IJ80CA a crew limit of one World Sailing Group 3 per boat at J/80 Class-sanctioned events and also require World Sailing Group 3 crew to be members. Proposed wording: With the exception of one crew member, all crew shall hold a valid Group 1 categorization. Crew members classified Group 3 to be current J/80 Class member.

Discussion: Russell came from the J/105 to the J/80, and the J/105 Class does not permit Group 3 crew. He also sailed a Melges 20 with unlimited professionals, which came with huge event budgets (their regattas are struggling). He thinks David's wording is a nice balance between the two. Martin agreed, and stressed the importance of maintaining our place in the sailing world. It's frustrating when someone spends you out of a regatta. He pleaded that we have Corinthian divisions/trophies (and Mixed, etc.) with proper recognition. He commended the 2025 NAC host for their acknowledgement of amateurs and for holding post-race debriefs to optimize shared knowledge of the pros on hand. Owen endorsed David's proposal, but suggested that Class membership not be enforced for one race here or there. Jason is a new Class member, and hopes the pros can focus on bringing up the whole fleet in the spirit of the J/80, especially with information sharing/education. Hugh added that any rule changes need to consider other "minor professionals" (sailing instructors, admin and coaching staff, etc).

Brian recapped that it sounds like the NA Class supports endorsing this proposal to the IJ80CA. Chris shared that most Classes see fewer pros in Europe so he wouldn't expect a lot of push back there. He said the Class Office will issue a survey to confirm the views of the membership to be able to bring the data to the IJ80CA.

Hugh put out a request for anyone with sponsorship experience to help with the 2026 NAC and Worlds.

Hugh welcomes Class comments any time! Thank you everyone for your dedication and time!

Action Items:

--The Class Office will issue a member survey.

--Happy Holidays!

Next Meeting: TBA