

1st November 2024

Fireball Rule Change Vote

The Fireball International Executive is seeking approval from the Fireball Council to agree proposals from the Fireball Technical Committee, chaired by Dave Hall, to make changes to the Fireball rules to make the class more attractive to a wider range of sailors and easier to build, without changing the fundamental nature or performance of the class.

Dave Hall is, of course, owner of Weathermark Sailboats and many of these proposals have been developed in conjunction with Dave Winder of Winder Boats (the other Fireball registered builder) and the well known dinghy designer, Phill Morrison.

The proposals have been discussed over the last 18 months at World, European and National Championships with the International Fireball class membership. They have been endorsed by the majority of competitors at these events, and are endorsed by the Executive of Fireball International.

In brief, it is proposed that the deck has some modifications along with changing the rules to allow simpler construction. We also propose to allow carbon now because it is simpler to work with than kevlar and is no more expensive. There are also some equipment rule changes suggested.

The process that will be followed is:

Responses to this vote must be made by Fireball Council NCA's before midnight on **Sunday 1 December 2024 UTC**. Each NCA in good standing shall be entitled to eligible votes based on the number of its paid up members, as outlined in the "Voting Rights" section of the Fireball Constitution. Votes not made by this date will **not** be counted.

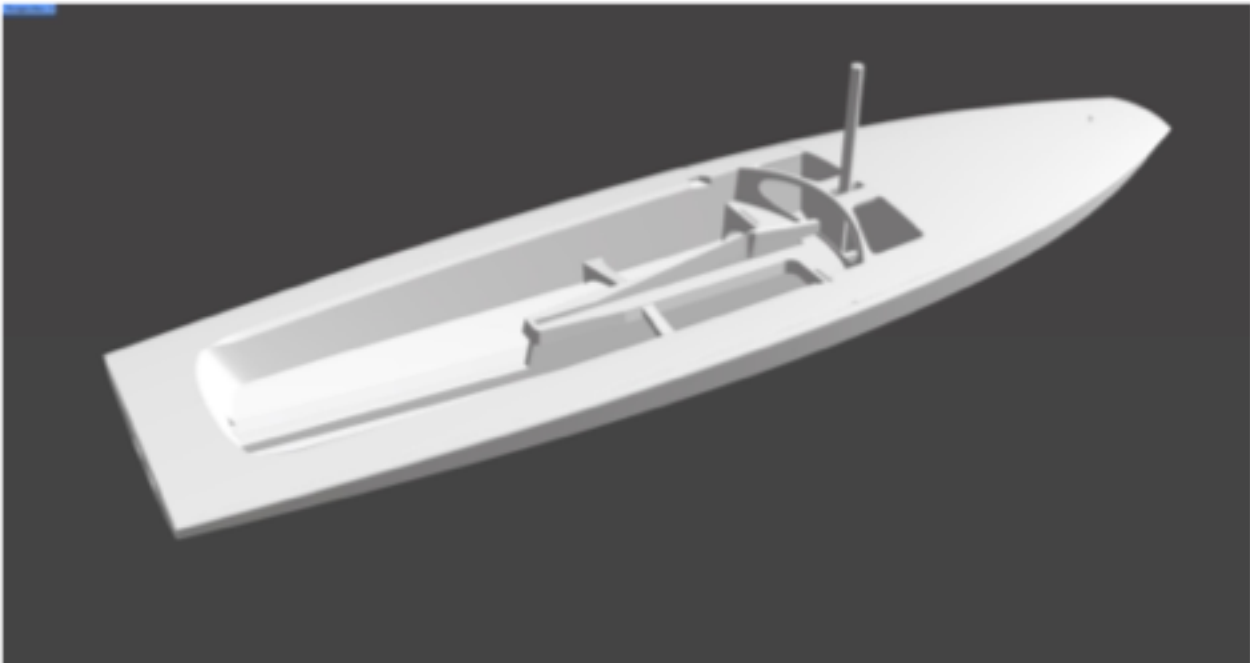
After completion of the vote, the agreed proposals will be drafted into the class rules and, after a review by the executive, the new class rules will be submitted to World Sailing.

We are also working on updating the rules to be a closed set of rules that conform to World Sailing standards. Depending of the rate of progress of this major edit, this may result in a second submission to World Sailing.

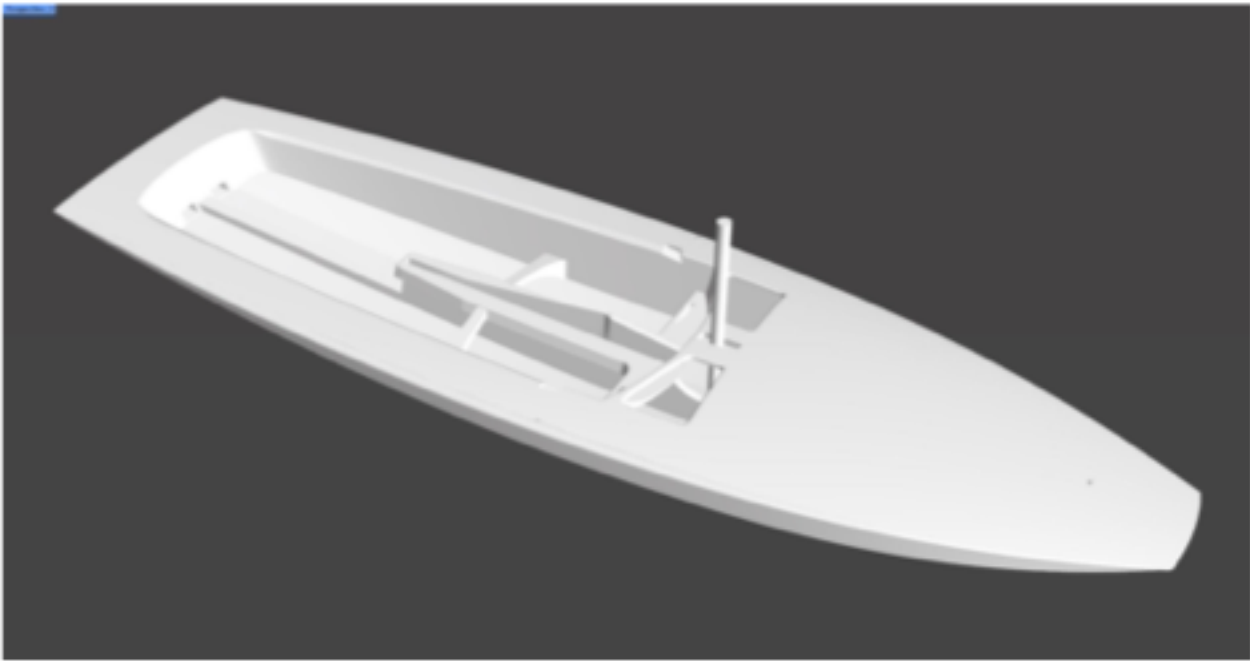
Nick Rees Commodore
Fireball International

Deck Updates - The Proposals

Boat image looking forward showing proposed new deck layout:



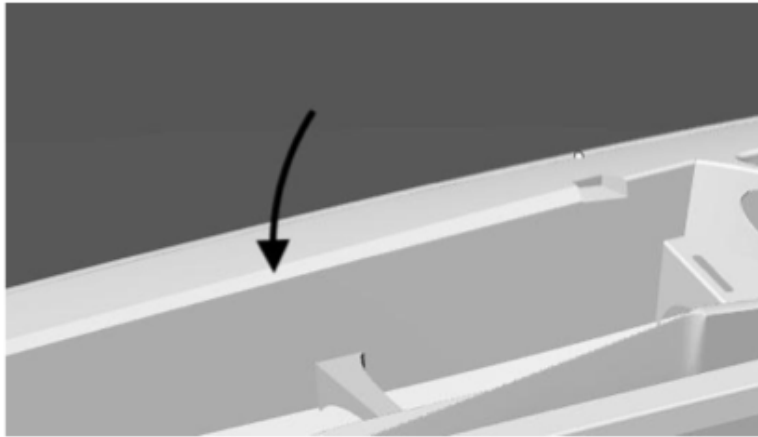
Boat image looking aft showing proposed new deck layout:



Proposal 1: Do you agree to allow angled bevels on the inside side deck corners as shown below?

Rationale: To improve comfort and give more room for the crew and to make construction simpler by eliminating the need for a separate moulding for the helm's legs (as in the Winder boats at the moment)

Detail showing bevels on side tanks:



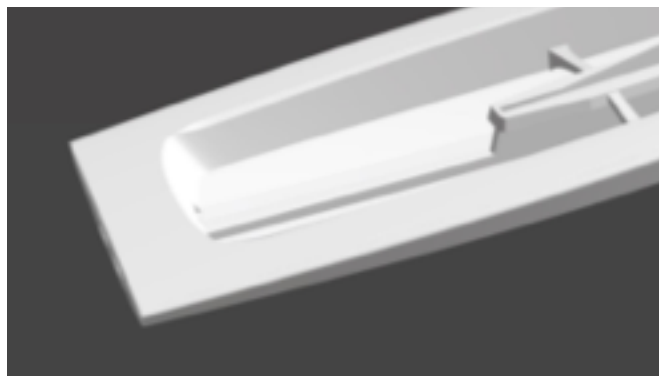
Proposal 2: Do you agree to flatten the side decks slightly?

Rationale: Make sitting to leeward more comfortable for the helm on a run.

Proposal 3: Do you agree to shorten the aft deck ?

Rationale: Allow mainsail to be stored fully inside the boat. Will also allow the helm to sit further aft.

Detail showing shorter aft deck:



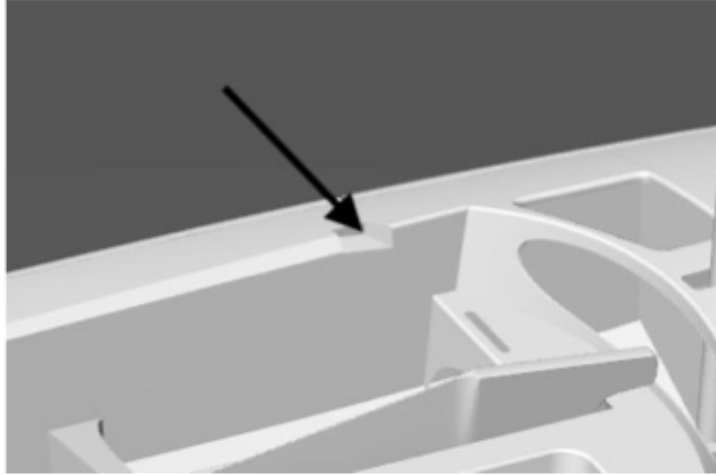
Proposal 4: Do you agree to remove the need to have an internal bulkhead between the aft tank and the side tanks?

Rationale: Make construction simpler. Safety is not compromised since there are still two separate watertight tanks. There is also buoyancy from the foam sandwich construction.

Proposal 5: Do you agree to integrate and recess jib sheet cleats to cockpit sides as shown below?

Rationale: Make construction simpler. There will also be more room for the crew and less things to get caught on.

Detail showing jib block recess:



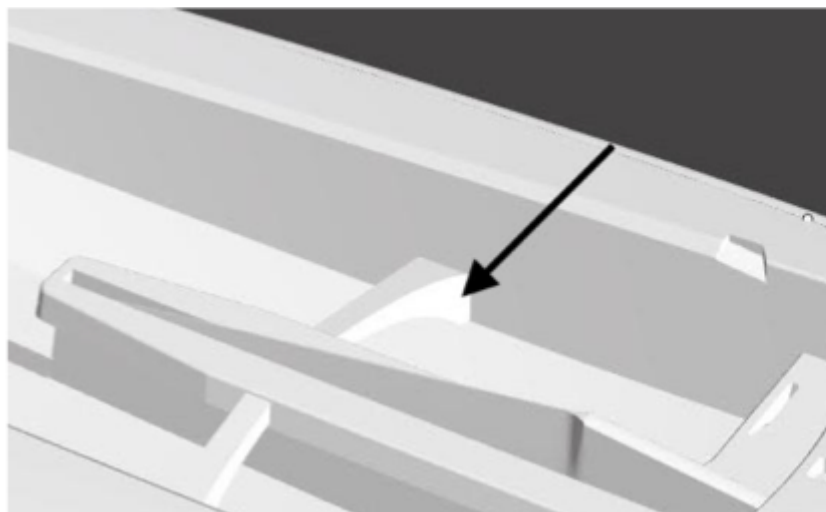
Proposal 6: Do you agree to allow a tube for the spinnaker sheets to run from the back bulkhead to the spinnaker sheave at the back corner rather than the current covered channels?

Rationale: Make construction simpler.

Proposal 7: Do you agree to remove the thickness, width and angle of the thwart edges rule (see image below)?

Rationale: This will enable the thwarts and struts to be stronger and allow better release from the mould.

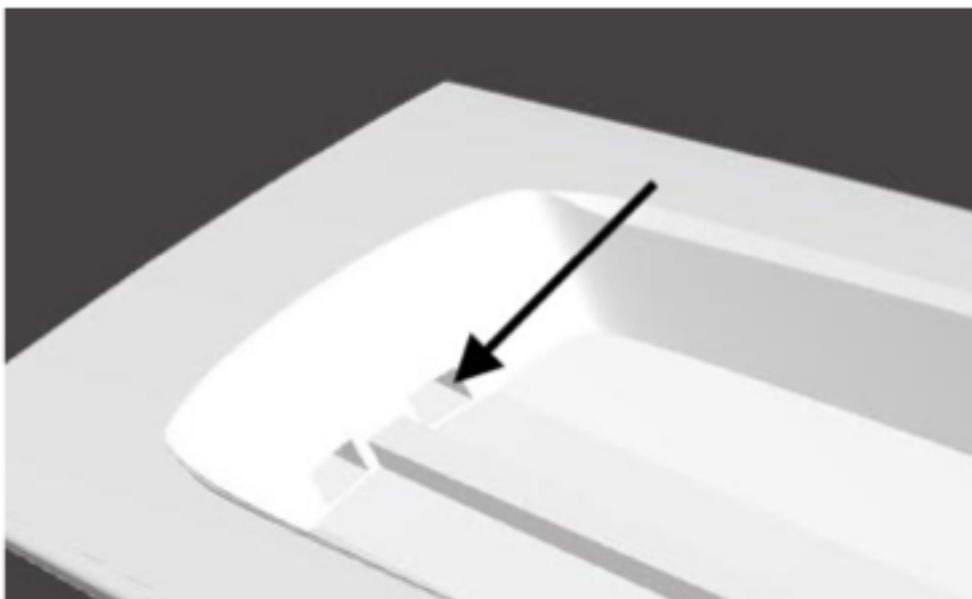
Detail of proposed new thwart, showing proposed additional depth:



8: Do you agree to allow larger drain tubes as shown below?

Rationale: This will allow the boat to drain faster.

Detail showing larger drain tubes :



Proposal 9: Do you agree to allow carbon fibre to be used in the construction of the foils?

The minimum weight of the foils will not change.

Rationale: Make construction simpler and slightly cheaper.

Proposal 10: Do you agree to allow carbon in the hull and deck mouldings?

The minimum weight of the boat will not change. The weight is largely determined by the laminate thickness rule, which will not change.

Rationale: Make construction simpler and slightly cheaper. Carbon is now no more expensive than Kevlar and it is easier to work with.

Proposal 11: Do you agree to allow 2 spinnaker poles?

Rationale: Two spinnaker poles used to be allowed and it is not clear why the rule was changed. It is unlikely to be used by top crews, but will give options to sailors with lighter and smaller crews.

Proposal 12: Do you agree to remove the need to have numbers on the spinnaker?

Rationale: No need for this, and a possible price saving. It will also make it easier to sell second hand spinnakers.

Proposal 13: Do you agree to allow the shroud adjustment system to be lead to the centre of the boat and combined into a single control as shown in the picture below?

Rationale: This provides for simpler rig adjustment at a minor increase in cost. Since the control would be done from inside the boat it would make it easier and safer to adjust the rig, and smaller crews could do this whilst racing in stronger winds and worse sea conditions. Both shrouds would be adjusted at the same time. Extra turning blocks are required, but this is a relatively small cost.

Picture of shroud adjusters on another class similar to those proposed for the Fireball:



Proposal 14: Do you agree to enforce a mechanism that means the sails can't be set outside the black bands (i.e. fit a stopper at black bands on boom and mast or ensure a main halyard lock)?

Rationale: To avoid sails being hoisted illegally. It was noticed at the last 2 international events that many teams had unintentionally pulled sails past the black band

Make any comments or ask questions about the proposed rule changes :

Dave Hall – Chair of FI Technical Committee
Nick Rees - FI Commodore

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