

# Proposed Zephyr Class Rule Amendments

4 March 2021

## ZOA Executive Committee generated rule change – (two rules)

During Covid 19 lockdown two ZOA Executive Committee meetings and the 2020 AGM were held using the Zoom and Webinar platforms. Work to formalise this aspect of Zephyr class administration was started by Rob Ebert prior to his retirement as Secretary. The rule 1.9.3 change below is an extension of that work, paralleling similar adjustments to the ZOA Constitution.

In addition, another, unrelated rule is now redundant and requires removal.

### Existing Rule

**1.9.3.** The proposed rule change has been approved by two-thirds of the registered owners who have voted.

**Replace with:** - *The proposed rule change has been approved by two-thirds of the registered owners who have voted at either an Annual or Special General Meeting or via electronic means as approved by the Executive Committee.*

YNZ no longer provides classes with rule-change overview services.

### Delete Existing Rule

~~**Rule 1.9.5.** — The proposed rule change will be effective only after approval by the YNZ.~~

## Member generated rule insertion – (one rule)

Class member Richard Mackay, (boats 194 and 521) has requested a rule to be inserted granting his two, and three other members' boats, permanent dispensation from the class Rule 3.8.1. that prohibits carbon fibre hull sheathing.

Below is the background timeline leading to this proposal: -

- In 2012 the ZOA Exec by majority ruling decided, *"...not to support carbon sheathing of Zephyrs."* This decision was published in West Wind July 2012 and again in October 2012. The Exec comprised M Sargisson (President), T Snedden (Treasurer), R Ebert (Secretary), S Pyatt, T Miller, R MacKay, S Smith, A Knowles, C Hargraves, R Turner, P Williams.
- A 2014 class vote to permit carbon sheathing failed.
- The sailors' forum at the 2019 nationals voted 49/3 to continue the carbon sheathing prohibition.
- A class-wide ballot to formalise the 2012 Exec hull sheathing ban received approximately 80% support and was included in the October 2019 Class Rules.
- After the ballot, the owners of hulls 194, 521, 529, 216, 101 applied for and were granted a temporary CF sheathing dispensation from the ZOA Executive.  
*"The decision is that #... be granted dispensation (under Class Rule 1.1.0.4) for the external carbon-fibre sheathing while it is being sailed by the current owner, or until next major refurbishment involving any glass coatings on either the internal or external surface of the hull shell. Either of these would require re-measurement and a review of the dispensation. "*

Richard Mackay appealed the decision and requested a permanent dispensation. This was declined. He now seeks a Zephyr Class Rule addition to permanently exempt the named boats, enabling any future owners to maintain the dispensation indefinitely.

Below is Richard's proposed rule and supporting arguments.

Following this is class President Matt Mitchell's counter arguments.

## Richard Mackay Proposed Rule Inclusion

### 2.1.5

Zephyr class hulls which were completely externally sheathed in carbon fibre material prior to August 2019, and for which a dispensation to the Association rules was applied for (hulls #101, #194, 216, #521 and #529) shall be permitted to retain that sheathing provided no sheathing of any type is applied to the cockpit floor. Should the external sheath of carbon fibre be removed for any reason, only a GRP sheath may be applied externally. The relevant measuring certificates shall be endorsed accordingly. Repairs to the cockpit floor, where use of GRP is considered, must be agreed by the Executive first.

Proposed by Richard Mackay (521).

Seconded by John Boraston (74), Hamish Atkinson (101), Andy Knowles (520), James Macrae (529) and Murray Sargisson (604).

## Submission from Richard Mackay

### External carbon fibre (CF) sheathing - a proposed rule addition.

Zephyr skippers might be relieved to learn that no strict *change* to the existing rules is proposed! Perhaps we all have a dose of “rule-change-exhaustion” after years of modernising existing rules, plus permitting the new GRP construction of hulls and decks. Rather, a small addition affecting only a handful of hulls is proposed, and if authorities like the Chief Measurer are to be believed, not going to impact boat speed.

### Background - the 2019 rule change ballot.

In this ballot, the membership supported the amendment to rule 3.8.1 - “(various specified items) and carbon fibre hull sheathing are prohibited”. The vote according to my notes was 67 of 84 in favour.

Between this and a number of other rule modifications, there were a significant number of existing hulls which contravened, usually in a minor way, the new set of regulations. Executive requested the owners of such hulls to seek a rule dispensation, permitting such hulls, where the alterations were not seen to impact boat speed. Such dispensations were in the vast majority of cases granted.

There are a handful of hulls which had already, by the time the ballot occurred, been sheathed in carbon fibre cloth. Executive has permitted this while the hull remains in the ownership of the current skipper. However upon sale, the measuring certificate will be withdrawn.

The other major impact from this ballot is that Rule 2.1.4 was approved - “Any wood or plywood surface of the hull or deck may be covered with a single layer of up to 220gm glass fibre “E-Glass” attached with resin.....”. ANY WOOD OR PLYWOOD SURFACE. So now it’s legal to e-glass not just the cockpit floor, but the entire interior of the hull. And underneath the sitting position of the skipper; or in fact the entire deck both exterior and interior if you want to!

### Consequences of the Executive decisions.

This renders the CF-sheathed hulls essentially worthless as Zephyrs. No doubt somebody would buy at the right price, but if they are to be raced after sale, the CF would have to be stripped off (and presumably the new owner would replace with a GRP sheath). To strip the cloth off and replace with GRP then re-paint is a major undertaking, and very expensive, it would be surprising if commercially the bill came in under \$5000.

More peculiar is that there is now a precedent for loaning out a CF-sheathed hull to someone else for a National Contest.

### The Chief Measurer’s position.

The following is a quote from the Chief Measurer Graeme Robinson, abstracted from the minutes of the Executive meeting on 9/10/2019:

“An external carbon fibre sheathing without an internal sheathing on the cockpit floor will be lighter but not stiffer than a permitted hull fitted with both external e-glass sheathing and an internal e-glass sheathing on the cockpit floor, creating a reasonably rigid sandwich construction.”

There is a concern that if an e-glass was fitted to the surface of the cockpit floor of these hulls, it would create a strong and rigid sandwich construction which would exceed the structural performance in the class rules. A CF-sheathed hull with NO internal GRP cockpit floor sheath is lighter but NOT STIFFER than a hull with both internal and external GRP sheathing! So in his view, such hulls do not enjoy ANY advantage over a hull with external GRP sheathing and the now permitted GRP cockpit floor sheathing.

#### **The cockpit floor**

Since E-Glass sheathing of both the external surface of the hull AND the cockpit floor is permitted -(quite apart from all the other things now allowed!), without question this will enhance the panel stiffness of the cockpit floor by creating a “reasonably rigid sandwich construction” to quote the Chief Measurer. No owner renovating a Zephyr is likely to NOT E-Glass the cockpit floor (so long as weight allows); indeed this is already happening!

#### **The alternative.**

It is vastly more intelligent, rather than spend money, labour and time, to simply allow the few CF sheathed hulls affected to be bought and sold on the open market like any other, without a restriction, *so long as the cockpit floor is not sheathed in any way* (as stated in the rule modification), and if any question is raised, this can be demonstrated by a simple scratch test.

This disadvantages no-one, obviates a complete waste of money, labour and time for no gain, and is a natural consequence of the Chief Measurer’s position. Further, it recognises the rule ballot of August 2019 which was about our policy *going forward*, as opposed to how we would handle the *existing* situation. Also it recognises that the Executive might feel that, since the membership expressed the desire to prohibit carbon fibre sheathing going forward, they were in something of a dilemma dealing with existing CF sheathed hulls.

#### **A small personal diversion.**

This is not necessarily relevant to the discussion, but I have included this because I do not wish to be viewed as a rule-bender, and readers can skip this bit if they desire.

I have been asked numerous times why my hull was sheathed in CF in the first place. #521 was built by the Auckland Traditional Boatbuilding School, the second of the ultimate series of wooden hulls #520 - #529. Construction was overseen by an appointee of ZOA. Basically, they did a terrible job, and it has cost me huge amounts of money to remedy this, and I’m not alone in this as most will know (and that’s not to say the previous series #500 - #519 were much better).

When it arrived in Christchurch, a professional boatbuilder (who had built some Zephyrs himself) discovered that there were numerous glue “voids” in the laminate, each of which had to be drilled and injected. The hull was glassed and painted, but before I even got it in the water, the surface of the hull developed major humps, and it was stripped back to bare wood, sanded flat and prepared all over again, re-glassed and re-painted.

The humps again developed over time, and about 4 or 5 years ago a different professional boat builder (who also has considerable experience with Zephyrs) again stripped off the GRP, and of course found there were further glue voids, so we had another run of drilling and injections. After the surface preparation I was advised that the top laminate may be fairly thin in places (and the thickness of the laminate on this series was 2.2 - 2.3mm rather than the standard 2.5mm). There were numerous places where the surface had been faired with filler, and that, given that there was a risk that irregularities would

occur again, my best option would be to sheathing in the best material available – carbon fibre.

## **Counter view from ZOA President Matt Mitchell**

Hi Everyone,

Please find my opinion on the resurfacing of this matter from the current President's point of view.

For a group of volunteers (ZOA Exec) to have to commit so much time to something recently dealt with and vehemently supported by the members is infuriating as it inhibits us from concentrating our efforts on positive outcomes for our mighty class.

The self-serving nature of this proposition benefits only four Zephyr owners. It's worth noting at this point Richard Mackay owns two of the boats concerned, was on the Exec in 2012 when carbon sheathing was initially outlawed and refuses to disclose the dates he carbon sheathed either of his Zephyrs. If passed, this garbage will create a legacy of pain for the class with the unavoidable perception of a few super boats. This folly has been clearly illustrated by other kiwi dinghy classes and is not one we should repeat.

Poignant here is the fact these owners have been given the grace of time to rectify their issues by the previous Exec. I thought this a smart and measured outcome but could be argued already goes against such a clear voting mandate and may need to be reconsidered once this vote is in.

The position of self-interest one clearly must take to think it's a good idea attempting to overturn a membership vote of 80% on precisely this matter is staggering.

This rule change proposal is ill-conceived, hopelessly short sighted, detrimental to 97% of our membership and I sincerely hope it's voted on with the disdain it deserves.

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