

Commodore's Report 2023

Past regattas: In Cooperation with the Lough Derg Yacht Club the Irish fleet did a fantastic job to host the Worlds 22 in Ireland. Both, the organisation on the water and the events ashore kept everybody happy. Despite being 80 boats on the startline, the Race Officer managed well to bring the fleet on the course, and 9 out of 10 races were carried out, although on the first day both races had to be cancelled because of too weak and unsteady wind and were rescheduled on days 2 and 3. Ashore everybody enjoyed to stay within the Fireball Family and the Club, where two spacy bars fulfilled nearly any wish a sailor could dream of! A great big thank-you to Fireball Ireland and Lough Derg Yacht Club! In 2023 the Fireballers met in Portoroz for the Europeans, and here again the friendly spirit within the whole class was thrilling anytime. Despite the fact that the wind made the life of the Race Committee really difficult, forcing them to hold 6 out of 8 races on the last 2 days, everybody was relaxed and enjoyed the holiday destination to swim and play and explore the impressive old town Piran.

A highlight for the commodore was the great interest of the Fireballers to actively take part at the Open Council meeting, which combined the yearly Council Meeting with the Open Forum. It focussed on the development of the Fireball to keep up as a modern and attractive class. Many thanks to Dave Hall to initiate this discussion! And of course many thanks to the Jadralni Klub Pirat and Fireball Slovenia, not only for the great organization and the warm welcome but also to bring so many new Fireball sailors on the course!

Next Events: Now, already three containers from Europe are on their way to the **Worlds 24 in Geelong AUS**. Thus, way before the start we have to thank Chris Payne and Heather MacFarlane for their enormous support for the organisation of the boat transports and for those sailors who want to attend with a rental boat. I am convinced that this will be a perfect World Championship!

The next **Europeans 24** will be held in **Maccagno Italy**, very close to the Swiss border. It will therefore be a cooperation of the Unione Velica di Maccagno, Fireball Italia and Swiss Fireball. Finally the **Worlds 2025** will come back to famous **Lake Garda**. Do I have more to say??

FI website including the FI calendar: Slowly slowly I feel that people get aware of our website. thanks to Webmaster Ruedi Moser it is always perfectly updated with any news related to the Fireball and the Class Organisation. Most importantly, our calendar has to be kept up to date, but this depends on all of you by informing us about the dates of your major national events. It helps to coordinate the international calendar with the national ones, and provide the dates of all international championships to the sailors of each country!

Technical Committee: In Portoroz Chris Henderson, our International Measurer, worked hard to get a base for defining a championship boat weight. He therefore weighed all boats without sheets and centerboard, and will make a proposal to the Tech Committee, accordingly.

Unfortunately the building of new boats came to a nearly complete stop with six boats built in the last four years. Dave Hall has therefore initiated a discussion about how to make the Fireball attractive again for new sailors but also for those still sailing their old boats. The purpose would be to motivate sailors with still competitive boats to buy a new boat and selling their old one to newcomers. In this way, it would keep up the broad interest in sailing a Fireball.

Finances: Based on the good financial status, Fireball International has decided to subsidize the containers going to Australia. I am convinced that this has helped a lot to bring 24 boats from Europe to Geelong and sustain the Fireball visibility worldwide! We still have the possibility to award financial support to young sailors attending international events. Council will decide on this each year by voting on the budget.

World Sailing: In July Fireball International has endorsed Chris Henderson as International Measurer. Thus, Fireball International will maintain its Worlds Sailing designation according the WS Regulations Part III §10.

Thanks: After 6 years my Commodoreship will come to an end. Through all these years I felt supported by all of you Fireball friends! Most notably, I want to mention the organizers of the Worlds and Europeans, where I could rely on the good cooperation and experience of the organising teams to realize events which guaranteed great competition and at the same time highlights to celebrate the Fireball friendship! Notably, I would like to thank with all my heart the members of the Executive. Not only their support but also their input and their ideas for sustaining and optimising the organisation has helped to keep the Fireball as an active and vital class. However, I could never have been successful without the great help of Francois Schluchter. He introduced me into all duties of the Commodore. I took over, e.g., the obligations towards World Sailing and the NCAs, and learned how to co-ordinate the organisation of big regattas. Thank you Francois!

Finally, I cordially thank Nick Rees! He accepted to be appointed as my successor and I am more than confident that he is the perfect fit as our new FI Commodore!

Your (nearly past-) FI Commodore
Christina Haerdi