

# INTERNATIONAL FINN ASSOCIATION 2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Was held at Aarhus International Sailing Center, Denmark  
2 September at 10.00

[All papers at [finnclass.org](http://finnclass.org)]

Present: Executive Committee: Tim Tavinor (Chair), Robert Deaves, Kristian Sjöberg, Andrzej Romanowski; Representatives from BRA, CHI, DEN, ESP, FIN, FRA, GBR, GER, ITA, NED, NOR, POL, SUI and SWE and around 35 sailors.  
Proxy votes sent online by: AUS, AUT, CAN, BEL, NZL, POR  
[Combined vote of 21 nations equalling 28 votes]

## MINUTES

### 1. Introduction

Tim Tavinor assumed the chair in the absence of the President. After welcoming Council and observers, he spoke about the need to look at online voting again, given the low attendance in recent years. He said a proposal would be made to move all voting online, while having more informal sailor meetings at all the major events. This would hopefully enable more National associations, and individual sailors, to take part and engage and to remove the likelihood of invalid meetings of less than 15 NCAs, which has been a concern in recent years.

### 2. Minutes from the last meeting

The minutes from the 2023 IFA AGM (previously circulated on IFA website, to secretaries) were approved.

### 3. Accounts

The Chair thanked David Bull for his excellent work in looking after the accounts and keeping everything in check, with clear explanations and accounts.

3.1 The 2023 accounts were approved

3.2 The 2024 budget was not approved. FRA and GER commented that the class should not have such a large forecast profit (more than €28,000) and would like to see avenues where that could be usefully spent. The Executive is to look at revising the budget to provide less profit, including developing the website further, promotion, media, online webinars etc. Further ideas are to be included and approved at a later date.

It was however pointed out that the high profit was just a forecast and depended on many factors such as entry fees and royalty labels to be achieved.

### 4. Executive Committee Reports

#### 4.1 President (no report)

#### 4.2 Executive Director

At the end of my first year as Executive Director I am pleased to report the Finn class continues to thrive. Despite some challenges, it also has many opportunities to expand, grow in numbers and refine its offering to the 1,800 Finn sailors worldwide. Individual membership is actually higher than before the loss of Olympic status, while numbers at major events continue to grow, though sometimes we are never sure how well any event will be supported.

However nearly 300 at the Masters was a sure sign that things are returning to normal, and with 100 at the gold cup and hopefully more at the Europeans, it is hard to dispute the fact that people like Finn sailing. Many local events are getting big numbers as well and seeing a 70-80 boat national fleet is very encouraging. However, things can always be improved and this year we have looked hard at positioning our events, so they remain meaningful.

The Finn Gold Cup is, and has always been, our showcase event, pitting the world's best sailors against each other for one of the most famous and hard fought for trophies in the sport of sailing. The IFA is looking at ways to enhance this, to make it more relevant, to make it more interesting to a wider cohort of sailors

from inside and outside the class. There are also a number of diverse submissions to the AGM with this in mind, driven by the desire to protect our legacy and create a new legacy in the future.

The Masters is perhaps the biggest adult dinghy championship on the planet and should remain so. It continues to attract big numbers and while there have been calls for change, to focus on the Finn Gold Cup, the Masters' recipe clearly works and works exceptionally well. So why risk that? The policy to combine the Open and Masters Europeans when there other two major championships are in Europe perhaps needs a different overview. Something that sits well between the World Masters and Finn Gold Cup, but perhaps offers something different. Each event should be discrete, with its own brand and image and each needs positioning as such. Finn sailors can be a fickle bunch ;-)) so this also brings challenges.

We have launched a new website this year. It may not look very different at the moment, but it has a whole new backend. We have also merged the Finnworldmaster.com site into it and working on including all the event sites in the same place. Now everything will be in the same place, but with the same URLs as before. With a similar rationale, work is also continuing to simplify, combine and improve our event documentation to provide a clearer and more compact overview of event requirements, organiser responsibilities and financial liabilities.

Otherwise, our finances are in great shape, with the eagle eye of David Bull keeping things on track. We have revenue, turnover and savings earning good interest. But we also need to invest and there is a paper for the AGM about investing in the youth of the class and you can read that elsewhere. Boat plaque and mast labels sales are slightly down, but sail labels continue to be strong.

In terms of media, the work rarely lets up pace, whether that is event reporting, publications, updating the website, social media, the hugely successful World Ranking List or just keeping track of the 50+ events on the World Tour for Finns.

In the coming year there will be a greater emphasis on this and better reporting on these events, however this is largely dependent on contributions from member countries and even now, despite many requests there are still blank events on the Tour and lost points for those sailors. If your events are not showing please chase your national secretary. Our social media presence is stronger than ever and huge thanks to Francesca for putting up with me and my sometimes weird ideas and keeping the world informed on Finn matters on a regular basis. There is still much work to do, but we have an incredible following thanks to her dedication and engaging personality.

In closing I'd like to thank the entire Executive for their help and support over the past year especially Kristian who has been a great help with the sailing events and Andy who largely gives me free rein to organise the masters.

***Robert Deaves, IFA Executive Director***

### **4.3 Vice-President Development**

It is time to scarify to the tradition at the moment of the Finn Class Yearly General Meeting and issue some words summing up the VPs in charge of the development point of view

When you have a good business plan (and this is the President's job to remind how healthy is the Class), it is a duty to stretch the false good ideas. Let's sum up what the business plan we have been elected for:

1. Going on with a demanding Finn Gold Cup (FGC is an opened competition under quotas per National Finn Class but yearly utmost challenge)
2. Making sure the World Finn Masters remains the most popular event of the world (WFM is a jamboree welcoming everybody who wants on protected areas and total security)
3. Making sure that the calendar of the events fairly water all the place of the world where Finns are sailing and tuning their number up in order there are not too much and not enough ( this is why for an example European Open have to be competed with rules depending only upon the venue of the FGC and/or the FWM)
4. which doesn't mean we are not happy to see "independent events " programmed and encouraged at suitable dates
5. Promoting the idea that the hardware used by the Finn Sailors is the more sustainable as possible in terms of cost and longevity (gauge stability allowing the enhancement of the number of purveyors)
6. Encouraging youngsters to discover the Finn and enjoy it in order, once they will be older, they mind sailing a Finn as long as they are interested in sailing a dinghy (which is a different concept that creating a fleet of youngsters)

***Marc Allain des Beauvais***

### **4.4 Vice-President Masters**

Following our largest Finn Masters event for six years I think we can look forward to the future with confidence and a welcome return to the former growth we were experiencing before the pandemic. As usual, we punched our way through the many issues that seem to run alongside a large event, but we continue to listen to opinions on how we can fine-tune and improve the Masters events.

The one thing that did keep rearing its head was the random selection process that we used, although it is currently based on a totally random process, originally developed by Richard Hart in 2014 and then further developed by Ray New and then Russell New and Steve Hayles. However, as we experienced in Punta Ala random can have issues in that some sailors in the top section of the fleet never had the opportunity to sail against each other, and some sailors were sailing each other almost every day. We had a lot of suggestions following this and I know that the Dutch are keen to look at another format for the larger fleet separation. Discussions are ongoing about the format for 2025, however it was clear at the Annual Masters Meeting, that very few want a final series, meaning that everyone races together in groups until the final day.

With memories of Italy starting to fade in the distance, our sights are now turned to the Europeans in Cannes. Stretching the summer with Finn sailing is always a good one for me! I'm looking forward to seeing many of you again before a number of us hide away for the winter period and what better place than the South of France. (The discounted deadline is looming so please enter soon).

Over the next couple of months, the workload for Medemblik will start to escalate and we will endeavour to keep you up to speed with news as it happens, particularly with accommodation/ camping, in order that you can plan your travel.

We are also looking in detail at some interesting future venues, but more on that later.

See you in Cannes

**Andy Denison**

#### **4.5 Vice-President Sailing**

**Ranking:** The Finn World Ranking, which has been live from the end of 2022 is now listing, in the latest update from July 2024, 1342 sailors from 40 countries as having participated in at least one ranking event. Of these, approximately 250 sailors have participated in 5 or more ranking events, thus sailing at least in one ranking event outside their home country in the last two seasons.

The main aim with the ranking is to promote the attendance in not only the championship events but also in the biggest international and national regattas and to bring together a growing number of active sailors. It is of course so that this ranking does not capture the ability of a sailor who, for example, only sail one international championship event. But that is well captured by the Championship events themselves.

The ranking is thus designed to capture and rank the abilities of the internationally active sailors in the class and to promote the participation in as many events as possible.

**Event plan 2025-2027:** We are continuing to try to fix events well in advance in order to avoid clashes with the major NFA's domestic main events. Silver Cups will be folded into FGC unless otherwise decided.

#### **2025**

Finn Open European Championships, 5-13. April, Naples

Finn World Masters, 13-20. June, Medemblik

Gold Cup, 31 August-7 September, Cascais (exact dates and length decided at AGM vote in FGC 2024 Aarhus)

#### **2026**

Finn World Masters - Brisbane

Gold Cup – Brisbane

Finn Open European Championships – Gdynia

Finn Masters Europeans – Bids expected from Spain

#### **2027**

Bids for events are expected from Dournenez, Vilamoura, Garda and other venues.

The executive has decided to look at specific ways to promote the status and the participation in FGC engaging with suggestions put forward to us. The executive thinks the FGC status as the most challenging

event (5 days, with a target of 10 races) should be maintained and cherished.

**Kristian Sjöberg**

#### **4.6 Treasurer**

The IFA Executive restructured the management structure of the Committee to meet the requirements of the IFA Constitution. This was done effective 1st July 2023 and I (David Bull) was appointed as Honorary Treasurer until the 2024 Annual General Meeting. The role of Finance and Membership Secretariat was made redundant.

I would like to thank Paul McKenzie for his assistance in transitioning the financials to the new arrangement.

The budget for 2023 was presented at the AGM in Miami which reflected a Net Profit of zero Euros. I suspect with many unknowns like attendance at the Gold Cup, Europeans and Masters Regattas, no longer being an Olympic Class and coming out of the pandemic together with a 2022 loss of 7,000 Euros, this was probably a reasonable projection.

Happily, we can report a Net Profit for the 2023 financial year of 7,914 Euros and Net Assets of 163,802 Euros.

#### **2023 Balance Sheet**

Total	170,942 Euros
Total Assets	168,441 Euros
Total Liabilities	4,639 Euros
Net Assets	163,802 Euros
Retained Earnings	155,888
Current Year Earnings	7,914 Euros
Total Equity	163,802 Euros

The Budget for 2024 has been prepared and incorporated into the Xero accounting system. There is a significant budgeted increase in Net profit of 28,300 Euros. This is primarily due to the large number of entrants in the FWM, FGC and FOE regattas. There are also notable savings as a result of the Committee restructure with the closure of the French Secretariat.

Currently we are ahead of budget, although I expect we will be close to budget by the end of the financial year.

#### **2024 Budget summary:**

Gross Profit	106,000 Euros
Other Income	9,000 Euros
Operating Expenses	85,700 Euros
Net Profit	28,300 Euros

#### **2024 Balance Sheet (as at 31st July 2024)**

Total Bank	206,721 Euros
Total Assets	204,219 Euros
Total Liabilities	4,640 Euros
Net Assets	199,579 Euros
Retained Earnings	163,802 Euros
Current Year Earnings	35,778 Euros
Total Equity	199,579 Euros

The major source of income for the association is membership fees and regatta fees. We have a total of 39 countries represented in our Class and I can report every country is financial. We had some outstanding bad debts, however these have been recovered and we currently have no outstanding overdue debtors. We cancelled the three French bank accounts and established a Wise Euro Account and a Wise UK Account. This provides a convenient system for income and expenditure and amounts can be transferred with minimal fees.

We have established an interest bearing account with NatWest Bank in the UK known as “Liquidity Manager 35 day notice account”. All surplus funds are transferred to this account and we earn a competitive interest rate.

In addition to the above we have maintained a UK working account and Masters account.

The Masters account is incorporated in the Xero accounting system, however the bank reconciliation summary indicates a credit balance of 12,232 Euros.

In summary, the IFA is in a very sound financial position. I would like to thank Robert Deaves for his valuable assistance and help during the handover, especially in establishing the new bank accounts.

The IFA is incorporated in Australia and has been for many years. A financial report is submitted to the Government each year and as an Incorporated Association category Tier 1, no audit report is required.

David Bull

#### **4.7 Chairman of the Technical Committee**

(see points 7.3 and 7.4)

#### **4.8 Chairman of the Media and Marketing Committee – With 4.2.**

### **5. Major Championships**

5.1. 2026 Open Europeans will be held in Gdynia, Poland

5.2. A discussion was held on future of the Silver Cup and Class development. The key outcome was to encourage those NCAs with successful youth programmes to provide ‘best practice’ for others to follow; central SoMe campaigns, improve web presence and purpose, and visibility to potential sailors.

### **6. Rule Changes**

#### **6.1 The age limit for Silver Cup was increased to U29**

GER proposed to amend proposal from U30 to U29 and this was approved. Further to the discussion in 5.2 the IFA policy to incorporate the Silver Cup into the Finn Gold Cup was approved and the age range would be increased to U29 (unanimous).

#### **6.2 Change frequency of Finn Gold Cups outside Europe**

Event Manual Part 1, Item 2 change ‘The Gold Cup shall be held outside Europe a minimum of once every four years.’

To “The IFA will strive to arrange the Finn Gold Cup outside Europe once every six years at the minimum.”

Approved by a majority of 20 votes.

Reason: To allow greater flexibility when allocating venues for the Finn Gold Cup, though it was stressed bids for venues outside Europe can still be discussed at any time.

#### **6.3 Clarify process for AGM Proposals - Constitution**

Add ‘Part A, 3.4 g) Proposals for changes to Association Rules or Class Rules shall only be made by the Executive Committee, the Technical Committee or through National Class Associations.’

Reason: Currently, there is no requirement on who can make proposals for rule changes.

Approved by majority of 25 votes

### **7. Submissions**

7.1 POR – Reduce Finn Gold Cup to 4 days.

Rejected by majority of 25 votes

7.2 GBR – Carbon Booms – A paper was presented from Martin Hughes from the UK.

A discussion was held and the Chair explained this was purely exploratory for the time being, but that a proposal, if any, may be presented in 2025. However, the feeling in the room was this was not needed. An informal show of hands all of those in the room indicated 2 in favour and about 50 against.

### 7.3 GER - Amendment to the Finn Gold Cup

There was a long discussion on the future of the Gold Cup and how to retain it as the pinnacle event in the class. The proposal did not find much favour, though the everyone understood that the event needed attention. Items discussed included

- Qualification – to increase interest and quality and also limit numbers attending.
- Goal is to retain it as a pinnacle event, and not a duplicate of the Masters
- Max fleet size of say 120, for one start. Using the former quota numbers, increased branding

The meeting approved the suggestion to create a Finn Gold Cup working group to discuss all ideas and come up with some proposals.

On the basis of this and the feeling in the room, GER withdrew its proposal.

7.3 and 7.4 The Chair started a discussion on permitting the carrying of GPS enabled equipment on board while racing, including watches, telephones, cameras and GPS compasses such as Vakaros and Velocitec type devices, and opening use of such during racing, as well as providing avenues for sailors to use content on social media, which was felt to be a good thing. Use of GPS devices while racing received a mixed response and further investigation may be done, including some testing at events.

The TC Chair also discussed permitting VHF radios on board during racing with the purpose of using as a means communication for safety reasons and receiving Race Committee communications such as pre-start course changes, start count down, OCS and BFD disqualifications.

Further work is being done and proposals will be made at a later date.

### 8. Elections of Members to IFA Committees

There were no new nominations and all members of the Executive Committee, Technical Committee and the Marketing Committee were elected on bloc, unopposed.

### 9. AOB

There was no other business.

The meeting was closed at 11.45.