



International Etchells Class Association
Andrew Cumming, Chairman
acumming@bell.net

July 1, 2022

Tom Schnackenberg, NZL
Grant Simmer, AUS
Len Imas, USA
Steve Killing, CAN
Bruce Nelson, USA
Shaun Ritson, AUS
Casey Brown, USA

via email

Dear Members of the International Expert Panel,

I am writing today to you all today on behalf of the executive and the members of the International Etchells Class Association. The Etchells, over the half century since its creation, has evolved into a special class which holds a singular place in the pantheon of highly competitive sailboat classes worldwide. I think it derives its special status due to the fact that top sailors of a certain age, whether Olympians, world and national champions in other classes, America's Cup vets, Volvo vets, and so on, inevitably gravitate to the Etchells to try their hand against the best of the best. In effect, the Etchells is the "Champion of Champions" class, and those who race them successfully can truly lay claim to being of the best sailors on the entire planet.

As you are well aware, due to an unfortunate set of circumstances which evolved over the past decade and a bit, the Class found itself, in mid-2019, in a potentially existential crisis over the allegedly out-of-class shape of boats produced by Mould 11. Given the intense level of competition in our class, the many strong personalities involved, and genuine differences of opinion about the Class Rules and how they seek to preserve the precise one-design character of the shape of these boats, the Class found itself on a path which would, many believe, have irreparably damaged it with respect to that special "Champion" status, ultimately undermining its global cachet and leading to its demise.

3368 Talbot Street, San Diego, CA 92106 USA
Phone: +1 619-840-2558

The work that you discussed, undertook, and performed in order to a) establish that there are measurable shape differences between M11 boats and Etchells created from Plug 2; b) show that there is a theoretical performance difference between the two shapes; and c) create a tunable scheme for bringing the performance differences to practically zero and then recommending the parameters of that scheme to allow us as a class to move forward with a protocol for the possible remediation of M11 boats; have very likely saved the Class. I am happy to report that the IGC has unanimously resolved to move forward with Mod 2.4 on a trial basis to April 2024 and has provided a framework for inclusion of so-modified M11 boats in Etchells regattas (except for the Cowes and Miami Worlds) if the organizing committee chooses to. The intention is to use the Perth Worlds as a trial for Mod 2.4, subject to Perth Worlds NOR signoff by the IGC. So great progress, which would not have been even remotely possible without the work the Expert Panel did.

The unimpeachable reputation, bona fide credentials and experienced seniority that each Panel member brings to our Class in this capacity is humbling and awe-inspiring. We are truly blessed to be in the hands of the top experts globally in this field of endeavour.

Resources being what they are in a volunteer-led, underfunded organization we are so incredibly grateful for your many, many donated hours attending meetings, discussing matters and designing the CFD analyses which ultimately proved the differences and then finally led to a practical scheme for elimination of those differences. We as a Class are permanently indebted to each of you.

I personally cannot thank you enough, and I know that I speak for IGC as well as the entire global Class membership when I say that. We the Etchells Class, with the work we are doing to tighten up the Rules concurrent with the help you have provided in navigating the M11 debacle, believe we are putting this Class on a path to serve as the “Champions” class for another half century to come. May we succeed and may we always be grateful for the role that the Expert Panel have played in that outcome.

Sincerely,



Andy Cumming
Chair, IECA IGC