

# RESPONSE TO OPEN LETTER IN SMOOTH SAILING NEWSLETTER DATED 15 AUGUST 2003

## DOUBLE HANDED POST OPTIMIST PLAN

Rob Walker and Dale Hudson must be supported in their efforts to put in place some structure for post Oppie youth sailing. Without this direction, we are losing too many young sailors from our great sport of sailing.

Having read their alternatives for double handed sailing with interest, I believe that there is another option that has many advantages over the two that were compared in their proposal. To facilitate a comparison with their two alternatives, similar information has been provided for the third option.

As can be seen, the *29er* compares very favourably with the other two alternatives and needs to be given serious consideration as the most suitable option of the three:

### Modern skiff design

Brought into production in 1998, there are now 1000 *29ers* sailing in 20 countries

The *29er* was designed as a training skiff for the International *49er* class (Olympic class)

It has an asymmetric spinnaker and uses the concept of apparent wind sailing, combined with a high degree of manoeuvrability that makes for exciting racing. The *29er* is fast and teaches sailors good boat handling techniques that can then be applied to any class thereafter.

Controls are light and easy to operate, making it suitable for young boys and girls to sail.

### Strict one-design

Single source for moulds, tooling, spars and foils

3 approved sail lofts in the world – strict monitoring of sail shape

Limited flexibility with fittings (Keeps costs down)

### Specifications:

Standard GRP construction with foam core – basic materials available anywhere in the world

Length: 4,4 metres

Beam: 1,7 metres

Upwind sail area 13,19 m<sup>2</sup>

Downwind sail area 30,02 m<sup>2</sup>

Hull weight 70 Kg

Fully rigged weight: 90 Kg

Ideal crew weight: 110 to 140 Kg\*

Self-tacking jib

Single trapeze

\* The designer indicates that the *29er* hull shape is more accommodate of wider crew weight range than a conventional dinghy shape

**Costs:**

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| New boat ready to sail (with sails) in South Africa | R45 000       |
| Second hand boats in excellent condition            | under R25 000 |
| <br>  |               |
| New main (including VAT)                            | R 3 124       |
| New jib (including VAT)                             | R 1 482       |
| Asymmetric spinnaker (including VAT)                | R 3 135       |

Sails are made in South Africa under license and are accepted for international competition.

These are all costs for boats and sails in South Africa and therefore there are no additional import costs or levies.

**Value for money**

No speed difference between new and old boats, due to durable construction and strict one design – this keeps costs down resulting in it not being chequebook sailing.

Low maintenance, robust boat

8 boats have been sailing in Durban, often in wind strengths in excess of 25 Knots and the boats have proved their durability in these conditions.

Sails last for a long time - most boats in Durban are sailing with their original sails that have now had nearly 4 years of hard sailing

Fittings may be replaced by alternatives of a similar size

**International strength:**

Very rapid growth worldwide, with boats being built in 6 countries (more builders are being registered).

There is a high proportion of youth sailors in the international fleet, including a large number of all girl teams

They are also sailed by family combinations (father/ son/ daughter; husband/ wife; brothers; sisters) and senior sailors.

Full ISAF class status

Official RYA youth skiff class

Sailing World overall performance boat of the year in 1999

Annual world championships (open to all ages)

Annual European Championships

Annual national championships in a number of countries

Used for the double handed boys and double handed girls divisions in 2002 Youth Worlds

**South African scene:**

**29er** mould in South Africa

SAS recognised class

South African class association

15 boats in South Africa, all of the same speed

Good opportunities for international competition:

1 SA team participated in Canadian Worlds (2001)

2 SA teams participated in Sydney Worlds (2002) – another half South African and half Australian team also participated in this event

1 SA team participated in Canadian Youth Worlds (2002)

Full South African youth teams participated in all of these events

There is also a proposed trip to Australia in January 2004 that will include:

A training camp in Sydney, followed by the Australian Championships in Melbourne, followed by Melbourne Week

## General

Worldwide, skiff sailing is where the real growth in sailing is taking place and South Africa needs to catch up with this trend. The *29er* is a way of getting into the skiff sailing scene at a reasonable cost and also provides the opportunity for South African Youth sailors to participate in international events. After learning skiff racing skills in a *29er*, some of our sailors can thereafter aspire to the Olympic *49er* class.

An important factor to be considered is that after Oppies, sailors qualify for youth worlds status for a very limited number of years. We need to have an exiting boat that will continue to retain the interest of younger sailors even once they are past the age limit for participation in youth worlds. It is considered that the *29er* can certainly do this. Presently, the majority of the *29er* sailors in South Africa are scholars and university students, while there are also a few older sailors that are enjoying the exhilaration of sailing a *29er*.

Regards,

Rob Tarboton

e-mail: [rbt@sai.co.za](mailto:rbt@sai.co.za)  
Home: 033-3471 774