

2022 IOM Worlds Report - P. Grimm

News from Peter Grimm about the IOM World Championships:

I would like to take the opportunity to report to the CRYA membership about my recent attendance at the IOM World Championship Regatta in Rogoznica, Croatia. The regatta was well attended by 24 nations and 76 competitors. Races were run for 6 days of racing across 7 days with a lay day in the middle. 5 fleets raced to complete 15 total races and 75 heats to a podium of 2 French and 1 Croatian competitors. Canada was well represented with two competitors representing our country and one additional Canadian attending from Alberta but under the NZL flag. Competitors were me, Peter Grimm and Bob Lewis from British Columbia and Murray Cummins from Alberta.

Travelling to Croatia was reasonably easy with a long-haul European connection via Germany and then onwards to Split, Croatia. Total travel time was about 18 hours due to layovers. I arrived in Croatia on October 25th in the afternoon local time, was met by Josip of Sailboat RC and went directly to their factory to have a visit and take delivery of my brand-new IOM. Josip, Zvonko, and all of the Sailboat RC team were very receptive and hospitable. The RC sailing workshop was clean, well set up, and firing on all cylinders to have everyone's orders ready for pickup in the following days. I caught a ride up to my apartment that I had arranged from a local taxi operator. Competitors had mostly arranged to stay at the host location Marina Frappa or in local rentals along the seaside homes and seawall where sailing was expected to take place along the seawall. On all practice days leading up to the event and during the event itself, sailing was on the same course along the seawall in Rogoznica.

Once reaching my tiny apartment, after walking to a local store for some odd bits of food for my fridge I decided to fight jet lag and begin work on setting up my new K2 IOM. I was so happy to see my new boat for the first time. It was quite the site to see with patriotic Maple Leaves painted on the sides of the hull and a dark metallic red finish about the hull. Sails needed to have sail numbers affixed, rigs tuned, hull electronics needed to be tuned and set up. I stayed up until nearly midnight drawing sail numbers on all three of my rigs, putting country designation on them, and IOM logos on the mainsails. I set up the hull and went to bed expecting I would wake up in the middle of the night unable to sleep and continue with my work. Much to my pleasure I was able to sleep in until 9am and resume the work to finish up and have my boat race ready. My goal was to sail in the afternoon. Lunch was at Marina Frappa in the company of a number of friends from the world IOM scene. Back to the apartment to collect my boat and splash for the first time. IOM's

gracefully adorned the waters of the Adriatic Sea next to the seawall basically all daylight hours from when I arrived until when I left. So cool.

Check in and measurement started the morning of Thursday October 27th and carried on through Friday the 28th until open ceremonies during the evening. Measurement went flawlessly for me. All 3 rigs through measurement, keel fin and bulb was a couple grams light, overall weight was slightly over so I removed the installed switch and boom, bang on 4000g. Bingo. Off to the races. Opening ceremonies for events like this are magical. We attended the town centre just a short walk or even shorter car ride away. Country flags were handed out to country representatives, and introductions quickly begin. Carrying our country's flag in amongst our competitors is an exciting, rewarding, heart warming, and wildly bigger than me moment. Sleep is on the mind, schnapps is in hand, smiles are on the faces of everyone around us. The looming start of this big regatta are ever present in my thoughts. Morning comes quick and I better get to bed. I'm in race heat #2 and I want to be in the water early for a bit of practice sailing.

Day one of sailing came fast. I got my boat in the water for some short practice sailing. There was very little wind. The boat moved, seemed reasonably balanced, steered, and sailed. Boat out of the water, skippers meeting, seed races start. I started the race well. Boat speed seemed slow. Pointing was an issue. Balance seemed off. Boats passed me all over the place despite seeming to make the right calls on shifts and favoured sides of the course. Boat came off the water. I placed 14th in my seed race. This means D fleet assignment for me. So upset. I walk away from my boat to clear my head and digest what just happened. Returning to my boat with the plan to reset and confirm all details of the rigging measurements was my plan. Immediately I notice the shrouds were twisted multiple times above the spreaders with the twists showing along the mast. I couldn't believe my stupidity. Why do I do this to myself at regattas? How do I make these stupid mistakes that I could never do at any other race day?! Shake it off. Time to confirm tune and get down to work. Watch some racing and try to learn something was the program now. The forecast for nearly the whole event looks to be a high pressure system with warm weather and what I like to call severe clear, heavy sun. Light winds. Beautiful weather for a vacation. Not ideal for a sailing regatta. Well...time to make lemonade as they say.

Day two was nearly a repeat to day one. Challenging sailing. I'm learning more and more as we all sail on the racecourse more. Natural features wise, we are racing on the lee side of a Peninsula. Across the basin is Marina Frappa. The basin is curved inducing some shoreline effect on the winds, increased pressure and direction much like a Bernoulli effect. Far side of the course appears to have influential outflow from the last marina channel creating a left shift only on the far-left side of the course and 3 boat lengths from the windward mark. These conditions favoured sailors with brass nuts

who were willing to bang the hard left or hard right corners of the racecourse. After 2 days and 74 windward mark roundings into glare and 100+ metre distance line of sight to the weather mark I'm starting to get frustrated. I had an informal meeting with race officials, umpires, and some past IOMICA officials. I asked where the country representative debriefs were happening? Today? Tomorrow? Where? Can we discuss what is working and what isn't? To my surprise they were receptive to some discussion about the racing. I suggested and requested 3 things after illustrating the existing problems with the racing as I had seen it. 1) Move the whole course to leeward 50-100 metres 2) Add a start line lower on the course with a finish line further up the course to create a larger first weather beat 3) Consult the Umpire team and outline the expectation that weather mark roundings needed to be viciously enforced PER the RRS. To say I was getting tired of poor performance, poor sailing, and complacency on part of the race officers is an under statement. Wonderful social dinner experiences happen each evening. Connecting with great sailing friends from around the globe overshadows racing issues. Fun times ensue. Genuine friendships are harboured and great laughs are shared over breaking bread. This is entirely why we are here!

Day 3 arrives. Race management makes changes. Weather mark is moved closer to the seawall. Another lower start line arrives. Eureka! We have some racing now!! The sailing is super challenging. The sailors are all excellent sailors in their own respect in their home venues. You can't get away with anything and you need to lead with the elbows. As you sail an event like this, you're always mindful of where you are within your respective heat, and which heat you're racing. Top 6 of any given race heat is a great place to aim for as a goal for. If you can't be in the 6 boats promoted to the next heat, then best not to be in the bottom 6 to be relegated down to the lower fleet on the next heat. Always counting 1-6 for the back and front of the fleet. The racing continues to be highly aggressive, highly skilled, and very impressive. The human factors affecting performance are fascinating for me. For myself I was able to see the affects of the pressure of the event. I spent 3 years preparing for the next worlds which was delayed multiple times. I ordered a new boat months and months prior to the event. I arranged flights, accommodation, time away from my family etc. All the work was put in to be ready...and here we are standing shoulder to shoulder pre-start with hands sweating, fingers shaking, nerves making decisions, not the sailors best judgement. Pressure is a fascinating thing. Day 3 ends with the promise of a Day 4 lay day and trip to a national park and waterfall and guided tour around the historic city of Sibenik and big lunch for everyone together.

Lay day was wonderful and well deserved. More social time with sailing friends from around the globe. New friendships formed; old ones rekindled. It was an amazing experience to explore an ancient city with tons of history with our friends from all over. We saw wonderful things and broke bread,

then saw more wonderful things. At the end of the day a fabulous get together to celebrate Fred Rocha's Birthday. Amazing day, amazing people. Again, this is why we are here! We all vow over adult beverages that days 5 and day 6 will be "moving day". Some people will move up, some will move down...but moving day was agreed upon. Day 7 will be an effort to solidify a position in the standings and "finish strong".

Day 5 and Day 6 resumed the racecourse issues that resumed after mid-day on day 3. Windward marks were way off the shoreline into the "bay" area with heavy glare and light winds. Challenging for the competitors, seemingly increasingly challenging for the umpires also. I end up suffering some casualties from improper actions from umpires. I was not alone. Many other competitors suffered issues. Many infractions caught on live camera. I can only conclude that here we are conceding to complacency, not taking a look at the bigger picture. Some mistakes compound into more mistakes. I found some of my more personal emotional lows in the event during these two days. The scores corroborate this story. Day 6 team Canada was very kindly invited to dinner by our good and humble friend, the current US National Champion, Gary Boell! Excellent! We'll be there 100% and can't wait. Our new friend from Japan #64 Yasuyuki Ikematsu is attending dinner with us also. We shared a beautiful family style meal, break bread and drink with a couple baked fish and vegetables with potatoes and a side salad. Bob tried to wear a fish head on his nose, and we all satisfy Gary's need for something sweet after dinner and have some of the best Fig Ice Cream for dessert that I have ever had in my life. More than icing on the cake...an evening of great food and laughs with good friends is priceless.

Day 7 is the last day of racing with an expected closing ceremonies and dinner. A world champion will be crowned. No one will worry about winds as the forecast is for big breeze for the last day. We all batten down the hatches, tune our B and C rigs before we go to bed Thursday night. Morning arrives and even before I get out of bed, I hear the wind blowing hard. In fact the wind was blowing hard even before going to bed. The rain is pelting down, the wind is blowing, the bay which was previously calm and serene is now frothy, swelled with higher water, white caps are abundant, and trees are blowing sideways. Finally...some SAILING weather to race in! Armed with fresh B and C rigs and a desire to finish the regatta strong, its game time. I went into the last day of sailing with an axe to grind, a chip on my shoulder, nothing to lose, and a desire to go hard. At first everyone was rigging up C rigs but as heat one started the day the breeze started to ease up a little. I made the decision to hang as much laundry out as I could handle and hopefully survive the worst of the gusts in a B rig. Also, If I wasn't willing to take some risk, I likely wouldn't be rewarded and the idea of finishing the regatta in the A fleet where I felt I belonged likely wouldn't become a reality. Come out swingin'! So, I quickly ditch my C rig, and put on my B rig in some crazy gusty conditions on shore and I think it's all ready to go. We all put our

boats in the water and start sailing. I sail the D fleet race; advance to C. I didn't bring my boat in between races and just assume my boat is good for C fleet. I sail the first weather beat and things feel strange with the boat. It is hard to tack, won't point, keeps falling off the wind in comparison to the competition but it has huge drive and decent speed. Off the wind its fast but the jib is going out too far...I sheet in off the wind to compensate but going upwind is super challenging. I finish the race but each one of the tacks loses ground. In any of these races, anything short of a perfect tune means a lower finishing position. You just can't hold off well-tuned boats with one that has issues. I limp my boat across the finish and pull the boat out still hanging in C fleet by the last spot before relegation. My jib sheet hook had come out of the hole in the boom. I had forgotten in my mad dash to swap rigs from C to B to slide the rubber O-ring over the sheet hook. The hook was just dangling out of the fairlead hole on the jib boom and threatening to come out of the fairlead. That explains a lot! The good news is the boat seems very fast and I'm keen and prepared to go hard in the next race. Race 15 heat C arrives, I sail well and promote to B heat then A heat. None of the sailing is a cake walk. We fight hard for each spot. I specifically recall in the C heat being in 8th spot before the final beat to the finish line with a lot of ground to make up. I capitalize on some errors of other competitors, pick the right spot along the shore to grab the inner gate, left shoreline lift along the shore, it's all coming together. I sail bow down, go hard for the finish, one last close crossing is coming up and I'm on Starboard. AUS 18 is looking like he'll directly intersect with my course. I asserted myself and my position and he tacks! Perfect, I make up a half boat length and have him pinned down for the finish line. I'm going to scoop that 6th promotion spot and cross the finish with a little sigh of relief. Up to B fleet we go. Every race is a roller coaster.

15A race comes and I'm standing next to some of the regatta leaders. Many familiar sailors in this fleet. I'm congratulated by Peter Stollery and Chris Harris for getting my head out of the dumps and sailing well. I'm reminded not to cause shit on the course by some other sailors who are trying to get their last stab at holding position in the standings. I laugh as the start tape kicks in, Michael Jackson's Billy Jean is playing and I remind the guy telling me to back off that I was there to win the race and he better not hit me. He takes two steps away...guess we don't all have the same sense of humour. We get off the line reasonably clean, I'm pinned down in the middle of the pack and have to make a trek to the shore along with everyone. I'm sharing space with Rob Walsh upwind on the first beat, arrive at the weather mark on the plus side of the group only to be t-boned before the mark by ESP 17. Ugh. This puts me below the lay line, he doesn't do a spin, I'm screwed at the weather mark, I end up fouling another boat, do a penalty, end up in the bottom end of the fleet quickly trying to play catch up again. Finish the race in 15th. A respectable race and I am comfortable knowing I sailed as clean as possible given the conditions and challenging distances we were working with. Very satisfied to finish strong like this.

Closing ceremonies was a fantastic meal. Best one of the event. We had tastes and feelings from many parts of the world. Sushi to start, Gnocci Bolognese, then a meat and potatoes main course. Great company at the table, great chances to have our last drinks and meal together, presentations to the top 10. What a wonderful event with our new World Champion Olivier Cohen! Here we find ourselves saying goodbye, planning to see one another again soon, and running home in a monsoon type downpour to pack for departure in the early morning.

Saturday morning, I departed early in my van taxi at 5am in a crazy downpour of rain again. Flights home looked like this: Split to Munich, Munich to London, London to Vancouver. Hugs, handshakes, promises to attack one another on the racecourse again soon. Everything went reasonably well, made all the connections, and all my bags made it to the arrival hall before I even got there. Success! Home with a new boat, no extra charges for excess baggage on the way home, back to regular life with my lovely wife and kiddies. Dreams and plans begin for the next WCR. Time to digest and evaluate how I can sail better in the future and what my learnings were at this event. Time to review my mental and written notes on the subject.