MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL DN ICE YACHT RACING ASSOCIATION

RUNNER TRACKS

DECEMBER 2025

WESTERN CHALLENGE: BACK TO MINNEWASKA

THREE PROPOSALS FROM THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

CONTENT

Cover Photo: Ron Sherry US44 at the 2025 Western Challenge on Lake Minnewaska, Starbuck, MN.
Photo by Steve Bernstein.

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COMMODORE'S REPORT

ROB HOLMAN US3705
LAMBERTVILLE, MICHIGAN, USA

Our first event of the season, the Western Challenge, is now complete. While I was unfortunately unable to attend this year, reports from the ice and feedback from participants indicate the event was well attended and delivered excellent sailing for all involved. Thank you to the organizers and competitors who helped make it a strong start to the season.

As the season begins, I do so with a heavy heart as we remember the loss of our dear friend and fellow sailor, JR Francis (US 807). A Toledo native, JR began sailing alongside many of us on Maumee Bay and went on to compete at the highest levels of our sport. He was a quiet presence—yet a mentor, a friend, and a respected competitor. Gone far too soon, JR will forever sail on that "black ice." He will be deeply missed.

Looking ahead to the remainder of the season, I encourage each of you to help bring others into our sport—whether through your local club or informal groups of sailors. Growing our class depends on welcoming new sailors, sharing our knowledge, and fostering the enthusiasm that makes this community special. The future of our sport rests with all of us.

Finally, this is a gentle reminder to register for the 2026 North Americans and the 2026 Nationals. Please consider registering early and inviting a friend to join you. Together, we can continue to grow a strong, supportive community of sailors. All are welcome.

Fair winds and fast ice,
Rob Holman IDNIYRA Commodore

Photo: Gretchen Dorian

WESTERN CHALLENGE
An unofficial regatta.
December 5-7, 2025
Minnesota
icesailing.net

NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP & NATIONALS
January 24-31, 2026
Host: Western Region
idniyra.org

WORLD & EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP
February 14-21, 2026
Host: Poland
idniyira.eu

WESTERN LAKES
January 3-4, 2026
idniyra.org

CENTRAL LAKES
TBD
idniyra.org

EASTERN LAKES
TBD
idniyra.org

DN & ICE OPTIMIST JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
January 20- 26, 2026

GRAND MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIP
February 10-12, 2026
Host: Finland
dngrandmasters.eu

CANADIAN CHAMPIONSHIP
TBD
idniyra.org

PHOTO: ANNA SUSLOVA
2025 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

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2022 Polish Championship 2nd Robert Graczyk P-31

2022 Grand Masters Champion Tomas Lindgren S-81

BE FAST BE COMPETITIVE BECOME THE WINNER

Lake Minnewaska in Starbuck, MN froze just in time on the Monday before the Western Challenge. Residents contacted Mike Miller as soon as the surface locked in. Mike and Tom Meyer went scouting and found what we hoped for: a wide, clean sheet and a familiar welcome. Minnewaska has become a favorite with its enormous launch area and the Water's Edge restaurant sharing the parking lot. Trailers backed onto the ice without trouble.

By Friday we had more than five inches of ice capped with thick white frost. Early arrivers found Thursday too cold to sail. A light snowfall came Friday morning and the wind never showed. The still air turned into a gift. Ron Sherry US44 held a seminar inside Water's Edge and drew almost every sailor in town. Peter Norton KA2 clipped on a microphone and recorded it for later use.

Ron walked through the foundations of good DN sailing. One of the sailors in the front row was a newcomer, Bobby Hale, an Australian dinghy racer visiting family near Glenwood, MN. He had posted a simple question in the Minnesota group: "Is there anywhere I could try this? Or anyone willing to give this Aussie a lesson?"

WESTERN CHALLENGE

WHERE THE SEASON BEGINS

Photo: Steve Bernstein

The class responded with the usual generosity. Advice, boats, and offers of help came his way. Bobby showed up ready to learn and never stopped smiling. Fellow Aussie expatriate Peter Norton KA2 took him under his wing. Bobby sailed hard all weekend.

Another bright story came from the youth side. Ella Bowers won her first race in the Silver fleet and then won another. It was the first racing she had ever done. She's the granddaughter of Gordy Bowers and has been coached by Sam Bartel. Gordy sailed in the first DN World Championship on Gull Lake in 1974, a fine echo of history.

A working seam ran across the lake on Friday, slowing the crossing to the racecourse, but sailors dealt with it. Some stood at the crack and helped others across. Pat Heppert scouted the ice each morning and placed flags so we knew where to cross. The seam became a natural border between racers and recreational sailors. As always, no scores were kept and sailors self-selected into Gold or Silver.

The best stories were told later at Water's Edge, with the day's details passed around the tables.

Saturday brought more sailors. The crack healed overnight. The scene felt European: crowded and cheerful, racers charging toward the marks while kids and newcomers worked the other side. A light snowfall made the ice sticky both days, but the wind filled in enough to keep everyone moving. It was good sailing, the kind that wakes up muscles and memories. The right start to a long season ahead.

Photo: Steve Bernstein

Photos this page: Kevin Barta

YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

WESTERN CHALLENGE RECAP
BY IDNIYRA YOUTH SAILING DIRECTOR SAM BARTEL US1011

The first weekend of iceboating is officially in the books. More than 80 ice sailors made the trip to Starbuck, MN, for the Western Challenge on Lake Minnewaska. Among them were seven junior sailors from the Lake Minnetonka Sailing School (LMSS), three parents, eight Minnetonka Yacht Club (MYC) members, and competitors from across the country and overseas—including San Diego, Pensacola, Boston, New York, Arizona, Sweden, and Germany. With six inches of ice, a light layer of snow, and more than two miles of glassy runway to play on, the stage was set for a great weekend.

Friday delivered a lively 10–15 knots of breeze, followed by 6–12 knots on Saturday—perfect for two full days of fast sailing. The group kicked things off with an on-land clinic led by iceboating legend Ron Sherry before ripping through more than 20 practice races. By Sunday, bitter temps and no wind convinced most sailors to call it early, but a handful of die-hards stayed for more sailing on Monday.

Minnetonka High School freshman Cayla Beddor summed it up well: "It was really fun to hang out with my friends and sail fast again—high school sailing only ended a month ago, but it feels like it's been much longer."

Class photo from the Ron Sherry DN sailing clinic at the 2025 Western Challenge.

The junior sailors also spoke about the community that makes iceboating so special. "The people were really nice and made it such a fun experience," said Ella Bowers, a sophomore at Benilde–St. Margaret's School (BSM). "Everyone wants to share knowledge, equipment, and help each other out—especially the youth sailors." She also celebrated a highlight of her own: "The most fun moment was winning two of the Silver Fleet races in a fleet of nearly 50 boats."

Minnetonka 8th grader Lucas McGary echoed that excitement from a different angle, saying, "The speed makes me feel powerful, and it's really fun to race against so many world and national champions."

A huge thank-you goes to Mike Miller, Tom Meyer, and Mike Bloom for scouting the ice and helping deliver such an amazing event right in our backyard. Thanks also to Steve Bernstein, who made the trek north to take photos on Friday.

With fresh snow shutting down many of the smaller local lakes and bays, Coach Samuel will soon scout new venues and take the junior team's fleet of DNs and ice Optis wherever the next patch of ice appears—hopefully Minnetonka's lower lake, Lake Waconia, or Lake Pepin.

Peter Norton KA2 and fellow Australian Bobby Hale.

Photo: Kevin Barta

TECH COMMITTEE PROPOSALS TO CHANGE THE OFFICIAL SPECIFICATIONS: GENERAL, C. MAST, D.BOOM

REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING GENERAL SECTION BY NEW GENERAL SECTION

Rational:
The consolidation of equipment limitations while racing to the new General Section of the Specifications makes equipment restrictions currently 'hidden' in various places easier for competitors and Race Committees to understand. Several changes in limitations while racing are proposed, as follows:

- The interpretation dated 11/10/73 and 11/14/88 prohibits movement of the tack pin 'during a regatta', whereas here it is 'during a race.'
- With the DN Class now allowing two sails per regatta, and different sailmakers often having different set-back on their tack cringles, adoption of 'during a race' acknowledges that different sails may require different tack pin locations.
- Other limitations on adjustments 'while underway' (stays and mast step) have been changed to limitations 'while racing.'
- Another limitation has been added: that adjustment of the clew pin position or of the outhaul be prohibited while racing. Specification I.4, Fittings, says "Hardware need not conform to plans as long as specifications are not violated and hardware performs the same function that the plan item performs." The plan 'Clew Outhaul Bracket' is not adjustable while sailing so prohibition of adjustment of the clew while racing is implied.

Delete:

- Existing 'General' Section of Official Specifications and three associated Interpretations
- Existing E.10, restriction of number of runners during a regatta
- Existing G.11, restriction of number of sails during a regatta
- Existing H.6, restriction of adjustment of stays while underway
- Existing H.8, restriction of adjustment of mast step while underway
- Existing I.10, restriction to single mast, boom, fuselage, and runner plank during a regatta
- Existing Interpretation I, 11/10/73 & 11/14/88 restricting tack pin location
- Existing interpretation I, 11/12/03 restricting hull and boom block location underway

Replace by:

A.A.	**General**
	The General Section of the Specifications shall be read and applied together with all other Sections of the Official Specifications.
1.	**Competitor's Responsibility for Compliance**
	All DN racing equipment must be in accordance with the DN Official Specifications. Whether or not a competitor reveals the structural components of his/her equipment, he/she is responsible for making sure his/her equipment complies with the DN Official Specifications.
2.	**Equipment Limitations while Racing**
a.	Only one mast, boom, fuselage, and runner plank shall be used for an entire regatta, unless broken beyond reasonable repair (as interpreted by the Race Committee).
b.	A yacht shall be restricted to the use of two sails in a regatta, unless damaged beyond reasonable repair (as interpreted by the Race Committee).
c.	A yacht shall be restricted to the use of nine runners during a regatta, unless any are damaged beyond reasonable repair (as interpreted by the Race Committee).
d.	During a race (after a yacht starts and until she finishes):
	i. The forestay and side stays shall not be adjusted.
	ii. The halyard shall not be adjusted.
	i. The tack pin location shall not be changed.
	iv. The clew pin location shall not be changed, or the clew outhaul shall not be adjusted.
	v. The positions of sheet blocks on the boom or on the fuselage shall not be adjusted.
	vi. The location of the mast step shall not be adjusted
3.	**Materials**
a.	Various materials are permitted in the construction of a DN, subject to the requirements of the applicable section of the specifications.
b.	Para-aramid (Kevlar) is always a prohibited material except for the tiller, for which it is permitted (Specification A.3.b.i)
4.	**Measurement**
a.	Where specifications or interpretations define measurement jigs for builders and measurers, alternative measurement jigs or methods may be employed, but results obtained with jigs or methods defined herein will govern in the event of conflict. Any illustrations of application of a specification to a DN show examples and are neither exhaustive nor exclusive.
b.	The dimensional specifications apply to a DN as presented for measurement. There is no allowance for wear and tear when a DN is measured beyond minor or cosmetic damage such as local dents, cracks or finish failures.

PROPOSED NEW SECTION C, MAST

Rationale:
The proposal for Section C is largely a combination of existing Specifications and Interpretations. Changes in structure and wording are editorial, for simplicity and clarity. Specific reference to corrector weights for weigh and balance point has been added following input from Ken Smith (US 4137).

Delete:
Existing Section C and its associated Interpretations.

Replace by:

C.	**Mast**
The DN mast is constructed of wood, aluminum and/or composites and supported by a forestay and shrouds and a mast-step that allows free rotation of the mast. *Masts built prior to July 1, 1996, shall be considered legal if they meet prior specifications (as published in the IDNIYRA 1996 Yearbook) instead of current Specifications.*	
1.	**Materials**
a.	The following materials are allowed for construction of the mast: aluminum; wood; carbon or glass fiber; adhesives; foam; fairing and finishing materials. Materials not explicitly allowed are prohibited.
b.	Fittings (for example: halyard block/sheeve, halyard catch, hound, or mast base socket) or corrector weights (ballast) may be built of any materials except para-aramid (Kevlar). Also see Section H, Rigging and Fittings.
c.	Fasteners of steel, stainless steel or aluminum are allowed.
2.	**Construction Methods and Details**
a.	Cross section profiles are optional. Mast may be solid or hollow.
b.	Only one boltrope tunnel is permitted. The boltrope tunnel shall be substantially straight with the mast relaxed. Track is prohibited. If the boltrope tunnel is attached to the mast externally the boltrope tunnel shall be considered part of the mast for measurement of the mast cross section dimensions and mast weight and balance point.
c.	A removable internal reinforcement device using the materials allowed in Specification C.1.a is permitted. The reinforcement device shall not be altered, turned or removed during a regatta.
d.	The mast may be made in sections (for example, an upper and a lower section) but shall be one piece when used in a regatta. When the sections are separable the joint between them shall be covered (sealed) by tape by regatta officials (or the tape signed by regatta officials) for the duration of the regatta.
e.	The bottom of the mast shall have a socket, or sockets, so the mast will pivot freely on the mast step deck ball. The socket(s) may be integral with the bottom of the mast or may be a separate fitting that is attached to the bottom of the mast. If a socket is a separate fitting it shall be in place and considered part of the mast for measurement of dimensions, weight, and balance point.
f.	A halyard shall be installed. An internal halyard is permitted.
g.	Devices which prevent or hinder movement of the boom on the mast are prohibited.

3.	**Key Dimensions**				
		English		**Metric**	
		Max (in.)	**Min (in.)**	**Max (mm)**	**Min (mm)**
a.	Length overall, including fittings	192	186	4876.8	4724.4
b.	Maximum fore and aft dimension of mast cross section, excluding hardware	4		101.6	
c.	Minimum fore and aft dimension of mast cross section, measured from the full section above the boom jaw area to a point located 127 ½ inches (3238.5 mm) above the mast base		3 ½		88.9
d.	Minimum fore and aft dimension of mast cross section, measured above a point located 127 ½ inches (3238.5 mm) above the mast base		2		50.8
e.	Maximum side-to-side dimension of the mast cross section, excluding hardware	2 ½		63.5	
f.	Minimum side to side dimension of the mast cross section, below a point located 127 ½ inches (3238.5 mm) above the mast base		2		50.8
g.	Minimum side to side of the mast cross section, measured above a point located 127 ½ inches (3238.5 mm) above the mast base		1-1/8		28.6
h.	Minimum depth of the bolt rope tunnel measured perpendicular to the outside trailing edge of the mast		3/8		9.5
4.	**Weight and Balance Point**				
a.	The mast, without stays but complete with hardware and halyard used while sailing, shall not weigh less than 15 lbs. (6.80 kg). Aluminum masts produced from a die existing prior to July1,1996 may weigh less than 15 lbs. (6.80 kg).				
b.	When supported at one point in an approximate horizontal position, the mast, without stays but complete with hardware and halyard in sailing position, shall balance at a point a minimum of 84 inches (2133.6 mm) from the mast base.				
c.	The minimum weight and balance point specifications (C.4.a and C.4.b) shall be met with and without any removable internal reinforcement.				
d.	Corrector weight(s) (ballast) may be applied to the mast or its fittings so that minimum weight and balance point (C.4.a and C.4.b) are satisfied. Corrector weights shall be permanently attached to the mast or its fittings.				
e.	In specifications C.4.a and C.4.b, the term "stays" includes all components and devices used to connect the cables to the mast hound at the height of the lower mast hound bolt, reference specification H.12.a. All components and devices used to connect the cables to the mast hound at the height of the lower mast hound bolt must be removed from the mast when determining the weight, C.4.a, and the balance point, C.4.b.				

PROPOSED NEW SECTION D, BOOM

Rationale:
The proposal for Section C is largely a combination of existing Specifications and Interpretations but includes two substantive changes.

Current specification D.4 sets a minimum specific weight and internal diameter for an aluminum boltrope tube. This requirement appears unnecessary and is deleted.

The measurement of the length of the boom is redefined. It is functionally equivalent to the existing Specification D.1, but simpler to apply.

Delete:
Existing Section D and its associated Interpretations.

Replace by:

D.	**Boom**				
	The DN boom is constructed of wood and/or aluminum, with Fiberglass as an allowed reinforcement.				
1.	**Materials**				
a.	Booms shall be built of wood and/or aluminum. Fiberglass may be added for reinforcement only. Adhesives, fasteners, fairing materials, and finishes are permitted.				
b.	Fittings on the boom (for example: boom jaws, tack and clew attachments, attachments for blocks) may be built of any materials except para-aramid (Kevlar). Also see Section H, Rigging and Fittings.				
2.	**Construction Methods and Details**				
a.	Cross section profile is optional. Boom may be solid or hollow.				
b.	Only one boltrope tunnel is permitted. The boltrope tunnel shall be substantially straight with boom relaxed. An aluminum boltrope tube is allowed on a wood boom; the cross section of the tube is optional.				
c.	i. Boom jaws are optional. Devices which prevent or hinder movement of the boom on the mast are prohibited except for the allowed check wire in the luff of the sail, if fitted.				
	ii. The boom or boom jaw shall not have a projection that will fit into the mast slot and thereby affect the rotation of the mast.				
3.	**Key Dimensions**				
		English		**Metric**	
		Max (in.)	**Min (in.)**	**Max (mm)**	**Min (mm)**
a.	Length of boom, measured on centerline (any portion of boom jaws off the centreline of the boom and any other hardware attached to the boom are not included in the measurement)	108	Optional	2743	Optional
b.	Height of cross section of boom between the forward end of the outhaul bracket or outhaul adjuster and a point 12 inches (305 mm) from forward end of boom on centerline	3	2 ½	76.2	63.6
c.	Width (thickness) of cross section of boom between the forward end of the outhaul bracket or outhaul adjuster and a point 12 inches (305 mm) from forward end of boom on centerline	1-25/32	1 ¼	45.25	31.8