

# *International Rule*

8mR   Race History   '39 - '11   Tore Holm   Rules   Restauration   baltic week 2010  
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**current issues:**

## Class & Rules

by John Lammerts van Bueren

The Eight Metres have traditionally been the dayboats of the aristocrats and captains of industry. Royal families of Spain, Norway and Sweden raced in these yachts and the class has always attracted colourful people who had the funds to purchase the very best. The Rothschild family sailed an Eight in 1924 and with generations past they now own a modern, wing keel aluminum Eight. Some other famous owners included the Duchess of Windsor, Baron Alfred Krupp von Bohlen of Germany, Marcus Wallenberg



jr of Sweden, Carl Siemens of Germany and Virginie Hériot of France. Many of the famous designers owned their personal Eight including William Fife, Charles Nicholson and Sir Glen Coates. The New York Yacht Club supported the class in

1928 by ordering 11 Eights in one order from Abeking & Rasmussen.

Today the class is very much alive. Each year the classic yachts race for the Sira Cup, donated in 1983 by King Olav V of Norway, and the modern yachts race for the World Cup and the European Cup. Indeed, more than 90 years after this first international sailing class was established new yachts are still under construction. The modern Eights have wing keels, trim flaps, sail computers, mylar and spectra rigs and are tank tested. These modern racing machines start together with the beautiful vintage yachts and the racing tuned classics.

How well the Metre rule works was again proved at the Rolex Cup in Saint Tropez. The 1930 Charles Nicholson designed classic 8-Metre Vision was able to beat the 1986 Aluminium Eight Gaulois designed by Fauroux in every single race! Maybe more interesting indeed, in 4 out of 5 races this 1930 classic Eight beat the entire fleet of Twelves, including some modern America's cup Twelves!

When the Eights go to their races most of them are transported by road on special deeploader trucks and every other year we see European and American yachts shipped across the Atlantic to compete for the World Cup. The class remains strong throughout the world, with fleets in the USA, Canada, France, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Germany, Holland and several other countries. In total the estimate is that approximately 180 Eight metre yachts still sailing.

## Cruising

Many, many Eights are cruising along the coasts of the world, and almost without exception they are owned by owners with a great passion for their yacht. Once you have sailed an Eight you're spoiled for life, for no other yacht combines her speed, upwind capabilities, easy handling, seaworthiness and uncompromising beauty.



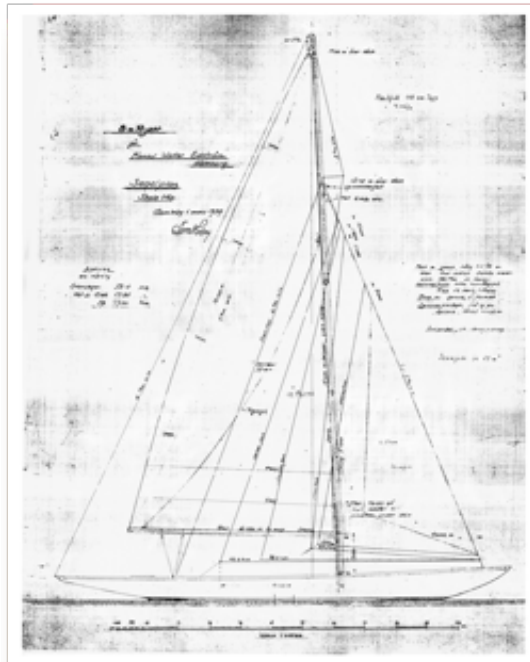
Especially in Scandinavia the Eights are kept in families for generations and it's quite normal to see owners who had their yacht for 25 years or more. The longest known family owned Eight metre is the lovely Quinta. She was built by Johan Anker in Norway in 1916. Mr. Kaspar Hassel bought her in 1918. When he



passed away in 1962 his son Knut Hassel continued to sail her until 1997 he passed the tiller on to his son Arne Hassel! Today Quinta is in perfect and very original shape and she represents one of the finest examples of the first rule Eight Metres.

The Eights have proved to be great seaboats. Many owners have extensively cruised their Eight along the coasts of Europe, Canada, USA, Australia and New Zealand. A great example is John Schlagel, he has now logged over 50.000 miles cruising the coast of America, Canada and Alaska. His Eight Metre Aurora is a 1928 Starling Burgess designed boat, built by Abeking & Rasmussen. The 1912 Taifun also has made some incredible voyages. She won gold at the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm. This Eight was sailed with a full crew to Japan and then she was single handedly sailed from Japan to Portugal! Under the guidance of metre yacht specialist David Vieira she has just been restored back to her original lay-out and gaff rig in Portugal. She will competed at the 1998 European championship in Geneva.

In 1934 Uffa Fox described the Eights so very nicely: "The owner can sail his Eight Metre round the coast from regatta to regatta for coastal cruising in an Eight Metre would give owners the two most sought after things in life; health and happiness, for without doubt sailing at sea brings peace to the mind, and the clean salt-laden air health to the body, which are both needed by all in this mechanical age of irritating noise and poisonous fumes. The Eight Metres are very popular, for in the cabin an owner can live, or simply change his wet clothes after a hard race and eat his lunch in comfort according to his ideas of pleasure. Added to this there is the protection the cabin gives in bad weather, for then it seems to make what otherwise be a boat, a ship."



The future and current trends:

Today the a good number of the classic Eights are primarily used for cruising at sea. They have a galley, a chart table, an engine, will sleep 4-5 and are converted to a self draining cockpit. A typical crew for cruising is four although depending

on deck lay-out and weather conditions it's also possible to handle the boat with a crew of two.

A core of about 70 classic Eights have been kept at their minimum weight and in top racing condition, including kevlar and mylar sails, aluminium spars, rod rigging, hydraulic mast shift and sail computers. If they have an engine, it will be removed for weight reduction when racing. These yachts race with a crew of seven for the Sira Cup.



The modern Eights are pure racing yachts, equipped with the very best money can buy and in many cases they are raced by professional crews. At this moment the class has 12 modern Eights. Some owners own more than one Eight. The main event for these yachts is the World Cup. Most will just sail 5 days a year and then be stored ashore waiting to be launched for the next World

Cup. A modern eight has a crew of 6. Racing a modern Eight requires a very skilled and strong crew. The sails are large and powerful, you may take the sailplan of an Eight and project it almost one to one on to the modern ILC40. The big difference is that the ILC40 has 14 crew members. The Eight just 6, and as you will understand, sailing in the top requires 6 of the very best!

The current trend in the class is restoring the classic Eights back to original. One of the first, and certainly the most well known, is the 1930 Fife designed Fulmar. She was restored at Fairlie Restorations to a standard that up to that time was only seen with vintage cars. She truly resembles what William Fife delivered back in 1930. Since then Catina VI, Aile VI, Sylphea III and Suzette have undergone such uncompromising and beautiful restorations and can be considered as the pearls of the class. Currently some 10 more Eights are under restoration. The future could well be the construction of classic 8-Metres with modern lines under water. This way one combines the power, speed and competitiveness of a modern 8-Metre with the beauty and grace of a classic. The first of this new generation of Eights is currently under construction to a 1998 Jim Taylor design for the Marblehead based Bruce Dyson. In Germany a new design by Juliane Hempel will be made on this concept, ready for publication at the end of 1998. The owners today represent a



group of people with an enormous passion for their yachts and the class and yes, many of today's owners would be rich if they didn't own an Eight...

## 8mR: Rules

The Eight Metre Yachts are not 8 meters long, in fact on most Eight Metre yachts it's impossible to find any dimension to be 8 meters. So what does 8 metre stand for? 8 metre is no more than the outcome of a mathematical formula which incorporates the main dimensions, which have influence on the speed of the yachts and to which the yachts are designed and built. This formula stimulated the designers to



search for methods of improving yacht design. As the first ever true international sailing class, the formula of the Metre yachts has been of a paramount importance to the development in yacht design. The Eight Metre yachts have always been considered as elite, very fast, very beautiful and very expensive. They were used mainly for racing and short cruises. The best known Metre yachts are the Twelves that were used for the oldest trophy in yachting history, the America's Cup.

Metre boats such as the 6, 8 and 12mR are not one designs. They are built to a formula that puts design and construction, as well as sailor skill, to the test. As such, they can have different dimensions for beam, length, displacement and sail area. The boats that sailed in the 1900 Olympic Games were built to the English rule. At that time there were French and German rules as well which obviously caused some conflicts of interest. In 1906 the International Yacht Racing Association (now the International Sailing Federation ISAF) met in London, and under the presidency of King George V, the Prince of Wales, the delegates came from France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Denmark and Sweden. After prolonged deliberations (at which extreme antagonism were initially voiced, there was unanimous approval of a uniform Rating Rule for all of Europe.

This rule was:

$$(L + B + 1/2G + 3d + 1/3 \text{ Sq. root of } S-F) \text{ divided by } 2.$$

m B = Beam in linear units

m L = Length in linear units

m G = Girth in linear units

m d = Girth difference in linear units

m S = Sail area in square units

m F = Freeboard in linear units

To give an idea of just how complicated this all became and why the Metre boats kept plenty of yacht designers and builders happily employed, here is an example of the seemingly simple and straight forward dimension length:



The Length is measured at a height 1.5 percent of the Class Rating above the L.W.L. plus one and a half times the difference between the girth, covering board to covering board, at the bow ending of this length, and twice the vertical height of the side of the yacht at this station; plus one third of the difference between the girth, covering board to covering board, at the stern

ending of this length, and twice the vertical height of the side of the yacht at this station. In case of yachts over 20 metres, the height will be 1.5 per cent of the declared rating, which must not be exceeded.

In 1919, the rule was amended to:

$(L + 1/4G + 2d + \text{sq. root of } S-F) \text{ divided by } 2.5$

The New Rule bore little relation to the Old Rule. The New Rule being practically a pure length and sail-area Rule with heavy tax on sail area. The old rule had 3 components, length, body and sail, and bore lightly on the latter. Only 1/3 of the square root of the Sail Area was counted in the Old Rule, while the whole sail area is included in the New Rule.

An 8 Metre designed for the New Rule would have a hollower section midships, about a foot more draft and a little less displacement. She would be more weatherly and better to windward in stronger breezes. She would thus require less

sail area, but would not provide as much head room below. There were of course strict rules on all the interior design too.

The designer of the Metre boats had a choice: go for large sail area and short waterline length, hoping to win races in light air, or the inverse, and hope for strong winds. Then of course we have the factor of the sailors skill, for as all sailors know, the wind will never do as you expect.

The Eight Metre Class enjoyed a long run as an Olympic Class before World War II. They raced in every Olympic yachting event from 1908 until 1936 with a highly complicated and controversial grand finale in 1936 when the Swedish yacht Ilderim, commissioned by the Swedish banker and industrialist Marcus Wallenberg jr. was disqualified. Although Wallenberg won the races and his Ilderim proved to be the best yacht, he could not bring home the gold medal and was disqualified after viewing of a film made from a zeppelin that flew over the race course. Italy gained the gold medal and the Germania III owned by Baron Krupp von Bohlen shifted one place forward giving Germany the so much desired bronze medal.

[ISAF 8mR rules - PDF format](#)

[2005 Neptune Trophy Rules - PDF format](#)

Quelle: [www.8mR.org](http://www.8mR.org)