

RORC opt out of lifeline change

The Royal Ocean Racing Club has made a decision to ban Dyneema® lifelines for the 2010 RORC race programme. At the ISAF annual conference in Busan Korea last November Dyneema® fibre was approved as a material for use in lifelines for offshore race boats. The material has been used for a number of years in Melges 24 and Melges 32 and on IMOCA 60's in the Vendee Globe.

The RORC committee made up of very experienced offshore racers expressed collective concern about the suitability of the material for offshore boats where the crew are constantly hiking especially in rough conditions and unanimously decided to ban its use for RORC races in 2010.

“We voiced our concern about the materials suitability for offshore race boats when the submission first came to our attention” said Ed Broadway the chairman of the RORC Special Regulations committee. “Whilst we know it is a very strong material and has been tested on IMOCA 60 in the Vendee Globe it has not been subjected to a season of offshore racing and we would rather take a wait and see attitude and let our constituents know our intentions as early as possible”

Ian Loffhagen the RORC Racing Manager feels that RORC's conservative approach is in the best interest of the sport. “While we always try and embrace new technology safety at sea is our principal concern. With over 400 boats racing with us each season we want to act in the best interest of the majority. The RORC committee were unanimously opposed to a move away from stainless steel lifelines and we will monitor the use of Dyneema in other races”

The ban will apply to all RORC races in 2010 including the RORC Caribbean 600 which starts on February 22nd in Antigua.