

Proposal to amend the Melges 24 Class Rules

Submitted by: J A Booker, Chair
USMCA Technical Committee

Proposal

Amend the existing wording of Class Rule F.3.3(b) as follows:

F.3.3(b) Spreaders, including the spreader bar, to the approved design shall only be supplied by the licensed builder. The spreaders shall be connected with the spreader bar only. **The upper shroud shall be retained in the spreader tip using the builder supplied retention clip for newer-style, black spreaders. For older-style, white spreaders the upper shroud may either be captive (as originally supplied) or retained with seizing wire in a slot cut into the spreader tip, parallel to the leading edge, no greater than 5.4 mm in width and extending no further inboard than the original hole. Seizing wire may be threaded through two additional holes of the minimum necessary diameter, drilled for this purpose. Stop swage balls are required above and below the spreader tip in all applications.**

Discussion

The Melges 24 is currently sailed with one of two approved masts and spreaders. The newer, black mast and spreaders use a stainless clip to retain the upper shroud in a slot cut into the spreader tip. This configuration allows for easy removal and replacement of either shroud or spreader in the event of damage or periodic maintenance. While it is clearly a superior design, this change was never addressed or allowed by the Class Rules.

The older, white mast and spreaders were designed with a captive shroud. This design requires, in the event of damage to the spreader and its replacement, that the shroud be replaced as well. Prudent maintenance would suggest that the other shroud be replaced at the same time. This unintended consequence of the design was addressed with the transition to the black mast, but remains a dilemma for owners of the older boats.

Based on my perusal of online fora such as Sailing Anarchy it is clear that a number of owners have addressed this problem over the years by cutting a slot in the tip of the replacement spreader, mimicking the design of the black spreader and using seizing wire to retain the shroud in the spreader tip. In conversations with Melges Boatworks I am told that this is a structurally viable modification, provided the stop swage balls are retained to prevent vertical movement of the spreader tip.

I propose that we adopt the above amendment to the Class Rules to specifically permit all three methods of shroud retention.