

To the monotype XV board, technical supervisors and monotype XV sailors.

It is probably because of Max Verstappen that I, like many dutch people, look at F1 racing with renewed interest.... The latest thing in that world is the Halo, a safety feature for next year..... The following are a few quotes from the international automobile federation (FIA) this week:



This week FIA confirmed the introduction of the Halo system for use in 2018 FIA Formula One World Championship.

Safety in motorsport is a paramount concern for the FIA and while great strides have been made in many areas of motor sport,.....

Motor sport by its nature involves risk but it is the mission of the FIA, as the sport's governing body, to continually strive to minimise that risk through the constant pursuit of greater safety on the track through sound research and technological development.

Over the past decade motor sport has witnessed serious incidents that affected drivers. The severity of the incidents made it clear to the FIA that developing a solution to... .. They were also a number of near misses accidents that highlighted the need for action.

.... Centering on three significant major risk types, car-to-car contact, car-to-environment contact and external objects, tests revealed that

Of course I used only a few selected quotes from the FIA s press briefing, but don t you all think that these could easily translate into something that our board has a responsibility to provide to the IMXVIYRA, the press and possible injured or damaged parties if they were at our heels?

Coming out of the DN class it has been surprising to me that we (the XV iceboat class) have so wildly disproportionately many serious accidents and we have never really done anything about it.....

I was personally there at the 1997 DN Swedish championship where the longtime European DN commodore had a near fatal accident that sparked swift and decisive discussion and action that has made DN iceboating a lot safer from then on.... After that,the DN class

-abolished the 8 course and reverted back to the O course,

-Introduced dolly marks at the top and leeward mark,

-And introduced fluorescent colours to be used on the fuselage sides.....

That last part was a no-brainer when I built H30 in 2000...but I was a bit surprised to not see it used on other monotypes when I was forced to join the class in 2009....

Since then, I have seen the big destructive accidents in 2012 (C3, H28), 2013(C5,?), 2016(C3,G70) (G69,H30) and this winter between S16,L2 and H33,P15..... The last ones prove that going to smaller groups doesn't really help much; it didn't even work on good ice with good visibility! And of course big accidents that ended in hospital like the one on Fysingen in 1999 And at Sandviken in 2008 were before my time, I have heard the first was a steering issue/geographic condition one that ended in a 90 degree T-bone, the second a sailing to the rigging site one... But why should we accept this? Especially when the bulk of the racing accidents happened in exactly the circumstances that those 1997 DN measures were designed to avoid?The ones between an upwind and a downwind iceboat, with up to 180 degrees direction.....the worst!

Why did we never switch back to the O course too? Why are we the only iceboating class in the world to stubbornly keep using this proven unsafer course?... I have written about courses in the attached article...that describes the history of courses and why the 8 course is inherently more dangerous.

In 2016 I was asked by the DN class to solve some other issues and be the principal race officer at the EC and WC..... That made me think hard about the issues this is about and the legal ramifications if the worst happens.... What if there is a really bad accident ending in loss of life or limb? Could I, as the PRO, live with just a waiver from all competitors? I decided I could, if I could stand before a judge if it had come to that and truthfully say that I have done everything in my power to make the races as safe as possible....

That means of course, that I would never do that for the monotype XV class, as long as we keep that 8 course..... why would anyone else?

But like the FIA in motor racing, we can't just think about track safety...

I'd like all the technical supervisors to also spend some thought on technical safety features...

Like what to do about our visibility problems? Of course I have no personal experience there, but what can we do about the fact that not only is the mast (and sail) in the way for the helmsman to look ahead, but also there's a crew in his way....the forward visibility is terrible!

As far as the upwind visibility is concerned, does that window actually work? And the low boom?

Have we maybe voted for a trend in the wrong direction with allowing the helmsman to sit deeper in the cockpit? I'm interested in Bernard Rost's view on that.....

And how about the fluorescent colours? In the DN class this was actually reversed in recent years because the balance between beauty of boats and safety (infuriating to me that that has an influence) has shifted because there are so few major accidents since the 8 course was abandoned.....

All these points are compounded because of the average age of our competitors.....but what can we do to help mitigate that?

And what can we do to preserve the experience? We have so few races per year that even our most experienced racers sometimes make beginners mistakes..... What can we do to prevent something like our most experienced racer take avoiding action by turning towards the 180degree crash instead of turning the other way?

So I have talked about the risk of a 180 degree crash, what about the less risky (but avoidable) 90 degree crash? It can still have a serious impact and end up in pretty bad injury.... Should we consider allowing (or maybe making mandatory) the use of Kevlar cockpit sides to prevent injuries like the one Lukasz Jedlinski sustained this winter? And what would the balance be between enough Kevlar to prevent injury and too much causing other injuries through high g-forces?

And, on the subject of learning from previous accidents, (like they do in the aerospace industry) Can somebody describe the 1999 Fysingen and the 2008 Sandviken accidents to me so we can take the lessons from the past and use them to improve our safety!

Could you all please reply with your thoughts and please let us make sure Lukasz has his say in this as well so we can at least try to get him back into monotype XV sailing.....

Wouldn t it be great to be able to explain to him (and his wife!!) that we have taken all possible precautions to make iceboating safer and to make sure an accident like he had in Fiskeboda (and the pretty bad aftermath I was told about; infections and the like....) will be prevented as much as we possibly can.....

I would hate to not see him become European champion someday (which is clearly in his future) because he could not justify the risk towards his young family.....

Although I appreciate that we keep our safety record quiet towards governments and press, it makes no sense to me to not discuss things and learn from the past....

Reading the text produced in the board meeting last winter, I come to the conclusion that a few giant elephants in the room were left out! The annual meeting was not held because there were people in the hospital, destroyed boats were being loaded up and everyone was dejected.....

So the conclusion from the couple days before, about the groups being a good solution and procedures working well was disproven!

The two main goals were: to make the racing manageable and safe.....and although the first half did work, the second clearly did not! We have gone from an average of one serious collision every two years to the worst year in history with two major accidents in one year! Why all this did not spark the

most serious discussion about safety in the history of the class really is beyond me! Are we supposed to wait until a fatal accident happens? Or until none of our families allow us to go take the risk anymore and the class goes back to a much safer EC with only 10 competitors like 15 years ago?

I hereby propose the following:

-We accept the lessons from our (and others) past and we return to the O course like every other iceboating class in the world.

-Maybe even to the half left half right start to spread out the fleet We at least discuss it....

-We keep the groups system as in the board meeting.

-We have a discussion within the technical supervisors about the helmsman s field of vision, minimum distance between boom and deck? Reversing the bulkhead cut out rule for forward vision? More, bigger windows?

-And we have a discussion, maybe even a test about sideways impact protection and optimize that first, adjust the specifications after we can present a solution.....

I think it would be a travesty not to take action now!

Either we bring down the incidence of major collisions or we improve the protection, or both!

Can anyone of us really argue with that?

This brings me back to F1; This is how the whole Halo thing went (and how I think it should go):

They had some fatalities

They all decided to increase the safety

The FIA took the lead, had a few solutions tested

And they decided to implement it....

The last couple of days I have seen lots of interviews with half the drivers against because

-It doesn t look good to them.

-It goes against tradition

-F1 is supposed to be dangerous (only the young drivers say this)

-There are accidents where it doesn t help

If you need the links, just mail me....But remarkably, these are all arguments that I am hearing in our case too....

Especially the last one is strange to me; the O course reduces the risk, but does not eliminate it, so..... we should not change??? No! the goal is exactly that; to reduce risks! I think of it this way; every winter we choose 8-course we choose more risk....

The risk versus esthetics is a non-debate.....

And our FIA (the board) should be leading the way, not me, but I gladly give it a first kick to set things in gear..... Six months have passed, let's get cracking!

Daan Schutte