

SMOC/F4 Rule change – Overview of decision made by Racing Committee – September 2016

Basic Submission: Upgrading F4 to 250 from 225 - 2 submissions received from 250 HP owners wishing to race in F4

F4 Class Summary

- SMOC was once the most popular class in ski racing, made popular by having the most reliable & cost effective HP to top speed ratio. It's also been touted as the associations entry level class although historically due to the number of boats in the class the competition and calibre of skill required to be competitive could be classed as "Expert".
- The class has dwindled over time, arguably more so because of the creation of F2 and introduction of reliable 300 HP engines. F2 has now replaced SMOC class in regards to competitiveness and numbers.
- It appears that currently there is only one F4 boat that intends to circuit race - Wayne Taylor.
- However the Hamilton B2B still attracts a competitive F4 class that is taken seriously along with the class record.

Factors researched & taken into account by the Racing Committee

- Given that F4's ratio of cost effective HP to speed has now upgraded to F2 is the class relevant or able to be saved?
- Parties affected.
- Elevated entry cost into F4 if upgraded to 250.
- Historical records and trophies.
- What increases competitor numbers in classes and income for the Association.
- Potential to reduce bureaucracy and perceived bias within the sport.

Questions / points discussed

- Consulted affected parties - Wayne Taylor & Mike Slack
 - Mike was unhappy about the class being upgraded to 250 HP although he would probably not be competing on the circuit, just River Races.
 - Wayne was unhappy, he would be competing on the circuit although understands he has no one to race against.
- Consult marine dealerships as to the cost difference between 225 & 250 HP engines is approximately a \$5k difference.
- Does this have a detrimental effect to F2?
 - Would the 250's cease to compete in F2 splitting classes and amplifying low numbers in races?
 - Moving forward given that the Association wants to focus on its core membership - the NZ circuit & river racing is F2 the class the Association should focus on?
 - NZ runs different boat length rules to the International F2 rule, the intended spirit of the class isn't actually being followed anyway so do we just return to a blanket MOC class - given that you can now only buy "green" outboards and the natural attrition of "dirty" outboards it was decided that MOC would eventually become a clean class and

therefore F2 should remain with the MOC class phased out over a given time period in consultation with affected parties.

- Do we "hamstring" the 250's through prop selection - this was deemed to create bureaucracy and also avenues for "negative creativity" within competitors.
- What exactly is the performance difference between a 225 & 250 HP, notably 2 stroke vs 4 stroke
 - Significant in regards to towing 2 skiers, acceleration out of corners and holeshot i.e. river racing
 - Handling issues created with heavier engines?
- Entry skill level required for a new skier
 - A 250 F4 boat will be faster, is this going to be an issue for new skiers; during F4's heyday it took a new skier 2-3 years to win consistently if at all
 - Are their safety implications for new competitors with an increase in speed?
- What's best for all members and therefore the Association - How do we please all parties?
 - Create complete transparency with the decision
- Create complete transparency with the decision
 - Make minutes/ emails available to affected parties
 - Make decision public along with the Racing Committee's philosophy & thoughts within its decision
- F5 should in fact be pushed as the Associations entry level class given the entry level cost & enjoyment the class gives to competitors
- If you wanted to buy a second hand boat to get into Ski racing what's the most popular engine size on Trade Me/ second hand market.

Outcome

- In regards to the B2B due to the competitor numbers affected and historical significance of race records a change to 250 HP would be unacceptable therefore F4 will remain a 225 HP class for all River Races.
- A one year trial period will be put in place via granting dispensation to 250 HP outboards to run in F4 on the circuit only. F4 restrictions such as SMOC engine height will apply to the 250 HP as they do to the 225 HP.
- The dispensation ruling will be reviewed throughout the season to gauge the success of such a change and its effect on the F4 class as a whole i.e. competitor numbers etc.
- If dispensation for the year is deemed a success a permanent rule change will be made to F4 moving to a 250 HP engine rating for the 2017-2018 Season.