

## **X-41 “X” only second at the Belgium IRC Championship due to a very poor race committee**

During the weekend of 21, 22 and 23 rd of September the Belgium IRC Championship was sailed in Oostende. For many years we had not sailed at the Belgium coast as we had experienced very poor Belgium race committees. Pity enough they succeeded to blow it again this year.

The weather and racing was very nice with three days of sunny conditions and .... three X-Yachts were finally on the podium :

1. IMX-40 “Oxygen
2. X-41 “X”
3. X-35 ‘Liesl’

The IMX-40 “Oxygen” sailed perfectly and I am very happy that the victory went to another X-Yacht. Amongst competition was the experienced Sydney 39 “Allard” and a Wauquiez 40, with some good sailors on board, but this did not seem to help much.

On Friday an offshore of 25 miles was sailed during the night. “X” had built out a nice lead, but on the last downwind rack to the finish, the wind shifted with 30 degrees. We had been sailing pure downwind all the time, with several gybes, the competition got the luck to have a nice reach to the finish line. Due to this the victory escaped to “Oxygen”.

On Saturday there was again an offshore race, but this one should not have started with bearly 3/4 knots of wind, and a 1,5 knots of current against. For the smaller boats, the racing for the day was over after twenty minutes, as none of the boats had crossed the starting line in time.

We hoped that the committee should have learned from this, but no.. A new start under these ridiculous conditions was given.

After three hours all boats were still lying within a half mile of the starting line. Then the wind came and as it was only around noon, we hoped still to have a nice sailing day, as the course to sail was 30 miles. But again the race committee made a stupid move. At the first buoy they had put in the finish line. Although “X” was nicely leading the fleet, the three hours of drifting and a half hour of sailing could of course not make good for our very high handicap against the other boats.

Finally “X” could show how fast she was and won the four upwind/downwind legs on Sunday under nice wind conditions. Only the X-35 “Liesl” was competitive and sailed very good during this day. All races counted “X” would have been the overall winner of the IRC championship.

It was really comedy capers when the race committee had forgotten to drop the downwind mark in the first Sunday race. We hoped that this was their last stupidity, but

no way they did it again with the counting of the points. Although not mentioned in the notice of the race, they counted every day as an event and did not count all races as done in the rest of the world and with this the victory slipped out of our hands.