



### **The Flying Dutchman: 60 years of 'Timeless Elegance'**

It was in August 1951, after the Tornado EC had been sailed in Loosdrecht (Holland), when a young sailor named Conrad Gülcher was disappointed in the performance of the Tornado and made his mind up:

It is time for a change! With the help of Dutch yacht designer Uus van Essen in very short time a prototype was built and tested. It was a major success!

In November 1952 the permanent committee of the IYRU adopted the Flying Dutchman to be the new international centre-board boat, in 1960 the class became Olympic!

On any event the boat appeared she was praised for her astonishing beauty and was the talk of the town. The sailors who raced and owned her could only speak of their dinghy in a tender, loving and caring way.....

With her distinguished forestay-angle, over six meters long, descent 10 square meters of mainsail, large genoa and spinnaker, the FD was (and still is!) a pretty and elegant boat. In strong winds she was tough to handle but really flying! Although hobby sailors could have a lot of fun in it, to win races one had to be better than average!

The FD has always been an innovative class. Some examples:

- 1952 Large genoa, first boat with trapeze allowed
- 1956 First fiberglass hull
- 1960 Furling jib, windows in sails
- 1965 Adjustable traveler
- 1967 Spinnaker tube and chute
- 1977 Spinnaker pole launcher
- 1984 Honeycomb/Kevlar/ Carbon hulls
- 2002 Carbon booms and poles
- 2005 Carbon masts



During these years the 'rake' was developed. The mast could be canted backwards and more grommets were made in de jib, adjustable shroud controls were added. This innovation became the major important trim control and made the boat much easier to handle in strong winds, especially for lighter crews.

Till 1992 the FD class kept its Olympic status. All FD sailors held their breath. What would become of the FD Class? ISAF's decision was final: The FD lost its Olympic status. However, the boat's excellent performance was still recognized by thousands of sailors. Even better: since sailing an FD became a lot more affordable, the class only grew bigger! The last World Championships were attended by 134 registered boats of 21 countries, far more than in the Olympic era! This shows very clearly the class is still very lively.

Reason for this may also be that Conrad dreamed of a friendly community of sailors and their families who really like sailing and spending time together in a friendly, social way.

Let us salute Conrad Gülcher for this, and his splendid and bright vision on what a racing dinghy should look like and all look forward to the year 2012 in which we celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday of our beloved boat, The Flying Dutchman!

The European Championships in Altea, (SPA) will open the celebration year, the World Championships in Santa Cruz (USA) will finalize the Jubilee. Also will the FD class compete in the Vintage Yachting Games at Lake Como (ITA), a magnificent event for former Olympic Classes like Dragon, Soling, O-Jolle, Tempest etc. The FD Class is proud to participate in the great fleet of the good old days!

Let us all firmly hope the Flying Dutchman will show its beauty and outstanding sailing performance for many, many years.

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more about the FD at [www.sailfd.org](http://www.sailfd.org)