

US One Meter Class

by Bill Turner

updated by Jim Linville and later by Steve Vaczovsky

Introduction

The US One Meter yacht is fun to sail; it's light weight, fast, and responsive to the controls. Due to its size and quick disassembly, it's easily transported to the pond.

The US One Meter is a developmental class boat, meaning that it has a few basic rules governing hull dimensions, keel depth and sail size, allowing the designer great freedom to experiment within a "box" of rules. It is 39.37 inches (one meter) in overall length, with 600 square inches of measured sail area. The nonrestrictive nature of the class rules (which have been changed only a few times since they were approved in 1983 – mostly to clarify existing rules and not to obsolete existing boats) encourages new designs and experimentation. It is a relatively inexpensive class for the beginning skipper. The yacht can be self-designed or built from plans. To help new or experienced skippers build their own boats, several plans and a construction guide are available on the Internet for downloading or as hard copies from the class secretary.

History

The class got its start in early 1982. During its beginning, it was known as the Olympic One Meter Class. The class was originated by R.G."Bob" DeBow and Bob Jensen in San Diego, California. To use Bob DeBow's words, "The class was designed with some very good reasons in mind." Some simple class specifications were drawn up. They remain basically the same today. Materials of construction were optional, so manufacturers who supported our hobby would be encouraged to build boats and kits for the class. Hulls were designed to sail well in all weather conditions. The main thought behind the class specifications was that anyone with a basic knowledge of building could gain entry to the hobby with a minimum of expense. Bob Jensen was drawing up plans, one after another, and was giving them to anyone who wanted to plank one of these great wooden boats.

In the latter part of 1982, the class was rapidly gaining momentum, especially on the West Coast, where there were 23 Olympic One Meters sailing or under construction. Some of the hot designs of 1983 were: *Sunsong*, *ORCO II*, *Bone*, *Skeeter*, *Tadpole*, and *Tyro*. The *Sunsong* and *ORCO II* were available as fiberglass short kits. The Olympic One Meter was growing by leaps and bounds and would soon become a class in AMYA. In the first part of 1983, it was official; the Olympic One Meter had become a recognized class in the AMYA, and Bob DeBow was the first class secretary.

In January 1983, the first official Olympic One Meter Class regatta was hosted by the Rio Salado Race Club of Arizona. Thirteen boats were entered, and Bob DeBow won the regatta, sailing a co-designed wooden hulled *Sunsong*, built by Bob Jensen. Swede Johnson was second, sailing his fiberglass *ORCO II*.

The first Olympic One Meter National Championship Regatta (NCR) was also awarded to the Rio Salado Race Club. The regatta took place in Arizona in November 1983. Rio Salado club member Bob Krufft won first place, sailing his own design, the *Express*. As it turned out, four of the eight entries were of the *Express* design. The *Express* went on to become a very popular and fast design. John Amen later produced the *Express* design in fiberglass. Other manufacturers were also producing fiberglass designs. Chuck Black was pumping out the *Lona*, Swede Johnson was laying up *ORCO IIs*, and Bob Sterne was producing the *Chinook*.

By 1985, the class was still growing fast and became a part of Race Week, which is hosted every three years by the Argonauts in San Diego, California, and remained a regular part of this prestigious event until recently when other California clubs have occasionally taken on the NCR. The 1985 NCR showcased the beginning of a new design trend: a break from the traditional wide-beam hulls to narrow-beam hulls. Swede Johnson's *ORCO 85* and Curt Hurley's *Squirt* were both of this narrow-beam design. Along with the narrow beam comes less weight and less wetted surface. The 1985 NCR had 33 entries and was won by Bob DeBow, sailing a modified *Orco 85* wooden hull.

The 1986 NCR was hosted by the Orange County MSC in Irvine, California. Based on some of the things learned from Race Week 85, the regatta was somewhat of a departure from the normal NCR of that time. With the large number of entries using the then available crystal controlled radios, a three-frequency conflict matrix would generally be used. This matrix had some shortcomings as to how many times each of the skippers raced against each other so no frequency conflicts existed. Due to the number of expected entries, it was decided to have a four-day regatta, which would allow a better-distributed heat matrix. There were thirty-two entries; they each sailed six races on Friday and six races on Saturday to accumulate a score. These scores were used to divide the group into the Gold NCR fleet, which raced on Monday, and the Silver consolation fleet, which raced on Sunday. Sandy Littlejohn won the Gold NCR fleet. He was sailing a wood-planked

ORCO 85 hull, which he borrowed from Swede Johnson. Todd Olson won the Silver fleet, sailing a fiberglass *ORCO 85*. Due to work commitments, there were a few no-show entries since it was a four-day regatta, but the regatta was still deemed a success.

In the 1987 autumn issue of the *AMYA Quarterly Newsletter* (QNL), there was a message from AMYA President Ned Helmle concerning the class name. He said, "I have been informed that the United States Supreme Court has decided that only the Olympic Committee can use the name 'Olympic.' Therefore, the Olympic One Meter Class is now the One Meter Class." One year later in the 1988 autumn issue of the QNL, Bob DeBow wrote in his column, "Since we cannot legally call our ever-growing One Meter Class the Olympic One Meter, the consensus among those that I have been corresponding with feels comfortable with calling our class the US One Meter, since the US was its place of birth and development." Along with the class name change came the question of changing the sail logo. The logo did not need to be changed because the logo "O", formerly for Olympic, would represent the first letter in the word "One," which was still part of the class name.

A change to the class rules came in 1989, and was an addition to the specification. The ballot motion M-1 was: "It is moved that the US One Meter Class specification diagram be revised to add an end view controlling hull extensions that add to the effective keel depth," and the following paragraph was added as section 8.2: "Any form of platform or pedestal, as of wineglass shape, which increases effective keel depth, except as noted on the drawing." The note on the specification drawing states: "Pad or flat in hull to facilitate keel mounting shall not exceed 1/16 inch below contour of hull." In 2014 there were several rule changes that addressed placement of registration numbers on the sails, prohibited rotating masts and hydrofoils – a response to the rising popularity of the technology in catamarans - and formally legalized jib boom counterweights. Another rule change came in 2016 that clarified how the sail triangles were to be measured - in response to the increased popularity of square-topped sails on full scale boats.

In October 1990, some very sad news came to the class. Bob Jensen had passed away. His passing was felt throughout the ranks of the AMYA and by his many friends across the country. He was instrumental in the founding of the class and in designing and building many good US One Meters.

In January 2017, the other class founder, Bob DeBow passed away. Bob was a multiple class National Champion, class secretary of multiple classes over the years, as well as a member of the AMYA Hall of Fame, being inducted in 2005. He was a true force in model yachting. A copy of a bio of Bob's accomplishments, written by his close friend Ernie Mortensen when Bob was inducted into the AMYA's Hall of Fame, can be found here: <http://www.theamya.org/hof/hall2005members.php>

The number of boats in existence has continued to grow but at a somewhat slower rate in recent years. After the rapid growth of the early years, the number of registered yachts on the class roster has remained about the same. That is, we always have some new registrations, but about the same number of skippers don't reregister their yachts or renew their AMYA membership and therefore become unregistered. Many of those formerly registered boats occasionally surface as they are pulled out of garages and storage lockers. Over many years, based on numbers of active skippers who are AMYA members, the US1M has consistently ranked fourth in the number of registered boats in the AMYA. .

Class Secretaries

Throughout the history of the class, there have been six class secretaries. Bob DeBow was our leader from the 1983 inception of the class until he retired in midyear, 1990. Steve Andre took over from Bob and adeptly guided the class through midyear, 1993. When Steve stepped down, Bill Turner was appointed to the position of secretary and remained there through the first part of 2000. When Bill decided to vacate the position, Jim Linville was appointed to take over from Bill and served until early 2006, Jay Barnes was appointed secretary in 2006, and served for more than a year, when he move on to become secretary of the 36-600 class, and Jim Linville was re-appointed in late 2007. Jim stepped down early in 2017. His 17 years of service currently rank as the third longest tenure of AMYA class secretaries. Steve Vaczovsky was appointed to the remainder of Jim's last two-year term and was elected to the position in the fall of 2017. He is the current class secretary.

National Championships

An NCR has been held every year since the class became an official class of the AMYA. That's 35 good years of racing in the US One Meter Class. If you look at the NCR Class Champions table, several things become apparent: (1) There haven't been too many repeat class champions during the entire class history, (2) Swede Johnson's *ORCO* design boats have been in the winner's circle eight times, (3) Bob Sterne's *Venom* design has led the fleet to the winners circle an impressive 15 times, (4) six home builder designed yachts have won our National Championship proving that it's not only the design that wins, and (5) over 50% of the NCRs have been held in California. The NCR is supposed to be rotated geographically if possible,

but it's not easy to find clubs outside of California that are willing to take on the task of hosting this event. Many thanks go to the clubs that have hosted it.

State of the Class

Unfortunately, the Great Recession of 2007-2009 caused a drastic drop in the number of model boat manufacturers and suppliers when the owners turned their attention to their "real jobs" and had to close their hobby businesses. As of early 2017, while a few parts suppliers remain, there are no manufacturers selling complete boats or boat kits. Currently, the only commercial supplier of hulls is Tippecanoe Boats (800) 206-0006, who is producing the *Venom* in carbon fiber and Kevlar from the original Bob Sternes' molds. A few active home builders have stepped forward to supply the class with lead ballast bulbs, one of the more difficult parts for the home builder. They can be found by searching the US1M thread in the Sailboat forum on the popular Internet bulletin board, RC Groups (rcgroups.com). Used boats are often posted in the Classified Boats section of the same site and on the AMYA website in the Classifieds section. And of course, you can always build your own with the help of the US1M Construction Guide that can be found on the AMYA website. (www.theamya.org)

By necessity the class is now back to its roots as a real "builders class". Fortunately, there are free plans available for many of the older designs on the US1M section of the AMYA website and new designs are being added all the time as designers try out new ideas and construction techniques. The class is far from dead and continues to have active fleets that supply not only thrilling competitive racing, but an opportunity to race what you built.

U.S. ONE METER CLASS CHAMPIONS

<i>Year</i>	<i>Sail #</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Hull</i>	<i>Beam</i> (in.)	<i>Weight</i> (lb.)	<i>Host Club</i>	<i>Location</i>
1983	25	Bob Krufft	Express, wood	na	8.0	Rio Salado RC	Mesa, AZ
1984	na	Terry Allen	Express, wood	na	na	San Diego Argonauts	San Diego, CA
1985	2	Bob DeBow	ORCO, wood (modified)	7.5	na	San Diego Argonauts	San Diego, CA.
1986	64	Sandy Littlejohn (gold fleet)	ORCO, wood	6.0	7.5	Orange County MSC	Irvine, CA.
1986	176	Todd Olson (silver fleet)	ORCO, fiberglass	5.5	na	Orange County MSC	Irvine, CA.
1987	179	Wick Smith	Mistral, wood (modified)	8.0	7.3	Detroit, MYC	Clarkston, MI.
1988	180	Harry Bourgeois	ORCO, skinny fiberglass	5.5	7.0	San Diego Argonauts	San Diego, CA.
1989	180	Harry Bourgeois	ORCO, skinny fiberglass	5.5	6.5	Miami Valley MYC	Dayton, OH.
1990	180	Harry Bourgeois	ORCO, skinny fiberglass	5.5	5.8	Mesa MYC	Mesa, AZ.
1991	108	Pete Jefferson	ORCO 90, (modified)	5.2	6.0	San Diego Argonauts	San Diego, CA
1992	180	Harry Bourgeois	ORCO, skinny fiberglass	5.5	5.8	Orange County MSC	Irvine, CA.
1993	313	Steve Andre	Zipper, carbon fiber	5.3	5.4	Miami Valley MYC	Dayton, OH.
1994	101	Bob Sterne	Venom, kevlar	7.0	5.5	San Diego Argonauts	San Diego, CA
1995	5	Pete Jefferson	Venom, kevlar	7.0	5.5	Mid-Atlantic MYC	Mt. Laurel, NJ.
1996	66	Paul Brown	Venom, kevlar	7.0	5.5	Orange County MSC	Irvine, CA.
1997	5	Pete Jefferson	Venom, kevlar	7.0	5.5	San Diego Argonauts	San Diego, CA
1998	907	Steve Spatenga	Yellowbird, balsa/glass	6.8	6.3	Space Coast MYC	Melbourne, FL.
1999	35	Mike Fujita	Venom, kevlar	6.8	5.3	Tri-City MYC	Placentia, CA.
2000	35	Mike Fujita	Venom, kevlar	6.8	5.3	San Diego Argonauts	San Diego, CA
2001	899	Allen Suydam	Cobra, balsa/glass	6.75	6.0	Detroit MYC	Mystic, CT
2002	214	Craig Mackey	Venom, kevlar	6.8	5.6	San Francisco MYC	San Francisco, CA
2003	214	Craig Mackey	Venom, kevlar	6.8	5.6	San Diego Argonauts	San Diego, CA
2004	214	Craig Mackey	Venom, kevlar	6.8	5.6	Orange County MSC	Irvine, CA
2005	727	Scott Rowland	Venom, kevlar	7.0	5.5	Detroit MYC	Dearborn, MI
2006	727	Scott Rowland	Venom, kevlar	7.0	5.5	Miami Valley MYC	Dayton, OH.
2007	214	Craig Mackey	Venom, kevlar	6.8	5.6	Orange County MSC	Irvine, CA
2008	1135	Gerhard Kelter	Venom, kevlar	6.8	5.9	Detroit MYC	Dearborn, MI
2009	875	Jess Atkinson	Zipper, fiberglass	5.3	5.6	San Diego Argonauts	San Diego, CA
2010	214	Craig Mackey	Venom, kevlar	6.8	5.6	Orange County MSC	Irvine, CA
2011	201	Colin Mosgrove	T. B. Skinny, carbon fiber	na	na	Housatonic MYC	Middlebury, CT
2012	214	Craig Mackey	Venom, kevlar	6.8	5.6	San Diego Argonauts	San Diego, CA
2013	875	Jess Atkinson	Zipper, fiberglass	5.3	5.6	San Diego Argonauts	San Diego, CA
2014	18	John Whalen	Saber, carbon fiber	6.75	5.5	Buffalo, MYC	Buffalo, NY
2015	47	Baron Bremer	Intuition, fiberglass	6.5	6.0	Jacksonville MYC	Jacksonville, FL
2016	831	Gary Boell	Talon II, kevlar			Lake Balboa MYC	Long Beach, CA