



Viper Class Association Technical Committee

Special Exemption and Waiver Rule 10.10.2 (Grandfathering Provision)

Mark 1 and Mark 2 boats with narrow rudder towers are granted an exemption from the rule amendment in Rule 2.2 which states:

“A vertical rudder blade and vertical axis of rotation becomes mandatory after March 31, 2020.”

This exemption extends until June 30th, 2021. All other requirements and terms of rule 2.2 remain in place.

Background to Waiver

In 2017 the class membership approved a class rule change to allow members to install a class approved bracket which would convert the existing “swept rudder” to a vertical rudder rotating on a vertical axis. Several months of testing had proved to us that this made the boat easier to sail, safer to sail, and less likely to broach.

The rule allowed a 3-year transition process to allow members to install the bracket before the vertical rudder became mandatory. The first prototype VB1, was designed to install on the back of all rudder towers. This design did not prove robust enough to for the job, so the Class approved a second prototype, VB 2, which was thoroughly tested in high wind conditions in Perth. VB 2 went into production in June 2018. VB2 can only fit on the modern wide tower boats. Installing VB 2 on a modern wide tower boat can be done in a couple of hours and the component is inexpensive.

Installing a VB2 on a narrow tower boat is a more time consuming and expensive process.

Conditions for a 10.10.2 waiver

- The technical committee must determine that the waiver conveys no reasonable competitive advantage. *Based on 2 years of sailing in fleets of vertical and swept rudders, the technical committee is confident that a swept rudder does not convey any competitive advantage.*
- The technical committee must determine that the equipment or configuration was as supplied and class legal at the time. *The technical committee is limiting this waiver to narrow tower boats that have the original equipment. If you replace your rudder tower, you must install a wide tower and vertical rudder configuration.*

- The technical committee can take into consideration the cost of complying with class rules. ***This exemption is being granted solely on cost grounds.*** We recognize that owners of narrow rudder tower boats were facing a higher cost burden than other boats. One of the core foundations of the Viper ethos is “Affordability”. We have a tradition of inclusiveness and we have always tried to ensure that when we make a rule change to improve the boat, we do not obsolete any of the older boats. We want to encourage lower budget teams to be able to afford competitive older boats as entry level boats into the class. We were faced with teams where the cost of the conversion would exclude them from competition. We felt it was the right thing to do to give these teams more time to make the conversion.
- The waiver can be granted for a specific period or for an unlimited period. *The technical committee decided to grant a period of three years from when the class approved VB2 This waiver thus lasts until the end of June 2021.*

Technical Committee Recommendations

The technical committee strongly recommends to the owners of narrow tower boats, that if they can afford the upgrade, they proceed to make the upgrade to a vertical rudder configuration as soon as possible. The vertical rudder configuration makes the boat noticeably easier to sail in stronger wind conditions.

We recommend making the upgrade in a timely manner because these tower components may not be available in the future.

Owners of mark 1 boats built by Bennett Boats are encouraged to upgrade to a wide tower for safety reasons. Many of these boats were built with narrow towers that were merely glued onto the deck. They can tear off in high wind conditions leaving the crew with no helm, and a rudder that can disappear overboard in unfriendly conditions.

Nobody should try to install any kind of vertical rudder installation on a narrow rudder tower. The narrow tower does not have sufficient geometry to withstand the forces of the vertical rudder.

As a friendly reminder, rule 2.2 does not allow anyone to go back and forth between vertical and swept configurations.

Kinked Rudders: There are a tiny number of early Bennet boats that were supplied with a forward swept kinked rudder which presented the rudder vertically. Rule 2.2 effectively outlaws this rudder. We recognize that this places another financial burden on these boats because they must also buy a new rudder. The class and Rondar have combined to mitigate this cost. Please let us know if you have a kinked rudder.

If you are a narrow tower boat about to embark on replacing your rudder tower and feel like you need installation advice, please don't hesitate to reach out to the TC. We are here to help.

Owners of wide tower boats (mark 3 and onwards): If you have not ordered your VB2 bracket, please make sure you order the bracket as soon as possible. The clock is ticking. The TC might consider temporary waivers for owners who have ordered and paid for their brackets but not received them but they need to show evidence that the order has been paid for.

David Nickerson, Technical Chair

Geoff Ewenson, Technical Committee

Justin Scott, Technical Committee

Rod Beurteaux, Technical Committee

Paul Young, Builder and Technical Committee