



# BLADE



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Photo courtesy of Dana E. Olsen



## Blade (ex. Blade Runner), CAN 111, (1987)

Designer: Ian Howlett

Builder: T. Smith, Elephant Boatyard

Originally built for Larry Marks, Blade is a modified version from the same mould of Ian Howlett's 'Kurlew', winner of the Seawanhaka Cup. Renamed 'BladeRunner' and in Avia Willment's ownership from 2008 until 2014, she sailed competitively for Canada in the 2014 European Championship in Falmouth (incomplete regatta - lack of wind). Understood by those who have sailed her to be a 'real weapon' she will sail in the 2015 World Cup in La Trinite Sur Mer.

In 1987, Ian Howlett designed Blade's keel with breakthrough results: finishing just behind Kirlo in the 'nail-biting' British Championship. Various other boats immediately discarded their existing keels and adopted these new ones, with equally satisfactory results. The benefits did not end with pure performance gains. Mainsail trimmers and helmsmen noticed better mannered sails less critical to mainsheet tension and traveler adjustment. Maintaining speed in gusty conditions was easier.

Since 1989, along with the wing keel, Ian Howlett has provided all his 6mR designs with a full-depth rudder of special laminar sections. The enhancement to control that this achieves is remarkable, and everybody who sails with one has been converted.

Blade will be looking for a new owner when she returns to Canada for the ISMA World Cup in 2017.

## Meet the Designer: *Ian Howlett*

Born in 1949 in England, Ian Howlett studied Ship Science including 'The Effects of Waves on Yachts'. His specialty is the use of the towing tank and wind tunnel in yacht design.

He was the innovator of the very successful 1980 'bendy topmast' and designer of winning 12mRs and America's Cup challengers as well as successful racing boats in the 8 and 5.5 Metre classes, among others. Blade (Blade Runner) is among Howlett's successful Sixes that have won World, European and Seawanhaka Cups.

As a key member of the ISMA Technical Committee, he wrote the scantling section that is now part of the Rule.

As well as working on his own 6mR designs, his contribution to the class includes designing keels, foils and wings for boats by other designers.

In 2007 he was awarded the Jean-Pierre Otero Trophy for his outstanding long-term contribution to the 6mR Class.

(source: THE SIX METRE -100 YEARS OF RACING, Pekka Barck & Tim Street)

