

Racing Rule of Sailing 50.4 - Headsail Definition

The Distinction Between Headsails and Spinnakers

A submission from the International Flying Dutchman Class Organization

Proposal:

50.4 Headsails

The difference between a headsail and a spinnaker is that the ~~mid-girth of a headsail, measured from the mid-points of its luff and leech, does not exceed 50% of the length of its foot, and no other intermediate girth exceeds a percentage similarly proportional to its distance from the head of the sail.~~ **as measured from points the same fraction along its luff and leech, does not exceed 110% of the top width plus that fraction of the foot.** A sail tacked down behind the foremost mast is not a headsail.

Current Position:

As above.

Reason:

The present RRS 50.4 requires the head of a headsail to be a mathematical point, a restriction that cannot be met by any practical sail design. The proposed amendment includes allowance for headsail top width and for the fact that the sail has some shape, i.e. that it is not a flat sheet and that the luff is not a straight line.

To avoid the first problem the top width is added to the girths, and to allow for the shape the limit for a headsail girth is increased by 10%. The latter choice could be adjusted if a more appropriate allowance is indicated.