

The Case Book

New Case

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Proposal:

CASE X

Rule 30.2, Starting Penalties: Z Flag Rule

Rule 30.3, Starting Penalties: Black Flag Rule

It is a proper action of the race committee to penalize a boat for breaking rule 30.2 or disqualify her for breaking rule 30.3, even if, before a starting sequence was begun, the race was postponed or if, during another attempted start of the same race, a postponement or abandonment was signaled before the starting signal.

Summary of the Facts

The fourth race of a series was scheduled to start at 10 AM, but it was postponed for thirty minutes while the race committee waited for the wind to fill in. At the preparatory signal, the race committee displayed flag Z as the preparatory signal. Boat A was identified in the triangle formed by the ends of the starting line and the first mark during the last minute before her starting signal. After the starting signal the race committee signaled a general recall. The race committee then began a second starting sequence for that race and again displayed flag Z as the preparatory signal. After removing the preparatory flag, but before the starting signal, the race committee signaled a postponement. Later, the race committee began a third sequence of signals and was successful in starting the fourth race of the series, and the race was completed. Boat A was given a 20% Scoring Penalty, and she requested redress on the grounds that the race had been postponed – indeed, postponed twice – before its starting signal and, therefore, under rule 30.2's third sentence, she should not have received the penalty.

Question 1

When the race committee gave a 20% Scoring Penalty to Boat A, did it act appropriately under rule 30.2 or was its action an improper action?

Answer 1

Yes. The race committee acted appropriately under rule 30.2. The first three sentences of rule 30.2 refer to a single starting sequence. The starting sequence in which A was identified in the triangle formed by the ends of the starting line and the first mark during the last minute before her starting signal was not postponed or abandoned before its starting signal. Therefore, the race committee acted appropriately under rule 30.2 when it gave a 20% Scoring Penalty to A. That action was not an improper action, and A is not entitled to redress.

....During the second starting sequence, if a boat had been identified in the triangle between the time that the preparatory signal was removed and the time that the postponement signal

was displayed, then it would have been an improper action under rule 30.2 to give that boat a 20% Scoring Penalty.

Question 2

If, instead of flag Z, the black flag had been used as the preparatory signal for the first and second attempted starts of the fourth race of the series, would the race committee have acted appropriately if it had disqualified Boat A without a hearing?

Answer 2

Yes. The first two sentences of rule 30.3 refer to a single starting sequence. The starting sequence in which A was identified in the triangle formed by the ends of the starting line and the first mark during the last minute before her starting signal was not postponed or abandoned before its starting signal. Therefore, the race committee would have acted appropriately if it had disqualified A without a hearing.

....During the second starting sequence, if a boat had been identified in the triangle between the time that the preparatory signal was removed and the time that the postponement signal was displayed, then it would have been an improper action under rule 30.3 to disqualify that boat without a hearing.

Current Position:

None. The proposed case is a new case.

Reason:

Some experienced judges interpret rules 30.2 and 30.3 to mean that in a race when any start of the race has been postponed or abandoned before the starting signal a boat may not be penalized under rules 30.2 or 30.3. Other judges interpret those rules to mean that a boat may be penalized under rules 30.2 or 30.3 unless the starting sequence during which she broke one of the rules was postponed or abandoned before the starting signal. The proposed case makes it clear that the second interpretation is correct.