

## Racing Rules of Sailing

### Rule D2.3

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

#### Purpose or Objective

To allow an umpire to penalise a boat that has broken no rule when her team has gained an advantage from a breach by a team mate boat.

This submission proposes an alternative rule to the main Appendix D submission 199-11 and uses the rule numbering therein. If submission 199-11 is rejected, this submission is withdrawn.

#### Proposal

##### **D2.3 Penalties Initiated by an Umpire**

An umpire may penalize a boat without a *protest* by another boat, or report the incident to the protest committee, or both, when

- (a) the boat breaks rule 31 or 42, and does not take a penalty;
- (b) the boat clearly indicates that she will take a One-Turn Penalty and then fails to complete the penalty;
- (c) the boat fails to complete a penalty signalled by an umpire;
- (d) the boat commits a breach of sportsmanship;
- (e) the boat breaks rule 14 when damage or injury has been caused;
- (f) the boat breaks a rule and as a result her team gains an advantage despite taking a penalty;
- (g) **a boat on her team has broken a rule and as a result her team gains an advantage despite taking a penalty;**
- (h) the boat breaks a rule of Part 2 through contact with another boat on her team or a boat in another race, and does not take a penalty.

The umpire shall signal a decision in compliance with rule D2.4. A boat penalized by an umpire shall take a Two-Turns Penalty or, when so hailed by the umpire, one or more One-Turn Penalties.

#### Current Position

As above.

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## Reasons

Occasionally in a team race one boat will commit a foul and as a result, her team-mate will gain an advantage in the race. For an example, see Team Race Call Book M3. Giving additional penalty turns to the boat that broke the rule will not reverse the advantage her team has gained. Indeed, at present, the umpires have only one effective option to deal with this situation: display a black flag and ask the protest committee to reverse the outcome of the race in a hearing. But this has serious flaws: it takes the outcome of the race away from the sailors and hands it to the protest committee, and the protest committee must wrestle with speculative questions about how much advantage was gained, and whether it is fair to reverse the outcome of the race.

This proposal adds a second tool to the umpire's toolbox. It empowers the umpires to penalize a boat when she gains an advantage as a result of a foul committed by her team-mate. This is a middle ground between giving no effective penalty and simply reversing the outcome of the race in a hearing. This option keeps the race "on the water" and ensures that even after the foul, each team still has a chance to win the race through sailing skill. Likewise, it reduces the occurrence of difficult, contentious, and time-consuming black flag hearings that often delay racing.

While considering this proposal, the Appendix D Working Group conducted an extensive, world-wide poll of team racing sailors, umpires, and coaches. The result was that 49% supported the proposal, 13% were neutral and 37% disliked it. For perspective, when asked about the option of reversing the race result in a black flag hearing, 36% of respondents were in favour, 25% were neutral, and 39% were opposed. As one coach put it, "In other team sports, often a player infraction hurts the team, why not team racing in sailing?" Importantly, many sailors emphasized the desirability of keeping the race on the water. As one sailor commented, "I support this option as it seems easier to penalize the boat that gained the advantage while keeping the game moving. To me, the fact that a boat didn't break a rule is immaterial to whether their team (including the boat that gained) should be penalized in the context of team racing. When penalizing with race wins (after a black flag), we are in effect penalizing boats that did not break a rule."

This proposed rule will not help in every case, but it adds an important tool for umpires to help ensure fair racing. While this proposed rule does require the umpires to exercise considerable discretion, this remains preferable to having a protest committee exercise even greater discretion in a black flag hearing after the race has ended. Should this proposal be accepted, the Umpires' Manual will be updated with guidelines to help umpires apply this new rule in a careful and deliberate fashion.

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