

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-015

Published: 21 January 2009

Situation

At a Match Racing regatta the sailing instructions state
"Rule 32 is deleted and replaced with: 'After the starting signal the RC may abandon or shorten any match for any reason, after consulting with the match umpires when practical.'"

The Race Committee subsequently abandons a match when the lead boat is within a few boat lengths of crossing the finishing line.

When the match umpires enquire why the race was abandoned, the race officer states "the Organising Authority directed me to abandon as the local team was not going to win the match."

Question

Does the abandonment of the race by the race committee constitute an improper action in terms of rule 62.1(a)?

Answer

Yes.

A race committee must be impartial and conduct the racing of all matches in good faith and in the best interests of all the competitors and the regatta as a whole.

The "*any reason*" provided in the sailing instructions can be anything the race committee sees as contributing towards a practicable, fair and equal competition and allows the race committee to handle issues as they arise as expeditiously as possible.

The decision to abandon lies solely with the race committee, although they are required to consult with the match umpires when practical. Provided the race committee acts impartially and in good faith when deciding to abandon a match, that action cannot be considered to be improper.

In this particular case however, the organising authority and the race committee have not acted impartially or in good faith. They have deliberately acted to assist one local competitor against all others and that action is both unfair to all other competitors and improper.

The Chief Umpire should include this incident in the ISAF report form including the identity of the Race Officer.

All published answers are based upon the 2009-2012 Racing Rules of Sailing