

Racing Rules of Sailing

Definition *Finish*

A submission from US Sailing

Purpose or Objective

To fix an unintended consequence of the new definition *Finish* that was caused by the changes adopted in Submissions 139-18 and 129-19.

Proposal 1

Change the definition *Finish* as follows:

Finish A boat *finishes* when, ~~after starting~~, any part of her hull crosses the finishing line from the course side. However, she has not *finished* if after crossing the finishing line she

- (a) takes a penalty under rule 44.2,
- (b) corrects an error in *sailing the course* made at the line, or
- (c) continues to *sail the course*.

Current Position

As above.

Reasons

1. For decades, a boat simply crossed the finishing line and cleared the finishing marks to *finish* a race. In 2018, when Submission 139-18 was approved, the requirements for a boat to *start* and *sail the course* were added to the definition *Finish*. In 2019, the approval of Submission 129-19 reversed part of the 2018 decision and removed '*sail the course*' as a requirement to *finish*. One reason cited by Submission 129-19 was 'this reasoning is flawed in that now, if a boat has not *sailed the course*, it has not *finished*. The status of the boat is in limbo.' Likewise, if a boat has not *started*, she cannot *finish*, and the status of the boat is in limbo. Many of the reasons for deleting '*sail the course*' in Submission 129-19 also apply to boats that have not *started*.
 2. According to the definition *Racing*, a boat is *racing* from her preparatory signal until she *finishes* and clears the finishing line and *marks* or retires. The addition of '*after starting*' to the definition *Finish* makes unintended changes to when a boat is *racing*. Under the 2021 definition *Finish*, a boat that did not *start* cannot *finish*. Therefore, a boat that breaks rule 30.3 in Race 1, *sails the course* and then crosses the finishing line is still *racing* when the rest of the boats in the fleet that cross the finishing line are no longer *racing*. This creates the potential for some bizarre applications of the rules in incidents between the boat (A) that is still *racing* and another boat (B) that is not. For example:
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- a. If Boat A breaks rule 30.3 in Race 1, is she still *racing* in Race 1 when she crosses the finishing line and sails to the starting line for Race 2? At what point does Boat A stop *racing* in Race 1 and start *racing* in Race 2?
 - b. Does rule 23.1 apply between Boat A and Boat B between races?
 - c. If Boat A uses her engine between Race 1 and Race 2, does she break rule 42.1?
3. For safety reasons at events with fast boats, very large fleets or pursuit racing starting schemes, the organizers often want boats that are over the line at the start to continue in the race with a penalty instead of turning back to the starting line. In previous rule books, the race committee could simply delete rule 29.1 and change rule 28 to give OCS boats a starting penalty. That is no longer possible in 2021 when *finishing* is contingent upon *starting* and both definitions are unchangeable by the NoR and SIs.

Proposal 2

Proposal 1 should be considered as 'urgent' under Regulation 28.1.2 and take effect 1 January 2022.

Reason

US Sailing is making this proposal in order to give the World Sailing Racing Rules Committee the opportunity to make this change on an urgent basis if they deem it necessary to do so. The US Sailing Racing Rules Committee is split on whether the rule change should be urgent.
