

Racing Rules of Sailing

Rule 32 and Race Signals, S

A submission from US Sailing

Purpose or Objective

To change the rules for shortening the course to make them fairer to all boats in the race.

Proposal

Change rule 32 and Race Signals, S, as follows:

32 SHORTENING OR ABANDONING AFTER THE START

32.1 After the starting signal, the race committee may shorten the course (~~display flag S with two sounds~~) or *abandon* the race (~~display flag N, N over H, or N over A, with three sounds~~),

- (a) because of foul weather,
- (b) because of insufficient wind making it unlikely that any boat will *finish* within the race time limit,
- (c) because a *mark* is missing or out of position, or
- (d) for any other reason directly affecting the safety or fairness of the competition.

In addition, the race committee may shorten the course so that other scheduled races can be sailed or *abandon* the race because of an error in the starting procedure. However, after one boat has *started*, *sailed the course* and *finished* within the race time limit, if any, the race committee shall not *abandon* the race without considering the consequences for all boats in the race or series.

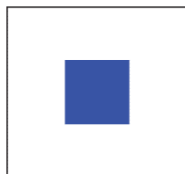
32.2 To shorten the course, the race committee shall display flag S with two sounds before the first boat crosses the finishing line. The two sounds shall be repeated as boats near the finishing line. If the course is shortened ~~race committee signals a shortened course (displays flag S with two sounds)~~, the finishing line shall be,

- (a) at a rounding *mark*, between the *mark* and a staff displaying flag S;
- (b) a line the course requires boats to cross; or
- (c) at a gate, between the gate *marks*.

~~The shortened course shall be signalled before the first boat crosses the finishing line.~~

32.3 To abandon the race, the race committee shall display flag N, N over H, or N over A, with three sound signals.

Shortened Course



S Shortened course.
Two sounds repeated as
required by rule 32.2.

~~S The course has~~
~~been shortened. Rule~~
~~32.2 is in effect.~~

Current Position

As above.

Reasons

1. When a race is shortened, it is frequently the case that the wind is very light and growing lighter. That means that, as boats approach the finishing line, flag S may be hanging down limply in a way that makes it difficult to 'read'. Also, the fleet may be quite spread out and those in the back of the fleet may not have heard the two sounds made when flag S was displayed. A boat's crew often change their tactics when they learn that the mark they are approaching is to be one end of the finishing line and not, as it would have been had the course not been shortened, a rounding mark or a gate mark.
2. The proposed addition to rule 32.2 requires repetition of the two sounds as boats near the finishing line. This is fairer to all boats in the fleet than the current arrangement (two sounds made just once when flag S is displayed). The current arrangement gives a tactical advantage to boats close enough to the race committee signal boat to hear the two sounds made at the time flag S was displayed.
3. Other minor changes in rule 32 in the proposal are made for clarity.
