

Racing Rules of Sailing

Definition Finish

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Purpose or Objective

Fix the circular reasoning contained in submission 138-18 that was accepted in 2018.

Proposal

Change the definition of Finish (as agreed in 2018) as follows:

Finish A boat *finishes* when, after *starting* ~~and sailing the course~~, 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, ~~or~~
- (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. The reasoning behind proposal 3 of 138-18 was:
“Clause (c) in the current definition Finish is deleted. Many readers have never understood that clause. It was introduced in 2013 to permit the use of multiple-lap courses that require boats to cross the finishing line as they begin to sail each new lap. Without clause (c), under current rules, a boat crossing the finishing line at the end of the first lap has ‘finished’ the race. Under Proposal 4, that boat does not ‘finish’ because she has not yet completely sailed the course.” and
“Under the current rules, if the race committee believes from its observations that a boat has made an error in sailing the course, it is required to score the boat in her finishing position and then protest her for breaking rule 28. If Proposal 4 is accepted, the committee will be permitted to score such a boat ‘ESC, thereby penalizing her without a hearing. However, the rights of the boat are protected because she may request redress if she believes she did sail the course correctly. Because the facts in most such cases will be clear and not contested, there should be a net reduction in the number of hearings.”
 2. 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. Only be the boat’s action in this case will it be possible to
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try and ascertain if the boat has retired (stopped racing). This is a harder concept to understand than to determine that a boat has "continued to sail the course".

3. This definition puts an onus on the race committee to monitor each boat to check if it sails the course. This is achievable in high level events but too much to ask for regattas with less staff / volunteers.
 4. If a boat is recorded as finished, It must, by definition, have sailed the course. How can a race committee determine if any boat has finishing without knowing if it sailed the course?
 5. This submission reinstates the clause (c) to the definition of finish. A review of race officials and sailors in the 12 months since 138-18 has resulted in the large majority being confused by the circular reasoning that is now in the definition.
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