

Racing Rules of Sailing

Definition Finish, New Definition Sail the Course, Rules 28, 35 and related rules

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Purpose

To remove a part of the definition *Finish* that readers find complicated and ambiguous and to clarify and simplify all rules that refer to a boat 'sailing the course'.

Note: Proposals 1, 2 and 3 are independent of one another. Proposals 1, 2 and 3 can be considered and voted on individually. Proposal 4 makes several changes that are dependent on one another and probably should be voted on as a 'package'.

Proposal 1

Change the title of rule 28 as follows:

28 SAILING THE RACE ~~COURSE~~

Current Position

As above.

Reason

Rule 28 requires a boat that sails in a race to do three separate things – to start, to sail the course and to finish. The current title is misleading because it suggests that rule 28 deals only with sailing the course. The proposal removes this possible source of confusion.

Proposal 2

1. Change rule 35 as follows:

35 TIME LIMIT AND SCORES

If one boat ***starts***, sails the course as required by rule 28 and *finishes* within the time limit, if any, all boats that *finish* shall be scored according to their finishing places unless the race is *abandoned*. If no boat *finishes* within the time limit, the race committee shall *abandon* the race.

2. Change the last sentence of rule 32.1 as follows:

However, after one boat has ***started***, sailed the course and *finished* within the time limit, if any, the race committee shall not *abandon* the race without considering the consequences for all boats in the race or series.

3. Change rule 90.3(a) as follows:

90.3 Scoring

- (a) The race committee shall score a race or series as provided in Appendix A using the Low Point System, unless the notice of race or sailing instructions specify some other system. A race shall be scored if it is not *abandoned* and if one boat ***starts***, sails the course in compliance with rule 28 and *finishes* within the time limit, if any, even if she retires after *finishing* or is disqualified.

4. Change SI 15.2 in Appendix L as follows:

15.2 Boats failing to finish within _____ after the first boat ~~sails the course and~~ finishes will be scored Did Not Finish without a hearing. This changes RRS 35, A4 and A5.

5. Change SI 12.1 in Appendix S as follows:

12.1 The supplement will state which of the following time limits, if any, will apply and, for each, the time limit.

- Mark 1 Time Limit Time limit for the first boat to pass Mark 1.
- Race Time Limit Time limit for the first boat to ***start***, sail the course and finish.
- Finishing Window Time limit for boats to finish after the first boat ~~sails the course and~~ finishes.

Current Position

As above.

Reason

Consider the following situation. The time limit for a race is 60 minutes. Boat A was on the course side of the starting line at the starting signal and then, without returning to start, she sailed the course and finished 55 minutes after the starting signal. Boat B was the first boat that started according to the definition *Start* and then sailed the course and finished. B finished 62 minutes after the starting signal. Under current rule 35, A's finish 'triggers' rule 35, and all other boats in the race are scored in their finishing positions. This is not consistent with the intention behind rule 35, which is that, if no boat can start, sail the course and finish within the time limit, the race must be abandoned. Under the proposal to change rule 35, with the word '*starts*' added, the rule will function as intended.

The proposed changes in rules 32.1 and 90.3(a) and in in SIs L15.2 and 12.1 make them consistent with rule 35 with the word 'starts' added.

Proposal 3

Change rules 28.1 and 28.2 as follows:

- 28.1** A boat shall *start*, sail the course ~~described in the sailing instructions~~ and *finish*. While doing so, she may leave on either side a *mark* that does not begin, bound or end the leg she is sailing. After *finishing* she need not cross the finishing line completely.
- 28.2** A string representing a boat's track from the time she begins to approach the starting line from its pre-start side to *start* until she *finishes* shall, when drawn taut,
- (a) pass each *mark* **of the course for the race** on the required side and in the correct order,
 - (b) touch each rounding *mark*, and
 - (c) pass between the *marks* of a gate from the direction of the previous *mark*.
- She may correct any errors to comply with this rule, provided she has not *finished*.

Current Position

As above.

Reason

For some races, the course is completely described in the sailing instructions. However, the sailing instructions are not required to completely describe the course (see rule J2.1(d)), and if they do not, the race committee is required by rule 27.1 to 'signal or otherwise designate the course.' The phrase 'described in the sailing instructions' in rule 28.1 suggests, incorrectly, that the course is always described in the sailing instructions. Under Proposal 3, the phrase 'described in the sailing instructions' is deleted and wording is added to rule 28.2(a) which is consistent with both a course described in the sailing instructions and with a course signalled or otherwise designated by the race committee under rule 27.1.

Proposal 4

1. Add the following new definition *Sail the Course*:
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Sail the Course A boat sails the course provided that a string representing her track from the time she begins to approach the starting line from its pre-start side to start until she finishes, when drawn taut,

- (a) **passes each mark of the course for the race on the required side and in the correct order,**
- (b) **touches each rounding mark, and**
- (c) **passes between the marks of a gate from the direction of the previous mark.**

2. Change rule 28 as follows:

28.1 A boat shall start, sail the course ~~described in the sailing instructions~~ and **then finish**. While doing so, she may leave on either side a mark that does not begin, bound or end the leg she is sailing. After finishing she need not cross the finishing line completely.

28.2 **A boat may correct any errors in sailing the course, provided she has not crossed the finishing line to finish.** A string representing a boat's track from the time she begins to approach the starting line from its pre-start side to start until she finishes shall, when drawn taut,

- (a) ~~pass each mark on the required side and in the correct order,~~
 - (b) ~~touch each rounding mark, and~~
 - (c) ~~pass between the marks of a gate from the direction of the previous mark.~~
- ~~She may correct any errors to comply with this rule, provided she has not finished.~~

3. Change the definition *Finish* as follows:

Finish A boat finishes when, **after starting and sailing the course,** any part of her hull, or crew or equipment in normal position, 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** ~~under rule 28.2~~ made at the line, ~~or~~
- (c) ~~continues to sail the course.~~

4. Change rules A4.2 and A5 as follows:

A4.2 A boat that did not start, **did not sail the course,** did not finish, retired or was disqualified shall be scored points for the finishing place one more than the number of boats entered in the series. A boat that is penalized under rule 30.2 or that takes a penalty under rule 44.3(a) shall be scored points as provided in rule 44.3(c).

A5 SCORES DETERMINED BY THE RACE COMMITTEE

A boat that did not start, **sail the course** or finish, or comply with rule 30.2, 30.3, 30.4 or 78.2, or that retires or takes a penalty under rule 44.3(a), shall be scored accordingly by the race committee without a hearing. Only the protest committee may take other scoring actions that worsen a boat's score.

5. Add to rule A11 after the line for SCP:

ESC Did not correct error in sailing the course

Proposal 5 - Consequential changes

1. Italicize 'sail the course', 'sails the course' or 'sailed the course' wherever one of those phrases appears in other rules or in a definition. Such a change must be made in the following current rules and definitions: Rule 32.1, 35, 61.1(a)(3), 90.3(a), E5.1(c), in Appendix L, SI 15.2, and Appendix S, SI 12.1; Definition *Finish*, Definition *Mark-Room* and in Appendix F, Definition *Finish*. The change should also be made if one of those phrases is used in new wording adopted for the 2021-2024 edition of the RRS.
2. Delete 'as required by rule 28' from rules 35 and E5.1(c) and 'in compliance with rule 28' from rule 90.3(a).
3. Change rule J2.15 as follows:
 - (5) descriptions of *marks*, including starting and finishing *marks*, stating the order in which *marks* are to be passed and the side on which each is to be left and identifying all rounding *marks* (see **the definition Sail the Course** ~~rule 28.2~~);
4. Change the definition *Finish* in Appendix F as follows:

Finish A kiteboard *finishes* when, **after starting and sailing the course**, ~~while~~ the competitor is in contact with the hull, **and** any part of her hull, or the competitor in normal position, 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** ~~under rule 28.2~~ made at the line, ~~or~~
 - ~~(c) continues to sail the course.~~

Current Position

As above.

Reasons

1. There are several advantages to Proposal 4:
 - 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.
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- The phrase ‘sail the course’ will appear in italics in each of the many places in the RRS in which it is used. That will specify exactly what that phrase means in each of those places. This will clarify the meaning of each of these rules.
 - As noted below, it should reduce average the number of hearings that the protest committee must conduct.
2. The effect of current rule 28.2 is to define what it means to ‘sail the course’. The phrase ‘sail the course’, ‘sails the course’ or ‘sailed the course’ is used in eleven different current rules and definitions. The meaning given to ‘sail the course’ by current rule 28.2 is certainly not a meaning that is ‘ordinarily understood in nautical or general use’, so it is appropriate to add the proposed new definition *Sail the Course* and to italicize the phrase wherever it is used in the RRS (see Terminology in the Introduction).
 3. Proposal 4 does makes two changes in current race committee practise:
 - 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.
 - Deleting rule 28.2, the ‘string’ rule, and moving its provisions into the new definition *Sail the Course*, means that no part of the ‘string’ rule will be able to be changed by the notice of race or sailing instructions. However, the authors of Proposal 4 have not ever seen such a change made and for that reason, do not expect this restriction to be at all onerous.
 4. The proposal does contains many changes, but, wherever possible, familiar wording used in the current rules has been retained.
 5. The first sentence of rule 28 makes a simple fundamental statement: Every boat in every race is required to do three separate things – to start, to sail the course and to finish. The added ‘then’ in that first sentence emphasizes the order in which these three requirements must be met. The new definition *Sail the Course* adds clarity to that sentence because each of the three requirements is treated identically – by a definition in the Definitions section of the RRS.

Clean Copy of Definitions *Sail the Course* and *Finish* and Rule 28 if Proposals 1 – 4 are accepted:

Sail the Course A boat *sails the course* provided that a string representing her track from the time she begins to approach the starting line from its pre-start side to *start* until she *finishes*, when drawn taut,

- (a) passes each *mark* of the course for the race on the required side and in the correct order,
 - (b) touches each rounding *mark*, and
 - (c) passes between the *marks* of a gate from the direction of the previous *mark*.
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Finish A boat *finishes* when, after *starting* and *sailing the course*, any part of her hull, or crew or equipment in normal position, 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.

28 SAILING THE RACE

28.1 A boat shall *start*, *sail the course* and then *finish*. While doing so, she may leave on either side a *mark* that does not begin, bound or end the leg she is sailing. After *finishing* she need not cross the finishing line completely.

28.2 A boat may correct any errors in *sailing the course*, provided she has not crossed the finishing line to *finish*.
