Racing Rules of Sailing

Rule 41

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Purpose or Objective

To improve on the change made by ISAF in rule 41 in November 2010 by providing for help in additional dangerous situations and allowing the protest committee to take action to ensure that a boat’s score is not significantly improved by assistance she receives under rule 41(a).

Proposal

41 OUTSIDE HELP

A boat shall not receive help from any outside source, except

(a) help for an ill or injured crew member who is ill, injured or in danger;
(b) after a collision, help from the crew of the other boat to get clear;
(c) help in the form of information freely available to all boats;
(d) unsolicited information from a disinterested source, which may be another boat in the same race.
(e) help to recover a crew member from the water and to return the crew member to the boat before the boat continues in the race.

However, if a boat gains a significant advantage in the race from help received under rule 41(a), she may be protested and a discretionary penalty may be imposed.

Current Position

Council approved Submission 163-10. Therefore, the current position (for the 2013 rulebook) is:

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(b) after a collision, help from the crew of the other boat to get clear;
(c) help in the form of information freely available to all boats;
(d) unsolicited information from a disinterested source, which may be another boat in the same race.
(e) help to recover a crew member from the water and to return the crew member to the boat before the boat continues in the race.
Reasons

The proposed change is preferable to the change adopted in 2010 for the following reasons:

1. Other safety measures are permitted beyond just helping a crew member who has become separated from the boat – for example, a race committee safety vessel may tow a becalmed boat out of the path of a large, unmanoeuvrable commercial vessel.

2. The proposed new sentence at the end of the rule deals with fairness issues that the 2010 change did not address. It is quite possible in strong winds with a limited number of rescue vessels that some capsized boats will be helped and others will not. If that occurs, the proposed new sentence will allow the protest committee to impose an appropriate penalty on boats that gained a significant advantage in the race because of the help they received.