Racing Rules of Sailing

Rule 30.3

A submission from Yachting Australia

Purpose or Objective

To communicate to boats that have broken the rule that may need to return and re-start.

Proposal

Amend rule 30.3 as follows:

30.3 Black Flag Rule

If a black flag has been displayed, no part of a boat’s hull, crew or equipment shall be in the triangle formed by the ends of the starting line and the first mark during the last minute before her starting signal. **If a boat breaks this rule and the race is not postponed or abandoned before the start or if a general recall is not signalled, the race committee shall, after the starting signal, promptly display flag X with one sound signal. The flag shall be displayed for at least one minute.** If a boat breaks this rule and is identified, she shall be disqualified without a hearing, even if the race is restarted or resailed, but not if it is postponed or abandoned before the starting signal. If a general recall is signalled or the race is abandoned after the starting signal, the race committee shall display her sail number before the next warning signal for that race, and if the race is restarted or resailed she shall not sail in it. If she does so, her disqualification shall not be excluded in calculating her series score.

Current Position

Rule 29.1 does not require the display of flag X with a sound signal when rule 30.3 applies.

Reasons

1. Apart from consistency with other starting procedures (P, I & Z flag starts), there are at least 2 situations where it is desirable that a boat should know that she may have been OCS in the minute before the starting signal and broken rule 30.3.

2. As addressed in Q&A 2014.015 Questions 1 and 2, if a boat has been compelled to break rule 30.3 by the actions of another boat, she will not be entitled to redress unless she returns and starts correctly. Unless flag X has been displayed with a sound signal at the start, the boat has no way of knowing that any boat broke the rule and that she may need to return and re-start.
3. At many regattas, the sailing instructions state that after a black flag start, the race committee will display the sail numbers of any boats that broke rule 30.3 at the first windward mark. Boats whose number has been displayed are required to immediately retire from the race and boats that fail to retire are scored DNE. At a crowded mark rounding it can be extremely difficult for boats to read the sail numbers displayed by the race committee and those that try to do so may have to sail away from the mark and lose many places. Unless flag X has been displayed with a sound signal at the start, the boats have no way of knowing that any boat broke the rule, that their number may have been displayed and that they may need to go out of their way to check the board for their number.

4. ISAF have approved the use of flag U being included under rule 30.3 and the re-numbering of rule 30.3 to 30.4. This proposed change would apply equally to flag U if rule 29.1 is changed to exclude both flag U and the black flag from the requirement to display an X flag with a sound signal at the start.