Racing Rules of Sailing

Rule P5(a)

A submission from US SAILING

Purpose or Objective

To align rule P5(a) with other race committee signalling rules in both function and wording.

Proposal

P5  FLAGS O AND R

(a) If the class rules permit pumping, rocking and ooching when the wind speed exceeds a specified limit, the race committee may signal that those actions are permitted, as specified in the class rules, by displaying flag O no later than before or with the warning signal. The flag shall be removed at the starting signal.

Current Position

As above.

Reason

Under the current rules, flag O is displayed no later than the warning signal and removed at the starting signal. However, there are some situations in which it is appropriate to continue to display flag O after the starting signal, and other situations in which it is more appropriate to remove flag O at the starting signal.

Displaying flag O for a few minutes after the starting signal makes the signal available for boats arriving late to the starting line, enabling them to learn that pumping, rocking and ooching are permitted. Continuing to display flag O after the starting signal is also appropriate when there is a general recall or a short postponement and the wind speed remains above the specified limit. However, when the warning signal for a succeeding class is made with the starting signal of the previous class, it may be necessary to remove flag O at the starting signal.

With the proposed change, the procedure for displaying flag O in rule P5(a) is analogous to the procedure for signalling the course under rule 27.1, i.e., there is a time requirement for the display of the signal, but its removal is dictated by the situation.

The phrase "before or with the warning signal" is changed to "no later than the warning signal." The two phrases have the same meaning, but the latter phrase is most often used in the rulebook.