Racing Rules of Sailing

Rule E4.2

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Purpose or Objective
To clarify the rule and correct omissions.

Proposal

E4.2 Outside Help

Rule 41 is changed to:

A boat or the competitor controlling her shall not receive help from any outside source, except

(a) when the competitor is help needed as a direct result of a competitor becoming ill, injured or in danger;

(b) when her hull, rig or appendages are entangled with another boat, help from the other competitor;

(c) when a boat's hull, rig or appendages are entangled, or she is aground or in danger, help from a race committee vessel;

(d) help in the form of information freely available to all competitors.

(e) unsolicited information from a disinterested source. A competitor is not a disinterested source unless acting as an observer.

However, a boat that gains a significant advantage in the heat or race from help received under rule 41 may be protested and penalized; any penalty may be less than disqualification.

Current Position

As above.

Reasons

Rule 41 was re-written in 2005, but parts of the rule were not transcribed into Appendix E. In particular, rule 41(d) regarding unsolicited information from a disinterested source was not included in rule E4.2. In the same way rule E4.2 does not provide a procedure for protesting boats that gain a significant advantage from outside help that is allowed under the rule.

Current rule E4.2(a) has been interpreted by some judges as allowing all forms of outside help if a
competitor is ill, injured or in danger, even if this help is unrelated to the immediate difficulty the competitor is facing. This was never the intent of the rule.

The current rule makes no provision for outside help from a safety boat or other race committee vessel. At present, if the crew of such a vessel intervenes the boats are required to retire. The new rule E4.2(c) will help to separate entangled boats rapidly and greatly reduce the risk of damage to them; it will also reduce the number of subsequent requests for redress.

This submission is supported by the International Radio Sailing Association.