Racing Rules of Sailing

Definition - Proper Course

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Purpose or Objective

To correct a technical flaw in the current definition.

Proposal

Proper Course A course a boat would sail to complete the course and finish as soon as possible in the absence of the other boats referred to in the rule using the term. A boat has no proper course before her starting signal.

Current Position

As above.

Reasons

The current definition does not define ‘proper course’ in the way that competitors use the term. The proposal aligns the wording with what competitors think the definition currently says – that is, a proper course is one a boat would sail to complete the course and then cross the finishing line as soon as possible, in the absence of other boats referred to in the rule. The problem with the current definition is that ‘finish’ is a defined term that makes no reference to sailing the course, only to crossing the finishing line from the direction of the last mark. Strictly speaking, a boat’s proper course under the current definition is to sail directly to the finishing line without completing the course. Adding the words ‘complete the course and’ brings the definition into agreement with current usage of the term among competitors.

This submission was prepared by the Rule 28 Working Party.