

Racing Rules of Sailing

Definition Finish, Rule D1.1(a) and Definition Finish in Appendix F

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Purpose or Objective

There is an undesirable and unintended consequence of the definition *Finish* that was adopted in the 2021-2024 RRS, as a result of Submissions 139-18 and 129-19. This proposal fixes the problem.

Proposal

Change the definition *Finish* as shown:

Finish A boat *finishes* when, ~~after starting,~~ any part of her hull crosses the finishing line from the course side. However, she has not *finished* if after crossing the finishing line she

- (a) takes a penalty under rule 44.2,
- (b) corrects an error in *sailing the course* made at the line, or
- (c) continues to *sail the course*.

Current Position

As above.

Consequential Changes

In Appendix F, delete ‘, after *starting*,’ from the definition *Finish*.

In Appendix D, delete rule D1.1(a) and renumber rule D1.1(b) – D1.1(h) accordingly.

Note: Rule D1.1(a) was adopted on January 1, 2022 as a result of an urgent submission in 2021.

Reasons

1. For decades, a boat simply crossed the finishing line and cleared the finishing marks to *finish* a race. In 2018, when Submission 139-18 was approved, the requirements for a boat to *start* and *sail the course* were added to the definition *Finish*. In 2019, the approval of Submission 129-19 reversed part of the 2018 decision and removed ‘*sail the course*’ as a requirement to *finish*. One reason cited in Submission 129-19 was: ‘This reasoning is flawed in that now, if a boat has not *sailed the course*, it has not *finished*. The status of the boat is in limbo.’ Likewise, if a boat has not *started*, she cannot *finish*, and the status of the boat is in limbo.
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Many of the reasons for deleting '*sail the course*' in Submission 129-19 also apply to boats that have not *started*.

2. Here is an example of a problem caused by including the words '*after starting*' in the definition *Finish*: According to the definition *Racing*, a boat is *racing* from her preparatory signal until she *finishes* and clears the finishing line and *marks* or retires. The addition of '*after starting*' to the definition *Finish* makes unintended changes to when a boat is *racing*. Under the 2021 definition *Finish*, a boat that did not *start* cannot *finish*. Consider this situation: Boat A breaks rule 30.3 in Race 1 and then she *sails the course* and crosses the finishing line. Because she did not *start*, she does not *finish*, and she is still *racing*, Boat B *started*, *sailed the course* and then crossed the finishing line; therefore, B is then not *racing*. This creates the potential for some bizarre applications of the rules in incidents between A, a boat that is still *racing* and B, a boat that is not *racing*. For example:
 - a. If Boat A breaks rule 30.3 in Race 1, is she still *racing* in Race 1 when she crosses the finishing line and sails to the starting line for Race 2? At what point does Boat A stop *racing* in Race 1 and start *racing* in Race 2?
 - b. Does rule 23.1 apply between Boat A and Boat B between races?
 - c. If Boat A uses her engine between Race 1 and Race 2, does she break rule 42.1?
 3. For safety reasons at events with fast boats, very large fleets or pursuit racing starting schemes, the organizers often want boats that are over the line at the start to continue in the race with a penalty instead of turning back to the starting line. In previous rule books, the race committee could simply delete rule 29.1 and change rule 28 to give OCS boats a starting penalty. That is no longer possible in 2021 when *finishing* is contingent upon *starting* and both definitions are unchangeable by the NoR and SIs.
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