

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



G 005

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Situation

Offshore Races often use an alternative score/penalty for boats that are OCS.

Examples of sailing instructions used by various organisers are:

- a) Boats scored OCS in offshore races will receive a 30% scoring penalty as defined in RRS 44.3. This changes RRS A4.2.
- b) When at a boat's starting signal she is subject to RRS 29.1 Individual Recall and she fails to comply with RRS 29.1 to start correctly, the Race Committee shall, without a hearing, apply a time penalty of 20%. This changes RRS 63.1 & A5.

From an event organiser's and from a sailor's point of view, it is very hard to have a boat sail potentially hundreds of miles only to realise after days of racing that they hadn't started correctly.

From a rules perspective, a boat that is OCS is a boat that did not start. Rule 28 requires boats to start in accordance with the definition Start. The definitions cannot be changed in the sailing instructions.

Question 1

May sailing instructions define a different score for a boat identified OCS - and if so, how?

Answer 1

Yes, however to be allowed to do that under the rules, the sailing instructions need to change rule 28. Rule 28 requires a boat to '*start*' (as defined in the RRS) and an OCS boat that does not thereafter go back and start correctly, has never started under the definition Start. The sailing instructions cannot change a definition.

After having changed rule 28, the race committee may define any penalty and, when relevant, score for a boat that breaks rule 28.

SI x RRS 28 is changed as follows:

- (a) In rule 28.1, delete the first sentence and replace with:
'A boat shall cross the starting line after having been entirely on the pre-start side at or after her starting signal and sail the course described in the sailing instructions and *finish*.'
- (b) In rule 28.2, delete the first sentence and replace with:
'A string representing a boat's track from the time she begins to approach the starting line from its pre-start side to cross it until she *finishes* shall, when drawn taut,.....'
- (c) Add new 28.3 Exoneration:
A boat that does not cross the starting line as required by rule 28.1 may exonerate herself from that breach by: [Insert the relevant penalty / action]. This changes rules A4 and A5.'

or

- (c) 'The penalty and scoring abbreviation for not crossing the starting line as required by rule 28.1 will be [Insert the relevant scoring and any requirements with regard to it]. This changes rules A4, A5 and A11.'

Question 2

If the answer to Q1 is yes, are there any recommendations for replacement penalties, e.g. SCP with 20 or 30 per cent, a time penalty on the elapsed time relating to the total time of the race (e.g. 1 hour for a day's race, or 5 hours for a week's race like one of the classic 600 nm Ocean Races)

Answer 2

The events using alternative penalties range from round the world races to stadium style races in confined racing areas. Other alternatives may be to use a 'Penalty Box', where such boats have to wait for a given time, or for shorter races to state that such boats shall round the first mark behind the other boats (or simply drop behind them). The benefit with the penalties taken on the water is that the boats are the exonerated and fully back into the race. One type of penalty may be appropriate for one event but inappropriate for another.

ISAF does not have any recommended replacement penalties for this, however, the penalty should be strong enough encourage boats to start correctly.