

Rules Specialist Group 2021-2024 Racing Rules of Sailing

Race abandonment

Issued 20 February 2023

Question

Could I get clarification on when a race should be cancelled and falls under 32.1 (d) please?

During a race, the wind died and went from S/W to S/W, North and back to S/E, as not all boats were affected would this then fall under "fairness of the competition " can you clarify please?

Response

The Racing Rules of Sailing do not state that a race committee should abandon race due to a change in wind direction.

Rule 32 allows a race committee to abandon a race provided specified criteria are met. This power is discretionary, a race committee is not required to abandon the race when the criteria are met.

Rule 32.1(d) makes it clear that the most important criterion for abandoning a race is that, for some reason, the safety or fairness of the competition has been adversely affected. Rules 32.1(a), (b) and (c) give some examples of reasons which may justify abandoning a race, rule 32.1(d) implies there may be other reasons. (Case 38).

Wind shifts are part of our sport as is wind varying across the racecourse. Sometimes a boat gets an advantage through a wind shift sometimes not, this is part of the game. Wind shifts do not directly affect the fairness of the competition, a requirement which must be satisfied for Rule 32.1(d) to apply. A race committee decision to abandon which favors one of more boats over others may be seen as unjust and affecting the fairness of the competition. If this is the case a boat may successfully request redress by alleging the decision to abandon was an improper action by the race committee.

The World Sailing Race Management Manual ([Microsoft Word - RM Manual 03 April 18-Update 13 Aug 19 .docx \(sailing.org\)](#)) is a reference guide for race officers which aims to contribute to consistency in race management. The manual strongly recommends that a race should not be abandoned due to a change in wind conditions after the leading boat has rounded the first mark. A race abandoned on the first leg is more likely to be restarted promptly and it is less likely that a boat would be able to establish that it adversely effected their score in the race or series.

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A decision by race committee to abandon later in a race should only be taken when a race committee has carefully considered the consequences for all boats in the race or series.

On behalf of the Rules Specialist Group

John Standley (Chair)

20th February 2023