

Rules Specialist Group 2017-2020 Racing Rules of Sailing

How does rule 78 apply for handicap races?

Issued 7 April 2020

1. [Background](#)

We run PHS racing for our members on our racing days. Our fleet is made up of a diverse range of boats and a number of them are boats that fit into a specific class, e.g. Farr40's, Dragons, J70's etc, however and importantly (for the purposes of my enquiry) they are not racing in a class event as such, instead racing in a club event. They may or may not be racing against boats of the same class (e.g. we may have 2 Dragons racing in our regular PHS race on a Saturday).

2. [Question](#)

Do the boats that fit into a specific class (as described above) need to comply with their 'class rules' when sailing in PHS or other types of handicap racing?

3. [Answer](#)

The definition of 'Rule' in the RRS states in part:

(d) the class rules (for a boat racing under a handicap or rating system, the class rules of the system are 'class rules').

When a boat enters a handicap race, she is required to comply with the rules of that handicap system, the notice of race and any other rules that apply for the race or series.

World Sailing case 98 Question 4 refers:

Question 4

Buttercup, a J/24, raced in the handicap class. Did the J/24 Class Rules or the handicap system rules apply to her?

Answer 4

The rules of the handicap system applied to Buttercup (see paragraph (d) in the definition Rule). If her handicap was explicitly based on the assumption that she race in compliance with some, or all, of the J/24 class rules, then those J/24 class rules, or all the J/24 class rules, applied to her.

However, if Buttercup's handicap was not based on such an assumption, then none of the J/24 class rules applied to her.

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A boat sailing under a PHS system is not required to comply with her class rules as the handicap system is not based on the assumption that the boat complies with those rules.

However, if the handicap system is explicitly based on the assumption that a boat is racing in accordance with class rules and the Notice of Race so states, then the boat is required to comply with her class rules.

John Standley

Chair

Rules Specialist Group

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