

Racing Rules of Sailing

New Case (Question 110)

A submission from US Sailing

Purpose or Objective

To submit a US Sailing Appeal for consideration as an ISAF Case.

Proposal

CASE XXX (Question 110)

Basic Principles, Environmental Responsibility Rule 55, Trash Disposal

Broken sail stops made of yarn or rubber bands that fall into the water are trash, even if they are biodegradable. Intentionally putting broken sail stops in the water breaks rule 55. However, rule 55 can be changed in the sailing instructions to permit their use.

Assumed Facts

Boat A stops a sail using commercially available biodegradable yarn or rubber bands. When the sail is hoisted and the stops are broken, some of them fall into the water. Boat B protests A, alleging that she broke rule 55. In the hearing, A argues that the stops are not trash because they are biodegradable.

Question

Did Boat A break rule 55?

Answer

Yes. The broken sail stops that fall into the water, although biodegradable, are trash that the competitor intentionally put in the water; therefore Boat A broke rule 55. However, rule 55 can be changed in the sailing instructions to permit putting sail stops in the water; see rule 86.1(b). The change should also be noted in the notice of race; see rule J1.2(1).

If rule 55 is changed to permit putting sail stops in the water, then in keeping with the new Basic Principle, Environmental Responsibility, it would be appropriate to require that sail stops be biodegradable.

Current Position

None, other than ISAF Q&A 2013-028.

Reasons

1. Both the Basic Principle, Environmental Responsibility and rule 55, Trash Disposal, are new to the racing rules, and both deserve special emphasis because they introduce to the rules the importance of protecting the environment.
 2. This appeal answers a question asked by competitors who sail with large spinnakers and headsails, noting that broken sail stops put in the water are trash, whether or not they are biodegradable.
 3. Furthermore, it points out that rule 55 can be changed by sailing instructions, and that if rule 55 is changed, it would be appropriate to require that the stops be biodegradable.
 4. This decision is in line with ISAF Q&A 2013-028.
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