

Championship rule change proposal

Denmark proposes to change Championship Rules paragraph 16 to allow the use of GPS.

All communication restrictions would then be covered by Sailing World Racing Rules of Sailing, and paragraph 16 could be deleted.

Motivation:

The former wording of rule 16 reads:

No transmitting equipment, radio receivers and portable phones shall be carried on board of any competing boat.

IACA contacted ISAF and got clarified that a GPS device is a radio receiver, and therefore it was interpreted that GPS was forbidden by rule 16.

We believe the definition of what kind of radio communication should be allowed, should be aligned with the way World Sailing looks at it:

Except in an emergency, a boat that is racing shall not make voice or data transmissions and shall not receive voice or data communication that is not available to all boats.

The key here is “available to all boats”. GPS signals are available to all boats, and therefore GPS is allowed under World Sailing's Racing Rules of Sailing.

Our Class rules don't restrict the usage of GPS, why should this be different in the Championship Rules?

GPS units are today found in many devices ranging from watches, instruments, action cameras etc. It's almost impossible to police the rule, hard to prove at a protest and might restrict areas that are unintended.

We believe the original intention of rule 16 was to limit personal communication to receive outside help from a coach, shore team etc.

By removing rule 16, radio communication will be covered by RRS 41(c), or additions to Notice of Race or Sailing Instructions. (See below)

RRS 41:

41 OUTSIDE HELP

A boat shall not receive help from any outside source, except

- (a) help for a crew member who is ill, injured or in danger;
- (b) after a collision, help from the crew of the other vessel to get clear;
- (c) help in the form of information freely available to all boats;
- (d) unsolicited information from a disinterested source, which may be another boat in the same race.

However, a boat that gains a significant advantage in the race from help received under rule 41(a) may be protested and penalized; any penalty may be less than disqualification.

World Sailing standard NOR template (Appendix K, 18):

18 RADIO COMMUNICATION

Except in an emergency, a boat that is racing shall not make voice or data transmissions and shall not receive voice or data communication that is not available to all boats.