

Racing Rules of Sailing

Rule 61.1(a)

A submission from US Sailing

Purpose or Objective

To solve a problem introduced by a change in rule 61.1(a) made in 2021.

Proposal

Change rule 61.1(a) as indicated:

- (a) The protesting boat shall inform the other boat at the first reasonable opportunity. When her *protest* will concern an incident **that she became aware of** in the racing area, she shall hail 'Protest' and conspicuously display a red flag at the first reasonable opportunity for each. She shall display the flag until she is no longer *racing*. However, [no further change]

Current Position

As above.

Reasons

1. Before 2021, this rule read:

- (a) A boat intending to protest shall inform the other boat at the first reasonable opportunity. When her *protest* will concern an incident in the racing area **that she was involved in or saw**, she shall hail 'Protest' and conspicuously display a red flag at the first reasonable opportunity for each. She shall display the flag until she is no longer *racing*. However,

The expression in bold above was removed for the 2021-2024 RRS because of the following problem: Suppose boat A breaks a class rule – say, she uses a spinnaker pole that is longer than her class rules allow. Boat B observes her racing but is unaware that the spinnaker pole violates class rules. After the boats come ashore, B has an opportunity to examine A's spinnaker pole more carefully, and she determines the pole violates class rules. So she tells A immediately that she is going to protest her. Under the pre-2021 rule, that protest could be found to be invalid because she observed the violation during the race but didn't hail and display a red flag at that time.

Unfortunately, removing 'that she was involved in or saw' causes a new, unforeseen problem. Without those words, all protests by boats, including protests after racing is over, require a hail and a red flag. Suppose, to use the example above, A admits at the yacht club bar that she was sailing with an over-long spinnaker pole and B hears this admission and decides to protest. For the protest to be valid, she must hail 'Protest' and display a red flag – in the bar! The proposed words correct that absurdity without reinstating the original problem.
