

4.26 Storm & Heavy Weather Sail Inventory

A submission from Royal Yachting Association

Purpose or Objective

To ensure safety of boats and crew members.

Proposal

4.26 Storm & Heavy Weather Sail Inventory

****** the following storm & heavy weather sails as specified in OSR 4.27:

MoMu0,1,2,3 **4.26.1 heavy weather jib.**

MoMu0,1,2 **4.26.2 storm jib.**

****** **4.26.3 For boats with first launch date before 1 January 2026 a boat shall have:**

MoMu0 ~~4.26.1~~ **4.26.3** a storm trysail (or rotating wing mast if suitable),

MoMu1,2 ~~4.26.1~~ **4.26.3** either a storm trysail or mainsail reefing to reduce the luff by at least 50% (or rotating wing mast if suitable),

MoMu3 ~~4.26.1~~ **4.26.3** either a storm trysail or mainsail reefing to reduce the luff by at least 40% (or rotating wing mast if suitable),

MoMu4 ~~4.26.1~~ **4.26.3** either mainsail reefing to reduce the luff by 12.5% or a heavy weather jib (or rotating wing mast if suitable or heavy-weather sail in a boat with no forestay).

****** **4.26.3 After 1 January 2026, all boats with first launch date before 1 January 2026. that do not require structural modification to meet the mainsail reefing requirements set out in 4.26.4. shall comply with 4.26.4**

~~MoMu0,1,2,3~~ ~~4.26.2 heavy weather jib.~~

~~MoMu0,1,2~~ ~~4.26.3 storm jib.~~

****** **4.26.4 For boats with first launch date on or after 1 January 2026 a boat shall have:**

MoMu0,1,2 **4.26.4** a storm trysail (or rotating wing mast if suitable),

MoMu0,1 **4.26.4** mainsail reefing to reduce the luff by at least 45% (or rotating wing mast if suitable),

MoMu2 **4.26.4** mainsail reefing to reduce the luff by at least 30% (or rotating wing mast if suitable).

MoMu3	<u>4.26.4 either a storm trysail or a mainsail reefing to reduce the luff by at least 30% (or rotating wing mast if suitable).</u>
MoMu4	<u>4.26.4 either mainsail reefing to reduce the luff by 12.5% or a heavy weather jib (or rotating wing mast if suitable or heavy-weather sail in a boat with no forestay).</u>

Current Position

As above

Reasons

A RORC working party have undertaken a review of the Offshore Special Regulations.

The submission to amend OSR 4.26 was revoked due to concerns. We have re-visited the issue and done analysis of the 2023 Rolex Fastnet Race along with discussing issues and concerns from the previous submission with Southern Spars.

The concerns raised required some boats already built to undergo extensive modifications to both mast and booms, in some cases it would require new masts and booms. This is not a desirable outcome both from cost and sustainability.

The 2023 Rolex Fastnet Race survey received a 25% response rate but was from a good cross section of the fleet representing nearly every class evenly, both from a participated perspective and a retirement perspective.

7 boats reported having 1 reef available - 4 encountered sail damage, 3 of which encountered mast damage and the other encountered structural damage, 2 of these yachts finished. 2 more boats encountered structural damage that may not have been due to an excessive sail plan, but this cannot be ruled out, neither boat finished.

55 boats reported having 2 reefs available – 16 boats reported sail damage, 10 of these were minor and the yachts finished the race. 2 yachts reported mast damage, neither finished.

49 boats reported having 3 reefs available – 6 boats reported sail damage, 0 boats reported mast damage.

7 boats reported having more than 3 reefs available – 0 boats reported sail damage, 1 boat reported rig damage although this was confirmed as a manufacturing fault.

After discussions with Southern Spars the percentages of reefing have been dropped. Southern Spars, along with sailmakers, provided information on the current levels of reefing available on a selection of yachts. These percentage decreases are deemed by the mast manufacturers and sailmakers to be acceptable which will not only be safe, but also allow new build yachts to have a very similar sail plan to what is already sailing.

In addition to the trend of damage occurring on boats with less reefs available, changing to a storm trysail is a challenging prospect and has dangers of crew members working on the deck, on most boats at a raised position by the boom, for an extended period of time. When changing back, this process needs to be reversed again and raises the risks of MOB incidents.