

SYRA MEETING
YCCS, Porto Cervo, IT
Saturday, June 8, 2013

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Rule Compliance / Enforcement Issues

ATTENDING:

Barry Houghton	Excom Co-Chairperson	Kate Branagh	Excom Co-Chairperson
Cameron Appleton	Tactician/Racing Rules Cte	Ed Dubois	Founding Member
Peter Holmberg	Tactician/Fair Sailing Cte	Tony Harris	Founding Member (BIM)
Phil Wade	Boat Captain (Timoneer)	Gordon Stredwick	LPSYR Jury Chair/RR Cte
Michael Clough	Uniform Racing Rules Cte	Peter Craig	SYRA Executive / PRO

A number of incidents at the Loro Piana Superyacht Regatta prompted a short notice meeting at the YCCS following the racing. The initial discussion item was 'protesting at superyacht regattas' and the role the race committee and jury play in that regard.

- The role the jury and the race committee play regarding protesting was discussed at some length. There were some misconceptions about specific incidents on the racecourse, who observed what and who was obligated to act. A key point made by Jury Chairman Gordon Stredwick (IJ) and reinforced by Peter Holmberg and Cam Appleton was that sailing is primarily a self-policing sport. There was confusion about what role a jury member can and should play when racing onboard a yacht in the capacity of 'observer'... and for good reason - it had never been clarified. This issue is addressed in a one page document produced by the regatta's Jury (Attachment 1). This should probably be included with any superyacht regatta's race documents going forward.
- The concept of 'fixed penalties' as well as an approved, consistent group of superyacht jurors was discussed. This has been policy on the RC 44 circuit for years now. While both concepts are sound, they may not represent the most practical 'next steps' to positively impact rule enforcement in superyacht racing. There is still the reality of determining fault before assigning the penalty and the challenge of having separate Organizing Authorities (OAs) with budget constraints for the various regattas.
- The concept of "shaming" misbehaving programs by listing all reported infractions each evening on the Official Notice Board was raised. This would certainly get people's attention, but carries the risk of alienating yacht owners if they (or their respective afterguards) feel that the reported infraction is not justified and/or that this is later determined to be the case by the Jury.
- We touched briefly on the concept of formalizing an "SYRA Sanctioned Event" and what that would entail, what requirements need to be met, and the benefits to the respective OA's. This will require further discussion (an agenda item at the September AGM).
- The issue of some participants electing not to activate their AIS while racing was also brought up. This will require a tougher stance and enforcement by the OA's.
- The importance of the yacht's tactician as it relates to safe racing was discussed at some length. This is in fact the afterguard member who makes the decisions that ultimately put the yacht in the right or wrong position on the racecourse. It was acknowledged by all that there are tacticians on the superyacht racing circuit who do not possess the fundamental RRS knowledge or experience required to ensure safe racing for the fleet. Based on my experiences at all of the regattas I manage, I feel very strongly that this is our single biggest issue with safe racing today. There were a number of steps proposed regarding tacticians:
 - OA's schedule a pre-regatta tactician meeting with the Race Officer and Chief Judge to get that important face to face gathering and discuss any regatta specific issues (perhaps immediately following the Captain's Briefing);

- OA's schedule a daily 'Tactician Meeting' (mornings at the Notice Board) with the Race Officer and Chief Judge. Opportunity to address issues/infractions from the previous day's racing and for frank dialogue on other than acceptable behavior on the race course as observed by the tacticians, judges and RC. And for experienced superyacht tacticians to lean on their peers who are not playing the game the right way;
- This leads to the need for the SYRA and Event Organizers to act in order to ensure that there are experienced, active racing tacticians on all competing yachts. We need to consider shifting the "tactical/racing rules requirements" currently in play for the Safety Officer to the Racing Tactician. This might require racing resumes from all but the well known and established tacticians. The Safety Officer requirement would be modified slightly with a "recommendation" for RRS knowledge. The reality is that most Safety Officers do not meet the requirement we currently have in place. This would make the Boat Captain a more logical choice for Safety Officer. More of this important issue at in the form of a recommendation to the Onboard Safety Committee and Event Organizers will follow.
- Peter Holmberg noted at the meeting and later in writing that participants should not be reluctant to file a protest if there is a gross infringement of the racing rules. For issues/ infringements that are less serious and perhaps do not present a safe racing issue, participants should take advantage of the option for a 'rules clarification hearing' with the jury. No matter what their findings - it does not impact the results. This is offered in the current version of the Daily Declaration Form. Please see the very latest draft version, which includes Cam Appleton's recommendation for a series of questions on the first page that require a simple check 'yes' or 'no' (Attachment 2).

This meeting summary has been sent to the meeting attendees, the Onboard Safety Committee with the SYRA Excom copied. Please feel free to provide feedback, comments as you see fit, and best to copy all addressed here. I will ensure that all Event Organizers get this meeting summary as well after receiving any feedback from meeting attendees and committee members.

Thanks,

Peter