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2017-2020 ISAF Racing Rule Book Changes

13th November 2015



J109s racing downwind at Volvo Dun Laoghaire Regatta in July. A new ISAF racing rules book will be published for the 2017 season

Photo: David O'Brien

ISAF Racing Rules committee member Bill O'Hara from Ballyholme Yacht Club reviews the changes in the latest edition of the racing rules book signed off at the ISAF conference in China this week.

The racing rules committee have finished their work this year for the 2017-2020 rule book. Publishing and translation deadlines means it's impossible to take any submissions next year into account. Most of the changes are pretty dry and simply technical changes to sort out small problems found in the applications of the rules. In the next rule book there is a big change in that for the first time we have the introduction of the term 'support person'.

Support person – Any person who

(a) provides, or may provide, physical or advisory support to a competitor, including any coach, trainer, manager, team staff, medic, paramedic or any other person working with, treating or assisting a competitor in or preparing for the competition, or

(b) is the parent or guardian of a competitor.

(proposed wording may be amended)

For years at both major and minor events we have incidents with people connected to a competitor. From 2017 onwards they will be under the jurisdiction of and subject to action under the racing rules. **The final wording still has to be finalised but it will give the possibility that for example a parent who has been warned about their bad behaviour at an optimist event may if there is a further incident be protested and points deducted from the competitor they support.**

There has also been some tidying up of the rules involving RRS 69 Gross Misconduct hearings. **This is in direct response by recommendations from CAS (Court of Arbitration for Sport) when dealing with the high profile America's Cup case that resulted in one sailor receiving a 5 year ban reduced to 18 months by CAS.**

When possible the jury when dealing with a 69 issue will appoint one of their members to investigate and in essence act in the role of a prosecutor. The big difference is that he won't take part in the decision which he could have done in the past.

Bill O'Hara has been on the Racing Rules committee since 2004. Bill is a member of ISAF's working parties for RRS 42, Medal races and also for considering applications from events who want to try experimental rules. An Olympian in the Finn dinghy from 1984, Bill is an International Judge, Race Officer and Umpire.

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