

Starting Line Extension Rule Discussion

Dec 18, 2006, at 2:47 PM,

Folks,

The question of the use of "starting line extensions" reared it's ugly head once again this past Saturday. Art Lent (correctly) pointed out that the requirement is not in writing. What is in writing in the Race Director Manual references the option given to the RD to make starting line extensions in or out for that day's racing.

Just for a quick review, let's consider the reason for use of the extensions: It eliminates the possibility of the modified dip start (sailing at high speed on the course side of the "line" with the wind coming over the boat's stern and then making a quick 180 around the end marker putting the skipper at speed on (hopefully) starboard tack and in front of the fleet.

It's a grossly unfair, worse than barging, maneuver (I've done it many times as have some of you) that can only be eliminated by the use of the Starting Line Extension. So, what say you: Should we make it's application a requirement, not an option?

Ernie P.

Dec 18, 2006 5:24 PM

Ernie

Sorry, but think I disagree. (Without a written definition, how can you support or disagree?)

1. If the problem was as bad as you say, the racing rules would cover it.
2. As the rule was defined last Saturday, it wouldn't preclude the circumstances you describe.
3. If you impose a penalty turn after the start in addition to making the offenders stay above the line until the start, it will be grossly unfair to those who cross the line just seconds or milli-seconds before the start signal.

Note:

While you and/or the Directors are certainly authorized to make and enforce such a rule, I personally think it should first be well debated/documentated and submitted to the general membership for approval. I would be happy to present all opinions in the Dock Line web site.

Don B

On Dec 20, 2006, at 4:58 PM

Looks like I missed another "historic event at the pond." As I remember the debate that put the rule in play at the discretion of the RD (that discretion was because we could not get a consensus on a hard and fast), it appears the time has come to nail it down. Don, its clear to me - the guy who goes over the extension is no in a position to cross the starting line at that point anyway so he is in violation: stays over there till gun goes off and does a 360 for not paying attention or for playing games not authorized. Please note, without the 360 penalty there is no rule - the offender stays over there anyway, ripping toward the end mark to catch the bell at the last second as Ernie points out. The last-seconds jump-start boats are just that, no game playing, just blew it - get out of fleet's way, come back around either mark and race, no 360 required.

Steve R

Dec 20, 2006 5:39 PM

Steve (et al)

If I read you correctly, the proposed rule would apply to the extensions only and not the actual start line itself. I guess that could work if time limits are specified (you need to preclude the possibility of an intentional over early used to circumvent the intent).

Again however, how can one agree or disagree when the rule is not documented?

With your approval, I will attempt to formulate a target rule that everyone (self included) will be invited to shoot at.

Don B

On Dec 20, 2006, at 5:52 PM

Don, have at it. I guess I still feel this is a sport and not a treaty with significant ramifications for violations. Perhaps this is more a case of "in the eyes of the beholder" than I'm appreciating.

Steve R

Dec 20, 2006 8:47 PM

Steve

I really don't understand your answer.

This undocumented "Rule" was devised primarily to preclude one club skipper from using a sailing tactic at which he excelled. I personally don't ever recall a boat being damaged as a result of not having this rule in play

The rule has never been properly documented and I don't think that there are any two skippers that agree with what it is or what the associated penalties are.

What that has to do with this being a sport I fail to comprehend.

There will always be arguments as long as the actual rule remains undefined.

I say, lets document it, publicize it then put it up for a general membership vote.

For what it worth, this is what I think the rule might be:

Note: This is a modification of and in conflict with Rule 30.1 of the racing Rules of Sailing.

SCMSC Starting line extension rule.

If any part of a boats hull or equipment is on the course side of the starting line or its extensions during the minute before her starting signal, she shall thereafter sail to and remain on the course side of the line until the start signal, after which she, while yielding right of way to all properly starting boats, shall sail from the course side across an extension to the pre-start side then take a penalty by making one turn including one tack and one jibe before starting.

SCMSC Starting line extension rule Exception.

Any boat that crosses the starting line (extensions excluded) within the final 2 seconds before the start signal shall be exempt from this rule *concerning the penalty.*

Don B

December 21, 2006 4:43:37 PM EST

Don

Don, this works for me with the refinement I added to the exception clause.

Steve

December 21, 2006 8:22:35 PM EST

All

Ernie, My reading of the AMYA Racing rules doesn't deal with dip starts or consequences for not staying on the "proper" side of the starting line. All I see in the AMYA racing rules is that you must be on the proper side to start.

I see the start from the course side to quick turn around the mark the same as a dip start - both of which can give an unfair advantage. Some members are vocal about requiring enforcement of "non-dipping". I'm not outspoken, but I agree that it's, at least, contrary to the spirit of fair racing.

If a boat is not "behind" the line during the 1 minute count down and, subsequently goes behind, the boat should do a 360 after the start.

Dana J

My thoughts - I think the rule should be consistent every Sat, rather than the RD's choice. It may be hard for the RD to determine the line. Can we police ourselves? 360 sounds like the right penalty.

Peggy J

December 22, 2006 11:06:27 AM EST

Dana

I think your rule would look something like this:

Dana's Rule

Any boat that crosses the starting line during the minute before start shall take a penalty by making one turn including one tack and one jibe after the start signal

and before starting.

I still think it still needs an exemption for those who are unintentionally over early

Don's Exemption (To Dana's Rule)

Any boat that crosses the line early within the final seconds prior to start may be exempted from the penalty turn at the discretion of the Race Director.

I guess if we have to have a rule, I like this one a lot better. Sure is a lot less complex.

Don

On Dec 23, 2006, at 5:11 PM

Don,

I think you and Dana have lurched into the truth, here.

An inadvertent crossing of the starting line while attempting to time the gun is something entirely different; A trip around either of the starting line markers and crossing the line legally with no other penalty has served us in the past and would do so in the future.

The use of start line extensions and the prohibition of sailing on the course side (including extensions) during the one-minute countdown could be penalized in either of a couple of ways:

- 1) Require a legal start after all other boats have crossed the start line.
- 2) Start with the other boats but do a 360 during the first leg (as was recommended.)
Dip-starts are prohibited.

I like the comment that it should not be left to the RD...when things are subject to interpretation is when we have problems. I have found that not all RD's want to deal with something like this. It is extremely rare that we do not have a start line that is wide enough to accommodate all boats.

IMHO the discussion has been good and whatever the club decides will be something we can live with.

Ernie P.

December 23, 2006 8:10:35 PM EST

Ernie

Let me back up and start over.

1. Personally, I don't think an additional rule is desirable.
2. If we must add a new rule, I think that:
 - a. It should be as simple to understand and enforce as possible. (The requirement for the offending boat to stay on the race side of the line until the actual start adds unnecessary complexity.)
 - b. It should be targeted at the perceived offense (i.e. Those who linger on the course side of the line until seconds before start in order to gain "unfair" advantage.) and not penalize those who are simply over early because of inadvertent poor timing, luck of position or sailing abilities.

Note: I am not sure this is possible without incorporating the judgement of the RD. The RD is after all essentially the cornerstone of our entire system. If we don't trust the RD, what good is our entire scoring system?

3. I think that any new rule **must** be documented.
 - a. So that it (the problem) will not "rear its ugly head again".
4. I think that any new rule should be additive to and not in conflict with the Racing Rules of Sailing.
5. Again personally, I think that any new rule that is repeatedly challenged by some members, should not be arbitrarily imposed by the Vice Commodore or Directors. It should be publicized, discussed in a meeting or e-mail forum, then submitted for a vote to the general membership as a change to the club Permanent Rules . That is what Permanent Rules are for.

That being said, and realizing that the majority of the directors do not agree with point 1, 3 and 5 of the above discussion, I still recommend that this matter be brought before the general membership for their consideration as outlined below.

1. I would like to publish all of the previous Directors/Editor discussions as a forum on the website.

2. I would like to invite the general membership to participate in the discussion,
3. I would like to distill from the comments received a few alternative rules (with Directors concurrence and with appropriate exemptions if appropriate) and submit them plus the option to reject all for consideration as a new Permanent Rule 6.0.

Example:

Ernie's Rule

Any boat that crosses the start line or it's extensions during the one minute before start time period (over early), shall delay their start until all boats who have not been over early have crossed the start line.

Comment: If we must have a rule, this seems the least unfair to all and requires no RD judgement calls.

With specific respect to your item #2:

1. I think any penalty turn should be imposed after the start signal but prior to actually crossing the start line. This would be a lot easier for the RD to monitor and in essence leaves the offenders in a "no rights state" until they complete the turn, but not thereafter. Clean rule.
2. Rule 30.1 takes care of dip starts and would still be in force without further club documentation.

Don

December 24, 2006 8:07:56 AM EST

Don,

I still believe this has been a healthy discussion and personally have no problem with posting information for the club members. As to any potential rule change; If a vote amongst members is taken I recommend that an alternative (such as leave things as they are) be an option.

Ernie P