

USACA Championship Rule 16 Change Proposal

Current IACA Championship Rule 16: RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

16.1. Radio transmitters, radio receivers, portable phones and similar devices may be carried but shall only be used in relation to emergencies.

16.2 Screen-less GPS tracker devices are allowed only if requested by the event Organizers.

Current World Sailing RRS 41: OUTSIDE HELP

A boat shall not receive help from any outside source, except

1. help for a crew member who is ill, injured or in danger;
2. after a collision, help from the crew of the other vessel to get clear;
3. *help in the form of information freely available to all boats;*
4. unsolicited information from a disinterested source, which may be another boat in the same race.

2022 USA Proposal:

To delete Rule 16 from IACA Championship Rules

Rationale:

1. Safety

IACA Rule 16.1 prohibits listening or using VHF radios, unless in an emergency. This contradicts RRS 41, which allows competitors to monitor VHF radios, which are covered in (41.3). IACA Championship Rule 16 effectively limits the recipients of a distress call to RC boats in range. Deletion of Rule 16 would enable all racing boats to hear distress calls, allowing for quicker response times which is the cornerstone of any rescue situation – time is the most critical factor.

Example) In a 60 boat regatta with 4 Race Committee boats, if I am injured or otherwise need assistance, a radio call would at absolute best be received by 4 RC boats. By allowing the radios to be on each boat and receiving, my distress call could be heard by 4 RC boats *and* 59 other A Class sailors who are likely closer to me. This greatly increases the chance of me being picked up quickly. Furthermore, a competitor that witnesses an incident where the sailor is injured and unable to request assistance, they can immediately hail the RC to send a safety boat.

2. Measurement and Enforcement

Rule 16 prohibits receivers of any type, which includes GPS and radio-based devices. Smart watches, heart rate trackers, and similar items with GPS and/or Bluetooth or other radio receivers are therefore prohibited.

Example) At the 2022 Worlds the IACA Chief Measurer, on top of his other duties, had to begin policing smart watches and video cameras which accept GPS signals. If a sailor was found to have any of these devices onboard then the Measurer would have no choice but to lodge a protest with the Jury. In practice this is a difficult thing to ask of the Measurement Team at the event and is very hard to police.

3. Limiting Class Promotion

Our competitors could never say how fast they were going at our most recent World Championship even though they are sailing one of the highest performance classes in existence. This makes our class look old and out of touch. The only explanation we can make to those who ask why, is to share we as a class voted to make a special rule not to allow GPS. In addition, sailors are not able to use GoPro or similar cameras at the World/European Championships, as these have been made with GPS receivers for many years.

Example 1) Watching SailGP we see amazing data on the boats and sailors that indicate speed, heart rate fitness level, etc. A-Class has nothing, not even for press releases, videos or interviews.

Example 2) To work within Rule 16 limitations, the 2022 World Championship organizers inquired about adding screen-less GPS to each boat to increase class promotion. The cost quoted was up to one third of the total regatta entry fee and was not possible in the budget.

4. Financial Barrier to New Class Members

Many Sailors own some combination of a GPS enabled compass, camera, VHF or watch, or have access to one from their other boats. Yet they have to buy something else to race the A-Class in their premiere events.

Example 1) Under current Rule 16, sailors who wish to have a digital compass must purchase one without GPS specifically for the A Class, as nearly every other class of sailboat does not have this restriction. A popular choice is the TackTick Micro non-GPS compass, which retails for \$400 USD.

Example 2) Additionally, several competitors at the 2022 Worlds were caught out with a smart watch, and had to go shopping the day before the event and waste money on a 1980's era digital watch so that they could time the start of each race.

Summary

The USACA proposes to remove Rule 16 from the Championship Rules, which makes legal at the Worlds and Europeans the monitoring of VHF for safety and GPS enabled devices to be used. This modernizes our safety response, removes pressure from the Measurement Teams, improves promotion of the A Class, and halts unnecessary purchases.

Drafted on behalf of USACA by Bruce Mahoney, 6/2022

Proposal Supported by:

Australia, Austria, Argentina, Canada, Netherlands