

# Open Skiff Umpiring Policy 2025-2028

(version 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025)

Since 2008, the Open Skiff Class has successfully used direct on-water umpiring in collaboration with World Sailing, often with fleets exceeding the limitations now being considered. Over the years, this system has proven to be an effective and fair method for ensuring high-quality racing. The spirit of Open Skiff Is strongly linked to On Water Direct Umpiring.

The Open Skiff Class has fully embraced in 2021 Appendix UF as a fundamental part of our class identity, making it an essential element of how our sailors experience and engage with the sport.

So much so that our class members—through a democratic voting process—chose to enshrine Appendix UF in the Class Rules for 2025-28 too.

This decision reflects a deep-rooted belief in the benefits of umpired racing and the value it brings to our events.

World Sailing during the month of March 2025 published the updated Appendix UF dated 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2025 heavily restricting its use without prior consultation with the Classes community. The restrictions include:

1. *Max fleet size of 25 boats*
2. *Max ratio of umpire vessels: boats being 1:5, with the recommended ratio of 1:3, especially when umpiring a fleet of equal performance or when a course construction spreads a fleet across a large area.*
3. *If an Organising Authority wishes to use UF when the max fleet size or max ratio exceeds these limits, then it must get prior World Sailing approval. Requests are to be sent to: [rules@sailing.org](mailto:rules@sailing.org).*

The Open Skiff Class on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2025 sent a formal and urgent request to [rules@sailing.org](mailto:rules@sailing.org) to be authorised to use Appendix UF without the above restrictions, the request is still pending.

*The approved Appendix UF 2025 provides also that an organising Authority whose fleet exceeds these limits may choose to use ‘**Umpire Observation**’. (Standard sailing instruction language for this is available at [www.sailing.org/racingrules](http://www.sailing.org/racingrules)), based on the assumption large fleet may have an option where some of the racing is observed by umpires and opinions regarding incidents are promptly communicated to boats.*

*Umpire Observation, recommended by WS for large fleets, needs a “set of Sis” and does not require the approval of World Sailing, nor of an MNA, and may be used freely by event organizers.*

*In order to allow Open Skiff races to take place based on the new rules issued by WS, for on Water Umpiring, the class has adopted **two policies** for the conduct of races in compliance with its Class Rules approved by WS in January 2025, too.*

**The First Policy- Regattas with less than 25 competitors per division:** Appendix UF as adopted by the Class (Annex 1) may be used, but with the recommendation to use “**Umpire Observation**” by inserting in the Sailing Instructions what is indicated in Annex 2.

**Second Policy- Regattas with more than 25 competitors per division:** to use “**Umpire Observation**” by inserting in Sailing Instructions what is indicated in Annex 2.

# Annex 1

## APPENDIX UF

# UMPIRED FLEET RACING OPEN SKIFF CLASS

## Open Skiff Edition

**Version:** February 2025

*Umpired fleet races shall be sailed under The Racing Rules of Sailing as changed by this appendix. Races shall be umpired. The rule changes in UF1 have been approved by World Sailing under Regulation 20.3(d)(ii) on the condition that only the provided options are used and the Event or Stage complies with the following limits:*

4. *Max fleet size of 25 boats*
5. *Max ratio of umpire vessels: boats being 1:5, with the recommended ratio of 1:3, especially when umpiring a fleet of equal performance or when a course construction spreads a fleet across a large area.*
6. *If an Organising Authority wishes to use UF when the max fleet size or max ratio exceeds these limits, then it must get prior World Sailing approval. Requests are to be sent to: [rules@sailing.org](mailto:rules@sailing.org). These limits apply to the number of boats in the fleet based at the start of the event or stage. An Organising Authority or Race Committee will not intentionally manipulate the event or stage in order to circumvent these limits.*

*An Organising Authority whose fleet exceeds these limits may choose to use 'Umpire Observation'. Standard sailing instruction language for this is available at [www.sailing.org/racingrules](http://www.sailing.org/racingrules).*

*This appendix applies only when it is referred to in the Notice of Race and made available for all competitors.*

### **UF1 CHANGES TO THE DEFINITIONS, THE RULES OF PART 1 AND 2, AND RULE 70**

**UF1.1** Add to the definition *Proper Course*: 'A boat taking a penalty or manoeuvring to take a penalty is not sailing a *proper course*.'

**UF1.2** Add to rule 2: 'When *racing*, a boat need not take a penalty unless signalled to do so by an umpire.'

**UF1.3** Add new rule 7 to Part 1:

#### **7 LAST POINT OF CERTAINTY**

The umpires will assume that the state of a boat, or her relationship to another boat, has not changed, until they are certain that it has changed.'

**UF1.4** Spare

**UF1.5** When rule 20 applies, the following arm signals are required in addition to the hails:

- (a) for 'Room to tack', repeatedly and clearly pointing to windward; and
- (b) for 'You tack', repeatedly and clearly pointing at the other boat and waving the arm to windward.

- UF1.6** Rule 70.1 is replaced with: A *party* to a hearing may only appeal a protest committee decision or its procedures, but not the facts found, under rule 69 to the national authority, except when rule 70.3 applies.
- UF1.7** Rule 70.2 is deleted.
- UF1.8** The definition *Mark-Room* is changed to:  
**Mark-Room** Room for a boat to sail no farther than her *proper course* to round or pass the *mark* on the required side.
- UF2** **CHANGES TO OTHER RULES**
- UF2.1** Rule 28.2 is changed to:
- 28 SAILING THE COURSE**
- 28.2. A boat may correct any errors in *sailing the course*, provided she has not rounded the next *mark* or crossed the finishing line to *finish*
- UF2.2** Rule 31 is changed to:  
**31 TOUCHING A MARK**  
While *racing*, neither the crew nor any part of a boat's hull shall touch a starting *mark* before *starting*, a *mark* that begins, bounds or ends the leg of the course on which she is sailing, or a finishing *mark* after *finishing*. In addition, while *racing*, a boat shall not touch a race committee vessel that is also a *mark*.
- UF2.3** Rules P1 to P4 shall not apply.
- UF3** **ON WATER PROTESTS AND PENALTIES**
- UF3.1** Rule 44.1 is changed to: 'A boat may take a penalty when, in an incident while *racing*, she may have broken one or more of the rules of Part 2 (except rule 14 when she has caused injury or serious damage), rule 31 or rule 42. However,  
(a) when a boat may have broken a rule of Part 2 and rule 31 in the same incident, she need not take the penalty for breaking rule 31;  
(b) if the boat caused injury or serious damage or, despite taking a penalty, gained a significant advantage in the race or series by her breach her penalty shall be to retire'
- UF3.2** A penalty in rule 44.2 is a ['One-Turn Penalty']
- UF3.3** **On the Water Protests by Boats and Penalties**
- (a) While *racing*, a boat may protest another boat under a rule of Part 2 (except rule 14) for an incident in which she was involved, under rule 31, or rule 42 by conspicuously displaying a red flag at the first reasonable opportunity for each. She shall remove the flag before, or at the first reasonable opportunity after a boat involved in the incident has taken a penalty voluntarily or after an umpire's decision.
- (b) A boat that protests as provided in rule UF3.3(a) is not entitled to a hearing, Instead, a boat involved in the incident may acknowledge breaking a rule by voluntarily taking a penalty. An umpire may penalize any boat that broke a rule and was not exonerated, unless the boat took a penalty voluntarily.
- UF3.4** **Penalties and Protests Initiated by an Umpire**
- (a) When a boat

- (1) breaks rule 31 and does not take a penalty,
- (2) breaks rule 42,
- (3) gains an advantage despite taking a penalty,
- (4) commits a breach of sportsmanship, or
- (5) fails to comply with rule UF3.6,

an umpire may penalize her without a protest by another boat by signalling in accordance with rule UF3.5(b), or UF3.5(c). If a boat is penalized under rule UF3.4(a)(5) for not taking a penalty or taking a penalty incorrectly, the original penalty is cancelled.

- (b) An umpire who decides, based on their own observation or a report received from any source, that a boat may have broken a rule, other than rule UF3.6 or rule 28 or a rule listed in rule UF3.3(a), may inform the protest committee for its action under rule 60.1. However, they will not inform the protest committee of an alleged breach of rule 14 unless there is damage or injury.
- (c) When a boat fails to comply with rule UF2.1 (rule 28.2) an umpire shall disqualify her under rule UF3.5(c).

#### **UF3.5 Umpire Signals**

An umpire will signal a decision as follows:

- (a) A green and white flag with one long sound means 'No penalty.'
- (b) A red flag with one long sound means 'a penalty is imposed or remains outstanding.' The umpire will hail or signal to identify each such boat.
- (c) A black flag with one long sound means 'A boat is disqualified.' The umpire will hail or signal to identify the boat disqualified.

#### **UF3.6 Imposed Penalties**

- (a) A boat penalized under rule UF3.5(b) shall take a penalty.
- (b) A boat disqualified under rule UF3.5(c) is no longer *racing* and shall promptly leave the course area.

#### **UF4 RACE COMMITTEE ACTIONS**

- UF4.1** After boats have finished, the race committee will inform competitors about the results by publishing the scoring on the ONB as soon as possible

#### **UF5 PROTESTS; REQUESTS FOR REDRESS OR REOPENING; APPEALS; OTHER PROCEEDINGS**

- UF5.1** No proceedings of any kind may be taken in relation to any action or non-action by an umpire.

- UF5.2** A boat intending to

- (a) protest another boat under a rule other than rule UF3.6 or rule 28, or a rule listed in rule UF3.3(a),
- (b) protest another boat under rule 14 if there was contact that caused damage or injury, or

- (c) request redress

Does not have to display a red flag or hail protest, and shall inform the race committee as soon it is possible

**UF5.3** The race committee will promptly inform the protest committee and any protested boat about any protests or requests for redress made under rule UF5.2.

**UF5.4** The protest committee may protest a boat under rule 60.1. However, it will not protest a boat for breaking rule UF3.6 or rule 28, a rule listed in rule UF3.3(a), or rule 14 – if there is there is no damage nor injury.

**UF5.5** The technical committee will only protest a boat under rule 60.1 when it decides that a boat or personal equipment does not comply with the class rules, rule 50, or the rules in the equipment regulations of the event.

**UF5.6** The time limit defined in rule UF5.2 also applies to protests under rule UF5.4 and UF5.5 when such protests are permitted. The protest committee shall extend the time limit if there is good reason to do so.

**UF5.7** Hearings

Except for a hearing under rule 69.2

- (a) Protests and requests for redress need not be in writing.
- (b) The protest committee may inform the parties and schedule the hearing in any way it considers appropriate and may communicate this orally.
- (c) The protest committee may take evidence and conduct the hearing in any way it considers appropriate and may communicate its decision orally.
- (d) Protest Committee decisions that change the score of one or more boats shall be communicated to all boats.

**UF5.8** Rule 60.5 is deleted and replaced with: ‘If the protest committee decides that a boat has broken a rule and was not exonerated, it may impose penalties other than disqualification (including imposing no penalty). If a boat has broken a rule when not racing, the protest committee shall decide whether to apply any penalty to the race sailed nearest in time to that of the incident or make some other arrangement.

**UF5.9** Rule 63.7(b) is changed to ‘A *party* to the hearing may not request a reopening.’

**UF5.10** Spare

## Annex 2

# O'pen Skiff Umpire Observation

*Open Skiff Class recommend max ratio of umpire vessels: boats being 1:20 up to fleets of 100 boats and then 1:30 for larger fleets (with always minimum of at least two vessels per regatta).*

## Umpire Observation

X.1 Umpires may observe the racing and provide advisory umpire signals. If an umpire observes an incident where a boat protests, one of the following signals may be made:

- a) A green and white flag with one long sound means 'The umpires saw the incident and believe that no rule was broken'.
- b) A red flag with one long sound means 'The umpires saw the incident and believe that one or more boat has broken a rule'. The umpires will hail or signal each boat identified to have broken a rule.
- c) A "J" flag with one long sound means 'The umpires do not have the facts to make a decision'.

X.2 Umpires may make signals as above if they observe an incident in which a boat:

- a) breaks rule 31 and does not take a penalty,
- b) breaks rule 42,
- c) fails to complete the course, rule 28,
- d) gains an advantage despite taking a penalty,
- e) commits a breach of sportsmanship,
- f) does not comply with a Freestyle maneuver

X.3 The signals displayed by the umpires are for information only. If a red flag is displayed, any identified boat is not obliged to take the applicable penalty, however if she **does not**, the Umpire, as part of the protest committee, may protest that boat. If a green and white flag or the "J" flag is displayed, a boat may still protest, or a boat may choose to take the applicable penalty.

X.4 If a green and white flag is displayed for an incident, the protest committee will only protest a boat for an incident involving her that may have resulted in injury or serious damage, or if the protest committee learns during the hearing of a valid protest that the boat, although not a party to the hearing, was involved in the incident and may have broken a rule. This changes RRS 60.1 and 60.4(b).

X.5 Penalty will always be a One-Turn Penalty including a tack and a Jibe (or vice versa) performed in the same direction, to be carried out immediately having broken the rule/s and without interfering other competitors. This changes RRS 44.1.

X.6 The system in Appendix P does not apply.

X.7 Rule 44.1 is changed to: 'A boat may take a penalty when, in an incident while racing, she may have broken one or more of the rules of Part 2 (except rule 14 when she has caused injury or serious damage), rule 31 or rule 42. However, when a boat may have broken a rule of Part 2 and rule 31 in the same incident, she need not take the penalty for breaking rule 31; if the boat caused injury or serious damage or, despite taking a penalty, gained a significant advantage in the race or series by her breach her penalty shall be to retire'.

X.8 When rule 20 applies, the following arm signals are required in addition to the hails:

- a) for 'Room to tack', repeatedly and clearly pointing to windward; and
- b) for 'You tack', repeatedly and clearly pointing at the other boat and waving the arm to windward.

X.9 While *racing*, a **boat may protest** another boat shouting protest and raising hand at the first reasonable moment, but not under rule 14 if there was contact that caused damage or injury, This changes RRS 60.2.(a).(1)

X.8 **If a competitor knows he or she has broken a rule**, the Basic Principle, Sportsmanship and the Rules requires he or her to take a penalty voluntarily as soon as possible.

X.9 Any competitor who intends to protest another/s competitor/s for an accident that occurred during the regatta, but not under rule 14 if there was contact that caused damage or injury, shall inform the Boat Committee upon their arrival or immediately afterwards without having had any contact with other competitors or support personnel.

X.10 (optional) Appendix T (if included in the NoR or SIs) may apply, competitors (Parties), before a hearing, will be given the opportunity to resolve the protest with Arbitration.