

## Appeals FAQ

This document offers advice from the US Sailing Appeals Committee to competitors, race officials or clubs and organizations who are filing or contemplating filing an appeal of a protest committee or association appeals committee decision, requesting confirmation or correction of a decision, or requesting a rule interpretation. The information here is strictly advisory; the rules governing these matters are rules 70 and 71, and the rules in Appendix R in the US Sailing edition of *The Racing Rules of Sailing*.

For further assistance, contact the US Sailing Race Administration Director at:

US Sailing  
PO Box 1260  
Portsmouth, RI 02871  
[raceadmin@ussailing.org](mailto:raceadmin@ussailing.org)  
(401) 683-0800

### Where do I find the rules that govern appeals?

They are in Appendix R, Procedures for Appeals and Requests, in the US Sailing edition of *The Racing Rules of Sailing*. Rules 70 and 71 are also relevant.

### Where do I send my appeal?

All appeals from events held in the U.S. are sent to: Race Administration Director, US Sailing, PO Box 1260, Portsmouth, RI 02871, or e-mailed to [submitappeal@ussailing.org](mailto:submitappeal@ussailing.org).

### May I e-mail my appeal and supporting documents?

Yes. E-mail is preferred, as it cuts down on time and costs for everyone involved. Please send your appeal only once; that is, if you send it electronically, please do not also send it in hard copy.

### What format should I use for the e-mail?

The e-mail can be in plain text or html.

### What format should I use for any attachments?

PDF documents are best. Alternately, files may be saved in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx). Documents such as the notice of race, sailing instructions and the PC's decision are typically scanned and attached as PDFs. Very large e-mail files (typically those over 10 MB) may not be handled by your e-mail provider. If you experience this problem, it is best to separate your materials into multiple e-mails.

### Is there a form I need to fill out for my appeal?

Yes. You must send, with the appeal or as soon as possible thereafter, the [US Sailing Appeals & Requests Information Form](#). To obtain the form, go to [appeals.ussailing.org](http://appeals.ussailing.org) and click on the

“Information Form” link. The form will ask you for all the pertinent information required by rule R2.2.

### **Is there a fee for my appeal?**

There is no fee if the appeal will be considered by an association appeals committee.

If the appeal will be considered by the US Sailing Appeals Committee, there is a fee of \$25 for US Sailing members and \$75 for non-members. The US Sailing Appeals Committee considers appeals from decisions of association appeals committees and the Intercollegiate Sailing Association (ICSA) / Interscholastic Sailing Association (ISSA) Appeals Committee, and appeals from protest committee decisions involving rule 69 (Misconduct) or from protest committee decisions made at US Sailing national championships. All other appeals are considered by association appeals committees or the ICSA-ISSA Appeals Committee. Those appeals committees will inform the appellant if they require a fee.

### **How do I pay my fee?**

You may [pay the fee online](#) by purchasing the item in the US Sailing Web Store. You may also send a check for the fee to US Sailing at the address above.

### **What happens after I send my appeal to US Sailing?**

The Race Administration Director promptly sends it to the appropriate appeals committee. The appellant will receive an acknowledgement from the Director that the appeal has been received, and indicating to which appeals committee the appeal has been sent. When the appeals committee receives the appeal, it too will send the appellant an acknowledgement letter with further information about the processing of the appeal. In addition, the appeals committee will send the appeal, all relevant documents it has received with the appeal, and a copy of the acknowledgement letter to all the parties and committees involved in the appeal.

### **Can the Race Administration Director tell me whether my appeal is timely or complete, or otherwise advise me on the likelihood of my appeal being sustained?**

No. The Race Administration Director will send the appeal to the appropriate appeals committee, who will then make all decisions regarding that appeal.

### **Does the appeal need to be in any particular style or format?**

No. Rule R2.1(a) requires the appeal to state the “grounds” for the appeal; i.e., why you think the protest or appeals committee’s decision or procedures were incorrect. Note, it is strongly preferred that the grounds be clear, short and to the point. Please remember to date the appeal. In addition, the appeal shall include the *US Sailing Appeals & Requests Information Form*, which will ask for all the relevant documents and information required by rule R2.2 that are available to the appellant, including the names, mailing addresses and e-mail addresses of the people listed in rule R2.2(e).

**Should I send my appeal if I haven't received the written decision from the protest committee?**

No. Rule R2.1(a) requires that the written decision being appealed be submitted with the appeal. Note that the 15-day time limit in rule R2.1(a) for sending an appeal begins the day you receive the written decision. Rule 65.2 addresses how to obtain a written decision from the protest committee. Rule R2.1(b) addresses what to do if your protest or request for redress was never heard by a protest committee.

**Do parties to an appeal ever meet with an appeals committee?**

No. All communication with an appeals committee is written.

**Do the parties and committees involved in the appeal have the opportunity to see everything the appeals committee sees, and to comment on it?**

An appeals committee is required to send all relevant documents it receives to all the parties and committees in an appeal. The parties and committees are entitled to comment on the appeal or request and on any documents listed in rule R2.2. However, rule R6 does not include comments. Therefore, parties and committees are not entitled to make comments on comments, nor is an appeals committee required to consider comments on comments.

**How long does it take to get a decision on an appeal?**

The time will vary, depending on many factors. If the appeal includes all the required material, and if the appeals committee does not need to request additional material from the protest committee, then the decision will come sooner. If the appeals committee is able to begin consideration on the appeal soon after it is received, the usual time frame for a decision is three months or less. Keep in mind that the deliberation by an appeals committee is done primarily via e-mail and conference calls, not by face-to-face meetings.

**Who can ask the Appeals Committee for an interpretation of the rules based on a hypothetical set of facts?**

Any club or organization that is affiliated with US Sailing (see rule 70.4) may request an interpretation. The request must be sent or endorsed by an officer of that club or organization (see rule R2.4).

**Why doesn't the US Sailing Appeals Committee publish all of its decisions?**

Some decisions are either redundant to already published Appeals or Cases, or they hinge on situations or procedural technicalities that were essentially unique. Also, publishing an appeal requires considerable rewriting. Since decisions on appeals, requests for confirmation or correction of protest committee decisions, and requests for interpretations of rules are decided based on the facts and documentation submitted with them, the parties and committees involved have copies of that documentation. None of that needs to be repeated in the Appeals Committee decision. For these reasons, decisions that are not published are not intended for distribution or circulation beyond the parties and committees involved in the appeal.

However, when the committee decides that its decision would be useful to sailors and race officials, it rewrites the decision to describe the incident and include the facts so that readers

can understand the basis for the decision. It then publishes the decision in *The Appeals Book* and posts it on the [Appeals Committee](#) page on the US Sailing Web site.

**What is the difference between US Sailing Appeals and World Sailing Cases?**

A US Sailing Appeal is the published version of a final decision that resolved or settled an appeal, a request for confirmation or correction of a protest committee decision or a request for an interpretation of a rule. A World Sailing Case is an authoritative interpretation and explanation of the rules for all racing, and is usually based on a decision of an appeals committee of a World Sailing member national authority such as US Sailing. See World Sailing Regulation 31.3.

**What is the status of a US Sailing Appeal in deciding protests?**

A protest committee in the US whose decision is subject to appeal and is deciding a protest or request for redress that involves a situation and facts similar to those in a US Sailing Appeal is well advised to base its decision on the rules interpretations in the US Sailing Appeal (see Appeal 99).

**What is the status of a World Sailing Case in deciding protests?**

The World Sailing Cases do not have the status of rules but are “authoritative interpretations and explanations of the rules.” Therefore, when the relevant facts from a protest are essentially similar to the facts of a Case, the interpretations in the Case should be accepted by the protest committee as correct interpretations of the racing rules for that protest.

**If an appeal decision changes the scores of a race, is the race committee required to change the scores of the race and, when appropriate, a series?**

When the decision of a protest committee is changed or reversed upon appeal, the final standings and the awards must be adjusted accordingly (see Case 61).

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