



RULE 47 — TRASH DISPOSAL

Competitors and support persons shall not intentionally put trash in the water. This rule applies at all times while afloat. The penalty for a breach of this rule may be less than disqualification.

Rule 47 is the teeth in the Basic Principle which states that participants in the sport of sailing should take an active role in protecting the environment. There are many actions that all participants can and should take in that direction, including using refillable instead of disposable water bottles. But most are difficult or impossible to enforce or are not practical for all events. A ban on putting trash in the water, however, is enforceable and easily implemented. Notice that this rule applies to both competitors and their *support persons*.

“If a boat uses yarn or rubber bands to “stop” their spinnaker, does the boat break rule 47 if those stops fall in the water when the spinnaker is set?”



Yes! Appeal 110 states, “**Assumed Facts:** Boat A stops a sail using commercially available biodegradable yarn or rubber bands. When the sail is hoisted and the stops are broken, some of them fall into the water. Boat B protests A, alleging that she broke rule 47. In the hearing, A argues that the stops are not trash because they are biodegradable. Question: Did Boat A break rule 47? Answer: Yes. The broken sail stops that fall into the water, although biodegradable, are trash that the

competitor intentionally put in the water; therefore Boat A broke rule 47. This applies at all times while afloat during an event; however the penalty for breaking rule 47 may be less than disqualification.” Note that many sailmakers now have alternative “stops” that do not fall in the water when opened.

And if rule 47 is broken when not *racing*, rule 64.2 says, *“If a boat has broken a rule when not racing, her penalty shall apply to the race sailed nearest in time to that of the incident.”* So you can be disqualified from a race already sailed or not yet sailed for breaking this rule. Note that the rule permits the protest committee to apply a less harsh penalty than disqualification for a breach of the rule.

Also note that the rule requires that the act of putting trash in the water be **intentional**, to prevent a boat from being penalized, for example, for capsizing and not being able to retrieve objects that might be categorized as trash.

There are many excellent programs now that support this concept. One that is commonly used at US Sailing championships and other regattas is “Clean Regattas” run by Sailors for the Sea.

Sailors for the Sea Clean Regattas program

Sailors for the Sea
449 Thames Street, 300D
Newport, RI 02840

phone: (401) 846-8900

info@sailorsforthesea.org sailorsforthesea.org