

ABANDON

A race that a race committee or protest committee *abandons* is void but may be resailed.

**N**

A race committee can *abandon* a race before it starts (rule 27.3, Other Race Committee Actions Before the Starting Signal), while it is under way (rule 32, Shortening or Abandoning After the Start) or even after one or more boats have finished (rule 32.1). To signal an *abandonment* of a race in progress, the race committee will make three consecutive sound signals and display flag N (meaning return to the starting area for a new start), flag N over H (meaning return to the harbor and await further instructions) or flag N over A (meaning no more races that day). (See Race Signals.) A protest committee, acting on a request for redress, can *abandon* a race (rule 61.4(c), Redress Decisions). A race that has been properly *abandoned* may be resailed.

**N over H****N over A**

Notice that once the race has started, the race committee is governed by rule 32 when deciding whether to *abandon* a race. Rule 32.1 lists the five scenarios in which the race committee may *abandon* a race. Four of them are:

- (a) because of foul weather,
- (b) because of insufficient wind making it unlikely that any boat will *finish* within the time limit,
- (c) because a *mark* is missing or out of position, or
- (d) for any other reason directly affecting the safety or fairness of the competition.

Rule 32.1 also states that the race committee may *abandon* a race because of an error in the starting procedure.

“Does rule 32.1(d) mean that the race committee can abandon a race in progress when a large wind shift occurs?”

Yes, when in its judgment the wind shift has made the race an unsatisfactory test of skill and therefore “unfair.” However, in my opinion it is desirable to reduce the number of subjective decisions a race committee can make once the race has started and it can see who is or isn’t doing well. Therefore, once a race has been started, race committees should make every attempt to anticipate and react to wind shifts and to reposition *marks* in order to keep the race “fair” before deciding to *abandon*, particularly after the first boat has rounded the first *mark*.

After at least one boat has sailed the course and *finished* within the time limit, if any, the race committee and protest committee are required, before *abandoning* the race, to consider the consequences for all boats in the race or series (see rule 32 and Appeal 100).