

SUPPORT PERSONS

'*Support person*' has been introduced as a defined term in the Racing Rules of Sailing 2017-2020 (RRS). This definition includes a parent or guardian, a coach, a medical or paramedical practitioner, a boat maintainer, a personal assistant to a disabled competitor or any other person working with or assisting the sailor to prepare for or compete in a race.

RRS 3 now requires a *support person*, including a parent or guardian of a competitor that is racing, to accept the rules. It requires also that the competitors agree that any *support person* is bound by the rules. Acceptance of the rules includes acceptance by a *support person* of any penalty imposed or other action taken under the rules, as well as of the protest, appeal and review systems provided for in the rules.

Additionally, the RYA has prescribed that 'Each competitor and boat owner shall ensure that their *support persons* comply with the *rules*.'

A support person is not permitted to protest, nor will the protest committee consider protesting a boat as a result of information from a support person, unless there was serious damage or injury as a result of the alleged incident (RRS 60.3(a)(1)).

While racing, a boat is generally not permitted to receive help from an outside source, including from any *support person*.

As well as providing a set of rules that apply on the water, the RRS requires every competitor and *support person*, at all times, not to breach good manners, good sportsmanship or indulge in unethical behavior, and to avoid conduct that may bring the sport into disrepute.

The Notice of Race and Sailing Instructions (SIs) for a particular series of races may also place specific restrictions and requirements on the actions of both competitor and *support person*, on and off the water.

If the protest committee learns of a possible breach of a rule by a *support person* through any source, including the Race Committee, it may call a hearing under RRS 60.3(d).

If the protest committee finds that a rule has been broken, it can issue a warning, remove any privileges or exclude the *support person* from the event or club. It could also penalise a competitor by time or scoring penalties or a race disqualification if the competitor has gained an advantage or has been previously warned that a repeat of the *support person's* actions may result in a penalty.

Examples of actions of a support person that could lead to a hearing are:

- Abusing or pressurising race officials, volunteers or other competitors or support persons (RRS 69 and/or SIs)
- Assisting a competitor (unless ill, injured or in danger) in any way after the preparatory signal (RRS 41)
- Failing to follow support boat regulations (SIs)
- Moving a competitor's boat away from any designated parking areas (SIs)

- Modification or substitution of measured equipment without authorisation (SIs)
- Tampering with or measuring other competitors boats without their permission (RRS 69)
- Using social media or any other medium to broadcast material that is unsportsmanlike or likely to bring the sport of sailing into disrepute (RRS 69)

Further information:

The Racing Rules of Sailing, the RYA prescriptions and the RYA Racing Charter can be accessed from the RYA website at www.rya.org.uk/racingrules.

The Notice of Race and Sailing Instructions for a particular series are available from the race organisers.