

UNDERSTANDING THE SCORING PENALTY

As Used in J/24 World and Continental Championships

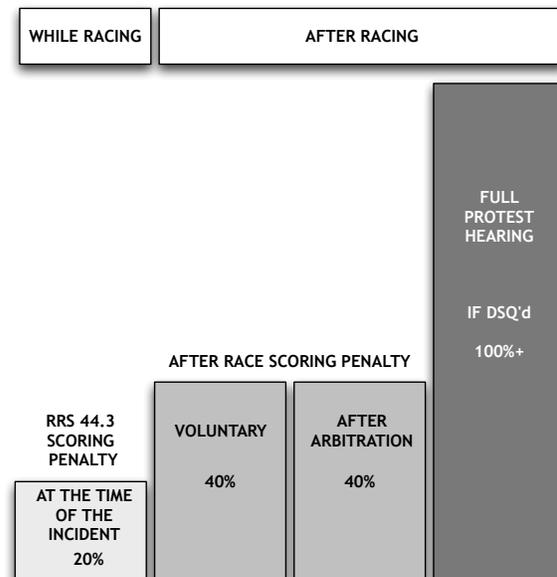
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Rarely are regattas run with the Scoring Penalty (rule 44.3) in effect. It is usually used with large fleets of one design keelboats where mark roundings are very crowded. With most rule incidents occurring at marks it is both difficult and dangerous for boats to get clear and do penalty turns. The scoring penalty is used in these situations, primarily in the interests of safety and avoiding further incidents.

This article is intended to help you understand how the Scoring Penalty works and what is required to use it effectively. The examples drawn are from the 2009 J/24 World Championship Sailing Instructions.

Three scoring penalties apply in this regatta as described in the Penalty System section of the Sailing Instructions:

1. The Scoring Penalty (rule 44.3) that is part of rule 44 that deals with penalties a boat may take at the time of the incident – while racing
2. The After Race Scoring Penalty – that deals with penalties a boat may take after racing and before the start of the protest hearing into the incident
3. Scoring Penalty for breaking some IJCA rules - to be applied by the jury to an infraction as an alternative to disqualification. This is described in the Sailing Instructions accompanied by a table with the involved class rules and penalties.



The Scoring Penalty (rule 44.3) is one of two options in rule 44 that deals with penalties a boat may take at the time of an incident to exonerate herself if she believes she has broken a rule of Part 2 (rules 10 through 23) or rule 31 (touching a mark) while racing. The other and more commonly used option is a two-turn penalty for breaking a rule of Part 2, and a one-turn penalty for breaking rule 31. Note that the inclusion of the penalty for breaking rule 31 in rule 44 is a change in the RRS for 2009-12.

Understand How the Scoring Penalty (rule 44.3) Applies

1. If the Sailing Instructions state that the Scoring Penalty (rule 44.3) is in effect for a regatta, **you do not have a choice.** Taking a two-turns or a one-turn penalty will not exonerate you for breaking the rule - you can still get DSQ'd.
2. A boat can only take a Scoring Penalty at the time of the incident if she has not caused injury or serious damage, or gained a significant advantage in the race or series by her breach. If she has, her penalty shall be to retire as stated in rule 44.1 (b).
3. A boat may take a Scoring Penalty for breaking only rules of Part 2 (rules 10 through 23) and rule 31 only while racing. She cannot take a Scoring Penalty at the time of the Incident for breaking any other rules.

The purpose of rule 44 is to allow boats that break a rule to take a penalty immediately – at the time of the incident - and continue racing. It is a “friendlier” approach than the “protest and risk disqualification or retire” approach.

Taking the Scoring Penalty (rule 44.3)

1. A boat that may have broken a rule of Part 2 may take the Scoring Penalty by **displaying the yellow flag** as prescribed in rule 44.3 and the Sailing Instructions. This must be done “at the first reasonable opportunity after the incident”. The same time test applies to the yellow flag as applies to a red protest flag. The decision to take the Scoring Penalty must be made right away – at the time of the incident.
2. When a boat takes a Scoring Penalty, she **must keep the yellow flag displayed until finishing**. You don’t have the option of taking the yellow flag down if, reflecting on the incident, you later conclude that you really didn’t break the rule, or that nobody protested you so you don’t need to take the penalty after all. Taking the yellow flag down breaks rule 44 and could lead to a protest, allegations of a breach of sportsmanship, and disqualification.

When in doubt, display the yellow flag and protest the other boat at the time of the incident following rule 61.1 (a) by hailing “Protest” and displaying a red protest flag to protect your right to file a valid protest. Even if you are successful in your protest, you will still receive the Scoring Penalty once you have displayed the Yellow flag.

Bear in mind that Race Committee and Judges on boats around the race course make a practice of recording yellow and protest flags that boats display on the race course. They may protest if there is reason to believe that a yellow flag has not remained displayed until a boat has finished. Unlike a protest, you may not change your mind about taking a Scoring Penalty once you display the Yellow flag.

3. **At the finishing, line call the race committee’s attention to the yellow flag and inform them of the identity of the other boat(s)** involved in the incident. The Sailing Instructions for this regatta instruct you to inform the Race Committee by VHF radio.

If for some reason this is not possible do so by hailing the Race Committee finishing boat – you always have to report.

4. The Sailing Instructions also require the boat accepting the Scoring Penalty to **file a Scoring Penalty Acceptance Form** after racing at a location and within a time limit stated in the Sailing Instructions.

There are two reasons for this - it lets the Race Committee reconcile the reports of yellow flags reported at the finishing line; and it confirms that the boat has actually taken the Scoring Penalty.

Note that the Penalty System section of the Sailing Instructions stipulates that a boat that complies with some but not all of the requirements of rule 44.3 and the applicable Sailing Instructions may be penalized.

If your boat is involved in an incident while racing and you allege that **another boat broke a rule of Part 2**, protest the other boat at the time of the incident following rule 61.1 (a) by hailing “Protest” and displaying a red protest flag to protect your right to file a valid protest even if the other boat displays a yellow flag.

At the end of the race monitor the VHF channel for the filing of notices to the Race Committee of acceptance of the Scoring Penalty. Upon returning to shore after racing, **check at the Jury Desk** whether the boat you allege broke a rule in the incident with your boat took the Scoring

Penalty by signing a Scoring Penalty Acceptance Form. If it hasn't you may file a protest on that omission. Make certain that the Scoring Penalty taken by the other boat relates to the incident in which you were involved and not to some other incident.

How the Scoring Penalty (rule 44.3) is Calculated

The calculation is described in rule 44.3 (c) and may be either a number of places as stated in the Sailing Instructions or the default of 20% of the boats entered in the regatta. For this regatta the Sailing Instructions use the default, and describe an upper limit on the scoring Penalty that may be applied.

After Race Scoring Penalty

The Sailing Instructions describe another form of scoring penalty – the After Race Scoring Penalty. This permits a boat that may have broken a rule of Part 2 or rule 31 while racing to take a penalty after she has finished or retired and prior to the start of a protest hearing involving the incident. In this case her penalty shall be a Scoring Penalty of 40% calculated as described in rule 44.3(c), with limits as described in the Sailing Instructions. However, if she caused injury or serious damage or gained a significant advantage in the race or series by her breach, her penalty shall be to retire.

This is available to any boats, including those that choose Arbitration, who accept that they broke a rule of Part 2 or rule 31 and want to take a scoring penalty rather than go to a full protest hearing. Boats may accept this penalty by **filing a Scoring Penalty Acceptance Form** after racing at a location and within a time limit stated in the Sailing Instructions. This is again “friendlier” than the score for Retired After Finishing (RAF) which scores the same as for a Disqualification (DSQ). The Sailing Instructions and rule 44.3(c) explain how the scoring penalty is calculated.

Scoring Penalty for Breaking Some IJCA Rules

There is a table of scoring penalties in an appendix to the Sailing Instructions that the Jury may apply to boats that break some IJCA rules. A change is made in the Sailing Instructions to rule 64.1 to put this into effect. The class wants an alternative that is less severe than disqualification for these infractions.

SUMMARY

If you break a rule of Part 2 or rule 31 and have not caused injury or serious damage, or gained a significant advantage your options are:

- at the time of the incident - accept the Scoring Penalty - 20%
- after finishing or as the result of Arbitration but prior to the protest hearing - accept the After Race Scoring Penalty - 40%
- go to the protest hearing where the penalty is usually disqualification.

If you were involved in an incident where you allege that the other boat broke a rule of Part 2 or rule 31 and the other boat indicated they were taking a scoring penalty by flying a yellow flag – protect your right to file a valid protest by displaying a red flag and hailing ‘Protest!’. After racing check with the jury desk to ascertain if the other boat accepted the Scoring Penalty for the incident in which you were involved, and if not, decide whether to file a protest.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Read - the rules, particularly rule 44 and the Sailing Instructions section on Penalty System. If you have questions, follow the directions in the SIs for submitting questions.

Disclaimer - This document is **not** part of the rules as defined in the Racing Rules of Sailing or any of the components included in the definition of “rule” therein. Treat it as an article from a magazine with some (hopefully) helpful hints.

Acknowledgements – Many of the concepts in this document and the encouragement to write it came from Lynne Beal IJ, Don Becker IJ, Steve Tupper IJ and Henry Menin IJ.

SCORING PENALTY CALCULATION

PLACE	PENALTY PLACES		PLACE	PENALTY PLACES	
	20%	40%		20%	40%
1	16	32	41	16	32
2	16	32	42	16	32
3	16	32	43	16	32
4	16	32	44	16	32
5	16	32	45	16	32
6	16	32	46	16	32
7	16	32	47	16	32
8	16	32	48	16	32
9	16	32	49	16	32
10	16	32	50	16	32
11	16	32	51	16	31
12	16	32	52	16	30
13	16	32	53	16	29
14	16	32	54	16	28
15	16	32	55	16	27
16	16	32	56	16	26
17	16	32	57	16	25
18	16	32	58	16	24
19	16	32	59	16	23
20	16	32	60	16	22
21	16	32	61	16	21
22	16	32	62	16	20
23	16	32	63	16	19
24	16	32	64	16	18
25	16	32	65	16	17
26	16	32	66	16	16
27	16	32	67	15	15
28	16	32	68	14	14
29	16	32	69	13	13
30	16	32	70	12	12
31	16	32	71	11	11
32	16	32	72	10	10
33	16	32	73	9	9
34	16	32	74	8	8
35	16	32	75	7	7
36	16	32	76	6	6
37	16	32	77	5	5
38	16	32	78	4	4
39	16	32	79	3	3
40	16	32	80	2	2
			81	1	1

This table illustrates the calculation of Scoring Penalties of 20 % and 40% calculated as described in rule 44.3(c), but limited to not more than the score for boats that are scored DNF.