

5.20. STRONG WIND ABANDONMENT GUIDELINES

The information below is a set of guidelines and information to help make a judgement as to whether to start a race or not.

Races should not be started if in the opinion of the Race Committee the maximum wind gust average over 3 seconds exceeds one of the values below:

- 20kt for Junior and ILCA 4 race fleets
- 25kt for ILCA 6 & 7
- 28kt for Yachts

The Race Committee must always check the specific Sailing Instructions rather than rely on any limits quoted here or assumed from previous experience.

The 3 second average is used by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) observations when reporting gusts. See <http://www.bom.gov.au/catalogue/observations/about-weather-observations.shtml>.

The BOM warns that wind gusts can be 40 percent higher than average wind speeds, so 14kt average wind speed can produce 20kt gusts, 18kt average can produce 25kt gusts and 22kt average can produce 30kt gusts.

When considering abandonment, the Race Committee should consult the BOM weather warnings at <http://www.bom.gov.au/nsw/warnings/marinewind.shtml>.

If on the morning of the race there is a Gale Warning (34 to 47 knots) for the racing area typically Sydney Closed Waters, then the decision will be to abandon.

With a Strong Wind Warning (26 to 33 knots), then the decisions will mostly be to abandon if their indications are that the forecast is accurate.

If there is no Gale Warning, then the expected wind speeds can be obtained from the BOM forecasts at <http://www.bom.gov.au/forecasts/graphical/marine/nsw/sydney.php>.

A race should seldom be abandoned purely on the basis of a forecast; rather the forecast should be used to better interpret the observations of the day. For example, if there are stronger winds predicted after the race or geographically close to the race, then additional caution should be used as weather may arrive early or change location.

Should you believe the wind may ease in the near future, for example because at the time of the scheduled start a front was moving through the race area, you don't necessarily have to abandon the day's racing. You can postpone the start of the race until conditions moderate by using the AP flag. This should also be communicated on VHF 72 to the competitors.

AP



With 2 sound signals



The ultimate authority when judging abandonment is the observations of actual average wind speed and gusts obtained either from the BOM (<http://www.bom.gov.au/nsw/observations/coastal.shtml>) or from instruments on the committee vessel (or similar). As well as local observations, more distant observations up and down the coast can be used to make a judgement about accuracy or otherwise of the forecast and to see what weather is coming.

While it is considerate to abandon races early (especially for boats coming through the Spit Bridge), the Race Committee should make reasonable effort to hold a race. Conversely, just because a race has not been abandoned before contestants have arrived at the course is not a reason to not abandon. Safety is the only consideration and a race may be abandoned even after the start if the conditions deteriorate.

The Race Committee can discuss the conditions and forecast with the Race Director, Principal Race Officer, Commodore or any other experienced sailors. Race Directors should ensure that Race Committees have the correct details at hand. **Please be aware that the Race Officer is responsible for the decision. The Race Officer can take advice but not direction from others.**

If MYC abandons a race, it is typically for the remainder of the day, so the N flag should be flown over the A flag and 3 sound signals made. There are large N and A flags in the office. Abandonment should also be communicated over VHF and/or by SMS.

N over A



With 3 sound signals



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