

Standing Rules for GBCA Single- And Double-Handed Racing

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1. Preamble

- a. These rules are intended for use in Short-handed racing
 - i. Short-handed refers to boats that are crewed by one (1) person (single-handed) or two (2) people (double-handed).
- b. The focus of these rules is the Galveston Bay Cruising Association (GBCA) races including, but not limited to, the Icicle and Rum races, evening/night races in Galveston Bay and Coastal races in the Gulf of Mexico.
- c. These are in addition to, or amplify, the rules that apply to all boats participating in GBCA races
 - i. These rules are contained in the Notice of Race (NOR) or Sailing Instructions (SI) and any amendments for each series.
 - ii. In the event of a discrepancy between these standing rules and the NOR or SI, the NOR or SI takes precedence.
- d. The single-handed and double-handed classes will be managed and sailed under the version of the World Sailing Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) current as of the date of the event, and these GBCA Standard Race rules as modified by the Sailing Instructions.
- e. Equipment requirements for all boats in all race categories can be found at: <https://www.sailing.org/specialregs>
- f. Any boat racing shall comply with the equipment requirements contained in PHRF-GB's Operating Policies.
 - i. These operating policies can be found at: <http://www.phrfgb.com/home/operating-policies>.

2. Definitions

- a. Cruising Speed
 - i. Cruising Speed is defined in smooth water with no wind as:
 $0.85 * (\text{sqrt}(\text{LWL}))$
where LWL is in feet and
Cruising Speed is in kts
Note: This is the definition of Cruising Speed contained in paragraph 12 of the PHRF-GB Operating policies. Boats with PHRF-GB certificates must meet this requirement except for boats in One Design classes where the class rules do not require propulsion. Note that if a boat is not racing in One Design configuration this exception does not apply.
- b. Primary Sailing Area
 - i. The Primary Sailing area is the portion of Galveston Bay bordered in the north by the entrance to the Houston Yacht Club, in the south by Red Fish Island, on the east by the Houston Ship Channel, and on the west by the coast of Texas in the vicinity of Kemah and Seabrook.

- c. Race Categories per US Sailing¹
 - i. Nearshore. GBCA races in the Primary Sailing Area are considered to be “Nearshore” events, as they are sailed “... primarily during the day, close to shore, in relatively protected waters.” (US Sailing, Safety Equipment Requirements, rev 2020.0). Races entirely in the Primary Sailing Area would be considered Category 4 races in World Sailing’s taxonomy.
 - ii. Coastal. GBCA races in the Gulf of Mexico are generally considered to be Coastal events as they are sailed “... not far removed from shorelines, where rescue is likely to be quickly available.” (US Sailing, Safety Equipment Requirements, rev 2020.0). These would be considered Category 3 or higher, depending on the specific course, in World Sailing’s taxonomy.

3. Other Rules

- a. All boats sailing short-handed are required to conform to rules from the USCG rules that are applicable to that boat.² This includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. Bilge pump/Bailing equipment
 - ii. Fire extinguishers
 - iii. Signaling (light and sound)
 - iv. PFDs/Lifejackets/Throwable Devices
 - v. Radios and radio monitoring
 - vi. Navigation lights
- b. All boats sailing short-handed are required to conform to US Sailing’s Safety Equipment Rules (SER) that are applicable to that boat’s equipment and gear for that category of race.³ This includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. Bilge pump/Bailing equipment
 - ii. Heaving line
 - iii. VHF Radio
 - iv. Radar Reflector
 - v. Permanently mounted magnetic compass
 - vi. Anchor & rode
 - vii. Medical (First aid) kit
 - viii. Lifelines
 - ix. Mainsail reefing
- c. All boats sailing short-handed are required to conform to US Sailing’s Safety Equipment Rules (SER) that are applicable to Crew Skills. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. Emergency steering
 - ii. Man overboard recovery

4. Eligible Sailboats

¹ The US Sailing Rules are based on the rules contained in World Sailing Offshore Special Regulations for 2020-2021. The World Sailing rules can be found at:
[https://www.sailing.org/tools/documents/OSR20202021-\[25845\].pdf](https://www.sailing.org/tools/documents/OSR20202021-[25845].pdf)

² A short summary of the USCG requirements applicable to recreational boats under 20 m (approximately 65 ft 6 in) LOA can be found at:
<https://www.uscgboating.org/images/420.PDF>

³ The US Sailing equipment rules can be found at:
<https://www.ussailing.org/competition/offshore/safety-information/ser-world-sailing-special-regulations/>

- a. Monohulls and Multihulls shall have a minimum LOA of 6.1 m (20 ft)
 - b. Multihulls shall have a minimum beam of 2.4 m (8 ft)
 - c. Boats shall have an enclosed cabin with:
 - i. One or more berths
 - 1. Berth cushions are not required.
 - ii. One or more heads, which may be one of the following
 - 1. Fixed with holding tank
 - 2. Port-a-potty style
 - 3. Fitted bucket
 - d. Boats not meeting these requirements may apply to GBCA for a waiver
5. Eligible Skippers and Crew
- a. In the single-handed class the skipper shall be 18 years of age or older
 - b. In the double-handed class the skipper shall be 18 years of age or older
 - c. Skippers not meeting these age requirements may, along with their parent or guardian, apply to GBCA for a waiver.
6. Equipment Rules for Short-Handed Sailing
- a. Personal Harness & Tether
 - i. A safety harness designed and constructed for offshore sailing or a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) with integral harness shall be available for each crewperson.
 - 1. A personal strobe light and a whistle shall be attached to the harness or PFD, or worn by the person (e.g., a whistle on a lanyard worn around the neck) between sunset and sunrise.
NOTE: A Personal Man Overboard Beacon is recommended but is not a requirement for Nearshore and Coastal races at this time.
 - ii. Each harness shall have a tether not longer than 2 meters (approx. 6 ft 6 in) in length.
 - 1. A dual tether with one tether no more than 1 meter (approx. 3 ft 3 in) in length and one tether no more than 2 meters (approx. 6 ft 6 in) in length also meets this requirement
 - iii. Tethers shall attach to the harness or lifejacket-harness with a connector that is "releasable" under a load (e.g., a shackle).
 - b. Jacklines and Anchoring (Clip) Points
 - i. Properly secured port and starboard jacklines or other appropriate method allowing the skipper to travel fore and aft on deck while remaining secured to the sailboat shall be fitted.
 - 1. Securing to the sailboat's life-lines shall not meet this requirement
 - ii. Jacklines or anchoring (clip) points shall always be rigged from 5 minutes before the boat's scheduled start until the boat has finished.
 - iii. Jacklines and anchoring points must allow a tethered sailor to reach the bow and stern
 - 1. Reconnecting the tether to a jackline is allowed to obtain this range of movement.
 - iv. Anchoring (clipping) points shall be spaced to allow the person to remain attached while moving between anchor points.
 - c. VHF Communications Equipment

- i. All boats in a GBCA Short-handed class shall have a a minimum of one (1) VHF radio on board.
 - 1. The radio must be capable of transmitting and receiving on channels 9, 16, 22A, 68, 69, 71, and 72 as a minimum. Other channels may be available for Transmit and Receive.
 - 2. For Nearshore and Coastal races, a waterproof handheld VHF, a VHF in a waterproof container, or a permanently mounted VHF radio will meet this requirement
 - 3. This modifies SER 3.8.1 for Monohulls and SER 3.8.1 for Multihulls for Coastal races.
NOTE: A permanently mounted VHF with a masthead antenna compliant with the SER is recommended for Coastal races.
- d. Compasses
 - i. At least one compass shall be aboard for Nearshore and Coastal races.
 - 1. This requirement may be met with any device that as a minimum shows the boat's current heading or course or the direction of North. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Permanently mounted compass
 - b. Handheld compass (aka. a "bearing compass")
 - c. Handheld or permanently mounted GPS with compass display
 - i. The display may be alphanumeric (showing direction or heading in degrees) or graphical mimicking a mechanical compass
 - d. Instrument on which the boat's heading can be displayed
 - 2. This modifies US Sailing SER 3.19.1 for Monohulls and 3.19.1 for Multihulls.
- e. Navigation lights
 - i. All boats in a GBCA short-handed class shall have Navigation lights meeting USCG requirements and SER 3.3.1 for Monohulls and SER 3.3.1 for Multihulls if all or part of the race is between sunset and sunrise
 - 1. A cut-off time between sunset and sunrise is interpreted to mean that all or part of the race is between sunset and sunrise for the purpose of determining the need for navigation lights.
 - a. Sunset and sunrise times will be based on the times in Seabrook TX for Nearshore races
 - b. Sunset and sunrise times will be based on the times in Galveston TX for Nearshore races
 - ii. The boat shall have stored power (i.e., battery power) adequate to illuminate the navigation lights for a period of two (2) hours for a Nearshore Race and six (6) hours for a Coastal race without recharging the battery or batteries.
 - iii. A boat that finishes between the hours of sunset and sunrise without displaying proper running lights (reference: COLREGS International and 33 CFR 83 Inland Rules 20 and 25) shall be scored DNF by the Race Committee.

f. Engines/Alternate Means of Propulsion.

i. All boats in a GBCA Short-handed class shall have an alternate means of propulsion

1. This requirement may be satisfied with an inboard engine, an outboard engine, or an all-electric or hybrid propulsion system.
2. For a Nearshore race the boat shall have sufficient fuel or other power source (e.g., stored battery power) for two (2) hours at cruising speed (see definitions).
 - a. For classes with rules that do not require a means of propulsion, such as the J/22 class, a manual system of propulsion such as oars, paddles or sweeps, will satisfy this requirement for Nearshore races only.

Note: It is recommended that boats sailing short-handed have a non-manual alternative means for propulsion (e.g., inboard or outboard) for Nearshore races regardless of class rules.

3. For a Coastal race the boat shall have sufficient fuel or other power source (e.g., stored battery power) for six (6) hours at cruising speed (see definitions).

- a. If stowed below decks (e.g., an outboard motor), the alternate means of propulsion shall be accessible and deployable by the crew aboard while at sea.

NOTE: It is recommended that the skipper of a short-handed boat carefully consider the pros and cons of having the outboard engine remain on a bracket throughout the race rather than being taken off and stowed below deck or in a locker.

It is understood that this is a performance issue.

However, in the interest of safety, having the outboard mounted on the transom bracket may allow an injured sailor to use the engine more easily to self-rescue.

Taking the engine from below decks or from a locker and mounting it on the bracket while at sea may be impossible, depending on the nature of any personal injury, boat damage, and the sea state.

7. Special Rules for Short-Handed Sailing

a. Outside Assistance

- i. Outside assistance after five (5) minutes before the start of a race or, in the case of a pursuit start, five (5) minutes before the boat's scheduled start time shall be prohibited.

1. Being under tow is considered outside assistance.
2. Having excess personnel aboard assisting with sailing tasks, navigation, or maintenance/repair is considered outside assistance
3. Paid subscriber services such as weather routing, forecasting, etc., are considered outside assistance.

4. Publicly available information obtained by telephone, radio or internet is **NOT** considered outside assistance.
 5. Communications with Vessel Traffic Service (VHF 63A) or with other vessels about their movements is **NOT** considered outside assistance under RRS 41.
 6. Communications related to medical emergencies, search and rescue efforts, or other lifesaving efforts is **NOT** considered outside assistance under RRS 41.
- b. VHF Monitoring
- i. Vessels in a GBCA short-handed class approaching within 0.5 nm of or transiting shipping lanes or ship channels shall monitor VHF 16 and, if possible, VHF 13 (Bridge-to-Bridge) as well.
 1. The only ship channel that may be entered or crossed in the Primary Sailing Area is the Bayport Ship Channel, which is just south of Houston Yacht Club.
- c. Harnesses/Life Jackets
- i. A harness or a combination lifejacket-harness with crotch strap or straps (ride up prevention) and associated tether shall be worn by personnel on deck
 1. between sunset and sunrise
 2. at any time the mainsail is reefed
 3. at any time the headsail is smaller than a #3 (100%) or taken down due to high wind and/or high sea state.
 4. at any time the race committee flies the “Y” (Yankee) flag before the start of a race.
 - ii. A harness or a combination lifejacket-harness with a crotch strap or crotch straps (ride up prevention) and associated tether may be worn at any time above or below deck.
- d. Gear stacking/Water Ballast
- i. Transferrable ballast is allowed, in the form of moving sails or other normal sailing gear or water ballast with density no greater than that of seawater.
 - ii. Transferrable ballast or gear shall not be carried above the level of the working deck with the sailboat in normal laden trim.
 - iii. Canting keels may be used only if declared, along with maximum canting angle, on the boat’s PHRF-GB certificate.
 - iv. This modifies RRS 51.
- e. Head Sails⁴
- i. One or more spinnaker poles or whisker poles may be used to pole out headsails. Two headsails may be used simultaneously on the headstay.

⁴ These rules are intended to bring GBCA’s short-handed rules into alignment with the rules of other organizations promoting short-handed events. In particular, these rules allow short-handed sailors to gain experience with configurations allowed in the Single-Handed Transpac, the Shaka Challenge, among other races. The Single Handed Transpac is held every other year. The race is from San Francisco CA to Hanalei Bay. The race is conducted by the Singlehanded Sailing Society (SSS). <http://sfbaysss.org/main/> The Shaka Challenge is held every other year. The race is from Marina Del Rey CA to Honolulu HI. The race is conducted by the Pacific Singlehanded Sailing Association (PSSA). <https://www.pssala.com/>

1. If multiple spinnaker and/or whisker poles are used, neither shall exceed the maximum spinnaker pole length on the boat's PHRF-GB certificate
 - a. The maximum pole length is usually equal to the J measurement as longer poles result in a rating penalty.
 - b. Both poles must be attached to the forward mast. (see RRS 50.2)
2. If two headsails attached to one stay are flown, the largest headsail shall not exceed the largest headsail on the boat's PHRF-GB certificate. e.g., if the largest headsail on the boat's PHRF-GB certificate is 140%, then the largest of the two headsails flown cannot exceed 140%.
 - a. Both headsails flown on one stay may be the same size.
3. Using two headsails attached to one stay will be treated as a symmetrical spinnaker for the purpose of scoring. That is, if two headsails are flown on single stay then the boat shall use the symmetrical spinnaker rating assigned by PHRF-GB rather than the asymmetrical spinnaker or non-spinnaker rating.
4. This modifies RRS 50.2.
- ii. Outrigging blocks for sheets may be used to project additional headsail sail area.
 1. This modifies RRS 50.3.
- f. Self-Steering
 - i. Mechanical or electrical self-steering devices (aka "autopilot", "tillerpilot", "autohelm") may be employed at any time during the race.
 - ii. Wind powered self-steering devices (aka "Wind Vanes") may be employed at any time during the race.
 - iii. This modifies RRS 52.
- g. Powered Winches
 - i. Powered winches, hydraulics, or furling devices are permitted.
 - ii. To the extent PHRF-GB requires declaration of powered equipment, powered equipment use shall be limited to the declared equipment during a GBCA race between 5 minutes before a boat's scheduled start until the boat has finished.
 - iii. This modifies RRS 52

8. Acronyms

ACRONYM	DEFINITION
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
COLREGS	Convention on International Regulation for Preventing Collisions at Sea
DNF	Did Not Finish
GBCA	Galveston Bay Cruising Association
LOA	Length Overall
LWL	Length Waterline
NOR	Notice of Race
PHRF-GB	Performance Handicap Racing Fleet – Galveston Bay
PSSA	Pacific Singlehanded Sailing Association
RRS	Racing Rules of Sailing
SER	Safety Equipment Regulations
SI	Sailing Instructions
SSS	Singlehanded Sailing Society
USCG	United States Coast Guard