

RULE 9.2 PROPOSAL

SUMMARY

There is a loophole in the PHRF-BC Rule 9.2 "Standard Yacht" in that it covers everything except lifelines.

This proposal suggests adding wording to 9.2:

(e) Pulpit, pushpit, lifelines and stanchions as standard from the builder or as required by the class rules.

This would affect the San Juan 24 1033 "Ghost Dancer".

When the San Juan 24 was rated it was rated with lifelines. Ghost Dancer came 1000 boats later and is the first and only one so far in the Pacific Northwest that races without lifelines. This gives him a considerable advantage over other SJ 24s and other PHRF boats.

If this continues, other SJ 24s will have to make a difficult decision. Remove their lifelines to compete or keep their lifelines if they want to enter the North Americans (SJ 24 class rules require lifelines).

Other classes could also remove lifelines due to this loophole.

If the above proposal is accepted, Ghost Dancer will be forced to install his lifelines, which he says he has, or be treated as an X boat.

To-date Ghost Dancer has refused to install the lifelines and stanchions even though he has them and his boat is predrilled for them.

Some years ago there was an appeals meeting where this boat was discussed. The result was that the committee assumed the owner would install his lifelines or face a protest. He did not install them. A protest took place but failed primarily due to the lack of definition in rule 9.2 (but also due to confusion with the Moore 24 ruling which should not have been relevant – see below).

DETAILS

San Juan 24 "Ghost Dancer" Hull number 1033

When PHRF-BC and PHRF-NW first rated the San Juan 24 in the mid 1970's they had a small fleet already building, all of which had stanchions and lifelines. The SJ 24 sales brochure at the time showed 21 pictures of SJ 24's every one of which had lifelines and stanchions.

Ghost Dancer was one of the very last, if not the last, SJ 24 to be built. To my very best knowledge it remains the only SJ 24 in BC and Washington State that does not have lifelines. And there must be well over 200 others with lifelines.

The owner of Ghost Dancer has the lifelines and stanchions but refuses to install them even though his boat is predrilled for these stanchions. He points to three things in his favor:

1. The fact that the PHRF-BC rule 9.2 defining the "Standard Yacht" is absent any wording concerning lifelines. In my mind this is a significant omission.
2. The owner has in his possession an equipment list that shows lifelines as an option (among many other items). However for marketing purposes it was common practice to show as many items optional as possible in order to minimize the base price and make it attractive. This options list was likely not available at the time the class was first rated. The original brochure did not offer lifelines as an option. Regardless, of the several hundred in the Pacific Northwest, only this one does not have lifelines installed.
3. There are two or three SJ 24's in Texas that were photographed without lifelines. That's all, out of over 1000. There could be many reasons an old boat is absent lifelines. It doesn't make it legal.

So when the boat was first assigned a rating, the boat was assumed to have lifelines. All the ones then did, the brochure only showed boats with lifelines. Ghost Dancer came much later.

It should be noted, the San Juan 24 class rules require stanchions and lifelines. Why? Because it was standard. These class rules have not changed in this regard to this date.

Why is this an issue?

Currently anyone who races a San Juan 24 is faced with a dilemma. To compete with Ghost Dancer they will need to remove their lifelines (see below for the advantages of no lifelines). But if they want to race in the regionals or North Americans they will have to have lifelines. To force them to make this choice simply because our rules do not mention lifelines, is simply not fair.

Currently our PHRF-BC rules, by their absence on this subject, could mean many other boat types could remove lifelines and stanchions to gain advantage, that is subject to any requirement in Sl's. But many races do not have such a requirement. If PHRF-BC has rules regarding hull, keel, rudder, mast etc, then why does it not mention pulpit, pushpit, stanchions and lifelines?

What advantage does Ghost Dancer gain by not having this equipment installed?

1. Tacking is much easier and swifter without the need to "skirt" the jib.
2. White sail reaching is more efficient. With lifelines the bottom 10% or so of the sail is significantly out of shape as it passes over the lifeline.
3. The weight gain is significant on this very light boat.
4. Crew are able to hike out further. To understand this, bare in mid that the SJ 24 heels when on the wind and with the single lifeline it forces the upper body in towards the boat. Without lifelines the upper body can lean out further.

The noted PHRF statistician Charles Tolman assessed the gain Ghost Dancer has from item 3 only, at 4 seconds. Likely the combination would be at least 6 second.

The Moore 24 Example.

Some time ago a Moore 24 in California was appealed for not having lifelines. There was much discussion and the appeal was eventually rejected because the class rules *did not require lifelines* (unlike the SJ 24 class rules). So this is a very different case. However it is interesting to note that afterwards all competitive Moore 24's removed their lifelines because the boat is definitely faster without.

Recommendation of this Appeal

1. Add to the PHRF-BC rule 9.2 the following: (e) Pulpit, pushpit, lifelines and stanchions as standard from the builder or as required by the class rules.