

2026 ECSA Offshore Racing Circuit Regulations

(revised March 2026)

1. Purpose

The Eastern Connecticut Sailing Association Offshore Racing Circuit was established for the following purposes:

- (A) To provide a measure of the season efforts of ECSA offshore yachtsmen by combining the results of yacht races within the Association.
- (B) To recognize the most successful efforts with the award of appropriate trophies.
- (C) To encourage and promote the sport of offshore yacht racing by offering a common goal to those who take more than a casual interest.
- (D) To support and help the ECSA in its efforts to standardize the conduct of offshore yacht races within the Association.
- (E) To promote closer ties between ECSA member clubs by providing a common activity for those involved in offshore yacht racing.

2. Eligibility

(A) Yachtsmen

- (1) Any individual.
- (2) An ECSA regular member.
- (3) Membership in US Sailing
- (4) Offshore Racing Circuit registration for any one yacht is limited to not more than two co-owners or co-charterers, or two members of the immediate family of the owner or charterer. At least one registered Offshore Race Circuit member must be on board and be in command of the registered yacht during any selected race.

(B) Yachts

- (1) An eligible yacht must be a self-righting monohull and must have a self-bailing cockpit and fixed berths. She must also be equipped as required by her applicable PHRF requirements (see PHRF-ECSA in this yearbook).
- (2) Specific equipment requirements for a race are left to the club sponsoring the race. The Offshore Committee strongly recommends compliance with the US Safety Equipment Requirements (SERs) for Nearshore or Coastal Races. These requirements can be modified by the organizing authority based on the specific needs of the racecourse and fleet. The SERs can be found at:
www.ussailing.org/competition/offshore/safety-information/ser-world-sailing-special-regulations/

- (3) An eligible yacht **MUST have a currently valid PHRF Rating Certificate from PHRF of Eastern Connecticut (ECSA).**

3. Circuit Races

(A) ECSA offshore races are divided into two categories:

- (1) Sanctioned races that count for the ECSA Offshore Racing Circuit and SHALL be run by a US Sailing certified race officer. For a list of US Sailing Certified Race Officers go to <https://www.ussailing.org/competition/rules-officiating/resources/find-a-race-official/> - enter "All race Officers" in the Report type field and "B" in the Area Field before clicking View Report. If your club has exhausted all resources, contact the ECSA Offshore Chair or Commodore for acceptable alternatives.
- (2) Additional offshore races sponsored by ECSA clubs that are not scored in the ECSA Offshore Race Circuit.

(B) The ECSA Offshore Committee will make the selection of races to be included in the circuit for scoring purposes. Selection is based upon races representing offshore racing and distributed within the ECSA area.

(C) To qualify for scoring in the ECSA circuit requires membership in ECSA, a currently valid PHRF certificate from Eastern Connecticut (ECSA) and participation in ECSA sanctioned circuit races.

(D) ECSA has designated PHRF of Eastern Connecticut as the handicapping body for handicapping ECSA Offshore races. Only races sailed under PHRF will be scored in the Offshore Racing Circuit. A boat class designator (C, HP, NSH, AB, or SB) and a Time Correction Factor are included with all PHRF-ECSA issued certificates based on $TCF=650/(PHRF+550)$. It is required that this TCF be used in Time on Time calculations or this PHRF-ECSA rating used for Time on Distance calculations. Races that use other PHRF ratings or TCFs shall not be scored.

(E) Classes

- (1) The sponsoring race committee ***shall make the most equitable classes possible, given the turnout for a particular race.***
- (2) Classes should ideally be assigned by class designator first, then by PHRF handicap. **
- (3) When practical, Sport boats (SB) should not be in the same class as C boats.**
- (4) Shorthanded Racers may race in a non-Spinnaker class when a good Shorthanded class is not possible.

**It is easier to divide classes conforming to E(2) & E(3) when there is higher turnout but almost impossible when there is low turnout. In a low turnout race, classes are more likely to be divided by PHRF number rather than Class designator.

(F) Courses

(1) Course Type Declaration

- (a) Each race shall be designated as either Windward/Leeward (W/L) or Random-Leg (R/L) by the Race Committee.
 - (b) The course type shall be stated in the Sailing Instructions, on the course board, or verbally prior to the warning signal.
- (2) Course length should be 8 to 20 miles in length based on the prevailing conditions and forecast and designed to be shortened if conditions deteriorate.
- (3) When two races are run, the combined distance should be 10 to 20 miles.
- (4) To qualify for bonus points Distance Races shall be at least **25** miles.
- (5) Courses shall be conducted in water navigable by all participants.

(6) Windward/Leeward (W/L) Course

- (a) The course consists predominantly of upwind and downwind legs, with little or no intentional reaching.
- (b) Marks may be movable or adjustable, allowing the Race Committee (RC) to realign the course as wind direction changes.
- (c) A course remains classified as W/L based on its intent and initial setup, even if subsequent wind shifts reduce alignment during the race. It does not convert to a Random Leg race. Once the warning signal has been made, the declared course type shall not be changed, regardless of changes in wind direction, strength, or other conditions experienced during the race.
- (d) If, in the judgment of the Race Committee, a wind shift or other condition prevents the course from providing a fair or safe test of skill, the Race Committee may abandon the race in accordance with Racing Rules of Sailing Rule 32.1.

(7) Random Leg Course (R/L)

- (a) The course includes a broad mix of points of sail, including significant reaching legs.
- (b) Marks are often fixed or constrained (e.g., government marks, permanent buoys, geographic features), limiting the RC's ability to realign the course with changing wind direction.
- (c) An R/L designation is based on course geometry and constraints, not on wind shifts or race-day conditions alone.

(G) Races must be sailed on the date scheduled. Any race postponed without the prior approval of the ECSA Board to an alternate date will not be scored for the Offshore Circuit. Rescheduling should be per the current Racing Rules of Sailing.

(1) Scoring Method

- (a) Races designated as **Windward/Leeward (W/L)** shall be scored using the boat's W/L handicap.
 - (b) Races designated as **Random-Leg (R/L)** shall be scored using the boat's Random-Leg handicap.
- X.2 Scoring Method

- (H) Race results shall be publicly posted immediately or a copy of the scratch sheet and official final results, including all starters, DNF, DSQ, and DNC, shall be forwarded to the ECSA Scorer listed in the ECSA Yearbook or www.ECSA.net. The lack of timely reporting of race results or a poorly organized or poorly run race may result in the suspension of that race from the 'sanctioned' category during the following season.
- (I) Time Limit Expired. Clubs may score TLE in any way that they find fairest for their own use if the race is part of a club series (ie, finishers +1, etc) BUT for scoring the ECSA Offshore Circuit TLE will be scored as starters +1.
- (J) Race results must be posted and submitted to the ECSA scorer including elapsed time, TCF used and corrected time. If the scoring program used publishes this information (ie, YachtScoring) then no additional action is needed. If the scoring program does not post this information (ie, Club Spot) then a separate sheet including this info must be posted and submitted to the ECSA scorer.

4. Non-Spinnaker Fleet

- (A) The Non-Spinnaker Fleet is established under the following rules:
 - (1) Spinnakers (including mizzen spinnakers) may not be used.
 - (2) Spinnaker poles may be used as whisker poles.
 - (3) Only one sail at a time other than staysails on standard double-head rigs may be tacked forward of the mainmast (foremast on schooners). This does not prohibit a transient condition such as during a sail change.
 - (4) Use of other sails (such as mules and mizzen staysails) **ARE NOT PERMITTED.**
 - (5) Vessels must meet all other ECSA Offshore Race Circuit requirements.
- (B) No race will be scored for a non-spinnaker class entrant unless the above conditions have been met.
- (C) Non-spinnaker and spinnaker boats are to be scored separately regardless of a mixed start if a race committee combined the class start because of insufficient entries or any other reason.
- (D) Nonsuch boats (Division 5) will automatically be entered as non-spinnaker unless the owner specifically makes request to the ECSA offshore chair to race in a spinnaker class.
- (E) Short Handed Non-Spinnaker Division
 - (1) Must abide by all non-spinnaker fleet requirements, amended as:
 - (a) Autopilots are permitted for shorthanded division boats.
 - (b) Maximum two crew members.

(c) Shall use their non-spinnaker rating when racing shorthanded.

(2) Scoring

(a) If racing in a mixed class of shorthanded and fully crewed non-spinnaker boats, a Shorthanded boat's points from these races shall count for the shorthanded division.

5. Scoring

(A) For Circuit races:

(1) ECSA will compute Scoring using the scoring matrix included in this yearbook.

(a) A minimum of three starters in any one Spinnaker class and two starters in a Non-Spinnaker class is required for a race to be scored.

(b) A boat must start at least one race in **any sanctioned race** to be scored in the Circuit.

(c) One score shall be given per boat per day.

(d) A boat may only be scored in the one division assigned on the current ECSA PHRF certificate

(2) Final score equals total points in scored races in qualifying races:

(a) Spinnaker Fleet (Divisions 1-4 & 6): A boat's best six races will be scored.

(b) Non-Spinnaker Fleet (Divisions 5 & 7-9): A boat's best five races will be scored.

(c) Ensign: Best Five races scored for ECSA Ensign Championship

(3) Bonus Points: Each of the overnight or distance races and the ECSA Bonus Regatta will be scored by doubling the number of boats in the class. Overnight & distance races shall be a minimum of **25** miles to be scored with bonus points. A distance race shortened to less than **25** miles shall be scored with regular points awarded.

(4) Ties will be broken using boat on boat from scored races.

(5) We will not include Penalties assigned by individual clubs to past winners in the calculation for scoring the circuit.

(B) For National Offshore Championship qualifying races:

(1) Sail a minimum of 6 races to qualify. Scoring and throw outs same as for Circuit Races. Bonus points apply to National Offshore Championship qualifying races. Only spinnaker fleet boats are eligible.

(C) For Club Team Trophies:

- (1) Each entry may declare only one club affiliation (other than Off Soundings whose membership is so large that it would create an imbalanced situation). Registered entrants must be members of the declared yacht club.
- (2) North Cove Team Trophy (Spinnaker) - Best four boats accumulated score within a yacht club.
- (3) Outer Light Team Trophy (Non-Spinnaker) - Best two boats accumulated score within a yacht club.
- (4) Ronald A. Sternicki Trophy awarded annually to the ECSA member who sails the most races.

6. Divisions

The Offshore Committee defines the divisions after receiving a complete roster of entrants. Boats have been classified as to the sailing properties as well as the PHRF Number.

- (A) Division 1 - racer /cruisers with moderate displacement, designated as "C" on the PHRF certificate PHRF rating up to 134.
- (B) Division 2 - racer /cruisers with moderate displacement, designated as "C" on the PHRF certificate PHRF rating 135 and over.
- (C) Division 3 - higher performance boats having light displacement designated as "HP" on the PHRF certificate. PHRF rating up to 109.
- (D) Division 4 - higher performance boats having light displacement designated as "HP" on the PHRF certificate. PHRF rating 110 and over.
- (E) Division 5 – Nonsuch Class designated by "NSH" on the PHRF certificate
- (F) Division 6 – light displacement sport boats, designated as "SB" on the PHRF certificate.
- (G) Division 7 - non-spinnaker boats. PHRF rating up to 170.
- (H) Division 8 - non-spinnaker boats. PHRF rating 170 and over.
- (I) Division 9 – Shorthanded non spinnaker.

7. Trophies

(A) Circuit Trophies

- (1) Spinnaker Overall Season Trophies: First, Second and Third place trophies will be awarded to the first three yachts on a total point basis of all Spinnaker divisions. First place Spinnaker overall is also recognized by a perpetual trophy.

- (2) Non-Spinnaker Overall Season Trophies: First and second place trophies will be awarded to the first two yachts on a total point basis of all Non-Spinnaker divisions. First place Non-Spinnaker overall is also recognized by a perpetual trophy.
 - (3) First, Second, and Third place trophies will be awarded to the first three boats in each division, provided three boats qualify. If twelve or more boats qualify in a division, a fourth place trophy will be awarded in that division.
 - (4) A distance-racing trophy will be awarded to the yacht with the best accumulated score based on her two best races that are designated as overnight/distance races.
 - (5) North Cove Team Trophy - spinnaker boats (Divisions 1-4 & 6); awarded annually to member yacht club with best 4 boats accumulated score.
 - (6) Outer Light Trophy - non-spinnaker boats (Divisions 5 & 7-9); awarded annually to member yacht club with best 2 boats accumulated score.
- (B) Special Trophies
- (1) Sylvestri Trophy awarded annually to the member yacht club with the most outstanding race committee work.
 - (2) Richard H. Roberts Trophy awarded annually to the member yacht club for the best post-race party.

8. Appeals

- (A) Appeals involving the decision of a Protest Committee should be submitted to US Sailing as outlined in the Racing Rules of Sailing following the procedure outlined in RRS Appendix R. The appeal shall be filed in writing within fifteen days of the written decision of the Protest Committee. Questions on the appeals procedure shall be directed to the ECSA Appeals Rep listed in the front of the Yearbook or US Sailing.

9. Administration

- (A) Administration of the Offshore Race Circuit is accomplished under the overall direction and jurisdiction of the ECSA Offshore Committee, with the assistance of others who may be selected.
- (B) Decisions required to resolve any problems that may arise that are not covered in the preceding paragraphs will be made on a case-by-case basis by the ECSA Offshore Committee and will be considered as revisions for the following year.

10. Race Management Review Policy

- (A) Each year, at the November meeting, the ECSA Executive Committee will review the quality of the season's race management. At that time, the Committee will select the winner of the Sylvestri Trophy. Additionally, it will identify any races that

may not have met ECSA race management standards, as set forth in the ECSA Offshore Circuit Regulations. The Secretary will then be instructed to invite the clubs that ran any such races to send representatives to discuss the event with the Committee, explain the circumstances surrounding the race(s), and provide ways they will improve the event in the future.

- (B) After the meeting, the ECSA Executive Committee will decide whether to put the club on probation for the following season. If a club is put on probation, the Secretary will be instructed to so inform the club in writing. The club will be asked to provide a written response, detailing the remedial steps to be taken for the following season. Additionally, individual participants will be asked to submit written reports regarding the following year's event.
- (C) If at the November meeting, a probationary club is found to have run an acceptable event, probation will be lifted for the following season. If the event is deemed questionable, the procedure described above will be repeated. If after the meeting, the ECSA Executive Committee determines that the event management did not rise to an acceptable level, the club in question will be denied a sanctioned race during the following season.