

21 January 2008

Société Nautique de Genève
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**International
Sailing
Federation**

Interpretation - Keel Yacht/Multihull Yacht

In reply to your request of an interpretation from ISAF:

A multihull is a ship, boat or yacht formed of more than one hull.

The additional hulls provide stability, typically to hold the vessel upright against the sideways force of the wind on the sails.

This is in contrast to monohulls which may use a ballasted keel for this purpose, especially on larger sailboats. Multihulls usually have no ballasted keels.

Monohulls are weight stabilised by keeping their center of gravity well below their center of buoyancy. When this is done by adding ballast weight in a hull appendage they are usually defined as keelboats.

Multihulls principally rely on their form stability, where at small angles of heel the centre of buoyancy moves to leeward of the centre of gravity.

‘On the difference between a keel yacht and a multihull yacht’:

ISAF publishes a document called the Equipment Rules of Sailing
Its application is covered in a footnote.

The terms ‘Yacht’, ‘Keel Yacht’ and ‘Multihull’ are not defined terms in the ERS 2005-2008.

‘Keel’ is defined in section E.1.2 as:

“A fixed hull appendage, attached approximately on the hull centreplane, primarily used to affect stability and leeway.

The draft ERS 2009-2012 do include a definition of ‘Monohull’ and ‘Multihull’:

Monohull C.6.2 (a) “A boat with one hull”

Multihull C.6.2 (b) “A boat with more than one hull”

Footnote:

ERS Application:

The ERS are adopted by ISAF as a code governing the use of equipment while racing. The ERS are made applicable as stated in Applicability, below:

Applicability

The ERS may be made applicable by:

- (a) Class Rules

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- (b) Adoption by a rating authority for racing under its jurisdiction,
- (c) Adoption in the Notice of Race and sailing Instructions for an event.
- (d) Prescriptions of an MNA for racing under its jurisdiction
- (e) Other ISAF codes and rules adopted by Council

In general dictionary references including "The Sailing Dictionary" by Joachim Schult the term yacht does not specifically exclude a multihull.

In the 1960s IYRU/ISAF created a Catamaran Committee, which then became a Multihull Committee around 1970. For the period up to 2004 IYRU/ISAF had as separate committees:

- Keelboat Committee
- Multihull Committee

For the purpose of the choice of equipment (boats) for the Olympic Games, ISAF would therefore not consider a multihull to fit in the 'keelboat' category. Therefore a "multihull" yacht would not be classified as a "keel" yacht.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information about this subject.

Yours sincerely



Jerome Pels
Secretary General

JP/HH