

World Sailing Racing Rules Question and Answer Service

G 004

Q&A 2019.007

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Situation

When a finishing line inflatable mark drifted out of position, the race committee substituted it with a vessel displaying flag M and making repetitive sound signals. The vessel was unable to anchor and held its position with the engine, making either the port or the starboard end of the finishing line favored at times.

Question

Was this an improper action or omission of the race committee?

Answer

No. The race committee acted properly by substituting a mark that was out of position with a vessel displaying flag M and making repetitive sound signals as required by rule 34.

Rule 34 describes the procedures available to the race committee when a mark is missing or out of position, in order to 'save' the race. Obviously, the replacement mark should be in the position of the original mark and it should be clearly visible to the boats, but no rule requires a mark to be anchored. Even anchored marks will move with wind and current. The movements of the unanchored vessel might be an improper action only if they were larger than what could be avoided. Even then, a boat requesting redress would have to satisfy a protest committee that the movement was the only reason for making her score significantly worse.