

Traveling Sails White Paper

Background

The J105 Technical Committee has been asked by Fleet 1, based in San Francisco, to look at the possibility of modifying the rules to allow traveling sails for boats that attend events outside their home sailing area. This issue is thought to be primarily a Fleet 1 issue affecting Fleet1 members who wish to sail in light air areas and members of other fleets who wish to sail in Fleet 1 events. This proposed change has been discussed in detail by the Technical Committee and this document attempts to organize the thoughts and issues that have come forward.

The wind in San Francisco Bay is consistently in the upper teens and seldom less than 12 knots. In reaction to this, and in concert with the J105 sail purchase rule, the sail makers have developed heavy air (HA) sails that are used exclusively by Fleet 1 members. These sails, in generalized terms, have a flat shape, use heavier materials, and more robust construction techniques. All other fleets use some version of the all purpose (AP) sails that have proved to be the best compromise for areas with more moderate average conditions and wider wind range.

The HA sails are what is now considered the best solution for Fleet 1 but the same sails are not competitive with AP designs when sailed in winds less than approximately 15 knots. Likewise, the AP sails are the best solution up to some wind speed threshold after which they are not efficient and, potentially, subject to damage.

Considerations

Any rule change needs to factor in the existing rule and will presumably maintain the balance that the current sail purchase rule provides. The existing rule, as it relates to sail purchases and specifications, has evolved to meet the goals of controlling cost while allowing owners to maintain an inventory of competitive sails.

Proposals

The following parameters have been discussed as essential elements of a Traveling Sail Rule.

1. *Number of sails allowed.* This could initially be one, two, or three sails and potentially could include a set of used sails as well. Some Fleet 1 members feel they would need three sails to be competitive while others think this is too much. There would be a significant cost issue for the boat that initially buys three sails that can only be used for traveling and the subsequent pressure on other boats to do the same or not feel they are competitive.
2. *Enforcement of the rule.* Any rule that allows purchase of sails for specialty use only will need to be enforceable. It would seem important to make sure these sails don't show up in local fleet events to protect the non-traveling home fleet members who must structure their sail purchases around a separate set of priorities. For the same reasons, it wouldn't be fair to a host fleet to have traveling boats that show up at each event with a completely new set of sails.

- Traveling sails would need to be clearly identifiable possibly through a unique registration number (suffix T?) and/or an easily recognizable patch.
3. *Use of mixed inventory.* How would the existing home fleet inventory and the traveling sails be mixed to provide backup sails? The concern here is that the traveling boat could have a set of sails for heavy air days and another for light air days, which would give a significant advantage. There would have to be some sort of limitation placed on the sail inventory available to a traveling boat rather than using any sail available.
 4. *Is this a Fleet 1 issue only or should it be universal?* The proposal for this rule originates from Fleet 1 and could be shaped to specifically address those boats that travel to or from San Francisco Bay. Specialty sails have been developed for other regions, such as “wave jibs” in Southern California, so it might make sense to structure this to address any boat traveling to any event that is designated to allow traveling sails.
 5. *Traveling Sails events.* Should all events be considered traveling sails events or should these be by Executive Committee designation only? Also, is there a geographic limitation? For example, if the rule is universally available (i.e. not limited to San Francisco), is it a travel event for a member of fleet 6 to attend a regatta in fleet 14, a mere 100 miles away?
 6. *Not to be used in the boat's home fleet.* The underlying assumption is that a traveling sail is for use in away events only. This means that a boat's home fleet has to be defined. Since some boats travel often between fleets, and some owners have two boats, a definition of what constitutes a traveling event would need to be established. For example, it has been suggested that a boat must have sailed at least 75% of its racing days in the home fleet for a given year.
 7. *Replacement sails.* There must be some formula for purchasing replacement traveling sails. Ideas such as counting the number of days used or one per traveling year have been discussed.
 8. *Used sails.* How would used sails be defined and treated. This would be applied to used sails that are converted to traveling for use as primary or backup inventory. Presumably not all boats would purchase all new sails to fill whatever allotment is allowed. For example, some might chose to purchase a new jib and fill out the inventory with sails that were originally purchased for another boat. How would a rule address these sails and their subsequent replacement.
 9. *Possible unintended consequences.* This rule modification could create a separate class of boats for national class events. Depending on how a rule is structured, the traveling boat will have a back up jib and spinnaker that allows the choice of heavy air versus light air inventory for a given day of racing (for jibs) or event (for chutes). This would effectively raise the cost of competition for all boats and counter the intended benefit of this rule, which is to encourage traveling.
 10. *Alternative approaches.* The need for this proposed rule is driven by the existence of local specialty sails. Maybe we should be looking at a sail rule that standardizes our sails through a bulk sails purchase program. This is used in several one design classes and has the side benefit of reducing sail cost by up to 40%.

