



PHRF PERSPECTIVE
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Multiple Rating Certificates: Lifecycle of an issue

It started off innocently enough near the end of February with a simple question posted on www.yrrc.com, a racer's electronic billboard: "How is it that many of the larger boats (Magnitude, TP 52's and the like) are sailing with two or even three current certificates. Each of these certificates has the boat in a different trim with a different sail plan. Can anyone have two or three if they are willing to pay for them?"

A little background: Not too long ago, a few of the Big Boats asked to have multiple configurations for different kinds of racing. The idea was to lighten the boat and add larger spinnakers and longer poles to just go as fast as possible. They wanted the speed for long distance races.

That first posting led to an exchange of postings from several different people including a highly respected Sr. USSA Judge who wrote: "SoCal PHRF Class Rule 6.5...implies to me that a boat can only have one certificate in effect at any time (the Rating Certificate in effect the day of the PHRF race)."

To try to clarify, I posted "PHRF accepts more than one rating certificate application...for boats that wish to have them. This allows, for example, a One-Design to either sail with the OD configuration (perhaps with a 100% headsail) in PHRF (and with the rating that goes with it) or to sail in the PHRF configuration (155% Genoa) as she chooses. Moreover, boats like Magnitude and the TP 52's have the similar option of inshore configuration or offshore configuration. It's a difference, for example, of changing keels or removing/adding ballast, etc. Second and third certificates are thoroughly scrutinized so you may just be going faster, but with a rating to match." This was akin to opening Pandora's box...

A former PHRF handicapper responded: "It used to be that if I wanted to change my boom length and buy a new main that I would have to hold the new rating for a period of 6 months before changing my configuration again. This dual rating situation certainly has the potential of shaking up racing at all levels. I could optimize my boat for downwind racing and use that certificate for those type races then switch back for buoy racing? This sounds like a new can of worms."

The recent Area B Chairman responded: "No can of worms. You can have as many certificates as you want. Let the Regional office know that you want another certificate for another configuration and you can have two certificates. The TP 52's have two certificates one for their inshore and offshore configurations. I was asked if I wanted a second configuration for (my boat) for an IMS spinnaker pole configuration. I stated 'NO' since I will not race PHRF with the short pole.

"It can't get any more simple than this. Declare the certificate and rating that you will be using for that race... and you are done."

The Area handicapper responded: "I understand the importance of having multiple certificates for the big boats. I am concerned about the use of them in the small boat fleets. If you can, for example, use one configuration for going to cat harbor and then (use) your oversized chute rating certificate on the race back home, then that is a problem. I need to read the rules as there must be some time required between rating certificate changes."

Some years ago, PHRF rules required a waiting period between reported changes. This idea that a boat could now have more than one certificate (without a waiting period) was not sinking in, so I posted the following: "It's very doubtful that a club or race organizer would accept an entry with more than one certificate. Enter with the certificate that you think will be best for that event

"Remember that each new rating application requires the scrutiny of a new rating review with the associated risks. Once again, you may wind up buying new gear and sails at great expense, go a little faster and have a rating that simply reflects the newly purchased speed."

Several more exchanges followed touching on a variety of possibilities. Would an owner of a 15 yr. old 30 foot boat invest \$7K for a 170% genoa, an oversize .4 oz. trick fabric spinnaker and longer carbon spinnaker pole to win a couple more pickle dishes on Wed. evening races? The answer was yes!

Another fear was Race Committees up and down the coast being plagued by competitors delaying their decision to the last minute of which rating/configuration they wanted to enter with based on the breeze and conditions or try to enter a series or even a race with two different ratings. It seemed that PHRF Class Rules did not specify any restrictions on the use of more than one rating. We began to realize that anything could happen. That was it! Clearly, the issue needed attention. I notified all that I placed the issue on the regional PHRF agenda for examination and possible action.

Finally, after a month of postings and exchanges, on March 20, I posted the following: "The matter of multiple rating certificates was heard and examined by the PHRF Regional Board last night. There was agreement that the issue needed attention in the PHRF Rules. Previously, it had not been scrutinized, as the practice of issuing more than one certificate was rather recent. Originally, it was primarily for the larger boats to have an "offshore/Downwind configuration" with the appropriate (lower) rating adjustments for the added speed potential so they could finish before the beer and food ran out.

"The discussion pointed toward a consensus for a limitation of using only one certificate per Series of races. This would allow the freedom to configure your boat as you see fit, but simply restrict racers to declare only one certificate for a series at the time of entry. This solution maintains the status quo while permitting the flexibility to have a different rating configuration.

"That seems to eliminate the nightmare scenario of having thirty-five racers run in at 4:58 to have the Sunset Series R/C change entries from one rating to another depending on the wind conditions. Regional Board members are sensitive to the operation of R/Cs because they have served or currently serve on them.

"The matter was turned over to the Judge Advocate for...wording that would not conflict with any existing provision. A vote on the proposal is expected for the April meeting.

"What this means, is that expenditures for "sunset series configurations" would be OK, but you must declare it at the beginning of the series. If the configuration you choose is for a dying breeze and it's blowing 15, you get to drag that lower rating around. Further, you will not be able to introduce a different rating during the any series...etc."

(I'm writing the above a few days before the meeting and I'm stretching the publishing deadline to finish this after the April meeting...)

At the April Regional PHRF meeting, the following addition to the PHRF Class Rules was approved: "A boat may have more than one valid rating certificate at a time. Upon submission of a rating application and payment of the required fees, additional PHRF certificates may be issued for a boat sailing with a different configuration. Where multiple certificates have been issued, a boat may not change certificates during a regatta but must sail the complete regatta using the rating certificate under which it entered. For purposes of this paragraph, a regatta is defined as a race or series of races for which a single entry is required and/or for which a single entry fee is paid."

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