IRC Rule Changes for 2027

IRC Technical Committee

A word used as defined by ERS is printed in **bold**.

A word used as defined by IRC Definitions is printed underlined.

Proposed additions are printed in blue.

Proposed deletions are printed in ~~struckthrough red~~.

Effective Date: IRC Rule changes apply from 1st January 2027, except in countries with June-May validity, where changes apply from 1st June 2027. See Rule 8.12

This Version: DRAFT 27 August 2026

1. SETTING OF SAILS

Reason for change: To ensure it is clear that all sails shall be set in accordance with RRS 55 and the OSR with the listed additions. To include setting of sails in the title since this is included in the rule

Amend IRC Rules 21.3 and 21.7.1:

21.3 Setting and Sheeting of Sails, Bowsprits, Spinnaker Poles and Whisker Poles

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21.3.3 All **sails** shall be set, attached and sheeted in accordance with RRS 55, ~~Setting and Sheeting Sails~~ and comply with the applicable requirements of the Offshore Special Regulations for the race category, with the following additions:

21.3.4 RRS 55.3 is amended to the extent that a spinnaker, headsail or flying headsail may be tacked to a **bowsprit**. ERS B.1.4 does not apply.

21.3.5 **Boats** will be rated according to whether they use a **spinnaker pole** and/or a **bowsprit** according to the following configurations:
(a) No **spinnaker pole** (spinnaker tacked on deck) or a centre line **bowsprit** only.
(b) An articulating **bowsprit** only.
(c) **Spinnaker pole(s)** either with or without a **bowsprit**.

21.3.6 A **boat** shall declare using any **spar** as a **whisker pole** set to leeward to set a headsail or a flying headsail.

21.3.7 More than one headsail may be set at the same time, but only when each headsail is attached, set and sheeted in accordance with Rule 21.3.

21.7.1 Boats shall not carry on board more than the number of headsails on their IRC certificate while *racing*, excluded from the number of headsails are one storm jib and/or one heavy weather jib as defined by the Offshore Special Regulations. ~~Headsails may be set simultaneously.~~

Effect: State that OSR setting of sails also applies. Clarifying the section title also includes how and where sails are set from, as well as sheeted, and mirrors the title of RRS 55 for consistency.

2. Rules 15 and 22.3.1

Reason for change: To add a new rule 15(e) that removes the requirement to declare the use of stored power for adjustment of moveable ballast, variable ballast or hull appendages, to read as follows:

15 MANUAL POWER

15.1 RRS 52~~, Manual Power,~~ shall not apply. This rule may be amended by Notice of Race.

15.2 (a) The use of stored power for the hoisting of **mainsails**, or the reefing or furling of sails need not be declared.

(b) **Boats** using stored power solely for the adjustment or operation of aft rigging shall declare this to the Rating Authority.

(c) **Boats** using stored power for the adjustment or operation of **running rigging** other than as noted in Rules 15.2(a) and (b) shall declare this to the Rating Authority.

(d) **Boats** shall not use stored power for steering unless specified by the Notice of Race.

(e) The use of stored power for the adjustment of **moveable ballast**, **variable ballast** or **hull appendages** need not be declared for rating purposes.

Amend rule 22.3.1 to reflect the amendments made to Rule 15 as follows:

22.3 Moveable Ballast and Variable Ballast

22.3.1 Moving **sails** or equipment while *racing* with the intention of improving performance is prohibited in accordance with RRS 51, although this may be changed by the Notice of Race. RRS 51~~, Moving Ballast, and RRS 52, Manual Power, are~~ is changed ~~modified to the extent required~~ by this class rule such that a **boat** may use **moveable ballast** and/or **variable ballast** and any such system shall be permanently installed and shall be declared to the Rating Authority.

Effect: Clarifying the use and requirements for declaring the use of stored power for moveable or variable ballast. No material change to current processes or rating.

3. A1 - AGE DATE DEFINITON

Reason for change: To make it clear a beam change shall result in an age date reset.

Amend IRC Definition A1 – Age Date as follows:

Age date	The date on which the **boat** was first launched, or the date on which the **boat** was re-launched following any **modification** of hull shell, **hull beam** or **hull length**, whichever is the later.

Effect: A hull beam change will reset age date.

4. DEFINITION OF TACK POINT and STL

Reason for change: To clearly differentiate in the IRC Rule between the Equipment Rules of Sailing definition of **tack point** and the point on a boat the tack of a sail is attached to.

Add new definition of Tack Point to read as follows:

Tack Point	The extremity of the **bowsprit**, ignoring any **outer limit marks**; the point on a **boat** to which the **tack** of a spinnaker is **connected**; the point on a **boat** to which the **tack** of a headsail is **connected**; the point on a **boat** to which the **tack** of a flying headsail is **connected**, each projected vertically as necessary.

Amend the IRC definition of STL to use the new definition of tack point as follows:

STL	The greatest horizontal distance from the forward face of the **mast spar**, ignoring any **fittings** and tracks, measured on or near the centreline of the **boat**, to the foremost tack point. ~~any of the following:~~ ~~- the extremity of the **bowsprit**, ignoring any **outer limit marks**;~~ ~~- the spinnaker tack point on deck projected vertically as necessary;~~ ~~- if a headsail or a flying headsail may be tacked forward of the forestay, the headsail or flying headsail tack point on deck projected vertically as necessary or to the extremity of the **bowsprit** ignoring any **outer limit marks**.~~

Effect: Clarifying the attachment point for the purposes of STL makes this term easier to read and understand. No change to actual requirements.

5. DEFINITION OF STLFHmax

Reason for change: To clearly separate the conditions for use for flying headsails from the IRC definition of STLFHmax.

Move the 'conditions for use' wording from the IRC definition of STLFHmax to a new Rule 21.3.7 and amend to make a more clearly understandable rule as follows:

STLFHmax The greatest horizontal distance from the forward face of the **mast spar**, ignoring any **fittings** and tracks, measured on or near the centreline of the **boat**, to the flying headsail tack point, calculated as follows:
- STLFHmax = FSFL – (0.25 * J)
~~- if the calculated STFLHmax is greater than STL, the flying headsail shall be tacked no greater than STL.~~
~~- if the calculated STLFHmax is less than J, the flying headsail shall be considered a headsail.~~

21.3.7 A flying headsail shall be set from a tack point at or aft of STLFHmax. If STLFHmax is less than J, a flying headsail shall be considered a headsail.

Amend the definition of STLFHmax to reference the revised definition of STL and clarify the measurement without changing the calculation as follows:

STLFHmax ~~The greatest horizontal distance from the forward face of the **mast spar**, ignoring any **fittings** and tracks, measured on or near the centreline of the **boat**, to the flying headsail tack point, calculated as: STLFHmax = FSFL – (0.25 * J)~~
The foremost permitted tack point of a flying headsail, being the lesser of:
FSFL – (0.25 * J) or STL

Effect: Clarifying the definition of STLFHmax and separating out conditions for use of flying headsails from the definition to make these terms easier to read and understand. No change to actual requirements.

6. DEFINITION OF Aft Rigging

Reason for change: To clearly identify that in the case of boats with more than one mast, the declared aft rigging is that connected to the main mast spar.

Aft Rigging: The total number of **stays** and/or sets of **stays connected** to the ~~mast~~ **mainmast spar** above the top of the boom set horizontal providing aft support and/or control.

(a) Any pairs of **stays** attached to the ~~mast~~ **mainmast spar** at the same position port and starboard on the mast **spar** shall count as one set of **stays**. E.g., whether there be a single standing **backstay** or twin **running backstays** these are counted as one set of **stays**.

(b) Any deflectors or adjusters attached between the top most **stay** and the ~~mast~~ **mainmast spar** shall also be counted. Any deflectors or adjusters attached between any other **stay** and the ~~mast~~ **mainmast spar** with separation from the attachment point of the primary **stay** of 10% of P or greater shall also be considered as a separate **stay** for these purposes.

Effect: Clarifying the definition of aft rigging relates to the stays attached to the mainmast spar in the case of boats with more than one mast.