

# CHESSS CLASS RACING RULES- 2026

As Adopted: December 5, 2015  
Amended: January 7, 2017  
Amended: November 7, 2020  
Amended: February 21, 2021

Amended: March 7, 2024  
Amended: April 11, 2026



## 1. Applicability:

- 1.1 These Racing Rules apply to all Chesapeake Shorthanded Sailing Society (CHESSS) sponsored races, unless specifically modified by the Notice of Race (NOR) or Sailing Instructions (SIs).
- 1.2 These Racing Rules apply to CHESSS starts provided by other Organizing Authority (OAs), unless specifically modified by the NOR or SIs.
- 1.3 These Racing Rules do not apply to shorthanded starts not associated with CHESSS in races sponsored by other OAs. CHESSS members who elect to participate in such races should comply with the NOR and SIs for those races.
- 1.4 The events may or may not be sanctioned by Chesapeake Bay Yacht Racing Association (CBYRA).

## 2. Safety-

**CHESSS Class Participants shall follow all of the more stringent of the COLREGS, U.S. Sailing- "Nearshore" Safety Equipment Requirements, PHRF of the Chesapeake, and CMA rules with the following additions:**

- 2.1 Jacklines or anchor points shall always be rigged. In the absence of Jacklines, anchor points must be spaced to allow the person to remain attached while moving between anchor points for the full length of the vessel per SSER Ocean 3.2.2.
- 2.2 Harnesses and tethers or PFD's with an integral harness and a tether per SER 3.1.4 shall be worn at night or when sails are reefed and must be on the boat in sufficient quantities for all crew members.
- 2.3 A DSC capable VHF radio shall be accessible from the cockpit. This may be a handheld meeting the requirements of SER Ocean 3.8.2.
- 2.4 CHESSS Sailors may communicate with each other via VHF. Conversation shall be limited to safety advice and welfare checks. This modifies RRS Rule 41.
- 2.5 CHESSS encourages that Harnesses and tethers and/or PFD's be worn at all times while racing.

## 3. Use of Sails & Equipment Specifications-

**CHESSS Class competitors shall adhere to all US Sailing, PHRF of the Chesapeake, and CMA Equipment Specifications with the following modifications:**

- 3.1 Sail Changes will be permitted as they are limited within rules contained within the PHRF of the Chesapeake restrictions for Spinnaker classes and as permitted for the Non-Spinnaker classes. Sail changes for boats with a furler credit will only be permitted as allowed within the PHRF of the Chesapeake restrictions associated with that credit. Changing to a storm sail will not be considered as a sail change. Flying multiple head sails **during a sail change** is not a violation against flying multiple jibs from the same stay.
- 3.2 Symmetrical spinnakers are permitted to be Free Flown. The term Free Flown shall be interpreted as not having a spinnaker pole attached on the guy, tack, or windward clew of the spinnaker. Asymmetrical spinnakers are permitted to be flown wing and wing. This provision is understood to potentially override interpretations of the US Sailing RRS and PHRF of the Chesapeake use of equipment rules.
- 3.3 Mechanical or electrical means of effecting or assisting steering, such as auto pilots, tiller pilots, and wind vanes are authorized for all CHESSS divisions. This is a modification to RRS 52.
- 3.4 Electric winches are authorized, subject to the PHRF rating penalty for stored energy. This is a modification to RRS 52.

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3.5 The maximum spinnaker pole length, SPL, can only exceed 100% J when included within the rating for the boat.

3.6 A whisker pole is a spar attached to the mast and connected to a headsail clew. The maximum whisker pole length for jibs where  $LP < 1.25 \times J$  is J. Maximum whisker pole length for jibs where  $LP > 1.25 \times J$  is  $0.8 \times LP$ . This is a change from the PHRF of the Chesapeake limit.

### 4. Crew Limits-

4.1 All vessels are limited to a maximum of 2 actively participating crew.

4.2 As many as two non-participating people are permitted be aboard during racing. A 'non-participating person' shall be defined as a person who does not perform any function that in any way contributes to the sailing requirements of the vessel and the needs of the participating crew, including navigation, race document interpretation, food and drink. Except in emergencies, non-participants shall remain in the cockpit or cabin from the Warning Signal until the vessel has completed or retired from the Race. Non-participants shall not be permitted to change roles with active participants during the course of the race.

### 5. Divisions

5.1 The CHESSS class is divided into Spinnaker, Non-Spinnaker and Multi-hull divisions. Single and double handers shall compete equally against each other in these divisions.

5.2 There will not be a rating adjustment for single-handed participants racing against double-hand crewed vessels.

5.3 Multi-hull vessels may compete in all CHESSS sanctioned races, but may NOT compete in the CHESSS division in any CBYRA-sanctioned race where a CMA class exists.

6. **CHESSS Class Identification-** CHESSS is authorized by CBYRA to fly 3<sup>rd</sup> Repeater. During CHESSS only-sanctioned races:

6.1 Spinnaker division shall fly 3<sup>rd</sup> Repeater.

6.2 Non-Spinnaker division shall fly 3<sup>rd</sup> Repeater, with a plain, white flag beneath.

6.3 Multi-hull division shall fly 3<sup>rd</sup> Repeater.

6.4 The CHESSS burgee may be substituted for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Repeater.

6.5 During CBYRA-sanctioned races, the class flag shall be set by the NOR and SI's of the hosting club.

### 7. Ratings-

CHESSS does not have the expertise to independently develop and maintain rating systems which would permit mono-hulls of different designs or multi-hulls of different designs to compete against each other, or for mono-hulls to compete against multihulls. CHESSS defers to the expertise of organizations dedicated to developing and maintaining rating systems for sailboat competition.

7.1 For CHESSS races (CBYRA sanctioned or not), and CHESSS starts provided by other OAs (CBYRA sanctioned or not), CHESSS will specify at the beginning of each sailing season the rating systems to be used by the CHESSS mono-hull and multi-hull divisions. The rating systems shall not be changed during the season except by agreement of the CHESSS membership.

7.2 When participating in CHESSS only-sanctioned races, CMA, PHRF, or other rating systems ratings may be used, providing that all members in a division use the same rating system. Mono-hull Competitors shall have a valid PHRF of the Chesapeake issued PHRF Rating Certificate. When there is a multi-hull fleet of 3 multihull competitors or more, multihulls shall race under a CMA rating certificate and correction system.

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**7.3** OAs conducting non-CHESSS shorthanded races/starts may elect to conduct such races using different rating systems. CHESSS members who elect to participate in such races may be required to obtain a rating certificate appropriate for those races. CHESSS will utilize PHRF of the Chesapeake Circular Random (CR) ratings and Time-on-Time scoring for mono-hulls, and CMA ratings and scoring for multihulls.

**7.4** When there are insufficient numbers of multi-hulls to form a division, multi-hulls will use the special PHRF ratings specifically created by PHRF of the Chesapeake for use with CHESSS when competing against CHESSS mono-hulls.

**7.5** All CHESSS competitors are required to have valid PHRF and/or CMA rating certificates. CHESSS encourages its members to obtain an ORC rating certificate and to participate in ORC racing where shorthanded racing is allowed.

**7.6** When there are insufficient numbers of multi-hulls to form a division, Multi-hulls will use the special PHRF ratings created by PHRF of the Chesapeake for use with CHESSS when competing directly against CHESSS mono-hulls.

## **8 High Point Awards-**

**8.1** CBYRA CHESSS high point awards: The CBYRA Green Book identifies the criteria for CBYRA high point awards and those races which qualify for CBYRA CHESSS high point. Members of CHESSS and CBYRA seeking to compete for a CBYRA CHESSS high point award should consult the Green Book and comply with its instructions.

**8.2** CHESSS Club high point awards: CHESSS will also have a separate high point award. Only CHESSS members are eligible for this award. The criteria and method of determining the award are described below:

**a.** In what follows it is assumed that each boat competing for high point is owned by a single member for the entire racing season. Special cases are discussed in i) below.

**b.** A boat can earn high points in any race that has a scored CHESSS class. These may be CBYRA sanctioned races or not.

**c.** A boat earns high points if the CHESSS class that his/her boat participates in for that specific race (i.e. JAM or Spinnaker) has a minimum of two starters.

**d.** For events with multiple races, each race counts individually toward high point. The boat's finish in the combined event is not relevant.

**e.** A boat earns high points for each race equal to one plus the number of boats beaten in that race. For a boat that is scored as finishing, boats beat include boats scored On Course Side (OCS), Time Limit Expired (TLE), Did Not Finish (DNF), and Disqualified (DSQ).

**f.** A boat that starts in a race, but is not scored as finishing the race, receives one high point for that race, except in the case that a boat is scored DSQ. In that case, the boat scored DSQ receives no high points for the race. This means that *all* boats that start and are scored OCS, TLE, or DNF receive one high point for starting the race.

**g.** The season high point score shall be the sum of all individual race high point scores. Multiple high point awards will be given to tied scores.

**h.** CHESSS will maintain a Club high point forum on the CHESSS website. It is the obligation of each skipper to submit via that forum his/her race results. As a minimum the skipper shall include: his/her name, boat name/make/model, race name/date/organizing authority, and CHESSS class results. If the results are posted electronically, a link to the electronic scores is sufficient.

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- i. Special cases: If a member purchases a new boat during the racing season, the high points earned on his new boat (while he/she owns the boat) and old boat (prior to starting to race the new boat) are combined. A boat jointly owned by two or more individuals is eligible for high point so long as at least one owner is a CHESSS member.
- j. If a CHESSS member sells his/her boat to another CHESSS member during the racing season, the high points earned do not transfer with the boat. That is if member A owns boat X for the first half of the season, the high points earned during the first half of the season accrue to Member A. If Boat X is then sold to member B, member B receives the high points earned during the period that he/she owns boat X.