

**BEFORE A PANEL APPOINTED UNDER WORLD SAILING REGULATION 18 AND POLICY L4**

**IN THE MATTER OF AN INVESTIGATION BASED ON A REPORT UNDER REGULATION 18 CONCERNING IMPROPER PROCEDURES, UNPROFESSIONAL Demeanour, AND FAILURE TO CONSIDER EVIDENCE IN HEARINGS CONDUCTED BY A PANEL OF THE INTERNATIONAL JURY AT THE 2025 ROLEX FASTNET RACE.**

**INTERNATIONAL RACE OFFICIAL INVOLVED**

Thomas Rinda (TR), International Judge (IJ / IU), United States of America

**PANEL MEMBERS**

Lynne Beal (Canada) – Chairman

Bence Böröcz (Hungary) – Panel Member

Gonzalo Heredia (Argentina) – Panel Member

**INITIAL ALLEGATION**

1. The allegations received stated improper hearing procedures as follows:  
“The International Jury of the Event did not properly notify Ms. Linda Goddard as the party (under the RRS Definition Party) of the hearing and deprived her of a reasonable opportunity to prepare for the protest hearing.”  
“Yourself as the chairman of the International Jury exhibited bias and unprofessional demeanour in the hearing and refused to permit evidence to be presented clearly relevant to the case.”  
“The decision of the International Jury did not consider the evidence presented.”

**ACCEPTING THE ALLEGATION / REQUIRING AN INVESTIGATION**

2. TR acknowledged receipt of the allegation and required an investigation.
3. Accordingly, formal action by World Sailing was taken and a Panel of three members was appointed as required by Policy L4 3.1.

**INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED BY THE PANEL**

4. After reviewing the documents provided, the Panel determined that further information was needed and issued additional questions to Linda Goddard and TR to address matters raised by the Panel.
5. The Panel considered the answers and documents received.
6. The information provided and considered by the Panel included:
  1. Appendix 1 WS Allegation Letter 9925.pdf
  2. Appendices.pdf (to WS Allegation Letter 9925.pdf)
  3. Email to Tom Rinda 2025 12 07

4. Rinda sending response.pdf
  5. Response to the allegations by Bedouin.docx
  6. TR Comments to Appendices file.docx
  7. Sending Further Questions from the Panel.pdf
  8. RindaResponse.docx from Linda Goddard
  9. Responses to Questions from the Investigative Panel.docx from Linda Goddard
  10. Response to additional questions from Lynne Beale.docx from Tom Rinda
7. The Panel, after careful examination of all information provided, decided that under Regulation 18.3:
- Tom Rinda has demonstrated performance and competence clearly below the level expected of an international race official in his work on the International Jury in these two hearings.
  - TR must be subject to supervision when officiating at four events where he is a member of the International Jury.
  - He shall not serve in the role of Chair of the International Jury at these events.
  - The four supervision reports shall address whether TR demonstrates adequate performance and competence when acting as a member of a hearing panel, and when chairing a hearing (to the extent chairing is observed in other contexts).

## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

8. There was an incident between Celeste of Solent GBR80551 (CofS) and Bedouin AUS8777 on 26 July 2025 approximately 90 minutes into the 2025 Rolex Fastnet Race.
9. CofS delivered a protest against Bedouin within 6 hours after finishing the race; the protest was delivered on 30 July 2025 at 18:46 BST (19:46 CEST).
10. Bedouin monitored VHF radio but reported that she did not hear a call from CofS to the Race Committee to inform of an intent to protest, as required by Sailing Instruction (SI) 25.2 which added to RRS 60.2(a)(1).
11. Bedouin monitored the WhatsApp group referenced in Notice of Race (NOR) 4.3 and Sailing Instructions (including SI 4.2 and 11.1) but did not find a notice of CofS's protest against her in the WhatsApp chat.
12. Bedouin finished the race on 30 July 2025 at 09:23 and after post-finish commitments sailed back to Cowes. Bedouin was in IRC and therefore exempt

from the 48-hour berthing requirement in SI 22.5 and also received approval from the Organizing Authority to depart Cherbourg after finishing.

13. On 31 July 2025 at approximately 08:30 CEST, Bedouin logged onto the online Notice Board and saw that CofS had filed a protest and that a hearing was scheduled for 10:00 CEST in Cherbourg. The protest form was not available on the online Notice Board at that time.
14. Bedouin attempted multiple calls to a Race Committee phone number displayed in WhatsApp as a UK SIM line; no one responded. Bedouin then emailed the Race Committee and was told that TR would be in touch shortly; TR did not contact Bedouin prior to the scheduled hearing time.
15. A panel of the International Jury constituted under RRS Appendix N1.4(b) held the hearing. TR chaired the panel together with one International Judge and one National Judge.
16. At 10:06 CEST on 31 July 2025, Linda Goddard (Bedouin) joined the hearing remotely via a WhatsApp call stating "I am ready" to join the call; at that time, she had not received a copy of the protest form. The protest form PDF was sent to her at 10:08 CEST.
17. During the hearing, Linda Goddard advised that it was her first hearing and that she was unfamiliar with the process; she asked basic questions about process.
18. CofS attested on the protest form that she notified the Race Committee of her protest against Bedouin by VHF 72 and 77 as required by SI 25.2. Bedouin stated she did not hear any such call. Bedouin presented messages from multiple boats attesting that they did not hear a protest radio call. No Race Committee log evidence confirming a call was presented at the protest hearing or to this panel after our request. TR advised this Panel that the IJ panel relied on the protestor's statement and protest form and concluded that the radio call had been made.
19. The IJ panel decided the protest was valid, finding that CofS displayed a protest flag immediately, hailed "protest", and made the required radio call.
20. Evidence given by CofS about the distance at which she passed astern of Bedouin was conflicting; the IJ panel recorded findings in the first hearing that CofS "passed close" and in the reopened hearing that CofS passed astern by "2 metres". The IJ panel concluded Bedouin broke RRS 10 and disqualified Bedouin.
21. On 31 July 2025 at 14:54 BST, Bedouin requested reopening under RRS 63.7(a)(3) to present significant new photographic evidence regarding CofS's protest flag. The IJ panel reopened the hearing and took evidence from both parties and witnesses.

22. Bedouin presented photographs (including exhibits described as H1, H2, H5, H7) which she asserted showed the protest flag was not unfurled and not conspicuously displayed; other flags appeared correctly displayed.
23. CofS provided other evidence that the red flag was displayed after the incident and was not intentionally furled, though it may have become tangled from time to time.
24. In the reopened decision, the IJ panel found the red flag was displayed after the incident but stated it could not conclude whether it was flying or furled and decided that the requirements of RRS 60.2(a)(1) had been met and the protest remained valid.
25. In the reopened hearing, the IJ panel again decided the protest was valid, finding that CofS displayed a protest flag immediately, hailed “protest”, and made the required radio call.
26. Bedouin stated that in the first hearing she had inadequate time to prepare and was denied opportunity to provide needed evidence. Bedouin also alleged that during the reopened hearing TR’s demeanour was unprofessional and that she was frequently cut off from presenting Bedouin’s evidence.
27. TR attested that Linda Goddard misunderstood procedures and that her attitude towards formalities made it difficult to manage the hearing “in a normal relaxed fashion”.

## **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS**

28. Jurisdiction / scope. This Panel has no authority to change or review the decisions of the International Jury panel under the Racing Rules of Sailing. The party’s recourse would have been to request a hearing with the fully constituted International Jury. Decisions of the International Jury were final within the RRS framework. The Panel’s task under Regulation 18 and Policy L4 is to assess the performance and competence of the Race Official(s) concerned.
29. Notice and reasonable opportunity to prepare. The Panel finds that Bedouin was properly informed of the time and place of the hearing as required by RRS 63.1(a)(1). However, Bedouin had not received the protest form until after the WhatsApp hearing call began. It is not feasible to conclude that Bedouin was prepared to proceed substantively when she said she was “ready” to join the call at 10:06 CEST, before seeing the protest at 10:08 CEST. The allegation that Bedouin was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to prepare is found to be true.
30. Explanation of process and procedural options. The Panel accepts that the hearing was conducted by a panel of the International Jury under Appendix N1.4(b). Given that the protestee expressly stated it was her first hearing and she was unfamiliar with procedures, best practice required clearer explanation of procedure than was provided by TR as Chair, including adequate time to read the protest and the

procedural options available (including, where applicable, the option to request a hearing by the full International Jury).

31. Treatment of protest validity requirements (central to inadequate performance). The Panel considers that, in chairing the hearings, TR's approach to assessing and recording compliance with mandatory protest validity requirements was insufficiently rigorous. In particular, where validity depended on factual predicates that were disputed (including whether the required SI 25.2 radio call was made and the adequacy of protest-flag display), best practice required the panel to obtain and weigh available corroborating evidence and to apply the balance of probabilities with transparent reasoning on the record. The IJ panel did not obtain Race Committee evidence of a radio call despite conflicting evidence. In addition, the reopened decision's statement that the panel "cannot help conclude if the flag was flying or furled" did not, on its face, clearly establish compliance with the requirement that the flag be displayed conspicuously until she was no longer racing. The allegation that the decision did not adequately consider evidence as it related to these validity issues is found to be true.
32. Demeanor and alleged bias. The Panel accepts that Bedouin's skipper experienced the Chair's demeanour in the hearing as unprofessional and that she was interrupted in a manner that interfered with her ability to present her case. On the evidence before this Panel, the allegation of unprofessional demeanour is found to be true. There is inadequate evidence to establish bias.
33. Weighing of conflicting evidence on the merits. The Panel notes that there were conflicting estimates regarding passing distance astern. While the Panel cannot change the IJ panel's findings, it is not clear from the material provided that the balance of probabilities was applied with sufficient transparency in resolving the critical factual disputes underpinning the decision.
34. Overall assessment. In the overall consideration of the incident and the conduct of the hearings—particularly the treatment of validity requirements, the management of a first-time protestee attending the hearing remotely, and the handling of contested evidence—the Panel concludes that TR's performance and competence as Chair were clearly below the standards required of an International Race Official.
35. In consideration of mitigating factors, TR acknowledged his difficulty managing the hearing but attributed it to Linda Goddard's misunderstanding of procedures and attitude. He expressed no remorse or apology. In consideration of aggravating factors, he accused Linda Goddard of attempting to "achieve retribution for conducting these two hearings with the same result and called her allegations "defamatory" and to "cross the line in terms of libelous claims".

## **DECISION**

36. The Panel recommends that:

- TR must be subject to supervision when officiating at four events where he is a member of the International Jury.
- TR shall not serve in the role of Chair of the International Jury at these events.
- The four supervision reports shall address whether TR demonstrates adequate performance and competence when acting as a member of a hearing panel, and when chairing a hearing (to the extent chairing is observed in other contexts).
- TR will be advised that the Race Officials Committee (ROC) will appoint a mentor to help him improve his application of the rules and procedures for International Juries. A mentor will be requested to interact with TR virtually on these issues and be present in person for at least 2 hearings where TR is chairing the hearing panel. TR shall be required to share with World Sailing information of the events he is attending in the next 6 months and a list of the appointed Race Officials. A suitable mentor shall be decided by ROC based on this list to ensure TR can meet the requirements of this sanction. Once the mentor is satisfied that TR is performing on an acceptable level as a chair of a hearing panel, World Sailing (WS) will issue permission for TR to act as a chair of any International Jury or as a chair of a panel of an International Jury.

#### **ADDITIONAL NOTE**

The International Jury panel included Thibaut Gridel (IJ, France) and Bill Edgerton (NJ, Great Britain). World Sailing may consider whether any further review is required to the extent either individual is a World Sailing International Race Official within the scope of Regulations 17 and 18.

Lynne Beal, Chairman

Bence Böröcz, Panel Member

Gonzalo Heredia, Panel Member

January 15, 2026: