

The LNKC hereby reminds Lake Norman sail racers of the rules for whisker pole use:

- Whisker poles cannot be longer than the “J” measurement of the boat
- Whisker pole black markings must be visible when the pole is at its rated length
- Whisker poles must be attached to the front of the mast when in use

In recent racing, there have been observed instances of these rules not being followed.

From the LNKC Standard Sail and Equipment Specifications: 12. Non-spinnaker limitations

A. The maximum length of a spinnaker pole (whisker pole) that may be used shall be equal to J. If the spinnaker pole (whisker pole) is adjustable, there shall be no gap visible between 1/2” stripes, placed one on each section of the pole where the sections intersect, when the pole is extended to its rated length.

From The Racing Rules of Sailing for 2021 – 2024:

2. Fair Sailing

A boat and her owner shall compete in compliance with recognized principles of sportsmanship and fair play. A boat may be penalized under this rule only if it is clearly established that these principles have been violated. The penalty shall be either disqualification or disqualification that is not excludable.

4. Acceptance of the Rules

4.1 a). By participating or intending to participate in a race conducted under these rules, each competitor and boat owner agrees to accept these rules.

55. Setting and Sheeting Sails

55.2 Spinnaker Poles; Whisker Poles. Only one spinnaker pole or whisker pole shall be used at a time except when gybing. When in use, it shall be attached to the foremost mast.

69. Misconduct

69.1 Obligation to not Commit Misconduct

(a) A competitor, boat owner or support person shall not commit an act of misconduct.

(b) Misconduct is: (1) conduct that is a breach of good manners, a breach of good sportsmanship, or unethical behavior.

69.2 Action by a Protest Committee

(h) When the protest committee decides that a competitor or boat owner has broken rule 69.1(a), it may take one or more of the following actions:

(h)(3) exclude the person from the event or venue or remove any privileges or benefits.

To Whit:

While keelboat race NOR's encourage resolving conflicts on the water, that doesn't mean skippers should overlook prohibited equipment or practices. In fact, competitors on the water should protest others when rules are broken so that racing stays fair for everyone.

The Lake Norman Keelboat Council will consider any future violations to be violations of the principles of fair play (Section 2) and acts of misconduct (Section 69). We will seek to have protest committees revoke skippers' privileges to race in Lake Norman Keelboat Council events for one year from the incident in protest.

If you and your crew use a whisker pole, please check your equipment, and review your practices with your crew. These rules are very easy to comply with:

- Check the J measurement (distance from the base of the front of the mast to the point where the forestay connects to the bow).
- Extend the whisker pole to that length or to its maximum length if that is shorter than your J measurement.
- Check that the two 1/2" black lines are aligned as described in Rule 12.A of the LNKC Standard Sail and Equipment Specifications above when extended. If not, use black paint or tape to add the stripes. If there are stripes from a previous owner or boat that are in the wrong place for your J measurement, sand them off or paint over them in a color that blends with the rest of the whisker pole. There can be only one set of stripes on the whisker pole.
- Keep the whisker pole attached to the mast when in use.

If you see a fellow racer whose whisker pole practices are prohibited, say something. It's not unsportsmanlike to challenge prohibited equipment and practices; it helps keep racing fair for all the racers who are following the rules carefully.

Lake Norman Keelboat Council