

Dear Mr Abrahamsson,

There were organized and conducted one off-shore and two skerry races on a stage from Hanko to Turku in the "2014 Gangut Regatta" led by STAF. Most participants preferred skerry routes, including all "L-6" yachts from St. Petersburg. The first race was held on July 28th from Hanko to floating light Jarngrunan, the second race was from the same sign to the northern tip of the island Pensar. Race's distance was about 25 miles. Racing is an important part of the regatta for all participants and for me in particular. Therefore I would like to tell you more about it.

Finnish organizing committee headed by you proposed to fill the form to calculate the ALMA FACTOR (rating index according to The Alma Rules for the rating of Vintage and Classic yachts) in spring. It was necessary to be declared in four classes:

1. Tall ships
2. Schooners and conventional ships
3. Vessels less than 24 meters with a spinnaker
4. Vessels less than 24 meters without a spinnaker.

When I saw the final schedule, which included 55 declared vessels (10 Finnish, 1 Estonian and 44 Russian), of which 11 belong to the class "L-6", I found out that there was no ALMA FACTOR specification, and no division into groups for yachts less than 24 meters in the presence of a spinnaker.

There was a meeting of captains concerning the races held on July 28th in Hanko. The members of the Race Committee were present. Captains were neither given the sailing instructions and lists of yachts with coefficients, nor there was a lay-out into scoring groups. We were given only small-scale schemes of skerry distances, which represented a GPS-track print on abyssal fairway without specifying any distance's signs. These schemes could serve as a supplement to the Sailing Instruction, at best. But there was no Sailing Instruction. I inquired about prescribed marks for rounding on the track. And I was told that there are no signs and it is recommended to stick to the track mentioned in the scheme. Thus, there were no race documentation, except for the one, which is mentioned above. These schemes were regarded by me personally as the recommended route from the perspective of safety. If there are no prescribed marks for rounding, the route between start and finish is a straight line, according to the International Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS 2013-2016, rule 28). In this case in skerry conditions the crew decides for itself upon the safer and faster way to hold the boat on this route.

There was general start of the first race on the skerry route in the afternoon on July 28th in almost windless conditions. Lifeguard «SAR» and powerboat RIB designated the starting line. We started well and were among the leaders. Finnish «TMX» was ahead, practically next to us was "Feya", "Argo" was behind. We were all under spinnakers. There was a squall on the stern wind on one of the elbows of the fairway on the recommended course. So we removed the spinnaker and set genoa, tacked windward and went over shallower fairway, specified in the Finnish atlas as the channel "3.5". It was not marked on the Russian map, but favorably cut the loop of the recommended route. Flurry passed, wind eased, and we barely moved ahead of the fleet more seaward. Lifeguard «SAR», which gave a start, overpassed us on the same fairway "3.5". We didn't receive any messages or requests from it. Meanwhile, the main fleet got wind, and gradually «TMX» caught up with us, then we ran around together for a long time, struggling with windless conditions. Gradually, we were approached by "Feya" and another Finnish yacht and the race began anew. We were going close-hauled port-tack in the light wind. «TMX» went forward, and "Feya", having the advantage of the ascent, went out one tack to the finish mark Jarngrunan. We were close to the leeward islands, hoping that the wind will go away, but we did not come out on the sign without tacking. Near the mark we tacked, and "Feya" passed us by the fore part at a distance of a hull. She went straight to the finish line close to the mark, and suddenly we heard a knock. Near the mark "Feya" hit a stone. We made the

second tack and finished in front of «SAR» lifeguard standing near, from which a powerboat RIB had been lowered already to bring "Feya" afloat. But "Feya" turned on her crown end and did everything by herself, then crossed the finish line behind us. Later "Feya's" helmperson told me that they passed the sign with their bow before hitting the stone. But even if it was so, then the finish time, according to the Rules, should have been the time of the last boat crossing the finish line, if there was more than one. So, in this first race, we were second, and from the "L-6" first.

After the finish this evening yachts moored in the harbor Kaznas, where berths were reserved for participants of the regatta. «SAR» lifeguard with the race committee on board also came there. In the same evening there was a meeting of captains dedicated to the second race, which was to be held the following day. There were no preliminary results of the first race and no protests. Race committee recommended to observe the route again, no signs distance had been assigned. Uncertainty remained. Co-ordinator from the Russian side Andrei Berezkin answered the captains' questions about the regatta: "This is the way the things are going here" he said. There were no claims of any parties or judges to "Nika" concerning the first race.

We started the second race near the finish of the first race on July 29th. Finnish «TMX» left forward after a few tacks. "Nika" was behind it, "Argo" and "Feya" were behind us. This situation persisted until the finish near the island Pensar, where yachts passed "SAR" lifeguard under spinnakers. At this distance we went along «TMX» path. After the race yachts went to the harbor of Nagu, to which was 12 miles. There was head fresh wind and we went all the way under sail, almost behind the boat, which went under the diesels.

We stood for a day in Nagu. There was «SAR» lifeguard in the harbor. The representative of the Race Committee gave us the form; there we should have specified the finish time in the 1st and 2nd races. We indicated the time according to the logbook, and handed it back. It was not clear why this had to be done, because the judgment ship was at the finish of both races, and it could record the time.

In Turku we stood for three and a half days. But the participants did not know the results of races until the ceremony, which was held on August 2nd. We were sure that we will be awarded prizes, though we did not know how the races were assessed. Alas, the prizes went to the others. "Feya" was the first, "Argo" was the second and "Delta" was the third. How the rest of places were distributed, we didn't not learn. Official results have not been published either before or after the ceremony. "Nika" could not find the cause of punishment and registered a protest, as the results were classified. We can only guess whether we were fined, disqualified, or ALMA-FACTOR coefficients, if they were considered, were incorrect. One thing I can tell for sure: there was no right to penalize or disqualify "Nika", as we didn't break the rules, because there was nothing to break. There was no Sailing instruction. By the way, there were no protests either.

I want to emphasize that on the general background of good organization of the moorage and crews' leisure in Finland; races were held not according to the rules. In fact, only starts were organized. There was no Sailing instruction and no list of participants with the coefficients, no clustering, no preliminary results between the races. And so far there are no final results after the race on the regatta's site <http://thegangutregatta.fi> (according to rule 90 RRS 2013-2016 this races must be considered not took place). In my opinion, STAF treated the competitors very disrespectfully on the rate. The absence of the entry fee does not mean the rules of the competition can be ignored. In Russia the judges never allow this attitude to the participants of races.

I also want to say a few words about the environmental competition that was held as part of the Finnish part of the regatta. It was the main competition, and main prizes were played out in three categories at the beginning:

1. Tall ships

2. Schooners and conventional ships

3. Other vessels less than 24 meters.

Only winners in yacht classes and in overall standings were awarded. The prize for winning the class was 3000 Euros, and in the overall standings it was 6000 Euros. For comparison, books and glass plates were the prizes in the race for speed. In St. Petersburg at a meeting of captains Andrew Berezkin said that his "Byilina" refused to participate in an environmental competition for several reasons, one of them being the necessity to include in the crew a supervisor from the Finnish organizing committee. We discussed this issue at the meeting, and most captains also decided not to participate in this competition, because without special tanks for wastewater on yacht there was no chance to win. We didn't raise or discuss this question anymore. Volunteers approached me and offered to fill out forms for this competition in Kotka and Hanko, but following the earlier decision, I said that we do not participate in this event. "The Standard" which in my opinion contributed a lot to the regatta success took grand prize and the prize for victory in its class in the environmental competition at the ceremony in Turku. But what was our surprise when "Byilina" was awarded as the winner in the environmental competition a check for 3,000 euros, in yachts class which are not equipped with special water tanks. Where did this class suddenly come out? Either Andrew delivered themselves from their competitors and declared in this class by deception and concealment of information, or the winner was determined not according to the Rules. You are the coordinator of regatta and you will get the prize? It would be interesting to see the completed "Byilina's" form about "environmental pollution" and find out why it is more environmentally friendly than, for example "Nika", which took the entire route under sail. And maybe there were no forms? And if there were, it is unlikely that anyone had analyzed them. Official results of the environmental event were not published either.

In connection with the abovementioned issues, may I ask you to answer the following questions:

1. Why weren't sailing instructions and a list of racing yachts, divided into groups with their ALMA-FACTOR coefficients handed to captains?

2. Why weren't the interim and final results of races provided?

3. For what reason and on what basis the yacht "Nika" was not included in the top three in class "L-6"?

4. Why weren't participants from Russia informed about the appearance of a new yacht's group not equipped with tanks for waste water?

5. On what basis did yacht "Byilina" receive the prize for winning the environmental competition?

6. Why there are still no final official records the results of races on the speed and results of the environmental competition?

This letter will be published on the websites of the Association of Yacht Class "L-6" and St. Petersburg Sailing Union: <http://l-6.org> and <http://sailingunion.ru>.

If there isn't reply to this letter from you within one month from the date of dispatch, it will be directed to the Committee on race STA.

With respect and hope for understanding,

Vadim Manukhin,

The captain of the yacht "Nika";

honorary president of the Association of Yacht class "L-6".



22/09/2014