

2026 BAMA Performance-Based Ratings System FAQ

General Overview

What is the new performance-based ratings system for the BAMA Cup?

The system is a fresh approach designed to make multihull racing in the Bay Area more competitive, fair, and engaging for everyone. It builds on proven concepts from successful PHRF fleets worldwide (like NHC and ECHO) by combining a fixed technical rating (Base PHRF based on OMR) with a dynamic performance factor (DF) to create a new, adaptive rating called the Adjusted PHRF. This rewards actual sailing skills and progress throughout the season.

What is the primary goal of the new system?

The system's primary goal is to motivate, include, and recognize sailors at every level—whether you're a seasoned racer or a relative newcomer. It's about keeping participants engaged and making improved performance meaningful from one race to the next.

Why Change the Ratings System?

Why does BAMA need to change from the current system?

Three main issues:

- *Stagnation*: The same boats tend to win repeatedly, and ratings stay static all season.
- *Barrier for New Sailors*: New participants need many races to become competitive, and can get discouraged.
- *Declining Engagement*: Ratings don't change much mid-season, so excitement fizzles and the winner is often decided early.

This is not a criticism of current champions—it's about creating more opportunities, stories, and rotational winners to keep the fleet healthy.

How does this benefit participation?

Having a path to victory for every sailor increases motivation, ensures consistent engagement, and provides a more dynamic, inclusive fleet.

How Does the System Work?

What is the basic structure of the new system?

- **Step 1:** Start on a fair foundation. Your base PHRF technical rating is unchanged all season. New sailors start neutral; returning sailors keep their latest factor.
- **Step 2:** Race as usual, but each finish is scored with a performance index showing real-world competitiveness.
- **Step 3:** Ratings adjust after every race ("magnetic pull") to reflect current performance—better results mean a slightly tougher rating, struggles mean quicker recovery. Everything is automated and published within 3 days.

What is the Adjusted PHRF?

- **Adjusted PHRF** = Base PHRF + Dynamic Performance Factor
- **Dynamic Performance Factor (DPF)** = Average of last 5 Performance Indexes (PI)
- **Performance Index (PI)** = (Boat's Corrected Time) ÷ (Winner's Corrected Time)

It replaces the static technical rating in race scoring, allowing for dynamic, skill-based results.

How stable is the system? Will my rating swing wildly?

No. Rating changes use rolling 5-race averages, so single flukes or bad races won't dramatically change your standing. The system is designed for stable, meaningful adjustment—responsive but not erratic.

Adoption and Benefits

What are the top benefits of this new approach?

- *Fairer competition:* Ratings reflect demonstrated performance, not just boat design.
- *Newcomers can succeed:* Good results quickly bring fair ratings; tough results provide fast path back to competitiveness.
- *More winners, more excitement:* Regular winner rotation; mid- and late-season surges are possible.
- *Season-long engagement:* Ratings evolve after every race; improvement and progress are tracked with recognition for most-improved sailors.

How does the system stay fair and objective?

Transparency is built in—a dashboard will track all ratings and performance trends. Changes require a minimum number of samples and exclude outliers. The ratings committee reviews appeals for legitimacy.

Safeguards and Calibration

How do you prevent ratings from drifting up compared to other fleets?

- The system anchors ratings to the OMR specification, protecting technical realism.
- Regular fleet-wide calibrations block any systematic upward drift.
- Statistical validation uses medians, not means, for outlier control.
- The ratings committee reviews all significant changes.
- Competitors can appeal if a drift or unfair change is suspected.

Are there rules to prevent big rating swings or manipulation?

Yes. You need three finishers in a race for adjustments to take effect. Large rating changes require at least three races, and the system uses medians and conditional safeguards to protect against errors and anomalies.

Success Metrics

What does success look like?

- 85% of the fleet finishes within 10% of the winner's corrected times.
 - Winner diversity: No single boat wins more than 30–35% of races.
 - Increased participation and retention.
 - Surveyed satisfaction and perceived fairness.
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Other Anticipated Questions

Q: Will this hurt established winners?

A: No. Consistency is still rewarded, but static ratings no longer offer an artificial advantage. Top sailors' improvement is tracked and celebrated.

Q: What if I'm new to BAMA racing?

A: You start neutral and quickly earn a fair rating based on early results.

Q: How much can my rating change each race?

A: Changes are modest, using averages and weightings for stability.

Q: What if I have a bad race? Will my rating tank?

A: No—rolling 5-race averages prevent excess penalty from outliers.

Q: Has this been tested before?

A: Yes. ECHO (Irish Sailing), North Harbor PHRF, and simulations using past BAMA results indicate a significantly improved competitive balance and engagement.
