

## Racing Rules of Sailing

### Rule 21.3

A submission from the Danish Sailing Association

#### Proposal

21.3 A boat moving astern **through the water** ~~by backing a sail~~ shall *keep clear* of one that is not.

#### Current Position

As above.

#### Reason

This submission has two parts. The first part is to add “through the water”. In the current rule 21.3 it is unclear whether “moving astern” relate to moving astern through the water or over the ground, even though there is a significant difference between these alternatives when, for example, there is a current pushing a boat forward over the ground at the same time as she is going astern through the water. The answer from the 2008 Olympic Jury to a competitor question (Question 101) and Match race call UMP 2 both agree that moving astern relates to the movement through the water. Adding the words “through the water” will thus clarify the rule and make a call unnecessary.

The second part is to delete “by backing a sail”. Under the current rule 21.3, a boat moving astern will have different rights depending on the reason for the movement. In addition, the implications of the rule are not judged consistently. Consider the following scenarios:

1. A boat goes head to wind, with her sails flapping; after some time she stops and starts drifting astern
2. A boat goes head to wind, stops her forward momentum by backing a sail, releases it and then starts drifting astern with her sails flapping
3. A boat goes head to wind and the crew uses the jib to keep the boat head to wind by backing it alternately on either side. During this maneuvering she stops and then starts moving astern
4. A boat stops her momentum by backing a sail and keeps it backed as the boat starts moving astern

Experience shows that the current rule 21.3 is not interpreted consistently by sailors and officials across these scenarios. There is agreement that the boat in (1) is not subject to 21.3, while the boat in (4) is. But there are different opinions about the rights of the boats in (2) and (3).

Match Racing Call UMP 2 clarifies the issue, but not completely, and the inconsistencies remain for fleet racing. The proposed change will make the call unnecessary and create consistency between fleet racing and match racing.

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The proposed change implies a change to the game. Yet this change is desirable since it discourages the use of maneuvers that lead to difficult situations with high risk of collisions. The change will result in all boats moving astern being treated in a consistent way and thereby make the rule simpler to understand and apply for sailors and officials.

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