

Racing Rules of Sailing

New Case

A submission from the Royal Yachting Association

Purpose or Objective

To clarify that the string in rule 28.2 cannot pass over dry land.

Proposal

New Case XXX

Rule 28.2 Sailing the course

The string in rule 28.2 is to lie, when taut, in navigable water only.

When a mark to be rounded is too close to the shortest course from the previous mark to the next mark for a boat to be able to decide visually whether it has to be looped, a boat that does not loop it and is successfully protested may be entitled to redress. However, she will not be entitled to redress if the coordinates of the marks are known and the boat can be expected to carry charts that will show that the mark can be rounded only by looping it.

QUESTION 1

Must the string referred to in rule 28.2, when drawn taut, lie in navigable water only?

ANSWER 1

Yes, rule 28.2 refers to “a string representing a boat’s track”. A boat’s track cannot pass over dry land, nor can it pass through non-navigable waters or through prohibited areas. It follows that, when drawn taut, the string must lie entirely in navigable waters; it is caught on headlands, passes to one side of non-navigable shallows, prohibited areas or other obstructions, and follows the path of a river.

Similar considerations apply to both the requirements in the definition Finish to cross the finishing line from the course side, and to pass through a gate from the direction of the previous mark. The course is described by a taut string that complies with the requirements of rule 28.2 and therefore the course is constrained to lie in navigable water as described above.

QUESTION 2

What are the obligations on a boat when a rounding mark is laid close to the shortest course from the previous mark to the next mark?

ANSWER 2

When a mark to be rounded to port lies to port of the shortest course from the previous mark to the next mark (or a mark to be rounded to starboard lies to starboard of that course), then, to comply with the string test in rule 28.2, that mark must be looped; that is, the boat must round the mark as required and cross her own track to continue sailing the course.

If, from observations afloat, boats cannot be sure on which side of that shortest course a rounding mark lies, then a boat who does not loop it and is protested may be entitled to redress if it is found in the hearing that the mark should have been looped.

However, if the coordinates of the marks are known and if boats can be expected to have a chart on board, then the charted position of the marks will determine whether the mark is to be looped.

QUESTION 3

In tidal waters, should navigable waters be considered at high tide or low tide.

ANSWER 3

Neither. Navigable waters must be considered according to the depth of water at the time the boat is sailing that leg of the course.

GBR 2000/5

Current Position

None

Reason

There is currently no guidance to competitors on the interpretation of the "string rule" when the string may not touch a rounding mark that is located geographically between the marks to be rounded before and after this mark.
