

Racing Rules of Sailing

Definition - Mark

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Purpose or Objective

To clarify the definition *Mark*, and to make it possible for race committees to attach a 'keep-off' mark to the transom of a race committee boat on the starting or finishing line.

Proposal

Mark: An object the sailing instructions require a boat to leave on a specified side, and a race committee boat surrounded by navigable water from which the starting or finishing line extends. An anchor line or an object attached ~~temporarily or~~ accidentally to a *mark* is not part of it.

Current Position

As above.

Reasons

When the mark at one end of the starting or finishing line is a race committee boat, it is common practice for the race committee to attach a 'keep-off' or limit mark to the transom of a race committee boat. Such a keep-off mark is usually tied to the committee boat and the space between it and the committee is a few metres. This is an important means of protecting race committee equipment from damage.

The Oxford Dictionary defines "temporary" as "lasting for only a limited period of time; not permanent." Because these keep-off marks are attached to the race committee boat only for a limited period of time (i.e., while races are being run), and are clearly not permanent parts of the committee boat, they cannot be considered as *marks* under the current definition. Accordingly, competitors can touch them with impunity. Moreover, in certain circumstances competitors could claim *room* at such marks under rule 19, because the first sentence of the preamble to Section C would not apply to them.

Sailing instructions cannot change the definition of *mark*. A sailing instruction which prohibited boats from touching a keep-off mark would likely cause such marks to rank as obstructions, negating the intent of the preamble to Section C.

Deleting the word "temporary" from the definition of *mark* solves this problem by making it clear that a keep-off mark and the line attaching it to the race committee boat are part of the race committee boat, and that rule 31 does apply with respect to them and that rule 19 does not.

This deletion would have desirable implications in other contexts. For example, if the proposal were accepted it would be clear that boats could not touch a fender or a small mark-set boat attached temporarily to the side of the race committee boat.

An object attached accidentally to a mark (for example, a long piece of kelp, clump of seaweed, drifting piece of line, or another boat racing) should not be considered part of the mark. The proposal preserves this feature of the definition. There is no need for the words “temporarily or” to be included in order to preserve this feature.

This submission was prepared by the Rule 28 Working Party.