



ISAF Racing Rules Q&A's Booklet

Last Update: 11 February 2009

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ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2001-001

Revised: 12 January 2009

Situation

A race has a time limit of two hours for the first boat to finish. The first boat finishes at 1 hour 59 minutes.

Questions

Does she finish within the time limit of rule 35 if:

1. She was scored OCS and did not return?
2. She started correctly and was later disqualified for breaking a rule?
3. She was recorded as having broken rule 30.3?

Answers

1. No. To comply with rule 35 (Time Limit), a boat must also comply with rule 28.1 (Sailing the Course) which requires her to start correctly.
2. Yes, provided the rule she broke was not rule 28.
3. Yes, provided she started in accordance with the definition Start. However, she will be disqualified in accordance with rule 30.3 and scored BFD.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2002-001

Revised: 12 January 2009

Question 1

Often in large regattas a member of the international jury may be on a signal boat or finish boat as an observer. Does this break rule N1.1.

Answer 1

No.

Question 2

In events with multiple racing areas, may a member of an international jury when asked to do so by the organizing authority, assist or advise the race committee on a particular race area, without breaking N1.1, if that judge takes no part in hearing protests from that race area?

Answer 2

If asked by the race committee, the jury shall advise or assist them on any matter directly affecting the fairness of the competition. This could be done by having one member onboard the race committee signal boat.

In such a case, rule N1.1 does not prohibit a member of the jury from deciding protests or requests for redress from that race course. However, when a member of the jury has been assisting or advising the race committee on a matter that is the subject of a hearing, it is advisable for that judge to serve only as a witness and not to participate in the decision, if the composition of the jury permits.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2003-001

Revised: 12 January 2009

Question 1

When is an International Jury constituted?

Answer 1

Provided that all the requirements of rules N1.1, N1.2, and N1.3 are met, an International Jury is properly constituted when at least five members have accepted their invitations, and the judges and the organizing authority agree to the terms of service.

Question 2

Five judges are appointed to the International Jury by the organizing authority in accordance with rules N1.1, N1.2 and N1.3. Due to illness or an emergency, only four members arrive at the event. Provided that the four remaining members are from three different national authorities (or two different national authorities if the event is in Group M, N or Q), is the jury a properly constituted International Jury?

Answer 2

Yes. However, the jury would only be properly constituted if all the requirements of rule N1.5 are met. In addition to the nationality requirements, the jury must have been previously and properly constituted with at least five members, and the reason for fewer members must have been for illness or emergency.

Rule N1.5 is an emergency provision that applies only when the unusual circumstances referred to in the rule arise, and the organizing authority has not succeeded in finding a replacement. An organizing authority must continue to make every effort to appoint replacements that will bring the jury into compliance with rules N1.1, N1.2 and N1.3 from the time it becomes aware of the illness or emergency.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2003-002

Revised: 12 January 2009

Situation

At the starting signal, the race committee observes three boats on the course side of the starting line. The race committee identifies Boat A and Boat B by sail number, but cannot identify the third boat. The race committee properly signals individual recall, but only the two identified boats return to start. After the race, Boat A and Boat B protest Boat C for not starting according to the definition and rule 28.1.

Based on the information in the protests, the race committee decides that the protested boat (Boat C) is the boat they could not identify at the start. Before the protests are heard, the race committee scores Boat C OCS without a hearing, in accordance with rule A5

Question 1

Is the race committee allowed to score a boat under rule A5 after the race?

Answer 1

Yes. Under rule A5, the race committee may score a boat, or correct a score, at any time.

Question 2

May a race committee decision to score a boat OCS under rule A5 be based on observations or statements from competitors or other persons outside the race committee?

Answer 2

No rule specifically prohibits the race committee from using other evidence than its own observations when scoring a boat OCS. However, if Boat C requested redress for being scored OCS, the protest committee would decide whether the race committee's procedure for identifying boats was proper.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2003-004

Revised: 12 January 2009

Situation

After 3 of 22 boats had finished, a race was abandoned because of a sudden thunderstorm that seriously affected the safety of the competitors. There was no opportunity to re-sail the race.

Question 1

Are the requirements of Rule 32.1, especially the last sentence fulfilled?

Answer 1

Yes. The last sentence in rule 32.1 never prevents a race committee from abandoning a race under rule 32.1(b) or 32.1(e) for safety reasons.

Question 2

Would a request for redress meet the criteria of Rule 62.1?

Answer 2

No. In this case, there has been no improper action or omission of the race committee.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2003-007

Revised: 12 January 2009

Question

Is it legal to disconnect the headstay to gybe the boat, or is the headstay required to be attached at all times while racing?

Answer

Forestays, and headsail tacks, may be detached while racing. However, when attached, a forestay must be attached approximately on a boat's centre-line. Class rules may change rule 54 to prohibit racing with permanent rigging detached.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2004-006

Revised: 12 January 2009

Question

Except on a beat to windward, rule 42.3(c) permits a boat to pull the sheet or guy to initiate surfing or planing. When is a boat on a beat to windward?

Answer

The phrase 'on a beat to windward' is used in rules 18.1(a) and 42.3(c). For the purposes of each rule, a boat is 'on a beat to windward' when her proper course is close-hauled; when she is 'beating.' Therefore, if a boat is sailing on a leg to the windward mark and the wind direction changes so that the boat's proper course to the mark is no longer close-hauled, then the boat is no longer 'on a beat to windward.'

Similarly, when a boat is sailing on a downwind leg and there is a wind shift so that it is clear the boat's proper course to the mark is close-hauled, then the boat is 'on a beat to windward'.

When judging this, the last point of certainty principle is used. For example, a boat approaching a windward mark on the starboard tack layline gets a lifting shift. The judges need to be certain that the boat's proper course is no longer close-hauled before permitting 'one pump per wave'. If there is any doubt, the judgment will be that the boat is still 'on a beat to windward'.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2004-008

Revised: 12 January 2009

Situation

During the starting sequence, the judges observe a boat's crew breaking rule 42. While the judges approach the boat to penalize her, the race committee signals a general recall. Approximately 15 seconds after the general recall has been signaled, the judges penalized the competitor by making a sound signal with a whistle, pointing a yellow flag at her and hailing her sail number.

Question 1

Can the judges penalize a competitor under rule P1 after a general recall has been signaled?

Answer 1

Provided that the breach of rule 42 occurs before the general recall is signaled, it is proper for the judges to penalize a boat as soon as possible, even if the penalty is being signaled after the general recall is signaled.

Question 2

Does this penalty count in the numbering of protests under rule P2?

Answer 2

Yes, see rule P3.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2005-001

Revised: 12 January 2009

Situation

At the beginning of the last leg of the course, a boat leaves the rounding mark on the wrong side but sails on and finishes. Then she sails back to the rounding mark, corrects her error, sails again to the finishing line and crosses it in the direction of the course from the last mark.

Question

Will this second crossing be counted as finishing?

Answer

No. According to the definition Finish, a boat finishes after correcting a rule 28.1 error she made at the finishing line, but there is no such provision for correcting an earlier error.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2006-002

Revised: 12 January 2009

Question

With respect to the definition *Racing*, when has a boat 'cleared' the finishing line and marks?

Answer

A boat clears the finishing line and marks when no part of her hull, crew or equipment is on the line and when neither mark is influencing her course.

A boat that clears the finishing line close-hauled and continues to sail toward the finishing line pin end mark, where current sets her into the mark, is still racing and has broken 31. A boat that crosses the finishing line, sails away from the line and marks, and then later hits the finishing line mark, does not break rule 31 as she is no longer racing.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2006-003

Revised: 12 January 2009

Situation A



The direction of the course from the last mark

Question 1

In situation A, the race committee observes Boat A passing the pin end of the finishing line on the wrong side and then dipping below the line, finishing, and sailing into the harbor. What should the race committee do in this situation?

Answer 1

The race committee must score the boat in her finishing place because she complied with the definition Finish. The race committee should protest Boat A for breaking rule 28. After crossing the finishing line, a boat may correct an error in sailing the course made at the finishing line, but if she does not, she must be scored as finished when she first crossed.

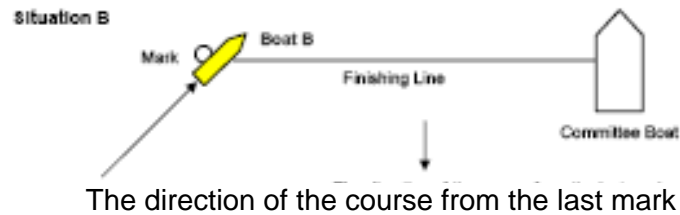
Question 2

Does the race committee need to remain on station until after the race time limit in case Boat A returns to correct her error?

Answer 2

No, unless it is likely that Boat A will return to correct her error and finish within the time limit.

Situation B



Question 3

In Situation B, the race committee observes Boat B breaking rule 31 as she crosses the finishing line. Boat B does not take a penalty and sails home. What should the race committee do?

Answer 3

The race committee must score Boat B in her finishing place when she first crossed the finishing line. See the definition Finish. The race committee may protest the boat for breaking rule 31. See rule 60.3.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service

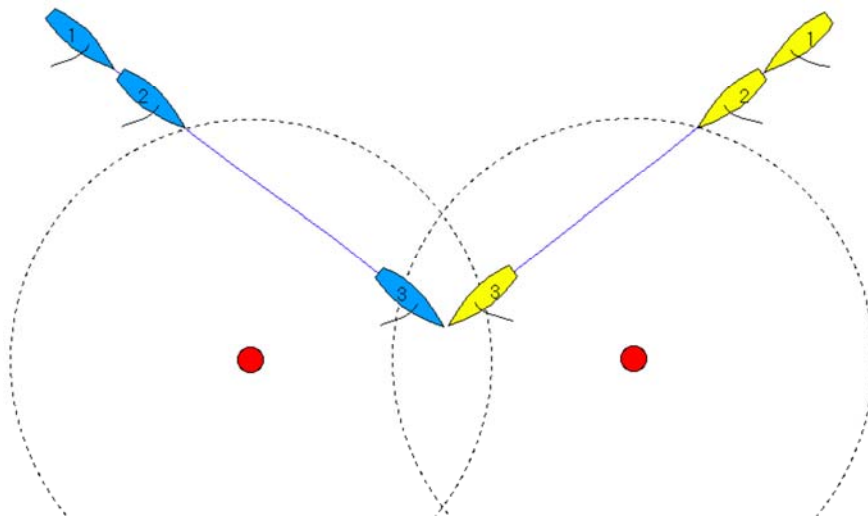


Q&A 2006-005

Revised: 12 January 2009

Situation

Two catamarans on opposite tacks both sailing a downwind leg on reaching angles were approaching the gate heading for different marks. They reached the gate at the same time and collided in the middle. At that moment the gate was less than 6 hull lengths wide and the boats were in both circles at the same time.



Question 1

What rules do apply and how to decide?

Answer 1

Boats that are sailing to different gate marks are not leaving the same mark on the same side. However, whether or not rule 18 applies, rules 10 and 14 continue to apply. Blue must keep clear of Yellow, and both boats must avoid contact.

Question 2

Could a gate which is less than 6 hull lengths wide be considered as an improper action of the Race Officer?

Answer 2

The width of a gate does not necessarily constitute an "improper" race committee action. Factors such as the size of the fleet, type of boats, wind conditions, sea state, current and water depth must be considered. A "perfectly set" gate may become less-than desirable due to changing conditions, often too late to make any corrections. Even if there was an "improper" action by the race committee in this case, that action did not significantly worsen the boat's score through no fault of her own. The race committee's actions did not prevent the boat from avoiding the collision.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2007-001

Revised: 12 January 2009

Situation

A regatta is held over two days, with five races scheduled and one drop race if five races are completed. On the first day, only Race 1 is completed and Boat A finishes in second place.

On the second day, Boat A finishes fifth in Race 2. Before the start of Race 3, A collides with B and is unable to compete in all the remaining races due to the damage. She protests B and requests redress. The protest committee finds that A is entitled to redress under rule 62.1(b).

The protest committee awards A average points according to A10(b) for races 3 and 4. A scores DNC in Race 5, but discards that score and is placed first in the total score. Therefore, A wins the regatta, having competed in only two out of five races.

Question 1

Did the protest committee make an error?

Answer 1

Yes. Although the protest committee did not break any rule, its decision in awarding the redress was not the fairest arrangement for all boats affected. In this case, allowing a boat to use average scores for half of the counting races in the series is not fair to the other boats.

Question 2

What would have been a more fair redress decision?

Answer 2

The protest committee should ensure that out of the counting races in a boat's series score, the majority of scores are based on finishing positions in completed races. Different situations may require different redress to be granted. One possible suggestion in this particular case is that the protest committee could have awarded redress only for the race where the collision took place.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service

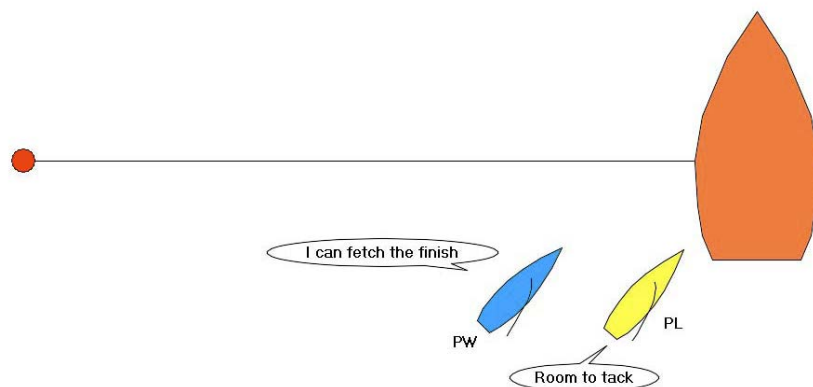


Q&A 2007-003

Revised: 12 January 2009

Situation

PW and PL approach the committee boat that is also a finishing mark. PW can fetch the finish, but she can't fetch the bow of the race committee boat. PL hails to PW for room to tack. PW replies: "I can fetch the finish!"



Question 1

For the purpose of rule 20.3, when shall PL not hail for room to tack?

- (a) When PW is fetching the finishing line (but not the race committee boat); or
- (b) When PW can fetch the race committee boat.

Answer 1

(b) PL shall not hail when PW can fetch the race committee boat.

The Mark in this question is a race committee boat from which the finishing line extends.

Question 2

Did rule 20.1 apply?

Answer 2

Yes.



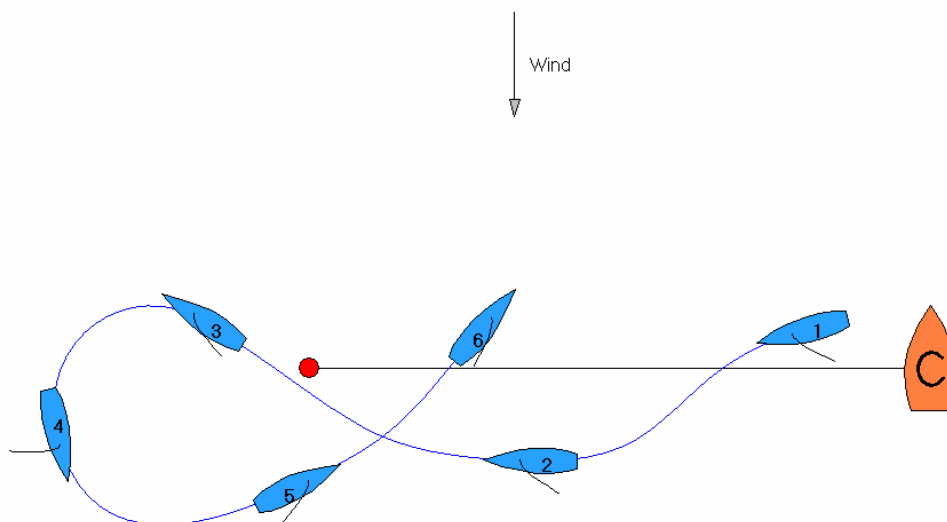
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Q&A 2007-004

Revised: 12 January 2009

Situation

Rule 30.1 (Round-an-End Rule) applies. 50 seconds before the start, a boat is on the course side of the line. She then sails as shown on the diagram and crosses the extension of the starting line from the course side to the pre-start side (between situations 3 and 4).



Question

Has the boat complied with the requirements of rule 30.1?

Answer

Yes. Rule 30.1 requires that the boat cross an extension of the starting line from the course side to the start side before she starts, and she meets this requirement.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2007-006

Revised: 12 January 2009

Question

May a race committee or protest committee satisfy its obligation under rule 61.1 to notify the boat of a protest by informing the boat's coach, rules advisor or other representative?

Answer

When a boat has registered a coach, rules advisor or other representative or when a person is clearly representing a boat, the race committee or protest committee complies with its obligations in rule 61.1(b) or (c) to inform the boat of the protest when it informs the representative.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2007-008

Revised: 12 January 2009

Question 1

Is it a violation of Rule 2 if a competitor attempts to slow another boat's progress in a race by covering or limiting its freedom to start, tack or jibe if this behaviour is not aimed at staying ahead of this competitor in a race or a series of races, but instead is purely aimed at skewing the competitor's result for the worse.

Answer 1

Yes.

For the purpose of ISAF Case 78, a race or series is restricted to those races governed by a notice of race as published by the organizing authority for the race under consideration.

Question 2

If the answer to the above question is negative (no violation of rule 2), does that mean that any motivation, may it be fear, hate, anger, greed or revenge (to name but a few) are considered to be within "recognized principles of sportsmanship"? In other words: could one team sail down another team for fun or for revenge at any regatta, as often as it likes?

Answer 2

Not applicable.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2008-001

Revised: 12 January 2009

Question

The Notice of Race states the Racing Schedule as follows:

Day 1 – Race 1 and 2

Day 2 – Race 3 and 4

Day 3 – Race 5 and 6

The weather conditions are not suitable for racing on Day 1. Therefore the first race will be sailed on Day 2.

Will the series start with Race 1 or with Race 3?

Answer

Unless the race committee post a proper notice on the official notice board stating that Races 1 (and 2) are abandoned and will not be re-sailed, or the Sis make some other provision, then the series should continue with Race 1.

It is generally accepted best practice to sail races in the original sequence unless there is a good reason to do otherwise. Typically this will be when different courses, or special races, are specified within the event.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2008-002

Revised: 12 January 2009

Question 1

With respect to the definition Finish, does the condition "in normal position" refer also to the hull?

Answer 1

No, the normal position refers to crew or equipment only. The commas before and after "or crew or equipment in normal position" limit the normal-position requirement only to the crew and equipment.

Question 2

With respect to the definition Finish, the Terminology paragraph of the Introduction and the second part of rule 47.2, does a capsized boat correctly finish if she crosses the finishing line when:

- a) all of the crew members are (somehow) on board even though the boat is capsized,
- b) some of the crew members are not on board but are very close to the boat and trying to straighten it out , and
- c) some of the crew members are not on board because they have become disconnected from the boat and its equipment, but are swimming to reach the capsized boat?

Answer 2

Yes. It is normal for dinghies to capsize and therefore a capsized dinghy and its crew in the water are in a normal position. It follows that a boat finishes correctly in all of the conditions stated in the question.

Also, the boat does not break rule 47.2 while the crew are making all reasonable attempts to recover the boat and get back on board provided they are not making any attempt to progress the position of the boat in the race. If they attempt to 'swim' the boat across the finishing line, they would break both rule 47.2 and rule 42.1, and possibly rule 2.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2008-003

Revised: 12 January 2009

Question

A yacht believes that she had broken a rule and retired after finishing (RAF). Subsequently, she discovers that she had not in fact broken a rule and asked for her retirement to be rescinded.

May the race committee re-score the yacht in her finishing position?

Answer

The Racing Rules of Sailing are silent with regard to the right of a boat to rescind her retirement, if the race committee are compelled to act on such notification and if there is any time limit for such actions.

As the rules do not prohibit such action, a boat may notify the race committee that she rescinds her retirement. The race committee may reinstate the boat and adjust the score of all boats affected by this notification.

In the event that another boat did not lodge or withdrew an otherwise valid protest based on the original retirement of the boat, the protest committee should extend the time limit and hear the protest.

If the boat did not act in good faith, such as, attempting to avoid being protested by first retiring and then rescinding that retirement, she breaks rule 2, Fair Sailing. Her breach may even be a gross breach of sportsmanship and justify a hearing under rule 69.

If the race committee did not reinstate her finishing position and she requests redress, the protest committee should consider if the original retirement was her own fault and if her action to rescind the retirement was timely. Especially if the retirement is rescinded after the end of the protest time limit, they may conclude that the race committee have made no error and they may also find that the score of RAF was not 'through no fault of her own' and refuse the request.

If the race committee do reinstate the boat and other boats in the fleet request redress then any such request should be refused as there is no error by the race committee.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2008-004

Revised: 12 January 2009

Question 1

Can the Yngling gybing line be considered 'the sheet' referred to in 42.3(c)?

Answer 1

The gybing line permitted by Yngling class rules is not 'the sheet' referred to in RRS 42.3(c).

Question 2

If the answer to Question 1 is 'yes' would the same answer apply if the traveller or vang was used to pump the mainsail?

Answer 2

Not applicable

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-001

Published: 09 January 2009

Question:

A supplier claims that application of its product "...has reduced the residual resistance, associated with drag viscous resistance, by 6%." Once applied, this "wax" will last about 60-80 hours of sailing.

Is the use of this product is allowed under the racing rules?

Answer:

Yes.

Rule 53 prohibits the specific action of releasing a substance into the water while racing. Using a preparation prior to racing that is removed by the water contact with the hull does not break rule 53.

Consideration of class rules may result in different answers.

Note:

- The name of the product has been removed from this Q&A and is not an endorsement of any product, rather an interpretation of rule 53 in regards to surface finishes that erode.
- This answer has been prepared in consultation with the ISAF Technical Department.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-002

Published: 09 January 2009

In a championship, there were 47 entries received, 44 paid but only 40 boats were present on site, had their equipment inspected and were scored at least once in a race (even if only as DNF...)

In Appendix A, boats are "scored points for the finishing place one more than the number of boats entered in the series".

The organising committee calculated scores based on 44 boats entered, and rejected the request of the class to score based on 40 boats entered. This affects the ranking of several competitors.

Question 1:

Does it comply with Appendix A to score 44 boats when only 40 were on site and passed the equipment control?

Answer 1:

For the purposes of rule A4.2, the number of boats entered in a series is the number of boats that have complied with the eligibility and entry requirements stated in the notice of race. Rule 75 refers. Any boat whose entry has been rejected or cancelled in accordance with rule 76 shall be deducted from this number.

Question 2:

In case of a split into Gold and Silver is it correct to use 44 boats (i.e. 22 in Gold and 22 in Silver)? This would create a Gold Fleet with 22 and a Silver Fleet with 18 boats?

Answer 2:

The Racing Rules of Sailing do not state any requirement for a split of the entries into two or more fleets. There is guidance in the optional appendix LE. Any split is entirely a matter for sailing instructions and should be described in detail there.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-003

Published: 09 January 2009

Question:

Where is the starting area, how big is it, when does it exist and when does it cease to exist?

Answer:

The sailing instructions may define the starting area for a particular event, and may place restrictions on entering it. When the term is not explained in the sailing instructions, it has the meaning 'ordinarily understood in nautical or general use' (See Introduction to the Racing Rules of Sailing). The 'starting area' will normally be the area where boats will sail between their preparatory signal and starting signal.

When all boats in all the starts in a starting sequence have started and left the area around the starting line, the starting area ceases to exist unless something else is written into the rules for the event or races have been abandoned.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-004

Published: 09 January 2009

Question 1:

W gets increasingly closer to L. They are overlapped on the same tack. There is no contact. L protests under rule 11. In deciding whether W has kept clear, how is the protest committee to decide whether contact after a hypothetical course change by L is 'immediate'? A very gentle change of course might not result in contact for several seconds. A substantial movement of the helm might result in contact in less than a second.

Answer 1:

The protest committee should consider facts, such as distance between the boats, wind and sea conditions and the manoeuvrability of the boats, to decide if W kept clear. The shorter the time between L's change of course and contact, or the risk thereof, the more likely W did not keep clear at the time of L's change of course.

Question 2:

W gets increasingly closer to L. They are overlapped on the same tack. L changes course, and there is contact. L protests under rule 11, and W protests under rule 16.1. The protest committee decides that the contact was immediate. What is the decision?

Answer 2:

When there was (immediate) contact W failed to *keep clear* as per the definition. The decision will be to disqualify W for breaking rule 11.

When L changed course, she had an obligation under rule 16.1 to give W *room* to *keep clear*. If W had *room* to increase the separation between the boats, but made no attempt to do so, then L had complied with rule 16.1.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-005

Published: 09 January 2009

Question 1

Based on the facts described in Case 45, would the decision of the protest committee be different, if X had lodged -parallel to its request for redress- a valid protest against Y and all other "hook-finishing" boats for breaking rule 28.1, with special regard to the "string rule" and the word "finish" in the first sentence of the rule?

Answer 1

The protest committee could have disqualified all boats that complied with the invalid sailing instruction, and then initiated redress for them based on their score being made significantly worse by the improper action of the race committee in altering a definition in the sailing instructions. Complying with the invalid sailing instruction led them to break rule 28.1 by failing to finish in accordance with the definition, and their action was therefore through no fault of their own.

Question 2

Would it be correct to say that Y and all "hook-finishing" boats cannot be exonerated for breaking rule 28.1, because they were not compelled by another boat to break the rule, as required by rule 64.1(b)?

Answer 2

Yes, the boats cannot be exonerated. However, they can be given redress as they were misled by the improper action of the race committee.

Question 3

If the protest committee decided that all the mentioned boats should to be disqualified for breaking rule 28.1, could they have requested redress under rule 62.1, or would it be their own fault as they should have known that the SI was invalid because it changed the definition "finish"?

Answer 3

The boats could have requested redress - see answer to Q1 above.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-006

Published: 09 January 2009

Situation

In a race all boats sailed the wrong course. Rather than sailing a trapezoid inner course as signalled by the race committee, all boats sailed an outer course. After the finish, the race committee protested the entire fleet. The protest committee found that none of the boats had sailed the course and disqualified all of the boats under rule 28.1.

Question

Should the race have been scored with all boats receiving a DSQ or should it have been abandoned?

Answer

There was a valid protest and the protest committee found as a fact that none of the boats had sailed the course in compliance with rule 28.1. Rule 90.3(a) allows a race to be scored only "... if one boat sails the course in compliance with rule 28.1 and *finishes* within the time limit...".

As rule 90.3(a) prohibits the race from being scored the protest committee must abandon the race instead of disqualifying the boats.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-007

Published: 09 January 2009

The following Questions have been answered without reference to any class rule. Consideration of class rules may result in different answers.

Question 1

Will any rope which is only used to support the hiking of a competitor be considered as a hiking strap as per rule 49.1?

Answer 1

No. However a rope used as described above would be a device as referred to in rule 49.1.

Question 2

Is it possible that a competitor uses more than one hiking strap at the same time?

Answer 2

Yes. In many boats the crew can use the toe/foot straps provided on either side of the boat at the same time. Class rules may restrict this activity.

Question 3

Will the device as shown in the picture below be considered as a hiking strap as per rule 49.1?

Answer 3

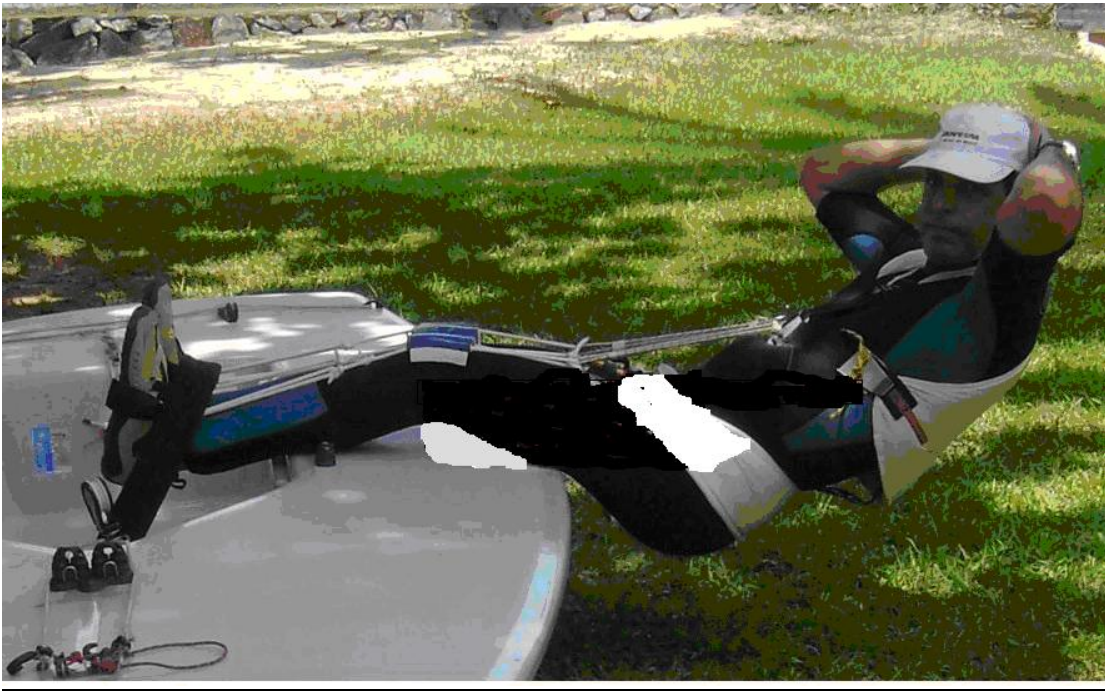
No – it is clearly a device designed to allow the body to be positioned outboard.

Question 4

Would the use of the device in the picture while racing break rule 49.1?

Answer 4

Yes. The arrangement may also be in breach of rule 43.1(b) as all the individual components of the device would be included in the term 'hiking harness'.



ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-008

Published: 09 January 2009

Question

For the purpose of rule 28, Sailing the Course, how should one understand 'side of a mark'?

Answer

For the purpose of rule 28, the required side of the mark is where the string representing the boat's track will be when the boat has sailed the course described in the sailing instructions. This applies even if the string is also looping a mark.

See also ISAF Cases 90, 106 and 108.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-009

Published: 09 January 2009

Situation

In an offshore race a fleet of eleven Hobie 16 catamarans passed through gate 1. Winds were light and variable except in squalls. Visibility at times was severely affected by the rain.

A sailing instruction stated that:-

“If in the sole discretion of the Race Committee, boats cannot be permitted for safety or other reasons to complete a leg of a course or it is not possible to finish a leg, boats will be scored at the time that they passed through the previous gate. This amends RRS 35 and Appendix A4.”

After discussion with the race officer the safety controller at the rear of the fleet was given discretion to stop racing with sufficient time to be able to pass dangerous reefs before nightfall. Accordingly half an hour after this discussion, towing commenced. Eight boats were taken under tow, some only accepting the tow on the basis that they were being instructed to stop racing. However from the time that the discussion with the race officer ashore had taken place all communication was lost between the race officer, the safety controller and safety boats at Gate 2.

Whilst the eight boats at the rear of the fleet were being taken under tow the three remaining boats continued to race.

After the eight boats had been taken under tow the three remaining boats passed through gate 2 which had still had no contact with the safety controller and the race officer. No abandonment, shorten course or other signals were shown as the three boats passed through gate 2. A safety boat at gate 2 advised the remaining three boats (out of sight of, or contact with the rest of the fleet) that the race was still in progress and stated that they could continue racing.

Boats were initially scored at the time they passed through gate 1 but then the scoring was changed to score the boats which passed gate 2 in the order they passed through gate 2 with other boats scored as for a retirement.

Following the change in scoring redress was requested by a boat in the second group of eight boats which had been instructed to take a tow. Redress was also requested by a boat in the leading group of three boats. Both parties were present, together with the race officer at the redress hearing.

Redress was granted because of errors and omissions made by the race committee. The protest committee decided to score the leg on the basis of the time and order of passage through gate 1 on the basis of the sailing instruction quoted above being fairest to all.

Question 1

Is there conflict between rule 4 and the sailing instruction quoted above?

Answer 1

No. The race committee may always shorten or abandon for safety reasons. Furthermore, in some circumstances and particularly with juniors, a sailing instruction that requires a boat to accept help when the race committee decides she is in need of help will be valid.

Question 2

Should the sailing instruction have also referred to rule 32?

Answer 2

Yes. The last sentence of rule 32.2 should have been specifically referred to, stating that rule 32.2 had been changed so that the course could be shortened after the first boat crossed the new finishing line.

Question 3

To make the intention of the race committee more clear, should there have been reference in the sailing instruction to the race being “shortened” at the previous gate.

Answer 3

Yes.

Question 4

Provided that there is a clear instruction in the sailing instructions can the race be shortened in this way without the use of flag or other signals.

Answer 4

Yes. The sailing instruction should include a reference to Race Signals ‘S’ and state the change.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-010

Published: 09 January 2009

Situation

In order to avoid contact with another boat or a mark, Yellow is forced to the wrong side of the mark when Blue fails to give her room to round or pass it. Yellow then continues on the next leg without returning and passing the mark on its required side.

Question

Can the protest committee conclude that this was a consequence of Blue breaking the rule requiring her to give room to Yellow, and exonerate Yellow under rule 64.1(c) for her breach of rule 28.1?

Answer

No.

A boat cannot be exonerated under rule 64.1(c) unless she was compelled to break the rule as a consequence of another boat breaking a rule. In this case, although Blue broke a rule when she did not give Yellow room at the mark, she did not compel Yellow to break any rule. Yellow could have passed the mark on its required side any time after the incident. Yellow did not break rule 28.1 until she finished.'

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-011

Published: 09 January 2009

Question:

When a protest committee in a fleet race, after hearing the parties and considering all evidence, comes to a judgement

- that the statements of the parties have the same credibility, and
- that the evidence presented by the parties and the evidence considered necessary by the protest committee (pro and contra) also have also the same credibility,

shall the protest committee then write this down as a fact (rule 63.6) and reject the protest?

Answer:

Rule 63.6 requires a protest committee to take evidence, to find facts and to base its decision on the facts found. Rule M3.3 expands on this and instructs protest committees to resolve doubts one way or the other, if necessary by calling the parties back for further questions.

Resolving doubts may not be easy but experienced judges should be able to ask relevant questions and gradually build up a picture or diagram of times, distances and courses that are the essential facts on which a decision can then be taken.

With the exception of rule 69 hearings, a protest committee has only to find that, on the balance of probabilities, one boat is more likely to have broken a rule than the other. When relevant, the following guidance is available to protest committees:

- (1) Rule 18.2(d) in the RRS gives guidance when the protest committee has reasonable doubt that a boat obtained or broke an overlap in time.
- (2) The umpiring principle of the last point of certainty is also to some extent valid in protest hearings.
- (3) In Case 50, a boat required to keep clear fails to do so if the right-of-way boat takes avoiding action because of a genuine and reasonable apprehension of a collision

The questioner's assertion that "if a protest committee writes down as a fact that after investigation of all reasonably available facts there is not enough evidence for the claim of the protestor" is misplaced. This is not a fact but a conclusion. Protest committees must be careful to distinguish between facts and conclusions, which are based on facts found.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-012

Published: 09 January 2009

Situation

At a rounding mark the race committee noticed a boat touching the mark. There were several other competitors near by, and it was obvious that they witnessed the touch. No protests were lodged and the offending boat did not take a One-Turn Penalty.

Question 1

What action should the race officer take?

Question 2

In the same scenario, would it be different if no other competitors were around at the time of the breach?

Answer

Sailing is a self policing sport. Boats are expected to promptly take a penalty when appropriate. The primary responsibility for protesting breaches of the rules is with the competitors, not the race officials.

A race committee should not normally protest for a breach of rule 31 unless that breach appears to be an apparent breach of good sportsmanship (rule 2). Examples are:

- deliberately touching the mark in order to gain an advantage
- failing to take a penalty after knowingly touching a mark

If the race committee is satisfied that the boat knew it touched a mark and took no penalty and did not protest another boat (for causing the incident), the race committee should protest even if other boats are in the vicinity. Those other boats may well have been focused on their own mark rounding and missed the incident.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-013

Published: 09 January 2009

Situation

The notice of race specifies that there shall be three rankings for an event: Boy's, Girl's and Team Overall. The Team Overall ranking would be made by adding the final scores of the competitors of each team.

The race committee ranked the teams first, second and third as follows:

		Individual place	Total score
Team A –	Girl A1	1	6
	Girl A2	2	
	Boy A1	1	
	Boy A2	2	
Team B –	Girl B1	6	28
	Girl B2	9	
	Boy B1	7	
	Boy B2	6	
Team C -	Girl C1	5	29
	Girl C2	7	
	Boy C1	5	
	Boy C2	11	

By calculating using the individual race scores, the result would have been as follows:

		Individual Race Score	Total Score
Team A –	Girl A1	9	63
	Girl A2	16	
	Boy A1	17	
	Boy A2	21	
Team C –	Girl C1	48	225
	Girl C2	53	
	Boy C1	58	
	Boy C2	66	
Team B –	Girl B1	50	231
	Girl B2	67	
	Boy B1	57	
	Boy B2	57	

Question

Did the race committee comply with the notice of race when it determined each sailor's individual score as their ranking places and not as their individual points?

Answer

No. Under rule A4 (Low point and Bonus Point Systems), a boat is scored points according to finishing place in each race. Rule A2 states that a boat's series score (final score) shall be the total of her race scores, excluding any discards.

The notice of race specifies that the Team Overall ranking would be made by adding the final scores of the competitors of each team. To establish the Team Overall Ranking, the race committee should have added the number of points each boat had in the series and not their positions in the ranking list.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-014

Published: 09 January 2009

Question

A catamaran on port tack approaches a leeward mark to be left to port. Does a catamaran that "flies" its port (windward) hull over, and possibly to windward of, a leeward mark comply with the requirements of rule 28.1 in relation to that mark rounding? The starboard hull is the only hull in the water (creating a track) and this hull passes the mark correctly.

Answer

Yes.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-015

Published: 21 January 2009

Situation

At a Match Racing regatta the sailing instructions state

“Rule 32 is deleted and replaced with: ‘After the starting signal the RC may abandon or shorten any match for any reason, after consulting with the match umpires when practical.’”

The Race Committee subsequently abandons a match when the lead boat is within a few boat lengths of crossing the finishing line.

When the match umpires enquire why the race was abandoned, the race officer states “the Organising Authority directed me to abandon as the local team was not going to win the match.”

Question

Does the abandonment of the race by the race committee constitute an improper action in terms of rule 62.1(a)?

Answer

Yes.

A race committee must be impartial and conduct the racing of all matches in good faith and in the best interests of all the competitors and the regatta as a whole.

The “*any reason*” provided in the sailing instructions can be anything the race committee sees as contributing towards a practicable, fair and equal competition and allows the race committee to handle issues as they arise as expeditiously as possible.

The decision to abandon lies solely with the race committee, although they are required to consult with the match umpires when practical. Provided the race committee acts impartially and in good faith when deciding to abandon a match, that action cannot be considered to be improper.

In this particular case however, the organising authority and the race committee have not acted impartially or in good faith. They have deliberately acted to assist one local competitor against all others and that action is both unfair to all other competitors and improper.

The Chief Umpire should include this incident in the ISAF report form including the identity of the Race Officer.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



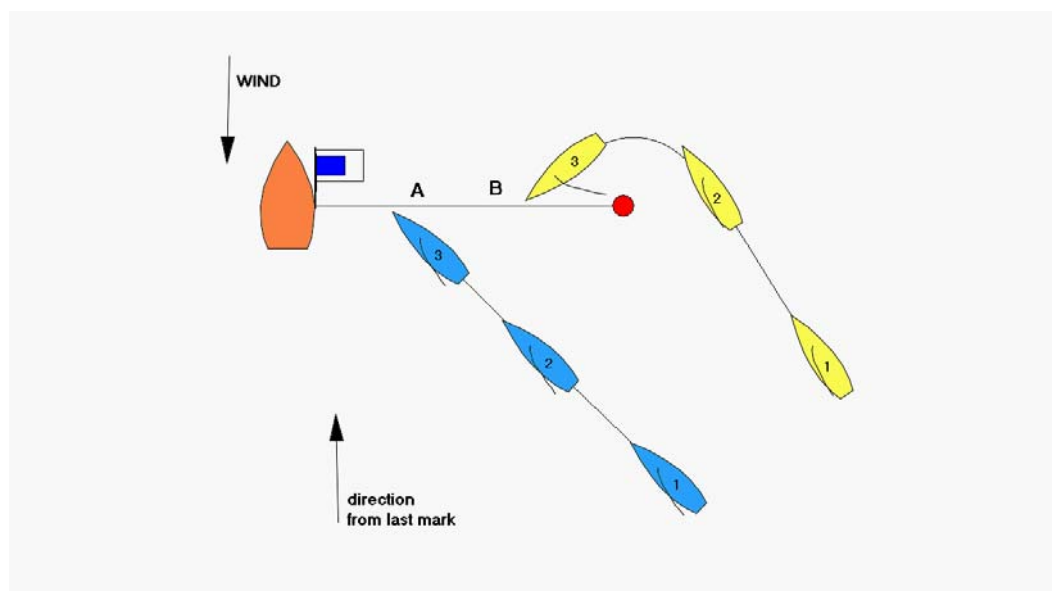
Q&A 2009-016

Published: 21 January 2009

Situation

According to the Sailing Instructions marks were to be left to port. Due to insufficient wind the race committee shortened the course by displaying flag S with two sounds at a staff on a committee boat near the windward mark.

Due to bad anchoring conditions at the starboard side of the mark the committee anchored the boat at the port side of the windward mark and so laid the finishing line at the “wrong side” of the mark.



Question 1

Are boats after the race committee has shortened the course still required to leave the mark to port and make a hook round finish as boat B (yellow) in the diagram, or is this mark no longer a rounding mark but a finishing mark so that boats are required to cross the finishing line in the direction of the course from the last mark as boat A (blue) in the diagram?

Answer 1

Because the race committee has signaled a shortened course, the mark is now a finishing mark rather than a rounding mark, and boats must cross the finishing line in the direction of the course from the last mark in accordance with the definition Finish. In the diagram, boat A finishes correctly.

Question 2

Could the protest committee consider laying the finishing line at the “wrong side” of the mark an improper action of the race committee, refer to case 45 *Revised 2007* and decide to score all the boats in the order they crossed the finishing line without regard to the direction in which they crossed it?

Answer 2

No. As long as the line clearly is at an angle to the course from the last mark, the definition Finish gives the correct finishing direction, irrespective of which side the finishing vessel is situated.

Had the race committee issued a sailing instruction that required the boats to cross the finishing line from the wrong direction, that would have been an improper action, and redress could have been considered (see ISAF Case 45).

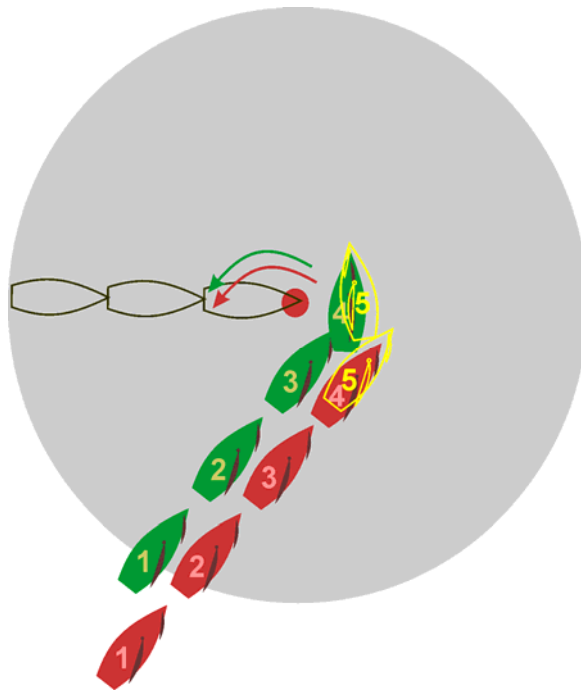
ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-017

Published: 27 January 2009

Situation



Two port-tack-boats are overlapped approaching the windward mark that should be rounded on port. The windward and inside boat (Green) is tacking to round the mark on her proper course. After Green passes head to wind (position 5), there is a minor contact between Green and Red.

The following comments have been made by the questioner leading to his questions below:

Up to position 4, Red has to give mark-room because of rule 18.2(a).

Mark-room includes the room to tack for the inside windward overlapped boat (see definition Mark-Room). After passing head to wind, the boats are not overlapped and rule 18.2(a) ceases to apply and rule 18.2(b) ceases to apply (See last sentence of rule 18.2(c)).

Question 1:

Does the outside boat (Red) break rule 18.2(a)?

Answer 1:

No.

It is clear from the diagram that when the first boat (Green) reaches the zone, she is either overlapped inside Red or she is clear ahead of Red. In either case, rule 18.2(b) applies and requires Red to give Green mark-room. Red breaks rule 18.2(b) at position 4, while the boats are on the same tack.

Question 2:

Is the breach of rule 13 by the inside boat (Green) exonerated by rule 18.5(a) or 18.5(b)?

Answer 2:

Green is exonerated under rule 18.5(b). Her breach of rule 13 (a rule of section A) while rounding the mark on her proper course results from Red's failure to give her mark-room while rule 18 applied.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-018

Published: 26 January 2009

Situation:

A finishing line has two marks and two zones and a boat must pass between the marks.

Question 1:

Under the 2009 - 2012 rules, in particular rule 18.4, is a finishing line considered a 'gate'?

Answer 1:

No.

Question 2:

If the course is shortened at the leeward gate, is the finishing line a 'gate'?

Answer 2:

No. Rule 32.2 changes the marks of the gate into marks of the finishing line.

Rule 18.4 would only be relevant at a finishing mark when an inside overlapped right-of-way boat must gybe to sail her proper course.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-019

Published: 26 January 2009

Situation:

Fetching

A boat is *fetching* a *mark* when she is in a position to pass to windward of it and leave it on the required side without changing tack.

Question 1

Is there any distance limitation from the mark when the boat approaches it (let's say from one mile away)? Is she fetching the mark?

Answer 1

The definition Fetching does not include any distance limitation. A boat may be fetching a mark from one mile away.

In either of the two rules using the defined term Fetching, one boat must be fetching for that rule to apply between two boats. Whilst a boat may be fetching from a long distance, rules 18.3 and 20.3 will only become relevant if the boats referred to in the rule using the term are in close proximity to each other and a mark.

Question 2

Does the term "fetching" include only the approaching action of the boat from any distance?

Answer 2

The definition Fetching is based on a boat's position, and not on any action she is taking. It addresses a boat's ability to pass to windward of a mark from her current position. It is satisfied if the boat can pass to windward and on the required side of the mark without changing tack. The approach of the boat and how the boat passes the mark are the facts that a protest committee can use to determine if a boat was fetching the mark.

Question 3

Or does it include the action of passing the mark as well?

Answer 3

See the answer to question 2.

Question 4

If the answer to Question 3 is yes, does it include the whole rounding manoeuvre of the boat?

Answer 4

See the answer to question 2.

Question 5

If the answer to question 2 is yes, how and by whom can a dispute based on contradictory statements in a protest hearing be decided?

Answer 5

See the answer to question 2.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-020

Published: 11 February 2009

Situation:

Boat B is required to give boat A mark-room and gives mark-room.
Boat A is rounding the mark on her proper course.

Thereby boat A sails a collision course with a third boat C, that is not required to give A mark-room, and boat A breaks a rule of Section A or rule 15 or 16.

Question:

Is A exonerated by rule 18.5(b)?

Answer

The answer to your question would depend on the relationship between the 3 boats in the situation indicated above, including where each of them are in relation to the mark, their course to it and or away from it and their obligations to each other leading up to the collision.

It could be that rule 18.5(b) may apply in one or more circumstances but to answer your question as posed above with either a Yes or a No would not always be correct in all circumstances and could be misleading to you and to others reading the Q&A. For example, rule 64.1(c) might be applicable rather than rule 18.5(b) if A was compelled by C to break a rule, and in other circumstances A may even be penalised.

The Q&A Panel would therefore appreciate it if you could supply some further information, including a diagram if possible, of the situation as you see it that has caused you to ask this question so the panel can look at it again for you.

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Deleted Q&A's 2009

The following Q&A's have been removed from the ISAF website and been deleted with effect of 1 January 2009.

2007-002
2007-005
2007-007

2006-001
2006-004

2005-002
2005-004
2005-005
2005-007

2004-003

2003-008

2001-005