

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-012

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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.

All published answers are based upon the 2009-2012 Racing Rules of Sailing