

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2010-008

Published: 15 February 2010

Question:

Is a boat entitled to pass as close to any mark as she pleases without getting entangled with its ground tackle? If a boat gets entangled and thereby loses time, prejudicing her finishing position, is she entitled to redress?

The Race Management Manual emphasizes the obligation of race committees to lay marks in such a way that boats cannot get caught, but there is a view that a boat must take some responsibility, and if she gets caught on the ground tackle she is partly at fault, which would deprive her from the possibility of getting redress ('... through no fault of her own...')

Answer

Current, wind, water depth, tidal range, the type of mark, its weighting and the characteristics of the boat passing it can all affect the possibility of entanglement with a mark's ground tackle. Good seamanship requires a boat to make allowance for these to the best of her ability, and she should not assume that it will always be safe to pass as close to the mark as is physically possible. This will also affect the amount of mark-room from other boats to which she is entitled. The less she can show she took these factors into consideration, the more likely it will be that she was at fault.

For a boat that gets entangled in a mark's ground tackle to be entitled to redress under rule 62.1(a), there must first be an improper action or omission by the race committee. This will be so only if there is a risk of entanglement that boats could not reasonably be expected to anticipate and the race committee could clearly have done something different that would have avoided or substantially reduced this risk