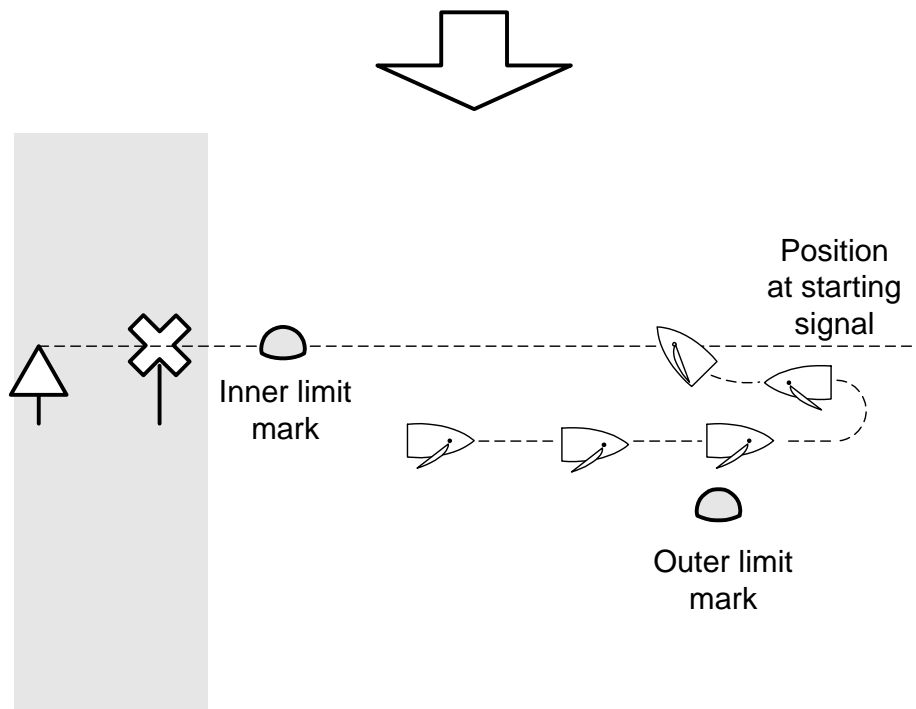## The Case Book

New Case

A submission from the Royal Yachting Association

Proposal:

Rule 28, Sailing the Course

A starting limit mark does not have a required side for a boat when it is laid on the pre-start side of, and more than a boat-length from, the starting line.

Summary of the facts

The sailing instructions said that the starting line was a transit with an inner limit mark and an outer limit mark, and that boats were to pass between those marks while approaching the line to start.

Highlander sailed a course when starting that did not take her between the limit marks when approaching the line to start. The outer limit mark was two boat-lengths to leeward of the starting line. She was protested, was disqualified, and appealed.

Decision

The appeal is upheld. *Highlander* is to be reinstated.

The limit marks were starting marks. Rule 28.2 requires a starting mark to be left on the required side when approaching the starting line to start. The effect of the sailing instruction was that the outer limit mark was to be left to starboard at that time. It is the 'string test' in

rule 28.1 that decides whether this requirement has been met, and the 'string test' does not begin to apply until a boat starts. Therefore, the beginning of a boat's wake will be at most one boat-length on the pre-start side of the starting line. As a result, the string cannot be said to lie on any side of a starting limit mark when that mark is more than one boat-length on the pre-start side of the starting line.

Case RYA 2006/2

Current Position:

None

Reason:

The 'string test' decides whether a mark has been rounded or passed correctly. As the test begins when a boat starts, then any object more than a boat-length from the starting line cannot have the string test applied to it, and so cannot be said to have a required side. The case is consistent with Case 58 which deals with a finishing mark. Both cases show that care is needed in laying of starting and finishing limit marks. Starting line problems are more common than finishing line problems, and so the case gives useful additional guidance.