

Racing Rules of Sailing

Rule 21

A submission from US Sailing

Purpose

To give current rule 21(b) its intended effect, and to simplify the layout and wording of rule 21.

Proposal

21 EXONERATION

When a boat is sailing within the *room* or *mark-room* to which she is entitled, she shall be exonerated if, in an incident with a boat required to give her that *room* or *mark-room*, ~~(a)~~ she breaks a rule of Section A, **or** rule 15, ~~or rule 16, or 31.~~

~~(b) — she is compelled to break rule 31.~~

Clean Copy of Proposal

21 EXONERATION

When a boat is sailing within the *room* or *mark-room* to which she is entitled, she shall be exonerated if, in an incident with a boat required to give her that *room* or *mark-room*, she breaks a rule of Section A or rule 15, 16 or 31.

Current Position

As above.

Reason

1. Current rule 21(b) does not have its intended effect in the following situation: W and L are running toward a leeward mark on port tack. Both boats are required to leave the mark to port. They are overlapped at the zone with W inside L. W hails 'Mark-room' when she reaches the zone. When she is one length from the mark, it is not clear to her that L will give her mark-room as she rounds the mark, so she hails 'Mark-room' a second time. W sails between L and the mark and, because there is not quite enough space for her between L and the mark, she touches the mark. W protests L for breaking rule 18.2(b). The protest committee finds that L has broken rule 18.2(b) and disqualifies L for that breach. The committee also finds that W has broken rule 31 and decides that she is not exonerated under either rule 21(b) or 64.1(a) because she was not compelled to hit the mark. The committee notes that, when W was one length from the mark and it was not clear that L would give her mark-room at the mark, W could

have left the mark to starboard. For that reason, the committee concludes that W was not 'compelled' to touch the mark. The intent of rule 21(b), just like rule 21(a), is that a boat entitled to mark-room will be exonerated if she breaks rule 31 while sailing within mark-room to which she is entitled. For this reason, rule 21 should treat rule 31 exactly as it treats the rules of Section A and rules 15 and 16.

2. The change simplifies rule 21 by making the criterion for its application the same whenever a boat breaks a rule of Section A or rule 15, 16 or 31 while sailing within room or mark-room to which she is entitled. The current rule has a different criterion for its application when a boat breaks rule 31 from the criterion for its application when she breaks a rule of Section A or rule 15 or 16.
 3. The change in rule 21 allows a simpler format by removing the need for sub-paragraphs (a) and (b).
 4. Two other submissions from US Sailing deal with exoneration. One of these proposes a change in the Basic Principle, Sportsmanship and the Rules, and the other proposes changes in current rules 21 and 64.1(a).
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