

Racing Rules of Sailing

Rule 42.3(c)

A submission from US SAILING

Purpose or Objective

To bring rule 42.3(c) into line with current actions and expectations of competitors and with the penalties currently given by on-water Appendix P judges.

Proposal

42.3 Exceptions

- (c) Except on a beat to windward, when surfing (rapidly accelerating down the **front** ~~leeward~~ side of a wave) or planing is possible, the boat's crew may pull the sheet and the guy controlling any sail in order to initiate surfing or planing, but only once for each wave or gust of wind.

Current Position

As above.

Reasons

If a wave is travelling from north to south, both oceanographers and sailors refer to its south side as its 'front side'. That is the side of the wave that, when the wave is high enough, is surfable. The other side of the wave is referred to as its 'back side'.

Current rule 42.3(c) defines surfing as rapidly accelerating down the leeward side of a wave. Therefore, the current rule permits pulling the sheet to initiate surfing only on waves that are moving in approximately the same direction as the wind. However, the rule was not intended to limit surfing only to waves travelling in the same direction as the wind. There are times when a wave large enough to initiate surfing is not travelling in the direction of the wind. It is often possible to rapidly accelerate down the front side of a wave when the front side is not the leeward side of the wave. This frequently occurs when the wave is caused by a passing spectator boat or by waves left over from a strong wind that previously was blowing from a different direction than the current wind. Pulling the sheet and guy on such a wave would not be protested by most competitors or penalized by most on-water Appendix P judges.

The proposed change would permit pulling the sheet and guy while on the front side of any wave large enough to rapidly accelerate the boat down that side of the wave. The change would result in the rule that was intended and one that permits pulling the sheet and guy at times that most judges and competitors think it is appropriate to allow that action.
