Racing Rules of Sailing

Rule C2.4, 13.2

A submission from the Match Racing Committee

Purpose or Objective

To define when a boat is no longer gybing under RRS C2.4 (13.2)

Proposal

C2.4 Rule 13 is changed

13 WHILE TACKING OR GYBING

13.2 After the foot of the mainsail of a boat sailing downwind crosses the centreline she shall keep clear of other boats until her mainsail has filled or she is no longer sailing downwind.

Current Position

As above.

Reasons

The rule has been interpreted to define the end of the gybe when the mainsail has filled no matter what the course of the boat is. However, when circling and especially with some kind of boats and in some wind conditions, it is not unusual that the mainsail never fills and the boat is close hauled or higher and, under the current rule, she is still gybing which seems not to be the common nautical sense of gybing.

The intent of RRS C2.4 (13.2) was to keep boats separated while gybing and to prevent contact. That intent is still fulfilled under the proposed change but the change eliminates the unintended consequence of having a boat that has gybed, but never filled its mainsail, at close-hauled or above on starboard tack, still subject to the rule and having to keep clear of a boat on port tack.

Please see Rapid Response Call 2011/003, below.

RAPID RESPONSE MATCH RACING CALL 2011/003
Rule C2.4 While Gybing
**Question**
Yellow gybes and continues luffing on starboard tack, but her mainsail never fills. Is Yellow required to keep clear of Blue under rule C2.4 (13.2), even after she gets to a close-hauled course?

**Answer**
Yes.
The term ‘a boat sailing downwind’ in rule C2.4 (13.2) indicates a condition for when the rule begins to apply. The boat subject to this rule shall keep clear of other boats until her mainsail fills, irrespective of heading.

*Published July 11 This call is valid until 1 January 2012*