**Racing Rules of Sailing**

New Case Definition Keep Clear, Rules 16, 20.1

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

**Purpose**

To propose a new case based on an ISAF Q&A that interprets the meaning of ‘course’ and ‘change course’, as used in rules 16 and 20.1 and in the definition Keep Clear.

**Proposal**

Insert a new Case as follows:

**CASE XXX**

**Definitions, Keep Clear**

**Rule 16, Changing Course**

**Rule 20.1, Room to tack at an Obstruction: Hailing**

A boat changes course when the direction that she is moving changes. A boat can change course even though the direction in which her bow is pointing does not change.

**Question 1**

What is the meaning of ‘course’ as the term is used in rules 16 and 20.1 and in the definition Keep Clear?

**Answer 1**

In the context of rules 16 and 20.1 and the definition Keep Clear, ‘course’ is the direction in which a boat is moving.

**Assumed Facts for Question 2**

Boat A has been moving forward slowly. The direction in which A was moving was 0°. Without changing the direction in which her bow is pointing, A begins to move astern. The direction in which A is moving is then 180°.

**Question 2**

When A begins to move astern, does she change course?

**Answer 2**

Yes. While A was moving forward her course was 0°. After she begins to move astern, her course is 180°. She has changed course by 180°, even though the direction in which her bow was pointing did not change. Similarly, if a boat has been moving astern and then, without changing the direction in which her bow is pointing, begins to move forward, she has changed course.
Assumed Facts for Question 3

The wind is from the north. In the last minute before the start, boat A is sailing close-hauled on starboard tack, moving directly northwest (315°). Without changing the direction in which her bow is pointing, A eases her sheets, her sails luff and her speed decreases. Then she trims her sheets, fills her sails and begins to regain speed. Initially she makes leeway and the direction in which she is moving is 295°, even though the direction in which her bow is pointing has not changed.

Question 3
When A begins to make leeway, does she change course?

Answer 3
Yes. Even though the direction in which her bow was pointing does not change, her course changes from 315° to 295°.

Assumed Facts for Question 4

The wind is from the north. Shortly before the start, boat A is overlapped to leeward of boat B. Both boats are moving forward slowly on starboard tack directly northwest (315°). Then A backs her mainsail and positions her rudder so that, without changing the direction in which her bow is pointing, her hull slowly moves forward and sideways, closing the gap between her and B. After A backs her mainsail, the direction in which she is moving is 335°.
Question 4
When A begins to move forward and sideways, does she change course?

Answer 4
Yes. Even though the direction in which her bow was pointing does not change, her course changes from 315° to 335°.

Current Position
None. The case is new.

Reasons
1. At its November 2012 meeting, the Racing Rules Committee (RRC) asked the Case Book Working Party (CBWP) to prepare a new case based on a Q&A, which at that time was Q&A M 006. The CBWP complied with that request by preparing Submission 129-13. That submission was discussed during the RRC’s November 2013 meeting, and a number of matters were raised that suggested (1) that the proposed case had flaws, (2) that it could be improved and (3) that it should be expanded to answer an additional question. After that discussion, Submission 129-13 was withdrawn.

2. This submission proposes a rewritten and expanded case which addresses the issues raised during the 2013 RRC discussion.

3. The Q&A that in 2012 was numbered Q&A M 006 is still in the Q&A Booklet, but it is now numbered Q&A M 002. The proposed case is based in part on that Q&A.