Racing Rules of Sailing

New Team Racing Call

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Purpose or Objective

To interpret the meaning of 'as necessary to sail the course'.

Proposal

Rule 18.2 Giving Mark-Room
Definitions Mark-Room

Question

When Y enters the zone of a leeward mark B and Y are overlapped on starboard tack with Y inside. Y is subject to rule 17. After position 3, Y gybes to round the mark. B gybes at the same time into an overlap outside of Y. As Y is passing the mark, B luffs her above the course to the next mark. Y responds promptly and keeps clear. There is a protest. What should the call be?
Answer

Option 1
Penalize B.

When Y enters the zone she is overlapped inside B and rule 18.2(b) requires B to give Y mark-room thereafter. Y is entitled to room to sail to the mark and room to round it as necessary to sail the course. At position 5, when B luffs Y above her course to the next mark, Y is still passing the mark and remains entitled to mark-room. B fails to give Y mark-room and breaks rule 18.2(b).

Option 2
No penalty.

When Y enters the zone she is overlapped inside B and rule 18.2(b) requires B to give Y mark-room thereafter. Y is entitled to room to round the mark as necessary to sail the course. This is the room Y needs to comply with rule 28 and, after she gybes, she sails within this mark-room. B gives Y this room and room for Y to keep clear as required by rule 16.1. B breaks no rule.

Current Position
None

Reasons

Reasons for Option 1

Room to round the mark as required to sail the course’ means room to go from the course a boat was on before she got to the mark, to the course she needs to sail in order to get to the next mark. After Y responds to the luff by B, she is not on the course she needs to sail to get to the next mark because B is not giving her room to go to that course.

Room must be given until (current) rule 18.2(d) comes into effect.

The obligation under rule 18.2(b) to give a boat room to sail the course to the mark is no different than giving her room to sail the course required to round the mark as necessary to sail the course.

Reasons for Option 2

The words “room to round the mark as necessary to sail the course” mean, in this case, room to round the mark as necessary to leave the mark to port. It does not mean room for the inside boat to sail her proper course.

The principle may be stated as: "Room to round the mark as necessary to sail the course" is the room a boat needs to comply with rule 28 at that mark.

The Team Racing Rules working party received the above diagram and question as a request for a rapid response call with the proposed answer to penalize B as in option 1. The working party rejected the proposed call by 6 votes to 3 and prepared option 2 with its recommended answer. The reason is that Y has been given "room to round the mark as necessary to sail the course" (as definition Mark-Room) and the words 'sail the course' logically refer to rule 28. This answer is easy to interpret for competitors and, in the view of the working party, it continues the long established
game. Penalizing B would change the game unnecessarily. Option 2 is also entirely consistent with the approved 2021 definition ‘Sail the course’.

This call is similar to Case 144 but critically different as, in this scenario, it is the inside boat Y which is entitled to mark-room. The answer may need to be reviewed when final decisions are known for the 2021 versions of the definition Mark-Room and rule 18.

RRC is requested to decide the matter noting that the rules for team racing and fleet racing in this scenario are identical.