Racing Rules of Sailing

New Case

A submission from the Royal Yachting Association

Purpose or Objective

To provide a simple and clear statement of the obligations of boats after a hail for room to tack.

Proposal

Delete existing Case 10 and replace with this new case.

NEW CASE FOR RRS 2017 TO 2020

Based on rule 20, amended as proposed by submission 175-15, Rule 20 and Terminology.

If approved, this new case is to take effect from 1 January 2017

CASE XXX

Rule 20, Room to Tack at an Obstruction

Assumed facts for Question 1

L and W are close hauled on starboard tack. L is on a collision course with P, a boat racing, close hauled on port tack. L hails W for room to tack; W responds and protests.

Question 1

How does rule 20 apply to this situation?

Answer 1

Although there is risk of collision between L and P, P is not an obstruction to L because L is not required to keep clear of her. Neither is P an obstruction to W.
At the time L hails for room to tack, she is not approaching an obstruction and she breaks rule 20.1(a).

Rule 20.2(b) requires W to respond to the hail even if the requirements of rule 20.1 are not met. Therefore, W must either tack as soon as possible or hail “you tack” and then give room for L to tack and avoid her. When W responds, L must tack as soon as possible. W responds by tacking and breaks no rule.

**Assumed facts for Question 2**

L and W are reaching along the start line on port tack. L is on a collision course with S, approaching the line close hauled on starboard tack. L hails W for room to tack. W responds and protests.

**Question 2**

How does rule 20 apply to this situation?

**Answer 2**

S is an obstruction to both W and L.

At the time L hails for room to tack, she is approaching an obstruction and will need to make a substantial course change to avoid it. However, because she is not sailing close-hauled or above she breaks rule 20.1(b).

As in answer 1, rule 20.2(b) requires W to respond to the hail even if the requirements of rule 20.1 are not met. Therefore, W must either tack as soon as possible or hail “you tack” and then give room for L to tack and avoid her. W responds by tacking and breaks no rule. If L fails to tack, and for example sails astern of S, she also breaks rule 20.2(d).

**Current Position**

Case 10, temporarily withdrawn in early 2013.

**Reasons**

1. The scenario in Case 10 is obscure and some experts think it could not happen. In addition, the interpretation in Case 10 is disputed. As a consequence, there is a 2015 submission to
revise rule 20 and this new case is intended to provide a simple, clear and authoritative interpretation of the revised rule.