

World Sailing Racing Rules Question and Answer Service

Q&A 2020.001

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Question 1

In a breeze of 20-25 knots, two Lasers are sailing on a reach, on starboard tack, overlapped, with one boat length between them. While the windward boat is keeping clear, the leeward boat's rudder breaks, she luffs sharply and there is contact with damage between the boats.

Did any of the boats break rule 14?

Answer 1

When the leeward, right-of-way boat changed course without giving the windward, keep-clear boat room to keep clear, she broke rule 16.1 and, since there was contact, rule 14. The fact that she was out of control is not relevant. See case 99. It was not reasonably possible for the windward boat to avoid the contact; therefore, she did not break rule 14.

Question 2

In a breeze of 20-25 knots, two Lasers are sailing on a reach. The boat clear ahead capsizes. The boat clear astern, two boat lengths behind, tries to avoid but there is contact with damage between the boats. Did any of the boats break rule 14?

Answer 2

It is not possible for a Laser to capsize on a reach without changing course, therefore, when the clear ahead Laser capsized on a reach, her course certainly changed. When the clear ahead, right-of-way boat changed course without giving the clear astern, keep-clear boat room to keep clear, she broke rule 16.1 and, since there was contact, rule 14. The fact that she was out of control is not relevant. See case 99. It was not reasonably possible for the clear astern boat to avoid contact; therefore, she did not break rule 14. Additionally, it was not possible for the clear astern boat to avoid the capsized boat; therefore, she did not break rule 23.

Question 3

In a breeze of 20-25 knots two Lasers are overlapped on a reach with four boat lengths between them. The windward boat becomes clear ahead and capsizes two boat lengths ahead of the other boat, who tries to avoid but there is contact with damage between the boats. Did any of the boats break rule 14?

Answer 3

See answer 2.