

Racing Rules of Sailing

New Case based on Q&A B004

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Purpose or Objective

To propose a new case based on an ISAF Q&A.

Proposal

CASE XXX

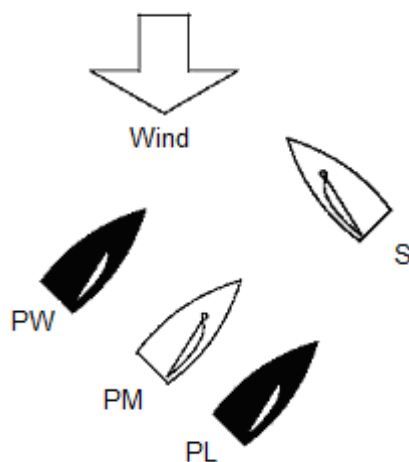
Definition, Obstruction

Definition, Room

Rule 19.2(b), Room to Pass an Obstruction: Giving Room at an Obstruction

Rule 21(a), Exoneration

When an outside overlapped boat is required to give room to one or more inside boats to pass an obstruction, the space she gives must be sufficient to permit all the inside boats to comply with their obligations under the rules of Part 2.



Assumed Facts

Boats PW, PM and PL are close-hauled and overlapped on port tack. Boat S is close-hauled on starboard tack. PW is on a collision course with S. PM and PL do not need to change course, to pass safely astern of S. PW bears away to pass astern of S without making contact, and PM bears away to give her just enough space to do so. PL holds her course and there is a contact between PM and PL, without damage or injury. No boat takes a penalty. PM protests PL.

Question

How do the rules apply to this incident and which boat or boats should be disqualified?

Answer

S was an obstruction to PW, PM and PL because each of them would need to change course substantially if she were sailing directly towards S and were one hull length from S, and because they all were required by rule 10 to keep clear of S (see definition Obstruction). PL had the right under rule 19.2(a) to choose to pass S on either side because she had right of way over both PM and PW. However, PL was not entitled to hail for room to tack under rule 20 because she did not need to change course to avoid S (see rule 20.1(a)). As PL passed astern of S, rule 19.2(b) required PL to give room to both PM and PW to pass between her and S. Rule 19.2(b) also required PM to give PW room.

The space that PL was required to give to PM and PW included enough space for PM to give PW room and for PM to keep clear of PL, as well as space for PW to keep clear of both S and PM (see the definition Room). PL did not give that space. Therefore, she broke rule 19.2(b), and should be disqualified. PL also broke rule 14 as, had she given PM and PL enough space, the contact could have been avoided. However, because PL had right of way over PM and there was no damage or injury, PL is exonerated under rule 14(b) for her breach of rule 14.

PM broke rule 11, but she is exonerated under rule 21(a) because she was sailing within the room to which she was entitled under rule 19.2(b). PM did not break rule 14 because it was not possible for her to have avoided making contact either with PL or with PW.

Current Position

None. The case is new. However, it is based on current ISAF Q&A B004.

Reason

To comply with an item in the minutes of the 2012 Racing Rules Committee meeting in Dublin by proposing a new case based on current ISAF Q&A B004. At that meeting, the Racing Rules Committee recommended that that Q&A was sufficiently helpful and interesting to competitors and officials that it be proposed as a new case.
