

Summary of rules pertaining to September 3, 2022

The Racing Rules of Sailing provide a framework for sailing rights while racing. There are times when incidents arise that provide an opportunity to examine the rules to enhance and expand our understanding. We had such an incident during the One Design morning race of the Mayor's Cup.

At the Start of the first one-design race on September 3, 2022, in very light winds Flying Scot 5877 (Boat "A") was on port tack but claimed they were becalmed. Flying Scot 3076 (Boat "B") had momentum and approached boat "A" on starboard tack calling for rights. Boat "A" hailed "what can I do - becalmed no steerage" Boat "B" steered away but made contact with boat "A's" starboard side amidships, with the corner of their stern.

Since boat "B" was tacking does **Rule 13** apply? - a boat tacking shall keep clear of other boats until it is close hauled - NO, "B" was not tacking (i.e., passing head to wind) so rule 13 (While tacking) does not apply between these boats.

Boat "B" called a violation based on right-of-way (port / starboard) Yes, boat "A" broke **Rule 10** (Port-Starboard) because the right of way boat ("B") had to take avoiding action. HOWEVER, "A" might be exonerated for breaking Rule 10, based on a) what "A" was trying to do as "B" approached.

Rule 14 -since boat "B" had contact with boat "A" does Rule 14 apply? YES, "B" is required to avoid contact if reasonably possible. It appears that it would have been reasonably possible for "B" to have avoided touching "A" in this case. While Boat "B" broke Rule 14 as the right of way boat ("B") it would be penalized if it causes damage or injury (see Rule 43.1c). Note that RRS 43.1c doesn't say "serious" damage, just damage. Even if the contact results in a scratch that can be buffed out, that would entail some cost, thus it qualifies as damage.

Boat "A" did not break Rule 14 because there is a good chance it was not reasonably possible (assuming becalmed) for her to avoid contact.

Rule 16.1 would apply as boat "B" was required to provide "time & space" to give the other boat room to keep clear. YES! Rule 16.1 requires her to give "A" room and provide time to keep clear. If "A" was doing everything, she could get out of the way from the moment and "B" turned to a course that resulted in contact, then "A" would be exonerated for breaking rule 10, and "B" penalized for breaking Rule 16.1.

The Racing Rules: The three rules discussed above are written below. The source is the RRS for 2021 – 2024.

Rule 10 – On Opposite Tacks

“When boats are on opposite *tacks*, a *port-tack* boat shall *keep clear* of a *starboard-tack* boat.”

Rule 14 – Avoiding Contact

“A boat shall avoid contact with another boat if reasonably possible. However, a right-of-way boat or one sailing within the room or mark-room to which she is entitled need not act to avoid contact until it is clear that the other boat is not keeping clear or giving room or mark-room.”

Rule 16 – Changing Course

“16.1 When a right-of-way boat changes course, she shall give the other boat *room* to *keep clear*.

16.2 In addition, on a beat to windward when a *port-tack* boat is *keeping clear* by sailing to pass to leeward of a *starboard-tack* boat, the *starboard-tack* boat shall not bear away if as a result the *port-tack* boat must change course immediately to continue *keeping clear*.”

Please note that no rulings were made regarding the incident as a formal protest was not submitted.

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