



**ISSUE #133**

**PLAY FAIR!**

**THEME** Be a good sport .....1  
**VIEW** Good sportsmanship .....2  
**THEORY** Sportsmanship defined.....3  
**IDEAS** Promote sportsmanship .....4  
**RULES** Fair Sailing, Misconduct .....7  
**QUIZ** Appropriate penalty?.....8  
**THEORY** Should you protest?.....10  
**RULES** Two-Turns Penalty.....12  
**RULES** One-Turn Penalty.....14  
**TACTICS** What's fair?.....16

**From the rulebook:**

**Sportsmanship and the Rules**

*Competitors in the sport of sailing are governed by a body of rules that they are expected to follow and enforce. A fundamental principle of sportsmanship is that when competitors break a rule they will promptly take a penalty or retire.*

– Basic Principle

**From three champion sailors:**

*'You have not won the race if, in winning the race, you have lost the respect of your competitors.'*

– Paul Elvstrom Four-time Olympic gold medalist

*'Although winning is the object of the game, it is not the object of playing the game.'*

– Dr. Stuart Walker Author, champion sailor

*'A good sport is someone who adheres to a code of ethics and doesn't compromise the quality of the game.'*

– Dave Perry Author, champion sailor, rules guru

**Be a good sport!**

Good sportsmanship might be much more evident at regattas if winning didn't seem so important. Without the expectation and pressure to perform at a high level over and over, competitors would be much more relaxed. They could devote a lot more time and energy to the many other reasons why most people race sailboats – to have fun, make friends, enjoy the outdoors, keep learning and to see improvement in their sailing skills.

But the reality is that winning is important. It's the object of every sailboat race and the goal of most sailors who strive to be the best they can be. So if good sportsmanship is to flourish among racing sailors, it must do so in conjunction with the urge to win that most sailors possess.

When you think about it, sportsmanship and winning are not mutually exclusive. In fact, many of the qualities that make someone a good sport are the same attributes needed to win races. This includes sound judgment, respect for competitors, a commitment to fairness, a graciousness in losing (made easier with the realization that losing is just a step toward winning) and a recognition that winning races is the result of hard, honest work rather than doing anything that could be even remotely perceived as cheating.

There are many reasons to be a good sport, but most of all it is just the right thing to do. That's what the rest of this issue is about.



JH Peterson photo

In most sports the rules are enforced by referees or umpires, who impose penalties and legislate fair play. Breaking a rule often doesn't matter unless the officials see it, and good sportsmanship doesn't seem very important to many of the athletes.

The sport of sailing is completely different. Except for certain specialized events like match racing (above), we don't have referees or umpires. The racing rules are enforced by the competitors themselves, and breaking a rule is a big deal even if no one else sees it. Sportsmanship and fair play are valued attributes that are expected to come naturally from within each sailor.

# A sailor's thoughts on 'good sportsmanship'

Before you read this page, think for a minute about how you would define a 'good sport' in sailing. Then compare your thoughts to those of Dave Perry. According to Dave:

Good sportsmanship is an attitude of respect for the game, the rules, the people you're racing against and the officials. Respect means you go about your job of competing fairly within the rules and try your hardest to win, without doing anything that is unfair to others. Sometimes you'll win and sometimes you won't, but people will always have a good feeling about racing against you.

In addition to sailing within the rules, another strong signal that you respect the game is taking your penalties when you break a rule. Part of sportsmanship is knowing that, since there are no referees or umpires, the game

needs sailors to take their penalties. When you do that, people really trust you. And that's part of having respect.

Some people think the term 'sportsmanship' means being a perfect, goody-goody nice person. But that's not what I'm saying at all. A good sport is someone who adheres to a code of ethics and doesn't compromise the quality of the game. If you subscribe to that, you can't help but have other sailors respect you.

Sailing is a game, a sport, and when you choose to play a sport what you're really saying is, 'Let's all start from an equal place and see who can do it better.' When everyone is playing the same game, it's exciting and challenging. But when some people try to win without regard for the rules, that compromises the game. Since sportsmanship is about respecting the game, I think it's important to be a good sport; otherwise sailing won't be very pleasurable, and people will stop doing it.

People may have slightly different opinions on manners, but the sport of sailing has one basic code of behavior or conduct. For example, we all go out there and agree to race by the rules without referees. We agree to go to each

other's aid when necessary. We agree to sail fairly. And we agree to take penalties when we know we've infringed a rule.

Other sports don't have a code like this because they use referees or umpires. But in sailing everyone is expected to follow the rules, be respectful, help each other, thank the race committee, be appreciative of the host club and so on. Those are the things the sport stands for, and they're universally agreed upon.

My philosophy is that everyone should try their hardest to win, but you have to do this within a respectable code of ethics. Otherwise you will do whatever you can get away with. I don't believe sportsmanship is more important than winning, and I don't think the two are mutually exclusive. I think winning just means you're trying to out-perform your competition. Good sportsmanship means you're competing in a way where you maintain respect for your competitors and the game. I think the two go hand in hand.

I think sailing is great because sportsmanship must come from within yourself. Referees can't make you be a good sport. It has to come from within. Our sport teaches an intrinsic respect for ethics. If you can control yourself, then you can play the game at a high level, and you've learned a great life lesson.

## Poor sportsmanship

Three things I see that reflect poor sportsmanship at regattas are the following:

- 1) Not taking a penalty when a sailor knows that he or she has broken a rule;
- 2) Lying (or stretching the truth) in a protest hearing; and
- 3) Acrimonious communication with other boats.

Regarding the last point, I don't mind hearing the word 'Protest.' Protesting is not poor sportsmanship because it's a key part of the game we play. But if you choose a mean or nasty tone of voice, that is unsportsmanlike and, in my opinion, unnecessary.

If another boat breaks a rule near you, avoid a collision and protest. You don't have to yell in a way that makes them feel bad or stupid. They probably didn't try to foul you on purpose, so why treat them in a manner that is disrespectful?

**Dave Perry** is (and has been for a long time) one of the most respected people in the sport of sailing. He was a college All-American, a champion match racer and an Olympic campaigner. He has entertained and educated thousands of sailors with seminars and books for many years. He has served on the US Sailing Appeals Committee since 1986 and has been its chairman since 2007. As chair of the US Sailing Match Racing Committee, he has been an avid and tireless promoter of match racing in the U.S. His willingness to help anyone at almost any time is a great example of good sportsmanship.



## A closer look at the defining qualities of sportsmanship

Why is good sportsmanship important in sailing? Because no matter how hard we compete, most of us still want to have fun. And almost all of us feel it's critical to have a fair playing field. If we want to attract more racers to the sport and continue getting good race management, sportsmanship is the only way to go. On top of all that, it makes us feel good.

Sportsmanship is a theme that runs through all competitive events, but what's considered 'good' or 'bad' sportsmanship is different with every sport. That's because the notion of what's 'fair' is based on traditions and recognized principles. Many actions that are acceptable on the football field, for example, would be completely unacceptable on a golf course.

As you can see from the following definitions and comments, however, sailors share a lot with other athletes when it comes to good sportsmanship.

---

### Good sportsmanship is:

- Fair play, respect for opponents, and polite behavior by someone who is competing in a sport.
- Conduct becoming to anyone who is participating in a sport; e.g. fairness, respect for your opponent, graciousness in winning or losing.
- Ethical, appropriate, polite and fair behavior while participating in a game or athletic event.
- The quality of showing fairness, respect, and generosity toward the opposing team or player and for the sport itself when competing.

### Synonyms for 'Sportsmanship'

*fairness honesty sincerity virtue forthrightness  
goodness honor principle righteousness*

From various online dictionaries and thesauruses

---

### A set of sportsmanship guidelines:

Apply the golden rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Understand and appreciate the rules.

Enjoy yourself and encourage enjoyment of others.

Take responsibility for your actions.

Exhibit respect for the officials.

Do not tolerate bad behavior from your teammates.

Cheer in a positive manner.

Accept all decisions by officials without question.

Applaud good plays by teammates and competitors.

Applaud at the end of the contest for the performance of all participants.

Encourage all surrounding people (fans included) to display sportsmanlike behavior.

**Win with class, lose with dignity.**

From the Hawaii Amateur Softball Association

Play Fair!



Go for the gun, or be a good sport?

Fortunately, you

don't have to make that

choice. While the pressure to win occasionally leads to poor

sportsmanship, there are many champion sailors who stand out as examples of good sportsmanship. For them, playing fair is a prerequisite for success in the sport and for the rewards that come from competing with respect and integrity.

---

### Don't be a sore loser or a bad winner!

Sportsmanship is an ethos that a sport will be enjoyed for its own sake, with proper consideration for fairness, ethics, respect and a sense of fellowship with one's competitors.

A **poor sport** is a person who doesn't take defeat well, while a **good sport** is someone who is a 'good winner' as well as a 'good loser.'

Sportsmanship refers to virtues such as fairness, self-control, courage and persistence and includes the concept of treating others fairly, maintaining self-control while dealing with others, and respect for both authority and opponents.

A **sore loser** is a competitor who exhibits poor sportsmanship after losing a game or contest. His or her behavior might include:

- blaming others for the loss,
- not accepting responsibility for personal actions that contributed to a defeat,
- an immature or improper reaction to the loss,
- making excuses for the defeat,
- not giving their opponent(s) credit for the win,
- citing unfavorable conditions, poor officiating or other petty issues as reasons for the defeat.

A **bad winner** is a competitor who shows poor sportsmanship after winning. This person acts in a shallow fashion after his or her victory; his or her behavior might include:

- gloating about the victory,
- rubbing the win in the face of the opponent,
- failing to show respect for the opponent,
- trying to lower the opponent's self-esteem by reminding the opponent of poor performance (even if the opponent competed well).

Paraphrased from the online entry for 'Sportsmanship' at Wikipedia.

# Ten ways to promote good sportsmanship

I have two favorite quotes that express the essence of what it means to be a good sport in sailing. The first is from Paul Elvstrom, the Great Dane who won four Olympic gold medals. Elvstrom once said something to the effect of, “You haven’t won the race if in winning the race you have lost the respect of your competitors.” In other words, Paul would rather lose a race than win it but behave in a way that his competitors did not respect. This commitment to do what is right and respectable, win or lose, is the essence of good sportsmanship.

The second quote is from Dr. Stuart Walker, a long-time competitive sailor and author who wrote, “Although winning is the object of the game, it is not the object of *playing* the game.” The reasons for playing the game are typically to have fun, learn a lot and challenge ourselves to perform at the highest level possible. It’s important to remember this whenever it feels like winning is the only thing that matters.

Fortunately, we frequently see or hear about sailors being good sports, and these examples are inspirational. I remember one year, quite a while ago, when the US Sailing Sportsmanship Award went to Scott Steele, one of America’s top boardsailors at the time. During the Goodwill Games (an event similar to the Olympics), Scott helped his closest competitor, Grzegorz Myszkowski of Poland, get reinstated after being incorrectly scored OCS. As a result, Myszkowski won the gold medal and Steele got silver.



Any sailor who shares his expertise with other members of his club, fleet or class is a ‘good sport.’ The most respected sailors are often those who are willing to talk tuning or tactics at almost any time. Knowledge is extremely valuable and means a lot to sailors who don’t have so much experience. Sharing your secrets is a great way to show respect for these people and to help support the sport in general.

“The number one rule in my book is honor,” said Steele. “What’s most important to me in sailboat racing is that the competition is fair – that everyone is given an equal chance to win. I hope everyone sails with this feeling.”

Steele is one of the vast majority of racing sailors who, like Elvstrom and Walker, do not believe in ‘winning at any cost.’ They try their hardest to win each race because that’s the goal (as Dr. Walker reminds us), but they remember and value all the other reasons why they go sailing.

To me, sportsmanship includes fairness, courtesy, friendliness and many more qualities that are important both on the water and ashore. The bottom line on good sportsmanship in sailing, as in most other parts of life, is the Golden Rule. In other words, ‘Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.’

If you always treat your teammates, your competitors and everyone else involved with the sport (e.g. race committee members, judges, administrators) as you would like to be treated yourself, then you won’t have to worry about sportsmanship. Here are some practical ideas on how you and your teammates can be good sports and encourage a more positive atmosphere in your fleet, club and class.

**1. Abide by and enforce the rules.** It’s clear that winning is a major objective of sailboat racing. Unfortunately, some sailors are tempted to overstep the boundaries of the rules to attain this end. That’s why it’s important to commit ourselves to sailing within the rules. When you play fair and square, you will likely win just as many races, and the respect you get from your competitors will be much greater.

Another part of being a good sport is taking responsibility for enforcing the rules. We all want to be nice guys who don’t make waves. But our sport is a self-policing one. If we don’t enforce the rules out there, no one will. I’m not suggesting you become a sea lawyer – but encouraging rule compliance will make the game better for everyone.

**2. Share your knowledge.** Almost every sailor wants to learn more about the sport, so if you can help your competitors understand how to sail their boats faster and smarter, they’ll find the sport more rewarding and you will both ‘win’!

You don’t have to be a rock star in order to help other people become better sailors. No matter what your skill level, there is always something you can share with other sailors. In fact, you may be more effective at this if you’re not the class champion because you’ll be less intimidating.

**3. Don’t ever yell at people** (like your crew or competitors). This doesn’t mean you can’t raise your



JH Peterson photo

**A big part of sportsmanship is appreciating the effort of all the people who (in most cases) volunteer their time to make our racing possible.**

voice if that is essential for communication. On a windy day, for example, you may have to shout pretty loud to be heard by other boats or even your own teammates. But it's not necessary to make your hail with a tone that is angry, condescending or intimidating. That just increases the tension level and makes the sport less fun for everyone. No one likes, or respects, a yeller.

**4. Thank the race committee and volunteers.** This may seem like a very obvious thing to do, but if we took a survey of all the race officers around the world, I bet a majority would say they feel underappreciated by the sailors. Volunteer race committees, regatta helpers and juries are the backbone of racing, and it's almost impossible to give these hard-working people too much credit.

I recommend something more than a token 'thank-you' at the awards ceremony. Talk to them personally during the regatta and offer words of support and appreciation. Get on the RC's radio channel after the last race of the day and say thanks. You may not agree with every action of a race committee or decision of the jury, but you can always thank the members for volunteering their time and working hard.

Another good idea is writing a letter of thanks to the membership of the club where you've just sailed a regatta. Thank them for a good time and for all the sacrifices they made to help insure that your regatta was a success. Send your letter to the regatta chairperson (with a note of thanks to him or her as well), and say you wouldn't mind if your letter was posted on their bulletin board or in their newsletter.

**5. Recognize good sportsmanship.** I'm not a huge fan of giving prizes for sportsmanship because I think the motivation for this kind of behavior must be internal, not external. However, I do think that recognizing acts of good sportsmanship is a great way of creating a positive climate. This can be done at regattas, or by one-design classes and sailing clubs. One idea is to create an award for sportsmanlike behavior that is voted on by competitors at a regatta or awarded by members of a club or fleet at the end of the year. But impromptu

## Good thoughts on being a good sport

The history of sailboat racing is filled with the tradition of exciting competition played out with honor and respect among the competitors and officials. In keeping with that tradition, when we race we agree to be fair and honest, to be good sports and to attempt to win using our own superior boat speed and racing skills.

At the heart of what makes our sport so fulfilling is the principle that we have a competitor-enforced, 'no-referee' rules system; that is, we have the responsibility to follow the rules on our own, to self-penalize ourselves when we break a rule, and to protest when we believe another boat has broken a rule. In this regard, our sport is unique compared with a lot of other sports.

– Dave Perry

*International author, sailor, rules expert*

Our sport, like golf and a few others, is different . . . we rely on the competitors to know and follow the rules of our game. In the typical sport where many people compete at the same time, the prevailing attitude is often, 'It's OK so long as I don't get caught.' That attitude doesn't work in sailing. We depend on the sailors themselves to decide when they've broken a rule and to voluntarily take a penalty.

A basic principle of the rules is that, ' . . . when competitors break a rule they will promptly take a penalty or retire.' This basic principle is often described as 'Corinthian,' but no matter what word you use to describe this concept, it is central to how our sport operates.

We as competitors need to abide by this basic principle for the good of our sport . . . When you break a rule (as we all do from time to time) take your penalty. The Two-Turns Penalty was introduced some years ago specifically so competitors could take a penalty and still either win the race or finish well enough in a single race to win the regatta. Remember, if in finishing first you have lost your self-respect or the respect of your competitors then you have lost more than you have won.

– Dave Rosekrans

*Former president of US Sailing*



One of the best reasons for being a good sport is because all of us are role models for new and younger sailors. When a person starts racing sailboats, they look to the people who are older and more experienced for guidance on how to behave. If they often see races where there are many collisions and few penalty turns, for example, that's how they will likely behave. Prevent this by setting a consistent example of good sportsmanship.

recognition can often be just as effective, or even more meaningful. A simple mention of sportsmanlike behavior at an awards ceremony or at your fleet's final banquet is usually more than enough recognition for the person involved, and it works well to get everyone thinking about this topic in the future.

When you are recognizing good sportsmanship, look for ethical behavior that includes qualities such as respect, fairness and integrity. Be careful of rewarding behavior that is simply required by the rules. It is nice, for example, when a sailor takes a Two-Turns Penalty rather than ignoring an obvious foul, but this behavior should be the norm so you may not want to treat it as something exceptional.

**6. Congratulate your competitors** when they make a good move or sail a great race. Nothing feels better than being acknowledged and appreciated by fellow sailors. But don't just talk to the first few boats – they will get congratulations from many other sailors and they aren't usually the ones who need encouragement. You'll have a much bigger impact if you focus on the middle or back of the fleet. Try to notice specific things that some of those sailors did well, and appreciate them. For example, you could commend a team for getting one of the best starts in the fleet even if that didn't translate into a great finish.

**7. Give other boats the benefit of the doubt.** One of the best things you can do while racing is to treat your competitors as you would like to have them treat you. For example, let's say you're approaching the jibe mark and a boat that's overtaking you from behind is pressing for an inside overlap. When you're not sure if they got an overlap in time or not, don't automatically yell 'No room.' Instead, give the other boat a break by saying 'Go ahead,' and then provide mark-room. This may cost you a boat or two in that race, but it's an admirable action that will earn you respect as a good sport in the long run.

**8. Be a good role model.** One of the best ways for young or less experienced sailors to learn about what's sportsmanlike in sailboat racing is from experienced sailors they respect – like you! People who are new to the sport tend to emulate the behavior of those who have been racing longer. If they see boats breaking rules and getting away with it, they will likely act the same way. So set a good example!

**9. Commend your teammates.** Unfortunately, it's not uncommon for skippers to be critical of their crews while racing. But this is neither sportsmanlike nor conducive to winning races. So think positively.

If you're a skipper, look for ways to compliment your crew: 'Hey, that was a great roll tack.' 'Nice job with the pole.' 'Good call on the layline.' If you're a crew, find ways to appreciate your skipper: 'Great start!' 'Good job steering the waves.' And so on.

This type of encouragement will help everyone feel more confident and better about themselves. It also makes it easier to handle a little constructive criticism once in a while. This will improve not only your performance on the race course, but your relationship after the race as well.

**10. Don't be a 'sore loser.'** No one respects or likes a competitor who is always bitter when they don't finish first. You can't win every race, so focus on the other reasons why you compete. Try to give each race your very best effort and learn as much as you can – this way you will be a 'winner' no matter how you cross the finish line. A big part of being a good sport is respecting your competitors, especially when they win – but that's difficult for a bad loser.

Sailing is a great sport because it puts the question of sportsmanship into the sailors' hands. If you treat other people with respect on the race course, they'll treat you the same way. And that will make the sport much more fun and rewarding. •

# What the rules say about sportsmanship



In the sport of sailing, there's almost nothing more important than complying with the racing rules. That's because rules make racing safe and fair. They help sailors maneuver in close situations without contact, and ensure that all competitors 'play the same game.'

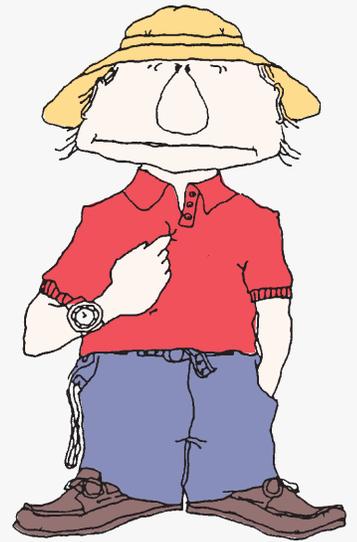
If you want to play fair, you have to understand the rules, abide by them and take the appropriate penalty when you happen to break a rule. However, doing this does not necessarily make you a 'good sport.' Since all sailors are expected to follow the rules, there is nothing particularly sportsmanlike about doing so.

To be a good sport, you have to go beyond just complying with the rules. Sportsmanship involves an attitude or spirit that usually comes from inside a

person. It's not something you can typically legislate externally or force people to accept.

It is helpful, however, for athletes in any sport to have a common understanding about what behavior is (or is not) expected of them. In sailing, this comes primarily from two racing rules – Fundamental Rule 2 (Fair Sailing), and rule 69 (Allegations of Gross Misconduct) – and their associated appeals and cases.

These rules explain generally how sailors are supposed to behave, and what penalties can be imposed if they don't behave properly. Note that the range of acceptable behaviors depends on 'recognized principles of sportsmanship and fair play,' which means these could change depending on where and with whom you are sailing.



Good sportsmanship starts from within each sailor's own mind and heart. It is not usually something that can be legislated, though in sailing there are certain rules that describe what is expected of sailors.

## RULE 2 – Fair Sailing

*A boat and her owner shall compete in compliance with recognized principles of sportsmanship and fair play . . .*

The basic premise of the Fair Sailing Rule is that while you are competing you must comply with 'recognized principles of sportsmanship and fair play.' In other words, you must be a good sport and play fair. This may vary slightly from regatta to regatta depending on the 'recognized principles' of the group (e.g. country, age group, one-design class) in which you are racing.

One example of an action that is prohibited by the Fair Sailing Rule is teaming up with another boat to advance your (or their) position in a fleet race. Other examples can be found in the ISAF Appeals Book. You break rule 2 (Fair Sailing) if:

**Case 47** When you are on port tack, you deliberately hail 'Starboard' to an inexperienced sailor.

**Case 73** While you are hiking, you reach out with your arm over your head to touch a windward boat (W) when the only purpose is to cause W to foul.

**Case 78** You intentionally break a rule to facilitate the tactic of pushing a competitor back in the fleet; e.g. you purposely start OCS to make sure you are ahead of the other boat when the race begins.

All of these are punishable under the Fair Sailing Rule. In addition, many actions that break the Fair Sailing Rule might also be considered gross misconduct and would therefore be subject to penalties under rule 69. Note that in a series you cannot exclude (discard) a score of DSQ for breaking rule 2 (see rule 90.3b).

## RULE 69.1 – Obligation not to Commit Gross Misconduct

*(a) A competitor shall not commit gross misconduct, including a gross breach of a rule, good manners or sportsmanship, or conduct bringing the sport into disrepute . . .*

Rule 69 (Allegations of Gross Misconduct) is a rule that broadly covers all the things that sailors should not do while they are participating in a sailing event. Rule 2 (Fair Sailing) applies to any breach of fair play or sportsmanship, while rule 69 applies to 'gross' breaches; i.e. ones that are offensive, repugnant, etc.

Rule 2 applies to rule infringements when sailors are 'competing,' while rule 69 covers the entire time period while competitors are participating in an event. That is, competitors are subject to the limitations of rule 69 on the race course while they are racing, and also in the boat park, sailing club, etc. at any time of day or night.

Here are examples of actions that would likely be considered gross misconduct and would therefore be punishable under rule 69:

- Cheating on boat measurement
- Punching someone in the parking lot after a race
- Lying in a protest hearing
- Using foul language toward a race official
- Excessive carousing at the host club during an event

An allegation of gross misconduct under rule 69 is very serious. Possible penalties include a warning, DSQ from a race or series, and suspension of a competitor's eligibility for years. Penalties must be reported to the sailor's national authority and, in some cases, to ISAF.

When you break a rule, play fair by . . .

# Taking the appropriate penalty

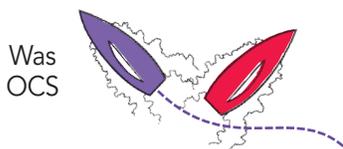
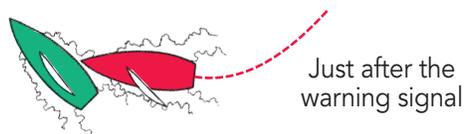
Just because you break a rule every now and then doesn't mean you aren't sportsmanlike. All sailors make mistakes, and sometimes these errors include rule infringements. This is not a problem as long as you take an appropriate penalty for each breach. But do you know which penalty is appropriate?

Below are 12 race-course scenarios where you (the Red boat) break a rule. In each situation, which penalty, if any, should you take to comply with the rulebook and be a good sport? Your choices are:

- A) No penalty    B) One-Turn Penalty    C) Two-Turns Penalty    D) Some other penalty    E) Retire

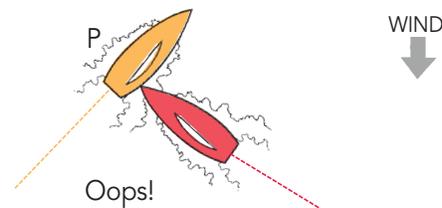
**Scenario 1:** A few seconds after the warning signal for your start, you fail to keep clear of a leeward boat. The resulting contact causes damage to the other boat in the form of a broken hiking stick.

**1a:** What if this happened just after the preparatory signal?



**Scenario 2:** You are racing upwind on port tack and a starboard tacker has to change course to avoid you. However, they do not hail 'Protest' and you know they were OCS at the start and didn't go back.

**Scenarios 3, 4, 5** You are sailing closehauled on starboard tack, but you haven't been keeping a very good lookout. As a result, you run into a port tacker (P) that fails to keep clear of you. P does her penalty turns. What, if anything, must you do in each case?



**Scenario 3:** Your contact with P did not cause any damage or injury.

**Scenario 4:** Your collision with P caused damage that is not 'serious.'

**Scenario 5:** Your collision caused serious damage to one of the boats.



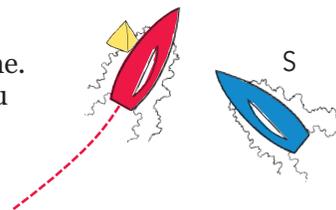
**Scenario 6:** On a windy reach, you and your crew are ooching on the waves. A nearby sailor yells at you to stop and explains that this kinetic technique has been illegal for many years.

**Scenarios 7, 8, 9** You approach the windward mark on the port-tack layline and tack around the mark very close in front of a boat on starboard tack (S).

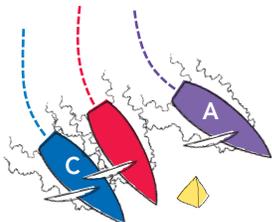
**Scenario 7:** You hit the mark without fouling the starboard tacker.

**Scenario 8:** You hit the mark and foul the starboard tacker at the same time.

**Scenario 9:** You hit the mark without fouling any boats, but this allows you to round ahead of 10 starboard tackers that were lined up on the layline. After taking your penalty you are still ahead of five of those boats.

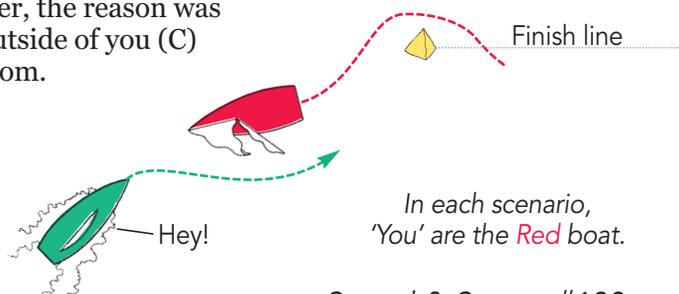


**Scenario 10:** While rounding a mark with no other boats around, you touch it gently with your hull. You are the only one who sees this.



**Scenario 11:** At a leeward mark, you fail to provide mark-room to a boat overlapped inside of you (A). However, the reason was that a boat overlapped outside of you (C) did not give you mark-room.

**Scenario 12:** Just after you finish the race, you are talking with your crew and you inadvertently interfere with a boat in the class behind you that is still racing toward the finish.



# A description of the correct penalty to take in each scenario

The previous page describes 12 scenarios in which you (the Red boat) broke a rule. Here are explanations of the appropriate penalty, if any, that you must take in each case.

**Scenario 1** A) No penalty. The racing rules apply when you are sailing in the race area, but you can't be penalized (in most cases) unless you are actually 'racing,' which begins at your preparatory signal. This is true even if you break a rule and cause damage to the other boat (though you could be liable for this damage). The other boat may request redress (*see rule 62.1b*), but it would be sportsmanlike of you to offer them your hiking stick to use for the race. They can accept your help until the prep signal (*see rule 41*).

**Scenario 1a:** C) Two-Turns Penalty (but if the broken hiking stick is considered 'serious damage' you would have to Retire). Since your foul occurred *after* the preparatory signal (i.e. while you were 'racing'), you have to take a penalty. You are permitted (and, in fact, required) to take your penalty promptly, before the start.

**Scenario 2** C) Two-Turns Penalty. A boat that was OCS maintains all her rights until she turns back and sails toward the pre-start side of the starting line. Until then you have to treat her like any other boat. It does not matter if another boat hails 'Protest' or not – when you know you broke a rule, you must take a penalty as stipulated in the Basic Principle (Sportsmanship and the Rules).

**Scenario 3** A) No penalty. You did break rule 14 (Avoiding Contact) because you failed to avoid contact when doing so was 'reasonably possible' (all you had to do was keep a good lookout and bear off behind P). However, rule 14(b) says that a right-of-way boat 'shall be exonerated if she breaks this rule and the contact does not cause damage or injury.'

**Scenario 4** C) Two-Turns Penalty. You broke rule 14 (Avoiding Contact) because you failed to avoid contact when it was 'reasonably possible.' Even though you were the right-of-way boat, you must take a penalty because you caused damage. Since rule 14 is in Part 2 of the rulebook, you are allowed to exonerate yourself by taking a Two-Turns Penalty.

**Scenario 5** E) Retire from the race. The answer is similar to Scenario 4 above, except the damage you caused was 'serious.' Rule 44.1 (Taking a Penalty) does not allow you to take a Two-Turns Penalty when you cause serious damage, so your only option is to retire. This is true no matter which boat was damaged.

**Scenario 6** E) Retire from the race. The Propulsion rule (42) specifically prohibits ooching. If you realize that you broke this rule, you must take a penalty, even if the other boat did not say they were going to protest you. Since rule 42 is not in Part 2 of the rulebook, you cannot take a Two-Turns Penalty for your infraction, so your only option is to retire.

**Scenario 7** B) One-Turn Penalty. You broke rule 31 (Touching a Mark), which says you shall not touch a mark while racing. Rule 44.1 (Taking a Penalty) says that when you touch a mark you may exonerate yourself by taking a One-Turn Penalty.

**Scenario 8** C) Two-Turns Penalty. In this incident, you broke two rules – one for hitting the mark and another for breaking rule 10 (Port-Starboard). However, rule 44.1b says, "when a boat may have broken a rule of Part 2 and rule 31 in the same incident she need not take the penalty for breaking rule 31." In other words, you only have to take the penalty for breaking the right-of-way rule, which is a Two-Turns Penalty.

**Scenario 9** E) Retire from the race. Though you didn't foul any boats, by hitting the mark you were able to round ahead of 10 boats that you would otherwise have had to duck. Since you were still ahead of some of these boats after taking your penalty, you gained a 'significant advantage' in the race, so you must retire.

**Scenario 10** B) One-Turn Penalty. It doesn't matter whether anyone else saw this or hailed 'Protest' – when you know you broke a rule you must take the appropriate penalty.

**Scenario 11** A) No penalty. Since you failed to provide mark-room to A, you broke rule 18.2a (Giving Mark-Room). However, the reason you broke this rule was because C failed to give you mark-room as required. Therefore, you will be exonerated for your breach (rule 64.1a), so you don't have to take a penalty.

**Scenario 12** E) Retire from the most recent race. If you are not racing and you interfere with a boat that is racing, you break rule 24.1 (Interfering with Another Boat). Though this rule is in Part 2, you can't take a Two-Turns Penalty (rule 44) because that applies only to incidents while you are racing. So you must retire.

# Should you file a protest?



In the sport of sailing, the racing rules are enforced primarily by the competitors.

When you think that another boat broke a rule, ideally you should file a protest and ask the jury to make a decision. But in real life it's not always that simple.

When you are considering whether or not to file a protest, there are many things to consider. For example, are you actually required to file a protest? Is there any risk in protesting? Why would you protest in one instance but not in all others? Is protesting part of being a good sport? Here are some thoughts on those subjects.

## Protests and sportsmanship

When you are involved in an incident and you realize you broke a rule, you must either retire or accept another appropriate penalty. This is not just the sportsmanlike thing to do – it is required by the rulebook's Basic Principle (*page 1*). A good sport will always take a penalty when they break a rule.

If you feel the other boat is the one who broke the rule, however, then you must decide whether or not to initiate a protest. Are you a good sport if you protest? Sure. In sailing we don't normally use referees or umpires, so the sailors have a responsibility to enforce the rules themselves. If a sailor never protests when he or she sees rules being broken, he or she is not helping create a fair playing field.

Few people want to be the cause of another boat's DSQ, but almost everyone has experienced the frustration of racing in a fleet where boats often break rules but few do penalties and fewer file protests. 'Fair sailing' means that the rules apply equally to all, and protesting is often the only way to ensure that certain sailors don't get unfair advantages.

## Are protests required?

The rulebook's Basic Principle says

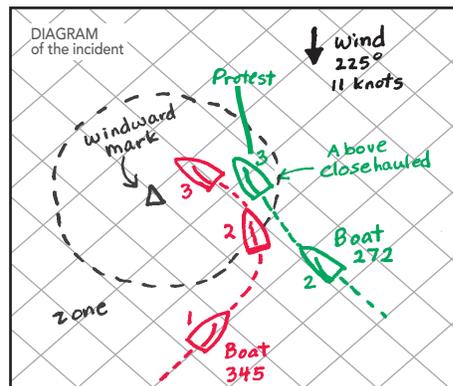
sailors are 'governed by a body of rules that they are expected to follow and enforce.' According to the dictionary, the meaning of 'enforce' is 'to compel observance of or obedience to.' One of the best ways to compel other boats to observe and obey the rules is to protest them if they do not. If you don't protest when you see a rule being broken, you aren't enforcing that rule.

On the other hand, there is no rule that specifically requires you to file a protest. Protesting may be a good way to seek justice and encourage other boats to follow the rules, but it is not mandatory.

Rule 60 (Right to Protest . . .) is the rule that gives a boat the right to protest other boats. It says that a boat 'may' protest another boat. It doesn't say you *shall* protest, only that you may. In other words, the choice is totally up to you.

## Protests and risk

Many years ago I heard some good advice from a very accomplished sailor. He said, 'Whenever you go into a protest hearing, your odds are 50-50.' That's because in a



protest you either win, or you lose. It doesn't matter whether you are the protestor or protestee, or how rock-solid you think your case is – if you go to a hearing there is almost always a chance of losing.

This risk of being disqualified is one factor that should influence every sailor's choice about whether to protest or not. Usually the best strategy is to sail clean and avoid the 'room.' As Buddy Melges is fond of saying, your goal should be to 'start first and increase your lead.' He always tries to sail clean and win on the water, and he hardly ever ends up in a protest.

It's difficult, however, to avoid every possible protest situation. And when you are involved in an incident, deciding whether or not



The first step in protesting is to hail 'Protest' and fly a red flag (on boats longer than six meters). This gives the other boat a chance to do the right thing (i.e. take a penalty) if they think they broke a rule.

## Ingredients of a 'Protest philosophy'

*"To protest or not to protest?" – that is the question. Here are some thoughts to help you develop a strategy about when you would take a protest 'to the room.'*

Unless you spend all your evenings in the protest room, you probably don't file a protest every time you see another boat break a rule. Under what circumstances do you actually follow through with a protest? These factors may influence your decision:

**Nature of the regatta** – Is it a Wednesday night beer can race or a world championship? It's much easier to overlook rule infringements in casual local races than in serious big-time events.

**Seriousness of the 'crime'** – Did the other boat crash into you and cause damage, or was their rules breach minor with no contact?

**Effect on the race outcome** – Did the rules infraction significantly change the race results, or was there no impact at all? Ideally this should not affect rule enforcement, but in practice it usually does.

**Experience/intent of the other sailor** – Most sailors are more likely to forgive (i.e. not protest) a less-experienced sailor who made a mistake than a veteran racer who should have known better.

**Risk of losing the protest** – What is the chance that you might lose the protest? Any risk of DSQ is often a protest deterrent.

It's valuable to think about these factors *before* you actually get into a protest situation. That way you can devise a philosophy of protesting that is consistent with your own regatta goals, fair to your competitors and supportive of racing rules enforcement.



Below is a spectrum of incidents where another boat has broken a rule (in your opinion). For each of these situations, would you file a protest? Pick one of these answers: Always, Never or 'It depends'? If your answer is the last, on what does your protest depend? This is where some sort of protest strategy can be helpful as a guide during a regatta or season.



*A boat breaks a rule and causes injury to your crew or damage to your boat.*

*A boat breaks a rule and as a result causes you to hit a mark or foul a third boat.*

*A boat breaks a rule and has contact with your boat (but doesn't cause damage).*

*A boat breaks a rule but there is no contact and this foul has no effect on the race outcome.*

*You witness a collision between two other boats and neither takes a penalty.*

*You witness a minor foul without contact between two other boats and neither takes a penalty.*

*At a mark rounding, you see another boat have minor contact with the mark.*

*In your opinion a nearby boat sailing downwind is breaking the kinetics (Propulsion) rule.*

*You are aware of a boat that breaks a sailing instruction or a class rule in a minor way but this has no effect on the outcome of the race/series.*

to protest can be a tough decision. What if the other boat's infraction was minor? What if the skipper is your friend? Or enemy? Many factors affect your decision of whether or not to hail 'Protest.'

### A protesting philosophy

When you're trying to decide whether or not to protest in the middle of a hectic race, it's helpful to have a protest philosophy or strategy already in mind. This might be something you develop with your crew at the beginning of each season, or a few guidelines you considered before the start of a particular regatta. The goal is to take a consistent, fair approach to protesting that doesn't require a lot of thought each time you are considering a hail of 'Protest.'

For example, you might decide that you will always protest when you think another boat has broken a rule. Or maybe you will protest only when there is: a) contact; b) damage; or c) a change of position in the race. Or perhaps you choose never to protest. (*See box above for much more about this.*)

Ideally, this protest philosophy will serve as your guide regardless of your personal feelings (positive or negative) for the sailor that broke a rule. And you could think of guidelines for when you won't file a protest too. For example, you might choose to avoid protests that seek primarily to a) advance your own position in the race or series; or b) punish someone you don't like. These reasons are not consistent with the purpose of the rules.

### More thoughts about protesting

When you hail 'Protest' during a race, you are notifying another boat that you believe they broke a rule. If they agree, they must take a penalty (usually they can exonerate themselves by taking a Two-Turns Penalty). If they don't agree with you they can risk a protest hearing.

Even if you hail 'Protest' on the water, you can drop your protest later by not delivering it in writing to the jury. However, I think this is a bad habit and not especially sportsmanlike. If you aren't serious about protesting, don't pretend to be that way on the water – you will just force your competitor to take an insurance penalty. If you were serious on the water because you felt they really broke a rule, follow through with your conviction. •



# Taking a Two-Turns Penalty

A big part of good sportsmanship is taking a penalty when you break a rule. In the old days sailors had no choice except to retire from the race for rule breaches; now we have the Two-Turns Penalty (TTP) which is much less severe and makes it easier for sailors to 'do the right thing' after fouling.

Because a TTP is the default rulebook penalty, it's critical to understand exactly how it works if you want to play fair. Many sailors, even some with lots of experience, don't know all the requirements of rule 44 (Penalties at the Time of an Incident). Here are some tips on when and how you can (and can't) take a legal TTP.

## Penalty turn requirements

When you break a racing rule you can usually exonerate yourself by making two turns in accordance with rule 44 (*see below*). Here are five steps you should follow to make sure your TTP is legal:

- 1) As soon after the incident as possible, get *well clear of other boats* so you won't be in their way when you start your penalty turns.
- 2) *Promptly* take your penalty.
- 3) Make two consecutive turns in the same direction; each one must include one tack and one jibe.

4) Keep clear of other boats while you are making your penalty turns.

5) If it's required by the sailing instructions, report your TTP to the RC boat at the finish or to the protest committee ashore.

## Don't delay your penalty

The Two-Turns Penalty is usually a much better option than retiring from the race, but it also requires that you make a quicker decision about what to do. According to US Appeal 60, 'Rule 44.1 does not provide time for a boat to deliberate whether she has broken a rule. If a boat decides too late that she has broken a rule, the penalty provided by rule 44 is not available to her.'

In other words, when you are considering a TTP you can't take a lot of time to think about whether you were right or wrong. You have a short window of opportunity right after the incident – if you fail to get clear of other boats as soon after the incident as possible, you lose the option to take a TTP.

## You can't break this rule

According to US Sailing Appeal 46, a boat's "failure to take a proper and timely Two-Turns Penalty broke no rule. It meant only that she failed to take a penalty . . ."



**If you want to exonerate yourself by taking a Two-Turns Penalty, you must do it as soon as possible. You can't delay, even if it's windy and you are flying a spinnaker.**

In other words, you can't break rule 44. If your TTP is improper or too late, it's just as if you didn't make any penalty turns at all.

Likewise, you cannot protest another boat under rule 44 for failing to do a proper TTP. If a boat fouls you and takes an improper or delayed penalty, you should protest them for the right-of-way rule they broke in the original incident.

Once you take a TTP you can no longer be protested for that incident (unless you caused injury or serious damage or gained a significant advantage). So taking a penalty is like buying insurance.

A TTP is not necessarily an admission of guilt. For example, if you're involved in an incident and you think you're right but don't want to take any chance of a DSQ in the protest room, a TTP can be a strategic decision to reduce risk. Even if you do penalty turns, you can still protest another boat for that same incident.

## 44 PENALTIES AT THE TIME OF AN INCIDENT

### 44.1 Taking a Penalty

A boat may take a Two-Turns Penalty when she may have broken one or more rules of Part 2 in an incident while racing. She may take a One-Turn Penalty when she may have broken rule 31 . . . However,

- a) when a boat may have broken a rule of Part 2 and rule 31 in the same incident she need not take the penalty for breaking rule 31;
- b) if the boat caused injury or serious damage or, despite taking a penalty, gained a significant advantage in the race or series by her breach her penalty shall be to retire.

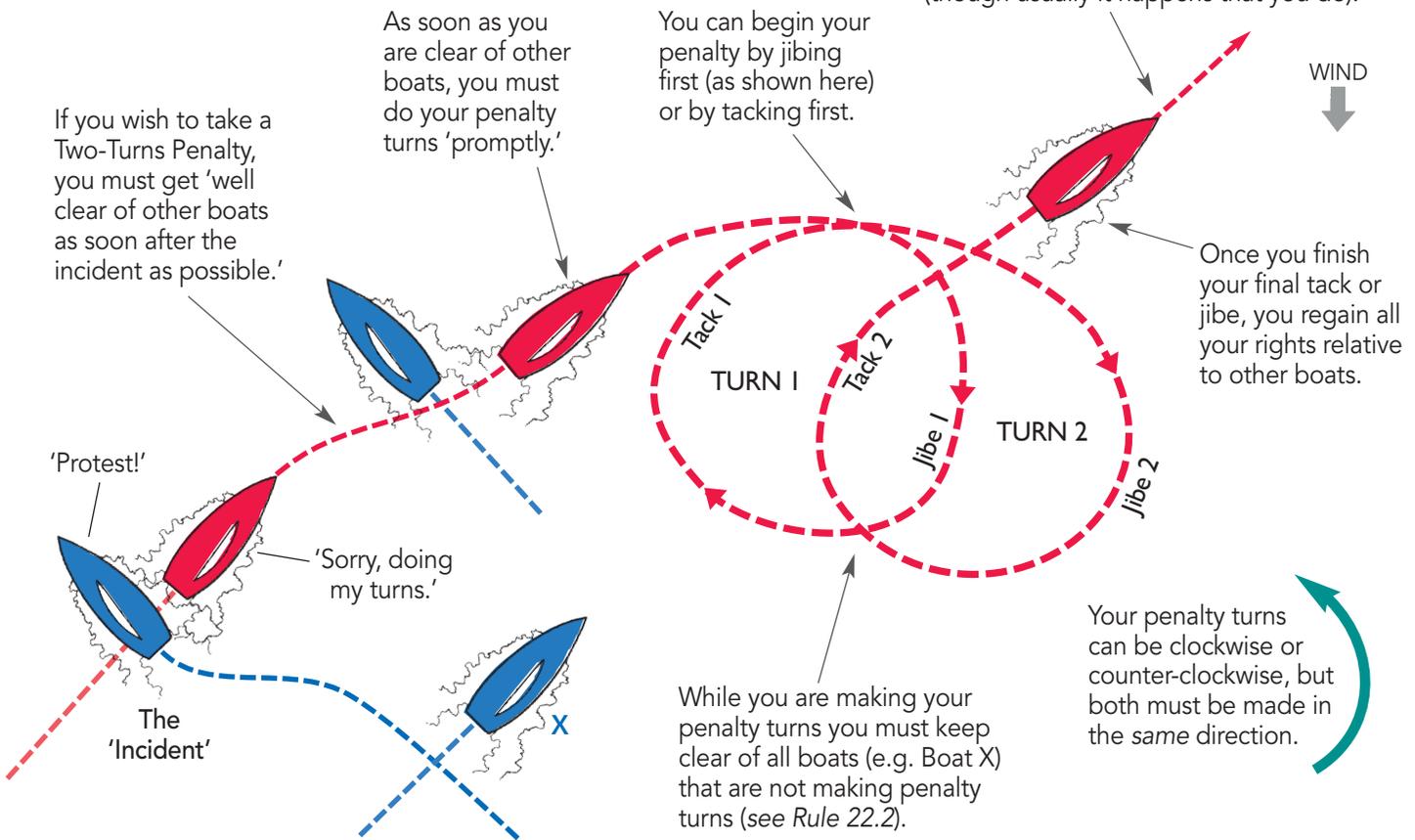
### 44.2 One-Turn and Two-Turns Penalties

After getting well clear of other boats as soon after the incident as possible, a boat takes a One-Turn or Two-Turns Penalty by promptly making the required number of turns in the same direction, each turn including one tack and one jibe. When a boat takes the penalty at or near the finishing line, she shall sail completely to the course side of the line before finishing.

## Anatomy of a legal Two-Turns Penalty

When you want to exonerate yourself by taking a Two-Turns Penalty, make sure you follow all the requirements of rule 44 – if you don't it's like you never took a penalty at all, and then you'd have to retire from the race.

As long as you make 2 tacks and 2 jibes, you do not have to complete a full 720° turn. In other words, you don't have to end the penalty by returning to the exact same course you were on when you started it (though usually it happens that you do).



## When you cannot take a Two-Turns Penalty

There are certain times when a Two-Turns Penalty is not sufficient to exonerate yourself for breaking a rule. Here are five such situations:

**You broke a rule when you weren't racing** (e.g. you interfered with a boat that was racing and therefore broke rule 24.1). The Two-Turns Penalty is available only when you break a rule while you are racing. If you break certain rules while not racing, you must retire from the race sailed nearest in time to the incident (rule 64.1).

**The rule you broke was not in Part 2 of the rulebook.** If you break a class rule, a sailing instruction or a racing rule such as rule 42 (Propulsion), for example, you must retire. The Two-Turns Penalty is only for breaking rules in Part 2 ('When Boats Meet').

**You caused injury or serious damage during the incident.** Rule 44 says clearly that the Two-Turns Penalty is not available for serious incidents where there is injury or 'serious damage.' In those cases you must retire from the race.

**You gained a 'significant advantage' in the race or series** by breaking a rule, despite taking a Two-Turns Penalty. For example, let's say you come in to the leeward mark behind a pack of boats, force an inside overlap and round ahead of them all by fouling the leader of that pack. If you are still ahead of some of those boats after taking a Two-Turns Penalty, you gained a 'significant advantage' by your breach and you must retire.

**The sailing instructions specify a different penalty.** Note that rule 44 can be changed by the sailing instructions. The SIs might say, for example, that the Two-Turns Penalty does not apply at all, or they could specify the use of the Scoring Penalty (see rule 44.3).



# Taking a One-Turn Penalty

**R**ule 31 (Touching a Mark) says you are not permitted to touch a mark while you are racing (see *text of rule on next page*). If you do hit a mark, rule 44 (Penalties at the Time of an Incident) describes the appropriate penalty and how you must take it (see *page 12*).

The penalty for touching a mark is very similar to the penalty for breaking a right-of-way rule, except you must do only one turn (including one tack and one jibe) instead of two. You still have to get clear of other boats as soon as possible after the ‘incident’ (touching the mark) and then you must do your turn promptly. While taking your penalty you must keep clear of all other boats that are not taking penalties. Here are a bunch of common questions and answers about hitting marks.

**Do I have to take a penalty if no other boat protests me?**

Yes! When you know that you broke a rule (e.g. touched a mark), the Basic Principle requires you to get clear of other boats and take a penalty promptly. It doesn’t matter whether anyone else saw you hit the mark or protested – you must take a One-Turn Penalty (or retire).

**Must I take a penalty if I touch only the mark’s anchor line?**

No. According to the definition of Mark, ‘An anchor line or an object attached accidentally to a mark is not part of it.’ Therefore, if you touch only the mark’s anchor line you are not considered to have touched the mark itself, so you don’t have to take a penalty. However, if you catch the anchorline on your keel and this drags the mark into contact with your hull (or any other part of your boat or crew), then you do have to take a penalty.

**Do I have to take a penalty if I hit one of the starting marks before the start of the race?**

It depends on when you touch the mark. Note that rule 31 (Touching a Mark) specifically says, ‘a boat shall not touch a starting mark before starting.’ However, rule 31 applies only while boats are racing (see *first two words of rule 31*).

Since a boat begins racing at her preparatory signal (which is normally four minutes before the start), the prohibition on touching a starting mark commences at that point. So if you touch a starting mark *before* your prep signal, you haven’t broken any rule. If you touch it *after* the prep signal, you must take a penalty.

**If I hit a starting mark before the start, do I have to wait until after the start to take a penalty?**

No! You can (and in fact you *must*) get ‘well clear of other boats as soon after the incident as possible’ and then promptly take your One-Turn Penalty.

**If I hit the mark and foul another boat at the same time, do I have to make three penalty turns?**

No. Rule 44.1a (see *page 12*) says, ‘when a boat may have broken a rule of part 2 and rule 31 in the

same incident she need not take the penalty for breaking rule 31.’ In other words, you have to do only a Two-Turns Penalty.

Note that both rule infringements have to occur in the ‘same incident,’ which means essentially simultaneously. If you break a right-of-way rule and hit a mark five seconds later, you’ll probably need to make three penalty turns.

**If I hit a mark, can I do my penalty turn around the mark?**

Yes. Rule 31 does not limit where you can do your penalty turn, so going around the mark is OK. In fact, this is what the rules required before 1989. Of course, if you re-round the mark you must be sure to comply with all the requirements of rule 31.2, like taking the penalty promptly and keeping clear of other boats (see *ISAF Case 108*).

**If I finish the race and then hit a finishing mark, do I have to take a penalty?**

That depends on when you hit the mark. Rule 31 (Touching a Mark) applies as long as you are still racing. According to the definition of racing, a boat doesn’t stop racing



JH Peterson photo

until she 'finishes and clears the finishing line and marks ...' So if the front half of your boat crosses the finish line and then you slide into a finish mark, you have broken rule 31 and must take a penalty.

But if you cross the finish line completely, sail around for 30 seconds and then touch a finish mark, you probably didn't break rule 31.

### If I touch a finish mark, do I have to take my penalty on the course side of the finish line?

No. You can make your penalty turn anywhere you want (as long as you meet the requirements of rule 44). However, as rule 44.2 explains, you must 'sail completely to the course side of the line before finishing.'

### Are there any times when doing a One-Turn Penalty won't exonerate me for hitting a mark?

Yes. If you touch a mark and take a penalty but still gain a 'significant advantage' in the race or series by your breach, your only option is to retire. This could happen if you hit the mark while trying to sneak in front of a pack of boats. Also, if hitting the mark causes injury or serious damage you must retire.

### Do I always have to take a penalty after touching a mark?

No. No penalty is required when:

- You hit a mark while you are not racing (i.e. before your prep signal or after you finish and clear the line);
- You touch a mark that does not begin, bound or end the leg you are on (e.g. the reach mark when you are still on the first beat);
- You hit a mark because another boat broke a rule and forced you into it. In that case you would be exonerated for hitting the mark (rule 64.1a).

#### 31 TOUCHING A MARK

While racing, a boat shall not touch a starting mark before starting, a mark that begins, bounds or ends the leg of the course on which she is sailing, or a finishing mark after finishing.

See rule 44 on page 12.

## Anatomy of a legal One-Turn Penalty

While you are making your penalty turn you must keep clear of all boats (e.g. Boat X) that are not making penalty turns (see rule 22.2) until you have completed your tack and jibe.

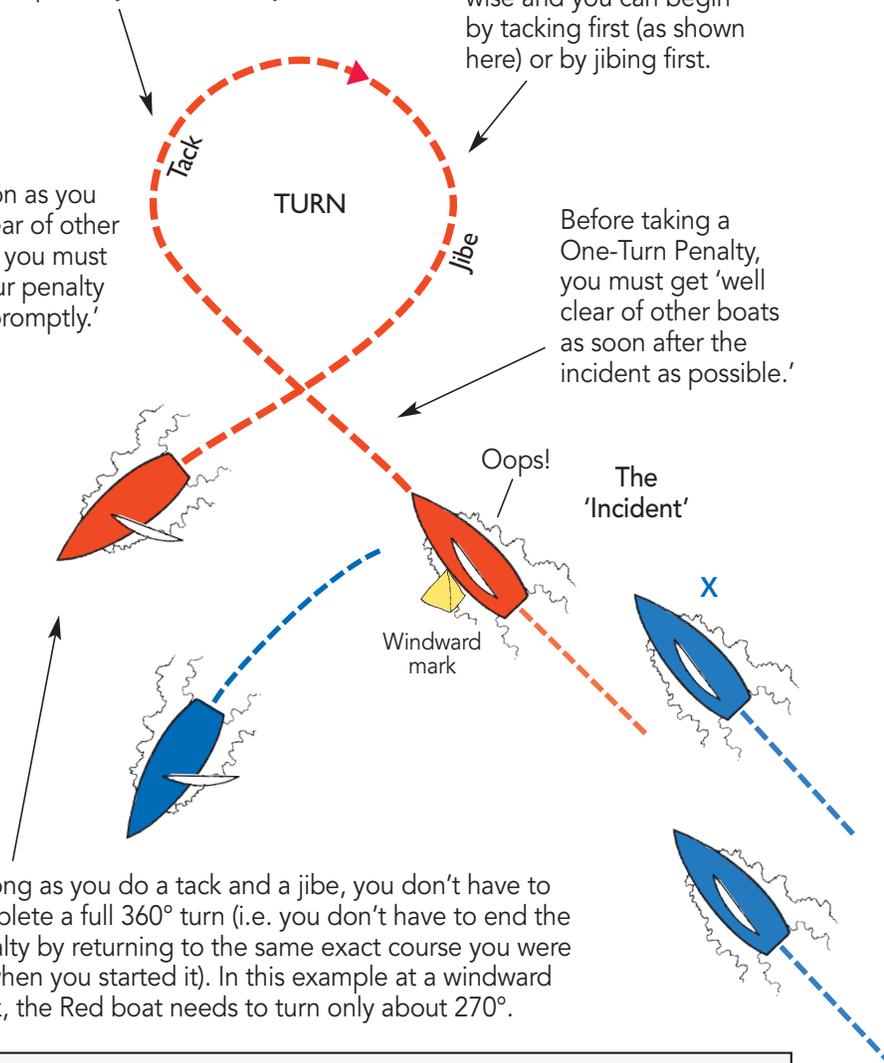
WIND



You can make your turn clockwise or counterclockwise and you can begin by tacking first (as shown here) or by jibing first.

As soon as you are clear of other boats, you must do your penalty turn 'promptly.'

Before taking a One-Turn Penalty, you must get 'well clear of other boats as soon after the incident as possible.'



As long as you do a tack and a jibe, you don't have to complete a full 360° turn (i.e. you don't have to end the penalty by returning to the same exact course you were on when you started it). In this example at a windward mark, the Red boat needs to turn only about 270°.

## SPEED & Smarts™

**Speed & Smarts** (ISSN 1075-5772) is published by Four Winds Inc.  
 Address: PO Box 435, Easton, CT 06612  
 Phone: 203-445-0734 Fax: 203-445-0735  
 Subscriptions/Renewals: 800-356-2200

E-mail: [SpeedandSmarts@optonline.net](mailto:SpeedandSmarts@optonline.net)

Web site: [www.SpeedandSmarts.com](http://www.SpeedandSmarts.com)

FB: [www.Facebook.com/SpeedandSmarts](http://www.Facebook.com/SpeedandSmarts)

Publisher: David Dellenbaugh Manager: Joanne DeLuca Art: Brad Dellenbaugh

© 2015 Speed & Smarts

All rights reserved. No part of this issue may be given to other people.

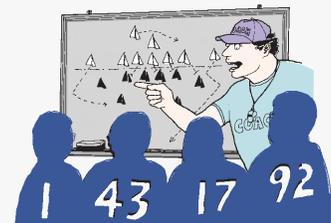
Subscriptions: We offer two versions of Speed & Smarts: Email (PDF) or Paper.

The *Email version* is available everywhere for \$38 per year (\$66 for two years).

The *Paper version* is available only in the U.S. \$48 (\$86 for two years) and Canada \$53 (\$95 for two years).

Subscribers get a **20% Discount** on all Back issues, Bundles and Gift subscriptions!

Speed & Smarts is published bi-monthly. Issues are numbered sequentially and *issue dates are approximate*.



To renew your sub or give a gift:

[www.SpeedandSmarts.com](http://www.SpeedandSmarts.com)

Subscribers now get:

**20% off** all Gift subscriptions, Back issues and Back Issue Bundles

**10% off** 'Learn The Racing Rules' two-part DVD set

© 2015 *Speed & Smarts*

All the material in this (and every other) issue of *Speed & Smarts* is copyrighted. Giving this material to other people is strictly prohibited.

## Is it fair to slow a competitor intentionally during a race?



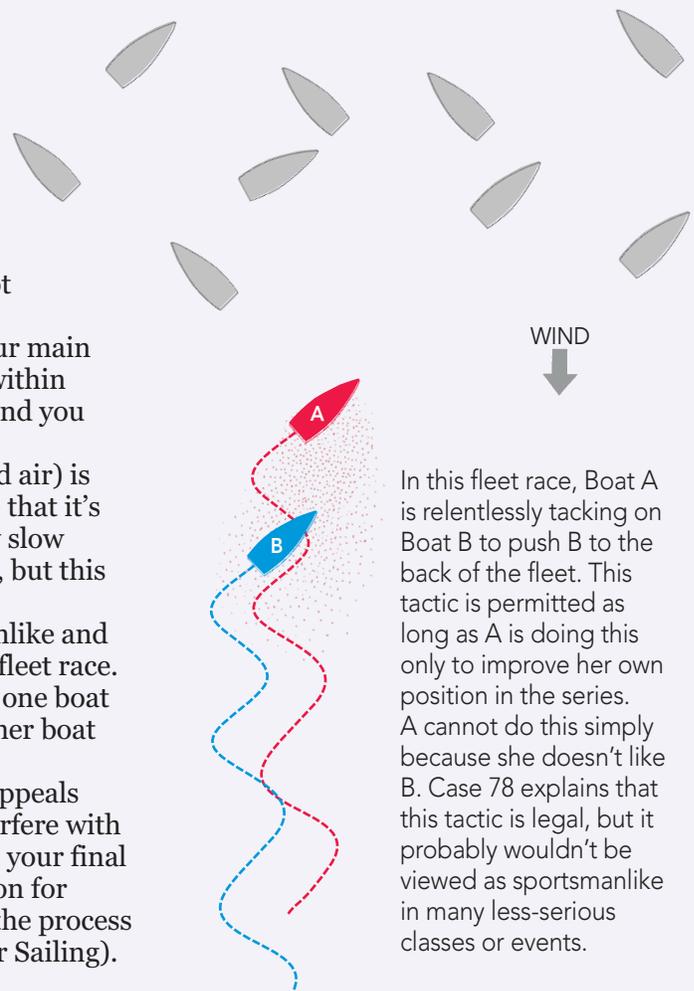
Is it legal, and sportsmanlike, to tack on another boat and give them bad air? Can you luff a competitor above and beyond your proper course? Can you push someone to the back of the fleet?

In most cases, the answer is yes. Sailboat racing is not like ski racing where you race only against the clock. You compete on a race course with many other boats, and your main goal is to beat them. It is certainly within the rules, and within accepted norms of sportsmanship, to slow the boats behind you in order to have a better chance of beating them.

Tacking or jibing on other boats (and giving them bad air) is hard to avoid completely in a large fleet. You could argue that it's smart to minimize the number of times you intentionally slow other boats (so they are less likely to do the same to you), but this is certainly an accepted and effective tactical option.

A more interesting question is whether it's sportsmanlike and fair to match-race another competitor in the middle of a fleet race. This happens occasionally near the end of regattas when one boat is trying to get a result that will put them ahead of the other boat in the series. Is this tactic legal?

The best guidance comes from Case 78 in the ISAF Appeals Book (see below). The short answer is that it's OK to interfere with and hinder another boat as long as this is done to benefit your final ranking in the regatta or your chances of winning selection for another event. But if you intentionally break any rule in the process of slowing the other boat, then you also break rule 2 (Fair Sailing).



In this fleet race, Boat A is relentlessly tacking on Boat B to push B to the back of the fleet. This tactic is permitted as long as A is doing this only to improve her own position in the series. A cannot do this simply because she doesn't like B. Case 78 explains that this tactic is legal, but it probably wouldn't be viewed as sportsmanlike in many less-serious classes or events.

### CASE 78 (ISAF APPEALS BOOK)

'In a fleet race either for one-design boats or for boats racing under a handicap or rating system, a boat may use tactics that clearly interfere with and hinder another boat's progress in the race, provided that, if she is protested under rule 2 for doing so, the protest committee finds that there was a reasonable chance of her tactics benefiting either her final ranking in the event or her chances of gaining selection for another event or for her national team. However, she breaks rule 2, and possibly rule 69.1(a), if while using those tactics she intentionally breaks a rule.'