

2025.001

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Well Clear to Take a Penalty

Question 1

When is a boat, intending to take a penalty under rule 44.2, 'well clear of other boats'?

Answer 1

The general principles for deciding whether a boat is well clear of other boats are set out in World Sailing Case 149 Answer 2. These principles state that a boat that begins to take a penalty is well clear if

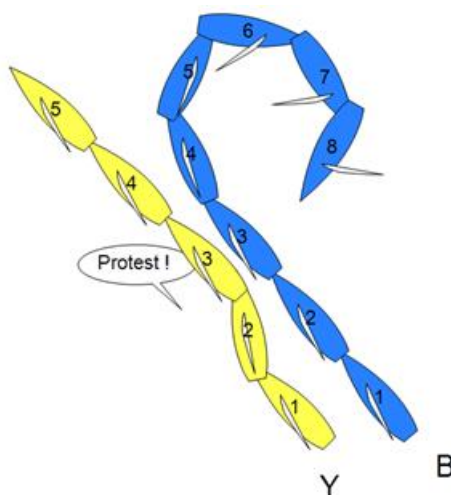
- when she begins to take her penalty, no other boat racing is in a position to interfere with her while she is making her turns, and
- she has no basis for expecting another boat to sail into the space in which she is making her turns.

These principles are equally applicable in both team racing and fleet racing.

Case 149 also clarifies that, provided a boat was well clear when she began her penalty, she may interrupt it to keep clear of other boats that have changed course, provided she immediately resumes taking her penalty.

Question 2

B and Y are two-person dinghies on a beat to windward in moderate wind. Rule 17 does not apply to Y, and no other boats are nearby. After Position 1, Y luffs slowly and B does not respond. At Position 3 B is not keeping clear. Y bears away and protests. B luffs, then tacks and gybes. Has B taken a One-Turn Penalty that complies with rule 44.2?



Answer 2

Yes.

After position 3, no other boat was in position to interfere with B while she was taking her penalty, and no other boat could be expected to sail into her space B needed to complete a penalty. Therefore, B was well clear before starting her penalty. By completing one tack and one gybe in the same direction, B completes a One-Turn Penalty according to rule 44.2.

Rule Opinion

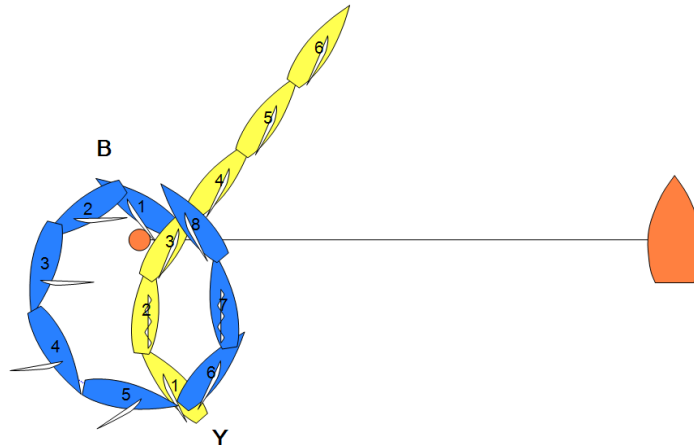
Rapid Response Team Racing Call



Question 3

Shortly after the starting signal, a keelboat B touches a starting mark that Y is approaching on a close-hauled course but not fetching.

There are no other boats nearby. As soon as B is clear of the mark, she bears away to take her penalty. Before position 3, Y tacks and starts. B promptly gybes, passes astern of Y, and then tacks. Has B taken a One-Turn Penalty that complies with rule 44.2?



Answer 3

Yes. See Answer 2.