Rules Specialist Group
2017-2020 Racing Rules of Sailing

Proposal to change RRS 13

Issued 21 September 2017

1. Question

The RMYC Broken Bay wrote to Australian Sailing proposing an amendment to RRS 13 where the words "…on a close-hauled course…" be replaced with the words "…close-hauled on the new course…"

2. Response

The Rules Specialist group has considered the letter and does not support the need for a change to RRS 13.

Firstly, no member of the group sees the need for the suggested change. We find the rule to be clear in both its wording and intention which is to make a boat that is tacking keep clear after it passes head to wind until it is on a close-hauled course.

Case 17 makes it clear that it is the direction that the boat is pointing in and that forward motion and correct setting of the sails is not required.

Secondly, we believe the suggested change would in fact complicate matters more and create the need for even more interpretation and confusion.

We would like to give two illustrations which we believe would cause problems if the suggested wording was adopted;

1. A boat takes a penalty while on a downwind leg. After passing head to wind she is a tacking boat and, because she wishes to bear away she would not pull in her mainsheet so, in accordance with the RMYC proposal she would continue to be a keep clear boat until she had rounded the leeward mark and became close hauled on a tack.
2. The words 'close hauled on the new course' cause difficulty when a boat starts to tack, passes through head to wind, but cannot continue and is forced back onto her original course. There will then be debate as to whether this is a 'new' course.

John Standley
Chairman
Rules Specialist Group
21st September 2017