

Q&A 05-002

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Situation

Yellow and Blue, both on starboard tack, approached the leeward mark to be left to port. Blue, as the inside right of way boat, sailed her proper course wide of the mark, to make a smooth, fast rounding.

In position 2, Blue gybed to port and in position 3, Blue's boom touched Yellow's boom. No damage or injury occurred.

Question

What rules were broken in this situation?

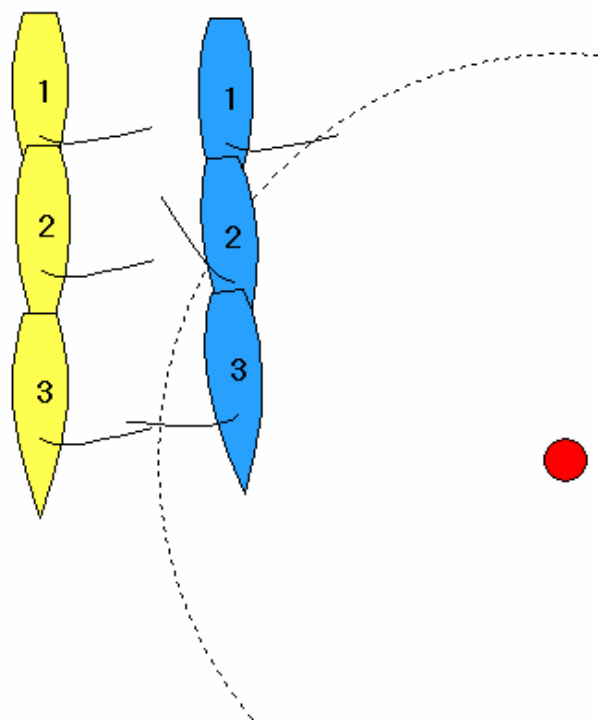
Answer

As the windward outside boat, Yellow was obligated to keep clear under rules 11 and 18.2(a). In addition, Yellow was also obligated under rule 18.2(a) to give Blue room to round the mark.

Blue's gybe was a normal part of the manoeuvre to round the mark, so Yellow was also required to give Blue room to gybe (see definition Room and rule 18). Provided Blue complies with rule 18.4 and her gybe is seamanlike, she is entitled to release her boom to its normal position on the new tack. Yellow broke rule 18.2(a) because she did not give Blue room for a seamanlike gybe without risk of contact between the boats.

Yellow acquired right of way under rule 10 when Blue gybed to port. Blue failed to keep clear of Yellow as a consequence of Yellow's failure to give Blue the room required by rule 18.2(a).

Rule 14 requires both boats to avoid contact if reasonably possible to do so. Because Blue could have curtailed her gybe to avoid contact with Yellow's boom, Blue broke rule 14. Had Blue curtailed her gybe, it would have demonstrated that Yellow did not give Blue the room she needed to gybe. In this case, neither boat could be penalized under rule 14 because Yellow was the right-of-way boat and Blue was entitled to room, and there was no damage or injury (see rule 14(b)).



Expires: 1 February 2006