

SYRA CASE STUDY #5

On the Same Tack; Proper Course

A 51m schooner (Blue) and a 31m sloop (Yellow) are both on port tack on a long beat to windward. The yachts have been overlapped continuously for a long time and the more weatherly sloop is sailing a course approximately 10° higher than the schooner. The yachts converge to where Yellow is approximately 40 metres to leeward of Blue at which time Blue tacks onto starboard-tack. The safety officer aboard Blue contends that Yellow “luffed” Blue and broke SY2.6, rule 17.1.

Question 1

Does Yellow break a rule?

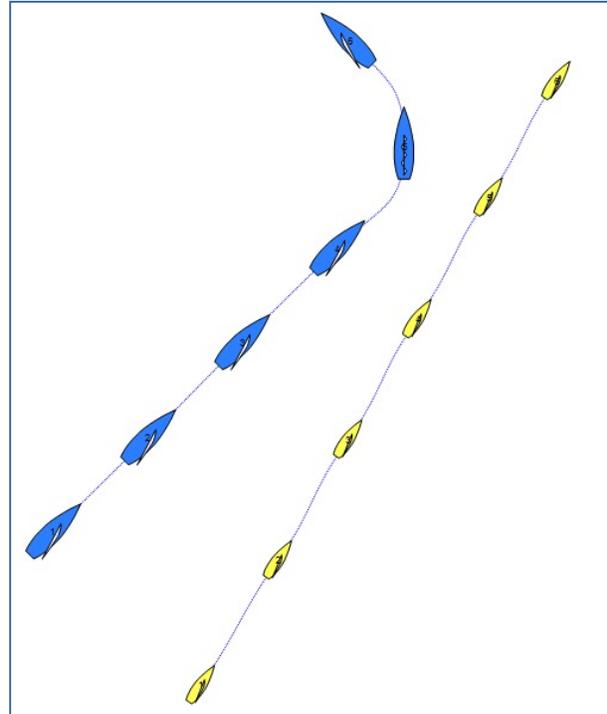
Answer 1

No. SY2.6, rule 17.1 says “A *leeward* boat shall not sail above her *proper course* while she is within 80 metres of the *windward* boat.” Yellow is sailing her *proper course*, “a course a boat would sail to *finish* as soon as possible in the absence of other boats referred to in the rule using the term.”

ISAF Case 14 also addresses this scenario. “When owing to a difference of opinion on the proper course to be sailed, two boats on the same tack converge, *windward* is bound by rule 11 to *keep clear* and by rule 14 to avoid contact.”

“Two boats on the same leg sailing near one another may have different *proper courses*.”

SY2.6, rule 17.1 places a limitation on the *leeward* boat and Yellow respects that limitation by not sailing above her *proper course*. Blue, the *windward* boat, is the *keep clear* boat and by tacking onto to starboard *keeps clear* of Yellow.



Question 2

Two boats are sailing downwind on the same tack continuously overlapped. The *windward* boat is carrying an asymmetric spinnaker and the *leeward* boat, sailing a higher course, is carrying a Code 0. What rules apply in this situation?

Answer 2

RRS SY2.6, rule 17.1 applies to the *leeward* boat and she shall not sail above her *proper course* when she is within 80 metres of the *windward* boat. RRS 11 applies to the *windward* boat and she must *keep clear*. RRS 14, Avoiding Contact, applies to both boats.

A boat's *proper course* is the course she would sail to finish as soon as possible, in the existing conditions with the sails she has set. See ISAF Case 134.