

SYRA CASE STUDY #5

On the Same Tack; Proper Course

The Racing Rules of Sailing apply as changed by Appendix SY.

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 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. Blue contends that Yellow “luffed” Blue and broke RRS 17.1 (SY2.9).

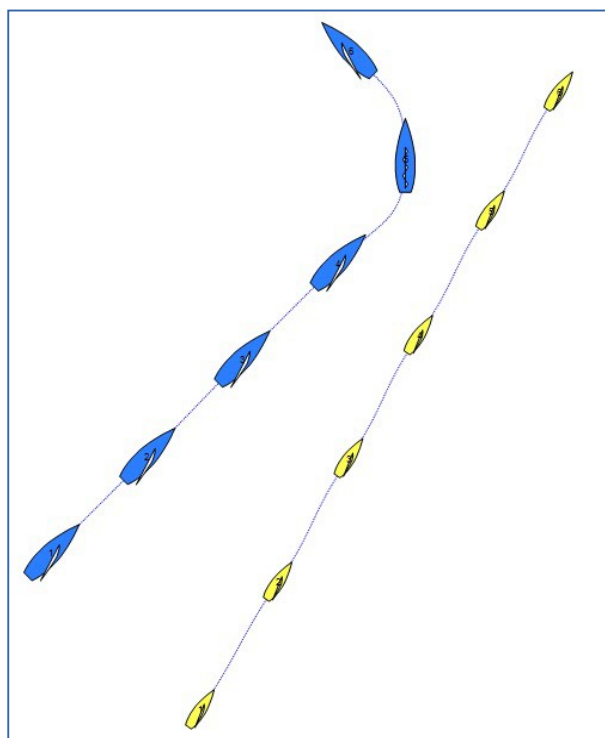
Question 1

Does Yellow break a rule?

Answer 1

No. RRS 17.1 (SY2.9) states “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.”

WS Case 14 also addresses this scenario. “When, owing to a difference of opinion about a leeward boat’s proper course, two boats on the same tack converge, the windward boat must *keep clear*. Two boats on the same leg sailing near one another may have different proper courses.”



RRS 17.1 (SY2.9) 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 17.1 (SY2.9) 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 WS Case 134.