

RAPID RESPONSE MATCH RACING CALL 2024.001

Updated 15 July 2024

Rule 2 Fair Sailing

Rule C2.14 (31) Touching A Mark

Rule 41 Outside Help

Rule C8.5 Penalties Initiated By Umpires

Question 1

Wind: 20 Knots, Sea State - small waves, boats: Elliot 6M

On entry yellow's bulb hooks under the anchor line of the race committee vessel ('RCV'). Yellow stops sharply and then slides down the anchor line and hits the RCV. Yellow becomes stopped with its midships port side making contact with the bow of the RCV. It becomes apparent that Yellow will not be able to extricate themselves without outside assistance. Given the conditions, the risk of damage to both boats as well as risk to sailors and race officials what should the umpires signal and do?

Answer 1

Penalize Yellow. Contact with an RCV that is also a mark breaks rule 31, as changed by C2.14.

It is recommended that the umpires should then focus to prevent or minimize injury to people and damage to either the boat or the RCV.

Being 'in danger' in the context of this question means that the crew member is at unreasonable risk of injury. Crewing on a boat in a match race comes with an increase in risk of injury. Only when such risks become unreasonable is the crew in danger. Each incident must be considered on its specific circumstances. The wind speed, wave height, and boat type are some of the factors when considering what is unreasonable risk, but there may be others.

If the crew are in danger, rule 41(a) allows the racing boat to receive help from any source including the umpires without breaking rule 41.

If the crew are not in danger and Yellow receives help from the umpire boat, Yellow has broken rule 41, as the umpire boat was not the 'other vessel' in the collision (see rule 41(b)).

Rule 41(b) allows crew on the RCV to help the boat to get clear without breaking rule 41.

Rule 41 is not a rule where the umpires can initiate a penalty. Often when a breach of rule 41 is explained to the boat, together with the sportsmanship implications of knowing they have broken a rule, the boat retires from the race (see rule 2). If the boat has retired, and did not start, the umpires may display a Yellow with a Black flag as allowed in C8.5 and terminate the match in favour of Blue.

The umpires should also be mindful of Yellow's requirement to cross and clear the starting line under rule C4.2.

If Yellow does not retire, then the umpires continue to umpire until both boats stop racing and consider a protest hearing based on the allegation that Yellow broke rule 41.

Note: The 2025-2028 rules will have a new C8 rule which will allow an umpire to terminate a race and award it to a boat if the other boat has started and retired.

Question 2

Would the answer to question 1 be the same if the wind was c. 6 Knots?

Answer 2

Yes. The actions needed to be taken may change but the same rules apply.