

World Sailing Racing Rules Question and Answer Service

Q&A 2025.007

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Hailing for Room to Tack

Situation 1

Boats are close-hauled on starboard tack, approaching an obstruction, such as the shore or the bank of a river. Boat A needs room to tack and avoid boat B. Boat A makes a hail in English that does not include the words 'Room to tack'. Boat B understands A's need and responds in compliance with rule 20.2(b) and (c). Boat B protests A for breaking rule 20.1.

Question 1

How should the protest committee decide the protest?

Answer 1

The protest should be dismissed. Rule 20.1 requires the boat to hail using the words 'Room to tack'. In order for rule 20 to apply, a hail that includes the words 'Room to tack' needs to be made. Since A made a hail that did not include the words 'Room to tack', then the hail for room to tack has not been made and rule 20 does not apply. Boat's B response is not relevant with rules 20.2(b) and (c), since they do not apply. Boat A did not break rule 20.1. Furthermore, no other rule of Part 2 was broken in the incident.

Situation 2

As in Situation 1, except that B understands A's need, but does not respond to A's hail. A luffs head to wind to avoid touching the obstruction, and slows. B tacks, sometime after the hail, and A then tacks, and is now behind B in the race. There is no contact between them. A protests B for not responding to her hail.

Question 2

How should the protest committee decide the protest?

Answer 2

The protest should be dismissed. Rule 20.1 requires the boat to hail using the words 'Room to tack'. Since A made a hail that did not include the words 'Room to tack', then the hail for room to tack has not been made. Rules 20.2(b) and (c) do not apply and Boat B is not required to answer. Furthermore, no other rule of Part 2 was broken in the incident.