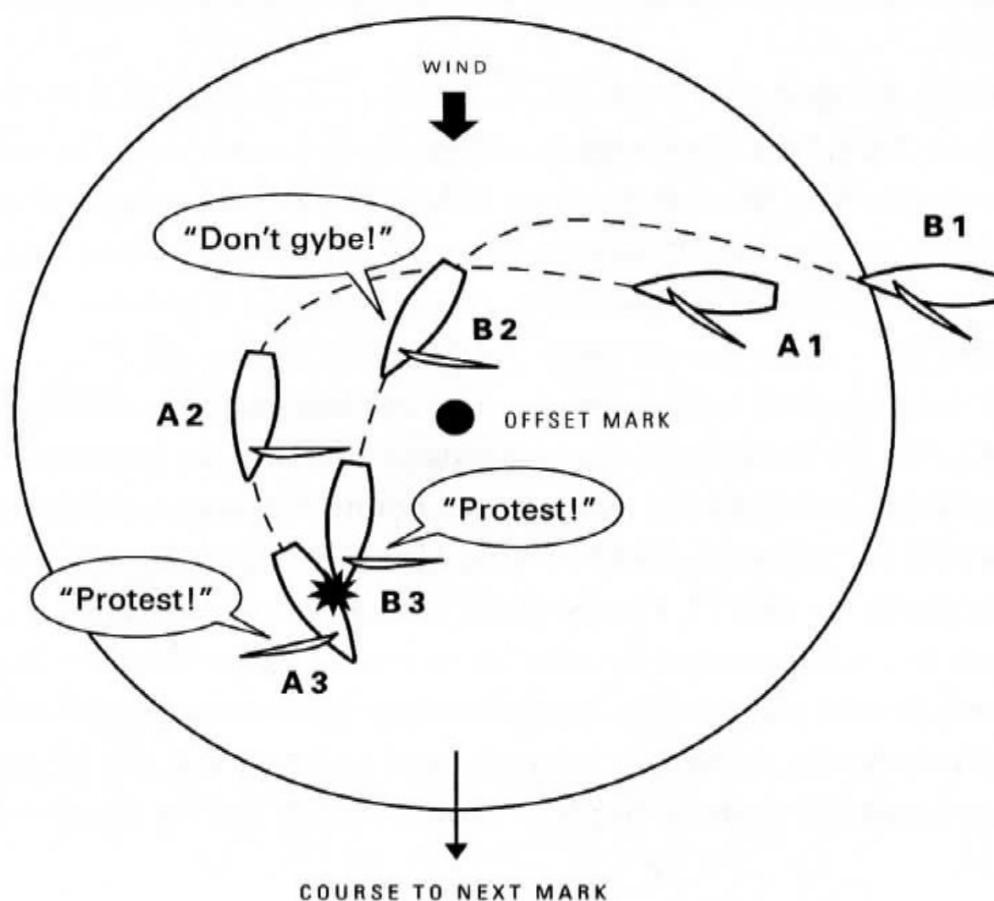


Quiz 44

Boats A and B are approaching an offset mark on starboard tack. The next leg is a downwind leg with time spent on both tacks. When A reaches the zone she is clear ahead of B. A bears away around the mark to her downwind sailing angle on starboard tack. At that point she is still overlapped with the mark. As a result of her bearing away, B becomes overlapped inside her. A continues bearing away and gybes onto port tack. There is contact immediately between B's bow and A's port side, with damage to both boats. Both boats protest. You are on the protest committee; how would you decide this?



Answers to Dave Perry's 100 Best Racing Rules Quizzes are based on The Racing Rules of Sailing for 2021–2024. For a comprehensive explanation of the rules, read Dave Perry's Understanding the Racing Rules of Sailing through 2024, which is available from US Sailing: 1 (800) 877-2451 or ussailing.org. Permission to reprint this quiz for non-commercial use is granted by the author.

ANSWER TO QUIZ 44

Boat A is penalized under rules 10, On Opposite Tacks, and 14, Avoiding Contact. Boat B breaks no rules. When A reaches the zone clear ahead, she is entitled to mark-room from B by rule 18.2(b), Giving Mark-Room, until she has been given that mark-room (see rule 18.2(d)). Mark-room is the space A needs to sail to the mark, leave it on the required side, and round it as necessary to sail the course (see the definition Mark-Room). Once A has borne away to her downwind sailing angle on starboard tack and has the space needed to leave the mark to port, she has been given mark-room and rules 18.2(b) and 18.2(c) cease to apply (see rule 18.2(d)). From that point forward, A is not exonerated by rule 43.1(b), Exoneration, if she breaks any rules. When A gybes, she breaks rule 10.

Before A rounds the mark, B is required to keep clear of A by rule 12, On the Same Tack, Not Overlapped, and to give her mark-room by rule 18.2(b). She complies with those obligations. When B becomes overlapped with A, A is already on her downwind course and has the space she needs to leave the mark to port; therefore she has been given mark-room and is not entitled to room to also sail her proper course under rule 18.2(c)(2) (see rule 18.2(d)). When B becomes overlapped with A, she instantly becomes the right-of-way boat under rule 11, On the Same Tack, Overlapped. But because she becomes overlapped due to A's action of bearing away, B does not need to give A room to keep clear under rule 15, Acquiring Right of Way. Also, B is required not to sail above her proper course by rule 17, On the Same Tack; Proper Course, and she does not.

Both boats are required by rule 14, to avoid contact if reasonably possible. A clearly breaks rule 14. The interval of time from when A gybes until contact is so short that by the time it becomes clear to B that A is not keeping clear, it is not reasonably possible for B to avoid contact, and so she does not break rule 14.