

# What would you do if...?



The essence of morality, and likewise sportsmanship, is *choice*. It is the choices we make every day that determine whether or not we are considered sportsmanlike by others, and by ourselves.

Below are six race dilemmas that require a choice which is not always easy, especially in the heat of battle. There are no absolute right and wrong answers here – just issues to consider. So read the questions, think how you'd act in each case, and discuss them with friends and crew.

**?** You're racing a 24-footer around an Olympic course in a strong breeze and waves. As you round the last leeward mark (a big orange inflatable), a wave pushes the mark toward you and one corner of the mark kisses your topsides very lightly and briefly. What's the first thing you would do?

- a) Instantly start sailing clear of other boats to do your circle.
- b) Think about whether you can do a circle without losing a place in the race or series.
- c) Look around to see if any other boats saw it.
- d) Look to see if anyone on your own boat saw it.
- e) Other \_\_\_\_\_

**?** As you approach the jibe mark in a light-air handicap race, your closest competitor is overtaking you slowly from astern. When you reach the two-boatlength circle, it is questionable whether he has attained an inside overlap or not. The skipper of that boat looks at you and says, "What do you think?" What would you do?

- a) Automatically say "No room."
- b) Automatically say "Go ahead."
- c) Move to the stern of your boat and try to make your best guess at whether there's an overlap.
- d) Consider how you feel about the other skipper or how giving room will affect your score.
- e) Other \_\_\_\_\_

**?** At a crowded start, you see two boats near the pin end have slight hull contact. There is a lot of yelling between the crews, but neither boat flies a protest flag nor does a 720. What would you do?

- a) Immediately fly your red flag and lodge a protest under rule 33 ("Contact between yachts racing").
- b) Ignore what you have seen.
- c) Don't fly a flag, but talk to the competitors after the race about their responsibility under rule 33.

**?** Just after the last race of a one-design series, you are packing up your boat in the club parking lot. Suddenly you notice that one small part of your boat does not conform to your class measurement rules. What would you do?

- a) Immediately go to the race committee and withdraw from the regatta.
- b) Withdraw from the regatta only if you figure the rules violation gave you a material advantage.
- c) Pretend you don't know about the problem.

**?** You're sailing in an IMS race on a run. Your toughest competitor is just ahead of you, and you happen to notice that the head of their mainsail is about an inch above the black band at the top of their mast. Several people on your boat confirm this by looking through binoculars. What would you do?

- a) Immediately fly your red flag and protest this violation of measurement rules.
- b) Yell ahead to the other boat and tell them to drop their main halyard an inch.
- c) Ignore what you've seen, and sail your own race.

**?** You're sailing a lightweight dinghy on a wavy, windy run. Several nearby boats are gaining on you by ooching and rocking beyond what rule 54 ("Propulsion") allows. What would you do?

- a) Immediately fly your red flag and protest.
- b) Yell to the other boats to stop or you'll protest.
- c) Join the crowd by ooching and rocking yourself.
- d) Ignore the other boats, and sail your own race.

## FAVORITE QUOTES

"The three basic ingredients for winning remain the same: attitude, attitude, attitude."

– Dennis Conner

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