

## Observer

***While on duty, an Observer is a member of the Race Committee.***

**An Observer shall hail and only hail**

- boat to boat contacts
- boat to mark contacts

**A good Observer will note**

- protest hails (how many? what exactly was said? how long after the contact?)
- the situation prior to a contact or protest hail
- the situation at the time of the contact or protest hail
- responses to a protest hail
- penalty turns and whether the turn was incomplete
- if any boat failed to sail the correct course

**A good Observer will**

- anticipate incidents, continuously track the which sector of the fleet he and the other observers are to observe.
- Are they on starboard or port?
- Are they overlapped, or is one boat clear ahead or clear astern?
- If overlapped, which boat is windward and which leeward?
- Was the overlap obtained from clear astern and within two boat lengths?
- Have they entered the zone?
- Are they tacking?
- Have they passed head to wind?

- Have they assumed a close-hauled course?

An observer will not always be certain of what s/he sees. For example, it can be difficult to know if an overlap was established in time, or whether a boat had passed head to wind. However, the observer's evidence, and the quality of that evidence, will be taken into account in the hearing and will contribute to the quality of the event.

***A good observer applies the principle of the "last known certain situation".***

An observer must go back in time to the point when the facts were certain, and report that.

***The issue here is NOT one of deciding whether or not a boat has infringed a rule, either probably or beyond reasonable doubt, but of deciding whether a statement can be made with certainty.***

**An Observer may**

give help to a competitor in the form of information freely available to all boats. *This reflects a recent change to the RRS and SIs and it seems that clarifying the course given on the board in response to a question from a competitor would be within the scope of this permission.*

Advising any competitor, whether he has asked or not, that he has not sailed the course correctly IS NOT within the scope of this permission.

Be aware that your opinion may be incorrect and of the consequences of that error.

**What a good Observer will NOT do**  
***The observer's duty is limited to noting the FACTS. The only call to make is a call***

***of "Contact!" plus identification of the boat or boats involved.***

The observer shall NOT, either at the time of an incident or afterwards,

- decide whether a protest hail was correctly made,
- determine guilt,
- identify or advise on the relevant points of the RRS involved,
- call "You've (not) sailed the correct course",
- call "Your turn is incomplete",
- suggest any action or remedy that the competitors should have taken or should now take.

**Going beyond calling contacts between boats and contacts between boats and marks takes the observer clearly towards being in breach of the rule prohibiting outside help (RRS E4.2) and, possibly, the sportsmanship rule (RRS 69**