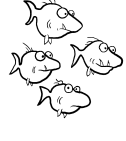


**RULE 42.1 — BASIC RULE**

Except when permitted in rule 42.3 or rule 45, a boat shall compete by using only the wind and water to increase, maintain or decrease her speed. Her crew may adjust the trim of sails and hull, and perform other acts of seamanship, but shall not otherwise move their bodies to propel the boat.

Rule 42 is the “pumping, rocking, ooching, sculling” rule. The rule specifically tells sailors how they can, and cannot, propel their boats in a sailboat race. The principle behind rule 42 is simple: the rule writers (and most sailors themselves) want people to race their sailboats by sailing them (i.e., using the natural wind) as opposed to by propelling or slowing them in other ways. If you are a bit too early for a start, it is more of a sport if you have to slow down using your sails and rudder than if you could just stick your arms in the water and backpaddle; just as it’s more challenging and fun to try to ride the waves on a windy reach as opposed to handing all the sheets to Igor and telling him to “pump” nonstop to the leeward *mark*.

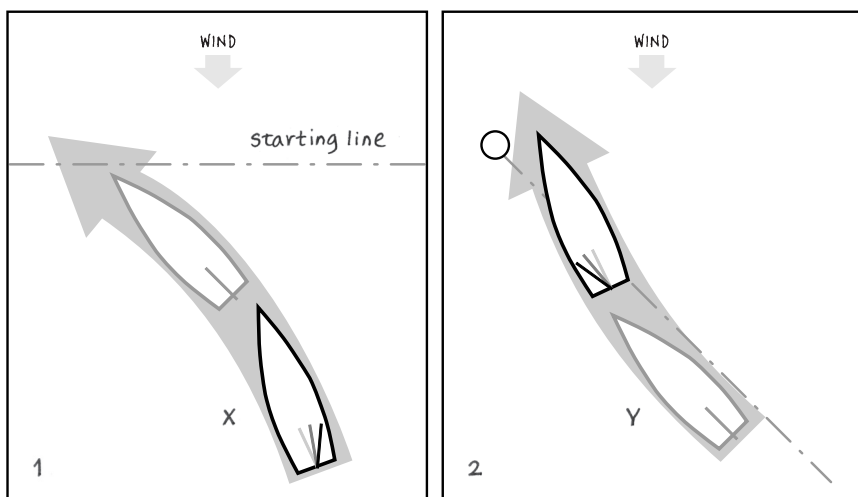


*“It seems that there could be a variety of interpretations and applications of rule 42 by competitors and judges. Are there any official interpretations of rule 42 that helps get all the competitors and officials reading and applying the rule the same way?”*

In fact there is. World Sailing has published a comprehensive document entitled *Interpretations of Rule 42, Propulsion* and specific interpretations for many international classes. These are available on the World Sailing website. The intention of these documents is to provide a clear and consistent interpretation of rule 42 as it applies to specific commonly-used actions while sailing a boat. This permits sailors and judges alike to prepare for events with confidence that they will be sailing and officiating properly under rule 42. I strongly encourage all who race or officiate boats that can be propelled by kinetic actions to read and study these documents carefully.

Compliance with rule 42 continues to be a major issue facing the sport. In my opinion, the rule and the *Interpretations* clearly state what is permitted and what is prohibited. After an explanation of the rule, I will discuss the more central issue of competitor self-control and self-policing vs. the growing reliance on putting judges on the race course to police the kinetics.

Rule 42.1 clearly states the basic premise: “A boat shall compete by using only the wind and water to increase, maintain or decrease her speed. Her crew may adjust the trim of sails and hull, and perform other acts of seamanship, but shall not otherwise move their bodies to propel the boat.” This is the way sailboats are to be raced; i.e., they can be powered only by the natural action of the wind and water. The last phrase in the rule serves to prohibit any crew action that **in and of itself** propels the boat. Paddling is an obvious example.



*In diagram 1, Boat Y is moving slowly and is repeatedly forcefully moving her tiller to turn the boat down from almost head to wind to a close-hauled course. Though this action is “sculling” it is permitted under rule 42.3(d), as an exception to rule 42.2(d).*

*In diagram 2, as long as Boat X was above a close-hauled course and moving slowly when she began repeatedly forcefully moving her tiller (“sculling”), she is not breaking rule 42.2(d) because she is turning towards a close-hauled course on port tack. However, once she has sculled in one direction, she breaks rule 42.2(d) if she then sculls in the other direction before getting to a close-hauled course.*

But even one good hard roll of the boat that propels the boat would be illegal as well. Note that the term “crew” refers to **all** sailors on board, including the helmsman.

Notice that it is just as illegal to slow yourself down (“decrease speed”) unnaturally as it is to propel yourself. So if you’re early for a start or trapped on the outside of a crowd at a *mark*, you can’t stick your leg in the water to slow down. Likewise, if you luff a boat before the start and hit them, you can’t hang on to them to slow yourself down so you’re not early. However, there are legal ways to slow yourself down using the natural action of the wind and water. One is to physically hold the boom out so the wind pushes against the sail; another is to turn the rudder hard over against the flow of the water provided it is not done repeatedly back and forth (see discussion of “sculling” in rule 42.2(d)). (See Appeal 25.)

Note also that a boat can be penalized for breaking rule 42 only while she is *racing* (see preamble to Part 4). Case 69 says, “During the period in which the boat was racing she was using wind as a source of power as required by rule 42.1. Her motion also resulted from momentum created by engine power that propelled her before she began racing. Nothing in the rule requires that a boat be in any particular state of motion or non-motion when she begins racing.” Likewise, in light air and adverse current, a boat can just get its bow across the finish line (thereby *finishing*), drift backwards, and, when clear of the finishing line and finishing *marks* (i.e., no longer *racing*), turn on her engine and power out of the course area.

There are some common-sense exceptions built into rule 42 for safety reasons.

**RULE 42.3 (g)**

Any means of propulsion may be used to help a person or another vessel in danger.

**RULE 42.3 (h)**

To get clear after grounding or colliding with another boat or object, a boat may use force applied by the crew of either boat and any equipment other than a propulsion engine.

These reinforce the overriding safety principle that you should get to a boat or person’s rescue as fast as you can using any means available, including paddling, rocking, or an engine when you have one. Obviously, this is not intended to be misused as a deceitful way to advance along the race course. Case 20 and the discussion of rule 1.1 (Safety, Helping Those in Danger) are clear as to the responsibility all racing sailors have, and when and how a boat that renders assistance should be compensated.

Also, when you go aground or hit another boat, you may use whatever means of force is necessary to clear yourself, except that you can’t use your engine to propel yourself. Note that you can use the power from your engine to run a winch or windlass, etc. if necessary.



*“Can I anchor?”*

Yes. Rule 45 (Hauling Out; Making Fast; Anchoring) states, “[A boat] may anchor or the crew may stand on the bottom.” Rule 42.1 specifically permits the actions described in rule 45. Generally boats anchor either as a safety measure or to decrease the speed at which they are moving away from their destination (as in adverse current). Note that a means of anchoring is the crew standing on the bottom. Of course if that crew starts walking the boat around, rule 42.1 is broken.

Note, recovering an anchor, whether it was lowered or thrown forward, so as to gather way over the ground, breaks rule 42.1. Anchoring should be a means of keeping you where you are, and not a means of advancing yourself along the race course. Clearly, if you throw your anchor forward and then recover the anchor, you will be “pulling yourself” forward past where you were when you threw out the anchor. Therefore, when *racing*, the anchor should be **dropped straight down**. Likewise, when you pull the anchor back up, you can’t generate momentum that will cause the boat to move **past** the point where the anchor was on the ground; i.e., where it was dropped. (See Case 5.)

*“Now what about the actions listed in rule 42.2; are they always prohibited, or only when they are actually capable of propelling the boat?”*

Rule 42.2 lists five specific types of actions which are **always** prohibited, regardless of whether they are capable of propelling the boat or not. This makes it easier for sailors to know what they can’t do, and for judges to administer the rule on the water and in protest hearings. The five are the major “offenses.”

