

RACING

**A boat is *racing* from her preparatory signal until she *finishes* and clears the finishing line and *marks* or retires, or until the race committee signals a general recall, *postponement* or *abandonment*.**

It is important to know when you are *racing* because you can only be penalized for breaking a rule of Part 2 (When Boats Meet) when you are *racing*, with the exception of rule 14 (Avoiding Contact) when the incident results in serious damage or injury, and rule 23.1 (Interfering with Another Boat) (see the pream-ble to Part 2). You begin *racing* at your preparatory signal. In a “5–4–1–GO” sequence, the four-minute signal is the preparatory signal (Rule 26, Starting Races). In a “3–2–1–GO” sequence, it’s usually the two-minute signal (see the US prescription Appendix U, Audible-Signal Racing System). Check the sailing instructions for the race to find out when your actual preparatory signal is. You are no longer *racing* when you have *finished* and cleared the finishing line and *marks*. Appeal 16 reads, “...when no part of a boat’s hull, equipment or crew is still on the finishing line, she has cleared it.”



*“When am I considered to be clear of the finishing marks?”*

You have “cleared the finishing *marks*” when you are no longer at risk of hitting them during or just after an incident that occurred while you were *finishing*. Case 127 says, “A boat clears the finishing line and marks when the following two conditions are met: no part of her hull, crew or equipment is on the line, and no finishing mark is influencing her choice of course.” See Appeal 26.



*“Once my bow crosses the finishing line and I’ve “finished,” do I need to cross the finishing line completely?”*

Absolutely not. Rule 28.1 (Sailing the Race) states, “*After finishing she need not cross the finishing line completely.*” So if you are beating to an upwind finishing line in light air and adverse current, all you need to do is get your bow across the line, then you can bear away and sail away from the line and marks.