

# Rule 42 Most Common Breaches Optimist



**THIS PAPER IS INTENDED AS A GUIDE TO JUDGES AND SAILORS**

## **PRINCIPLE:**

**The judges will give sailors the benefit of the doubt, however, when they are sure a sailor is breaking rule 42 they will act to protect the sailors that are complying with the rule.**

## **CLASS RULES AFFECTING RULE 42: NONE**

### **Class Specific Techniques and Breaches:**

Clear breaches of Rule 42 in Optimist class are easy to notice. The problem is that nowadays sailors and their coaches develop the techniques to explore the limits of the rule. As a result judges may have to spend more time observing a boat in the yellow light area before deciding whether to penalize.

## **STARTS**

### **1. Sculling**

This can be both forceful and gentle as Optimist's rudder is very efficient for sculling and can propel the boat with sweeping slow movements. After sculling in one direction sailors sometimes scull to offset the previous sculling and keep the boat in place at the starting line especially in light air (SCULL 2). You can also observe forceful sculling that propels the boat forward in order to avoid being trapped between other boats at the start. Such actions break rule 42.2(d).

#### **Permitted actions:**

- Gentle rudder movements through the centreline that do not propel the boat or prevent it from moving astern
- Sculling, even forceful, when a boat is above close-hauled course and clearly changes direction to a close-hauled course – 42.3(d), SCULL 1
- Repeatedly moving the helm to reduce the speed – 42.3(f)

#### **Prohibited actions:**

- Sculling below a close-hauled course often in an effort to stop the boat immediately going back to head to wind or to duck in to leeward of another boat  
Notes for judges: please remember that you need to count at least two forceful rudder movements below a close-hauled course before you penalize for this action!
- Forceful sculling on both sides – SCULL 2
- Crabbing, but only if the rudder movements are forceful enough to offset the steering caused by backing a sail – SCULL 3

#### **Gathering evidence:**

- Are the tiller movements forceful?
- Are they propelling the boat forward or preventing it from moving astern?
- Is the boat above a close-hauled course and clearly changing direction towards a close-hauled course?
- Is the sculling offsetting previous sculling?
- When backing a sail, is the sculling preventing the boat from changing course?

### **2. Rocking**

Rocking can be mostly seen just after the start, especially in light air, when a sailor tries to sail out from the other boats' shadow. This is done by standing in the boat and repeatedly heeling it to leeward and back to windward.

#### **Permitted actions:**

- One roll that does not clearly propel the boat.

**Prohibited actions:**

- One roll clearly propelling the boat - BASIC 4
- Repeated rolling of the boat - 42.2(b)(1)

**Gathering evidence:**

- Is the competitor causing the boat to roll?
- Does a single roll clearly propel the boat?
- Is the rolling repeated (more than once)?

**UPWIND****1. Torquing**

In Optimist class you see a lot of body movements affecting the sail as the boat is small and the bow is of a flat and irregular shape. When judging this, it is essential to connect the sailor's body movement with the flick and be sure that the flick is not caused by the wave pattern.

**Permitted actions:**

- Torquing to change the fore and aft trim of the boat in phase with the waves – OUCH 1

**Prohibited actions:**

- Excessive torquing causing the leach to flick – PUMP 6
- Torquing on flat water – OUCH 2
- When bailing out the water, making one strong body pump that clearly propels the boat – BASIC 4 or repeatedly rolling the boat by in and out body movements – 42.2(b)(1)  
BAILING OUT THE WATER CANNOT BE A JUSTIFICATION FOR BREAKING THE BASIC RULE.

**Gathering evidence:**

- Are there waves?
- Is the sailor's body movement in phase with the waves?
- Is the sailor's body movement causing the leach to flick?
- Can you connect the sailor's body movements with the flicks?
- Are the flicks repeated?
- May the flicks on the leach be caused by the waves?
- Does one body pump clearly propel the boat?
- How does it appear compared to the other boats?

**2. Body Pumping**

Often you can observe a boat on a port tack that starts to body pump in order to pass in front of the boat on starboard. In such a case, the same principles for gathering evidence apply as for torquing.

**3. Sculling**

Sculling on the upwind leg usually occurs nearby the weather mark either when the sailor has tacked below the layline and tries to reach the mark or after touching the mark in order to get clear of it. The same principles for sculling as at the starts apply with the exception that a sailor can scull after colliding with a mark but only in order to get clear of it – 42.3(h).

**ON THE REACH**

Majority of infringements occur in medium and strong wind conditions and refer mainly to sheet or body pumping. This is best observed from aside and astern as it is then easy to connect flicks on the leach with competitor's body movement.

**1. Sheet Pumping****Permitted actions:**

- Trimming a sail in order to trim the boat in the prevailing conditions – PUMP 2
- Pumping a sail once per wave or gust of wind to initiate surfing or planing but to qualify as surfing the boat must rapidly accelerate down the front side of the wave. – 42.3(c)
- Making an attempt to plane or surf when conditions are marginal, even if it is unsuccessful – PUMP 7

**Prohibited actions:**

- Trimming a sail in order to fan it – PUMP 1
- Pumping a sail when already surfing or planing – PUMP 12
- Making three consecutive unsuccessful attempts to plane or surf – PUMP 8

**2. Body pumping****Prohibited actions:**

- Body pumping causing repeated flicks on the leach – PUMP 6

**Gathering evidence:** See DOWNWIND section below.

**DOWNWIND****1. Pumping****Permitted actions:**

- Trimming a sail in order to trim the boat in the prevailing conditions – PUMP 2
- Pumping a sail once per wave or gust of wind to initiate surfing or planing but to qualify as surfing the boat must rapidly accelerate down the front of the wave. – 42.3(c)
- Making an attempt to plane or surf when conditions are marginal, even if it is unsuccessful – PUMP 7

**Prohibited actions:**

- Body pumping causing repeated flicks of the leach – PUMP 6
- Trimming a sail in order to fan it – PUMP 1
- Making one pump that initiates planing or surfing and before the boat reaches another wave making a second pull on a sail. It is best observed from aside as it is then easy to see that the second pump is made in between the waves and does not initiate planing or surfing.
- Pumping a sail when already surfing or planing – PUMP 12
- Making three consecutive unsuccessful attempts to plane or surf – PUMP 8

**Gathering evidence:**

- Are there surfing or planing conditions?
- Does one pump per wave or gust of wind initiate surfing or planing?
- Is the boat pumping while already surfing or planing?
- Could the trim and release be a response to wind shifts, gusts or waves?
- Is the repeated trim and release fanning the sail?
- Can you connect the flicking leach with body movements?

**2. Rocking****Permitted actions:**

- Heeling the body to leeward to facilitate heading up and heeling the body to windward to facilitate bearing away, provided it is linked to wave patterns – ROCK 6
- Restoring proper trim of the boat and adopting static crew position when the boat's stability is reduced – ROCK 1 and ROCK 4

**Prohibited actions:**

- Repeated rolling of the boat that is not linked to wave patterns – ROCK 7
- Rolling the boat connected with the change of course when conditions make it unnecessary to roll the boat to facilitate steering e.g. lack of waves
- Single body movement followed by repeated rolling – ROCK 5
- In light air, inducing rolling by rhythmic movements of the upper part of the body when sitting on the windward side of the boat with the centreboard out of the water, one hand holding to it and the boat heeled to windward – 42.2(b)(1)
- In light air and small waves, inducing rolling by steering, mostly in an effort to use the waves and increase the boat's speed – 42.2(b)(3)
- When bailing out the water, inducing repeated rolling by in an out body movements. BAILING OUT THE WATER CANNOT BE A JUSTIFICATION FOR REPEATED ROLLING OF THE BOAT.

**Gathering evidence:**

- Is the competitor causing the boat to roll?
- Is the rolling helping the steering of the boat?
- Are there conditions for rolling the boat to facilitate steering?
- Is the heeling of the boat consistent with the boat's turning?
- Is it linked to the wave patterns?

## **TIPS**

1. Ask questions!
2. If you are not sure about a technique, ask in writing for a clarification so that other sailors can also benefit from the answer.
3. If you get a yellow flag penalty, ask the judges for an explanation of what you can and can't do.
4. Remember, the more important the event, the higher the ratio of judges to sailors, so your sailing technique will be under scrutiny when it really matters.

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