

ITM NEW ZEALAND SAIL GRAND PRIX

14 - 15 Feb 2026

From The Umpires
To NZL & FRA

Incident No. 125
Date 19 February 2026
Time 20:00 UTC

The umpires, having observed contact, considered the following matter having conducted a hearing under RRS 14 reached the following decision immediately after the incident: *An 8 race points penalty is imposed on NZL for breaking rule 14 (7 penalty points for serious damage and 1 additional point for aggravating factors).*

No penalty is imposed on FRA.

After being advised of the decision, NZL requested a penalty points review. The Jury opened a hearing to hear further evidence from the parties and consider whether the original decision should be changed. Jury members Remy Dondraat and Diego Yubero were replaced with Sofia Truchanowicz and Chris Lindsay.

The Jury called Paul Bieker, Alex Reid and David Rey from SailGP as expert witnesses.

NZL called Phil Robertson (ITA), Nicolai Sehested (DEN), Andy Maloney (SWE) and Giles Scott (CAN) as witnesses.

Boat NZL & FRA

Incident No. 125

Time 03:52 UTC

Race No. 3

Facts 15 seconds after the start, on the reach to mark 1, NZL was travelling at 90kph. NZL was 4m ahead and 6m to windward of FRA who were travelling at 86kph. A gust of 43kph hit NZL (race time 0:13), the speed increased and the ride height also increased resulting in the tip of the port foil piercing the surface of the water. Over 3 seconds, (race time 0:15-0:18), the leeway on NZL increased up to 19 degrees, while crossing in front of FRA to a position 6m to windward of ITA with FRA 6m clear astern and 1.5m to windward of NZL. As leeway increased, the NZL flight controller reduced the rake on the daggerboard until the board protection limiter started to limit their rake control input. The rudder was turned increasingly to starboard.

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The boat started to heel to windward, increasing the amount of the port foil which was out of the water.

The board protection limit limited the actions to reduce the angle of attack of the foil by the flight controller and the ride height continued to increase along with more of the foil coming out of the water, resulting in increased leeway.

NZL pitched forward, digging the starboard bow into the water.

NZL then rotated to starboard rapidly by 40 degrees, slowing to less than 30kph.

FRA immediately turned by 10 degrees in response to NZL's sharp luff (race time 0:20) but contact occurred between the port bow of FRA and the starboard hull of NZL in the vicinity of the daggerboard.

The port bow of FRA detached in front of the port daggerboard.

The starboard bow of NZL detached in front of the starboard daggerboard.

The wing on NZL collapsed.

Neither boat finished the race.

Two crew members, one on each boat, were injured and were taken to hospital.

The race was later stopped before scoring distance and abandoned.

Other teams sailed along the reach with reduced ride height to avoid being as close to the edge of control.

The board protection limit, limits the board rake and hence the angle of attack of the foil based on boatspeed and a pre-defined calculated downward load on the foil currently set at 2 tonnes. This limit was increased from 1 tonne following feedback from teams on the behaviour of the boat during mark rounding manoeuvres.

The systems team provides regular updates to the foil control system logic working with teams to identify improvements based on any issues encountered by boats while sailing. All teams are aware of the board protection limit within the logic of the foil control system and that once an F50 starts slipping to leeward there can be a reduction in the effectiveness of control inputs from the flight controller.

Choosing to sail at a lower ride height and/or foil cant angle mitigates against hitting the board protection limit and the possibility of a reduction in control.

Conclusion The increased wind speed from the gust increased the lift from the foil and therefore the ride height on NZL which also caused the tip of the foil to pierce the surface of the water triggering the increase in leeway. An increase in windward heel added to the amount of foil becoming clear of the water.

Once NZL began slipping to leeward and the daggerboard rake was limited by the board protection control system, the NZL crew had limited ability to control the F50. All teams were aware of the risk of this situation occurring.

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Since all the teams, including NZL, were aware of the consequences of reaching the board protection limit, it was possible for NZL to have avoided passing that threshold by choosing a lower ride height and with less foil cant angle. The choice of ride height and foil cant angle is under the control of a boat and so it was reasonably possible for NZL to avoid the loss of control, and hence the contact, and therefore she broke rule 14.

Once the boats were on a collision course, there was no action that FRA could have taken to prevent the collision hence it was not reasonably possible for FRA to avoid the contact and therefore she did not break rule 14.

Contact between FRA and NZL caused serious damage. In addition, the boats were initially travelling at more than 50kph and at the time of the incident the angle of incidence was greater than 60 degrees and the speed delta was more than 15kph. Therefore at least two of the aggravating factors in the 2026 Season Jury Contact Flowchart are met.

Having considered the further evidence presented by NZL, FRA, and the evidence of the witnesses listed above, the Jury considers that the SailGP Contact & Damage policy was correctly followed.

Decision The original decision and penalty imposed on NZL stands. An 8 race points penalty is imposed on NZL for breaking rule 14 (7 penalty points for serious damage and 1 additional point for aggravating factors).
No penalty is imposed on FRA.

Craig Mitchell, Miguel Allen, Sofia Truchanowicz, Chris Lindsay, Niall McLeod

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