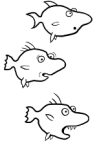


Note that rule 18.2(b) does not shift the right of way from the boat *clear astern* to the boat *clear ahead*. If the boat *clear ahead* is the keep-clear boat, she is simply entitled to *mark-room* from the *clear astern* right-of-way boat.



*“What happens when the boat ahead is on port tack approaching a downwind finishing line with a boat on starboard tack right behind her, and the port-tack boat will pass through the zone about two lengths from the finishing mark?”*

Good question. First of all, the *port-tack* boat (PA) is the keep-clear boat under rule 10 (On Opposite Tacks). This does not change just because she is in the *zone* of the *mark*. Because she reached the *zone clear ahead* of the *star-board-tacker* (SB), she is entitled to *mark-room*. However, because her *proper course* is to sail straight across the finishing line, and because she is two lengths away from the *mark*, her *proper course* is not to sail close to the *mark*. Therefore, she is not entitled to *room* to sail to the *mark*; only to the space needed to leave the finishing *mark* on the required side (which she has plenty of). PA will need to *keep clear* of SB until she has *finished* and cleared the finishing line and *marks*, which she can easily do by either heading up or bearing away or gybing. And if she fails to *keep clear*, she breaks rule 10 and is not exonerated by rule 43.1(b) (Exoneration).



*“What happens if the boat that was clear astern becomes overlapped on the inside of the other boat inside the zone?”*

Note that rule 18.2(b) has a “lock-in” provision (“...*shall thereafter give her mark-room*”), and rule 18.2(c)(1) makes it clear that the lock-in provision continues to apply even if the boat clear astern later becomes overlapped, either on the inside or outside, with the boat that was clear ahead at the zone.

Rule 18.2(c)(1) says, “When a boat is required to give mark-room by rule 18.2(b), she shall continue to do so even if later an overlap is broken or a new overlap begins...”. Therefore, if a boat is clear ahead when she reaches the zone, the boat that is clear astern at that moment must continue to give her mark-room, even if she overlaps her later during her rounding or passing manoeuver.

“So if I’m entitled to mark-room at a leeward mark, can I go head to wind to ‘close the door’ on a boat trying to sneak inside of me?”



Yes, but you have to be careful! Assuming the boat trying to sneak inside of you owes you *mark-room*, she still must give you that *room*, which is just enough space for you to round the *mark* as needed to *sail the course*. Further-more, when she becomes *overlapped* inside of you, she must also give you *room* to sail your *proper course* while you two are *overlapped*. Rule 18.2(c)(2) says, “When a boat is required to give **mark-room** by rule 18.2(b), if she becomes **overlapped** inside the boat entitled to **mark-room**, she shall also give that boat **room** to sail her **proper course** while they remain **overlapped**.”

If you break rule 16.1 (Changing Course) while taking the *room* or *mark-room* you are entitled to, you are exonerated by rule 43.1(b) (Exoneration). So as long as you don’t sail **above** your *proper course*, you can “close the door” even if you break rule 16.1 in the process.

However, when rounding a leeward *mark* to start a beat, once you’ve sailed up to a close-hauled course (usually your *proper course*), and can sail between the *mark* and the outside boat without breaking a rule, you’ve been given *mark-room* and rule 18 ceases to apply (see rule 18.1). Therefore, if you choose to sail **above** close-hauled, you are no longer sailing within the *mark-room* you are entitled to, and you are **not** exonerated if you break rule 16.1. So if when you luff above close-hauled, the windward boat cannot *keep clear* of you or she is forced to touch the *mark* because she is stuck between you and the lee-ward *mark*, you will break rule 16.1. And you get no *room* to tack, so if you sail past head to wind, you risk breaking rule 13 (While Tacking). However, if by sailing up to head to wind you force the *windward* boat to the wrong side of the *mark* without forcing them to foul any other boats, you have not broken rule 16.1 and you have successfully “shut the door.”