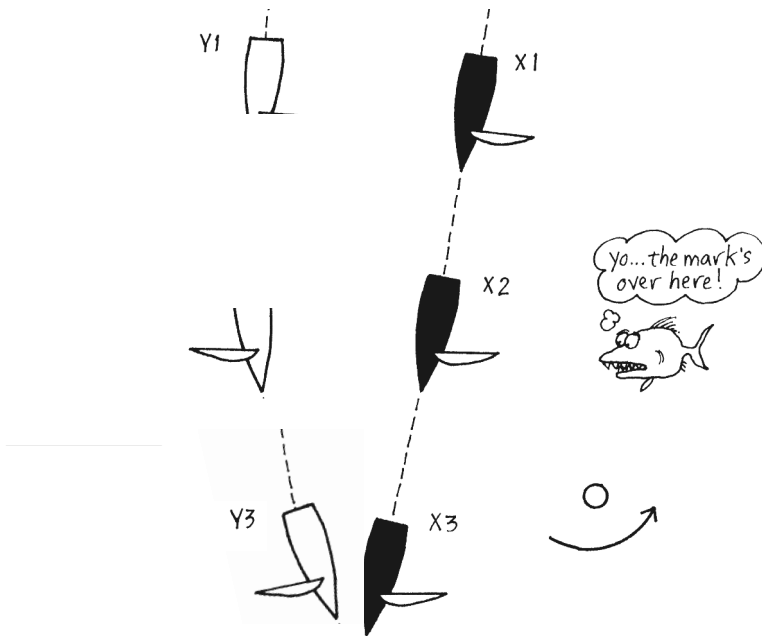


WHEN AN INSIDE RIGHT-OF-WAY BOAT NEEDS TO GYBE TO SAIL HER PROPER COURSE AROUND A MARK

RULE 18.4 — GYBING

When an inside *overlapped* right-of-way boat must gybe at a *mark* to sail her *proper course*, until she gybes she shall sail no farther from the *mark* than needed to sail that course. Rule 18.4 does not apply at a *gate mark*.

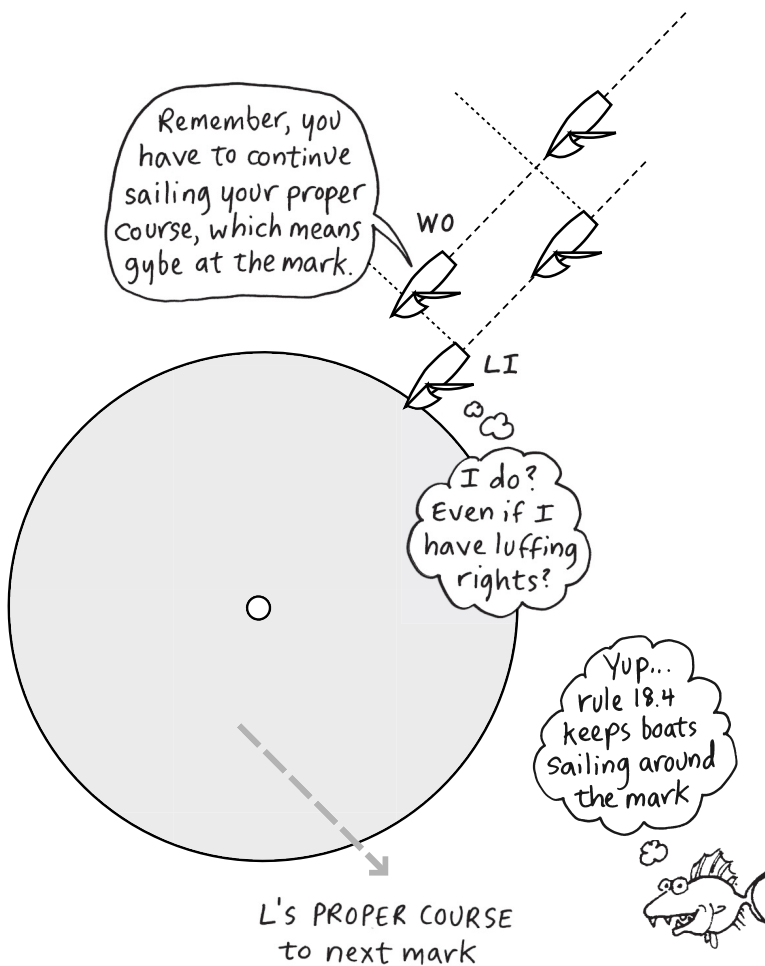


When boats are sailing below ninety degrees to the true wind or when rule 18 applies, the term “overlap” applies to boats on opposite tacks. Therefore, X and Y are “overlapped” at the mark. When the inside boat has the right of way and when she must gybe to sail her proper course, rule 18.4 requires her not to sail any farther from the mark than needed to sail her proper course until she gybes. By sailing past where her proper course was to gybe, X breaks rule 18.4.

First of all, rule 18.4 puts a “limit” on inside right-of-way boats; i.e., *leeward* boats and *starboard-tack* boats. Essentially, that “limit” is that whenever their *proper course* is to gybe at a *mark*, they must do so. Actually, the instruction in the rule is that up until she actually gybes, the right-of-way boat “shall sail no farther from the mark than needed to sail [her *proper course*].” This means that not only does she have to gybe when it is her *proper*

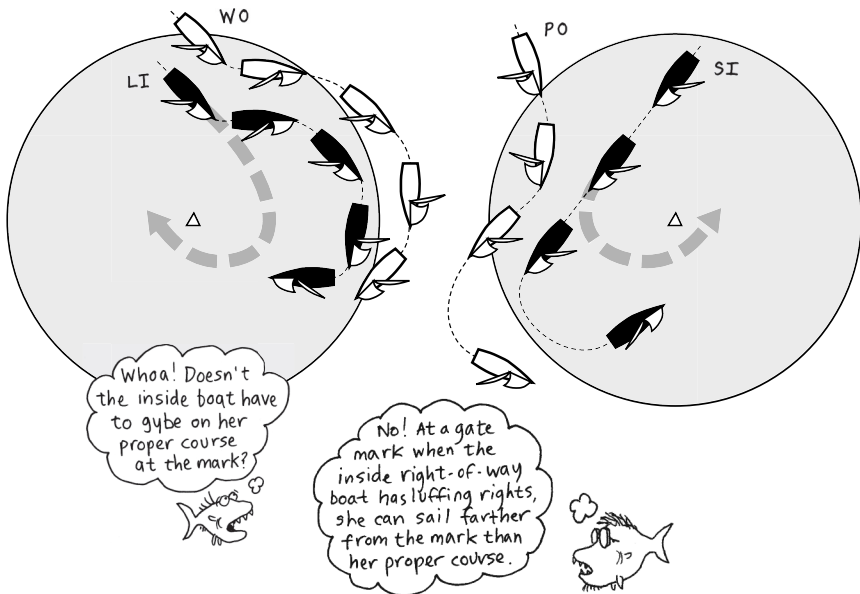
course to do so, but she can't luff (turn) away from the *mark* prior to gybing if that takes her farther from it than necessary to sail her *proper course*. This applies even when the outside/*windward* boat initially obtained the *overlap* to *windward* such that L would otherwise have the right to sail above her *proper course*. (See Case 75.)

Note that rule 18.4 has a clear "shut off" time built in. The rule no longer applies once the inside boat gybes (i.e., the boom crosses the centerline). After that, the inside boat is not limited by rule 18.4, though she will continue to be entitled to *mark-room* under rule 18.2(b) (Giving Mark-Room).



The situation will commonly arise at gybe *marks* and leeward *marks* to be left to port when the *leeward/inside* boat or the *starboard-tack/inside* boat will be required to gybe in order to round the *mark*. Notice that a boat's *proper course* is the course she thinks will get her to the finishing line as quickly as possible. Therefore, especially if there are boats just ahead of her, she can certainly swing wide to set up for a "tactical" cut-close rounding.

Note that rule 18.4 applies any time boats are *overlapped*. Therefore, if the boats are not *overlapped* when the boat ahead enters the *zone*, but the boat astern obtains an outside *overlap* later, rule 18.4 applies. Similarly, if the boats are *overlapped* as the boats enter the *zone* and then the *overlap* is broken at any time during the rounding, rule 18.4 does not apply.



"Does this apply at a gate mark as well?"

Good question! Rule 18.4 does **not** apply at a *gate mark*. A "gate" is two *marks* set close to each other, typically at the end of the downwind leg. The boats are required to sail between the *marks*, and then can choose to exit the gate around one *mark* or the other (see rule 28.1, *Sailing the Race*, and the definition *Sail the Course (c)*).

When inside right-of-way boats are sailing to round a gate *mark*, rule 18.4 does not apply, meaning an inside right-of-way boat is not “limited” to sailing no farther from the *mark* than her *proper course*. She can sail as far as she pleases from the *mark*, force a *windward*/outside boat outside the *zone* if she pleases, then gybe and round the *mark*. Outside keep-clear boats are well advised to not remain *overlapped* with inside right-of-way boats when approaching gate *marks*.

However, if the inside right-of-way boat became *overlapped* from *clear astern*, then she is subject to rule 17 (On the Same Tack; Proper Course), and she is not allowed to sail above her *proper course* for as long as the boats remain *overlapped*. Therefore, at a gate *mark*, even though rule 18.4 does not apply, the inside boat is required by rule 17 to gybe at the *mark* if that is her *proper course* at the time. If she goes farther from the *mark*, she is sailing **above** her *proper course* and is breaking rule 17. Note that the outside keep-clear boat must still *keep clear* and protest.