

US Sailing Presents...

RRS Part 2:

Around the Race Course with The Racing Rules of Sailing





Around the Course

What This Covers

- Key Definitions for Judging
- How do the RRS fit together around the race course?
- How do the rules that apply change as the situation changes?



Tip: Rule Deconstruction

How to analyze a rule by breaking it down into its component parts.

Rule 10: On Opposite Tacks

"When boats are on opposite tacks, a port-tack boat shall keep clear of a starboard-tack boat."

- Tack A boat is on the tack, starboard or port, corresponding to her windward side.
- Keep Clear A boat keeps clear of a right-of-way boat:
 - a) if the right-of-way boat can sail her course with no need to take avoiding action, and
 - b) when the boats are overlapped, if the right-of-way boat can also change course in both directions without immediately making contact.

When boats are on opposite *tacks*, a *port-tack* boat shall allow a *starboard-tack* boat to sail her course with no need to take avoiding action and able to change course in both directions without immediately making contact.

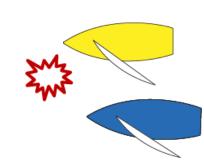
Keep Clear

A boat *keeps clear* of a right-of-way boat

- a) if the right-of-way boat can sail her course with no need to take avoiding action and,
- b) when the boats are *overlapped*, if the right-of-way boat can also change course in both directions without immediately making contact.









Room

The **space a boat needs** in the **existing conditions**, including space to comply with her obligations under the rules of Part 2 and rule 31, while maneuvering **promptly** in a **seamanlike** way.

- Space a boat needs bigger faster boats need more room
- Existing conditions big waves, strong winds, current...or really light air
- Promptly with little or no delay; immediately
- Seamanlike –befitting a competent seaman

Includes ability to comply with rules of Part 2 and rule 31.



Proper Course (Changed 2025-2028)

A course a boat would choose in order to *sail the course* as quickly as possible in the absence of the other boats referred to in the rule using the term. A boat has no *proper course* before her starting signal.



Sail the Course (Changed 2025-2028)

A boat sails the course when

- (a) she *starts;*
- (b) A string representing her track until she finishes, when drawn taught,
 - passes each mark of the course for the race on the required side and in the correct order (including the starting marks),
 - 2) touches each *mark* designated in the sailing instructions to be a rounding *mark*, and
 - 3) passes between the *marks* of a gate from the direction of the course from the previous *mark*; and then

(c) she finishes.

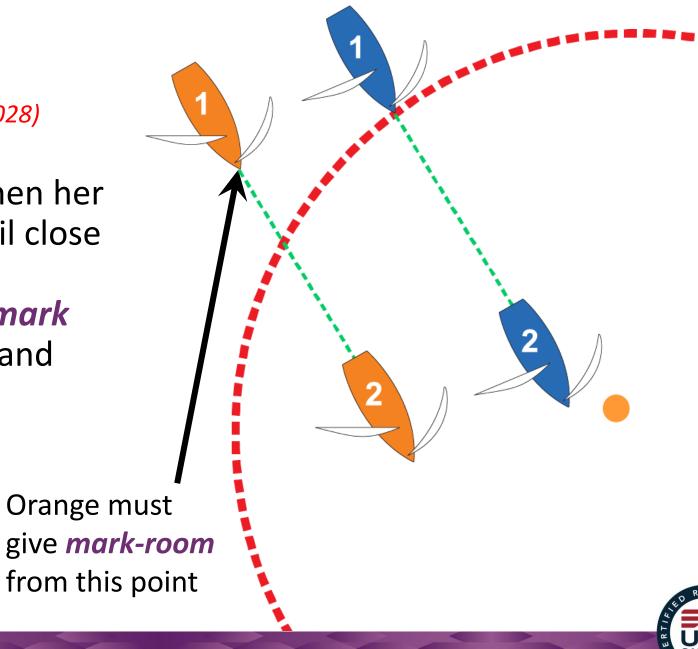
A *mark* that does not begin, bound or end the leg the boat is sailing does not have a required side.



Mark-Room (Changed 2025-2028)

Room for a boat

- a) to sail to the *mark* when her *proper course* is to sail close to it,
- b) to round or pass the *mark* on the required side, and
- c) to leave it astern.



Mark-Room

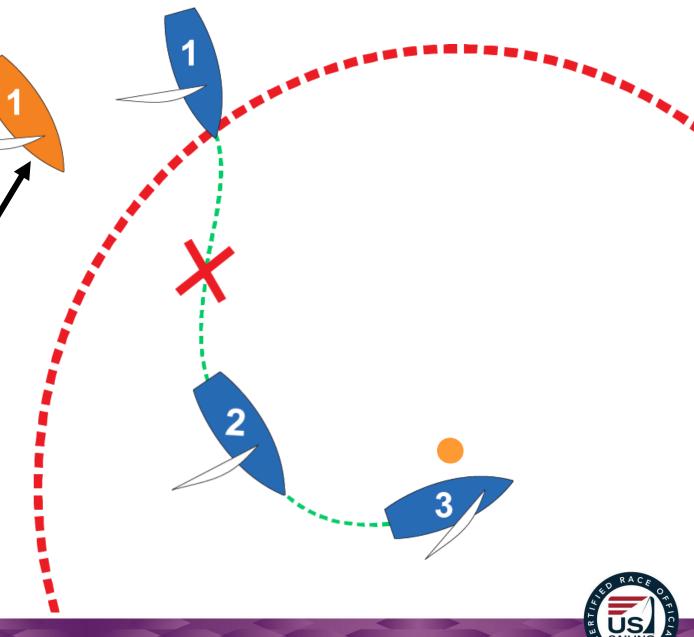
(Changed 2025-2028)

Room for a boat

(a) to sail **TO** the **mark** when her **proper course** is to sail close to it,

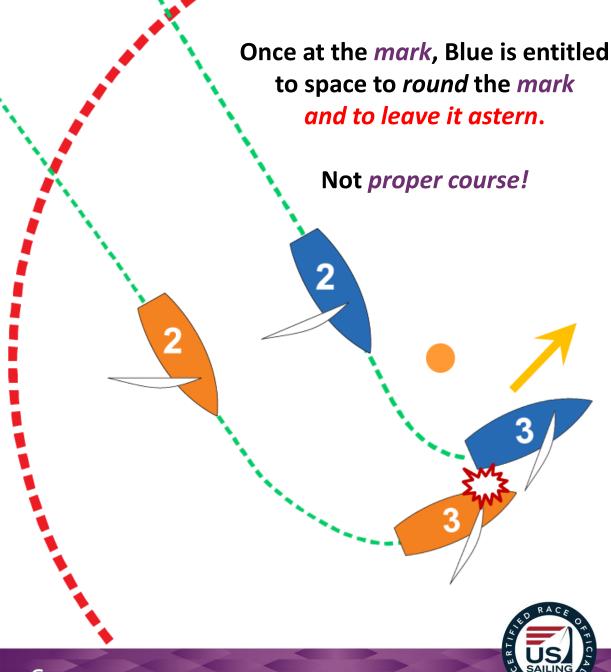
Orange must give *mark-room* from this point.

CASE 118 - 'room to sail to the *mark*' means space to sail promptly in a seamanlike way to a position close to, and on the required side of, the mark.



Mark-Room (Changed 2025-2028)

- (b) to round or pass the *mark* on the required side, and
- (c) to leave it astern.



Obstruction (Changed 2025-2028)

An *obstruction* is

- a) an object that a boat could not pass without changing course substantially, if she were sailing directly towards it and one of her hull lengths from it;
- b) an object that can be safely passed on only one side; or
- c) an object, area or line that is so designated in a *rule*.

However, a boat *racing* is not an *obstruction* to other boats unless they are required to *keep clear* of her or, if rule 22 applies, avoid her.



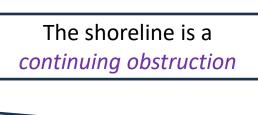
Key Points About Obstructions

1. The object must be large enough to require a substantial course change to avoid if you were sailing towards it.

2. The amount of course change required is determined from a point one-boat length from the object.

3. The size of course change must be substantial.

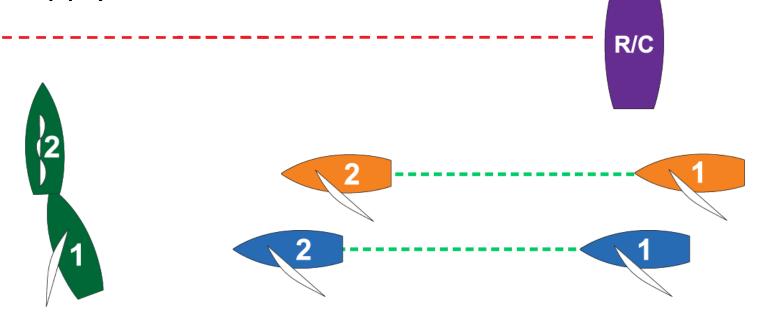
Red is an *obstruction* to Blue and Yellow





Questions

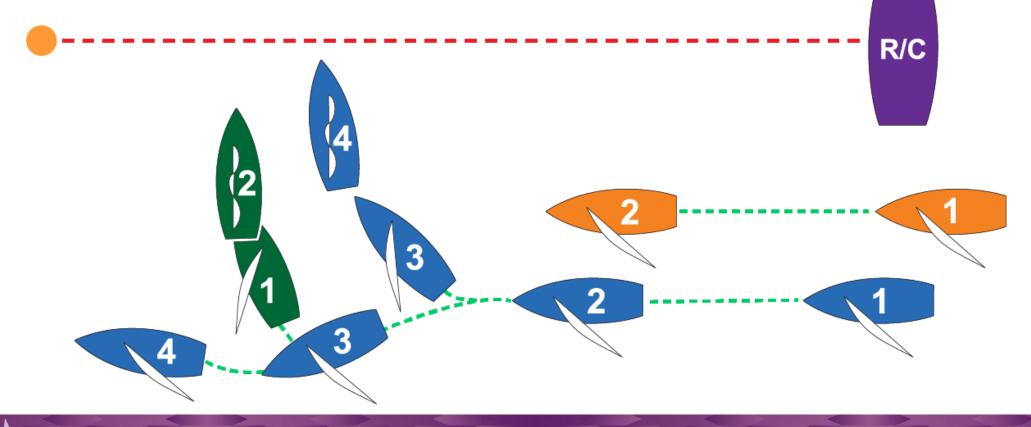
- Is Green an *obstruction*?
- Who has what rights?
- What rules apply?





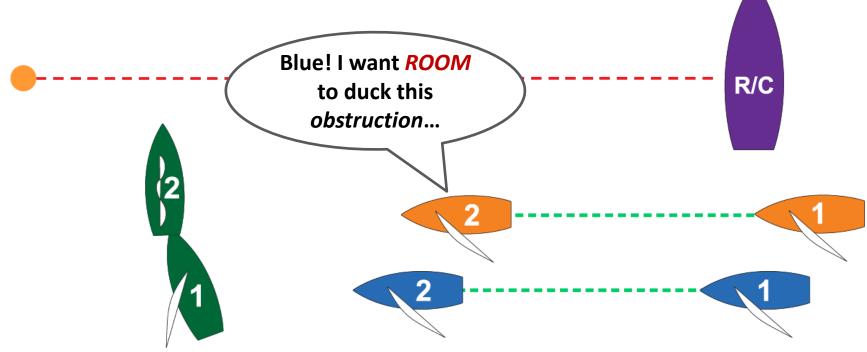
Starting Area (Changed 2025-2028)

Rule 19.2(a) - Blue, a *leeward* right-of-way boat, may choose to pass Green an *obstruction* on her port or starboard side.





Does Orange have the right to ask for room?

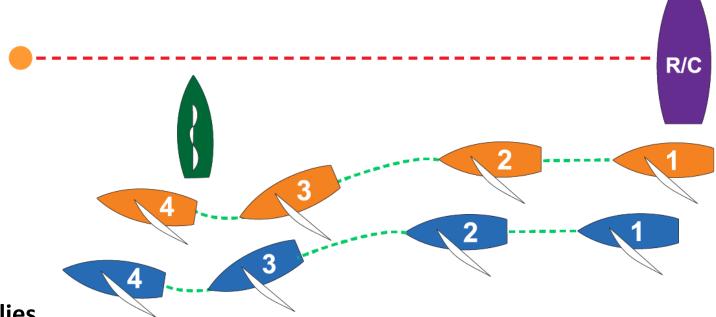


No.

- Green is an *obstruction*, so RRS 19.2 (a) applies.
- Blue (RoW) may choose the side on which to pass the obstruction.



What happens once Blue decides to go to *leeward* of Green?



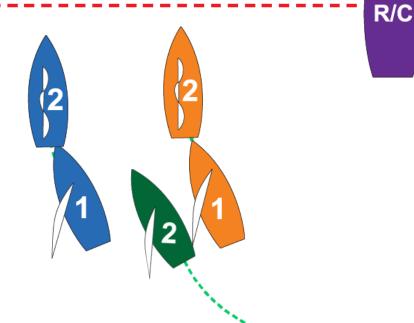
- Rule 19 applies...

 Green is not a *mark* of the course (rule 19.1).
- Rule 19.2(b) Overlapped
 Blue (outside) shall give Orange (inside) room.



Is Green entitled to room to pass between Blue & Orange?

Blue is an *obstruction* as both Orange
 (*same tack, windward* – rule 11) and
 Green (*same tack, clear astern* – rule 12)
 are required to *keep clear* of Blue.



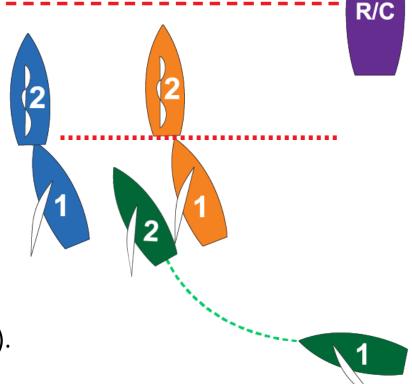


Is Green entitled to room to pass between Blue & Orange?

It depends...

Caveats

- When Green overlaps Orange and gains RoW she must initially give Orange room to keep clear (rule 15).
- Orange must keep clear and give Green room to pass between her and Blue if she is able to when the overlap begins (rules 11 and 19.2(b)).





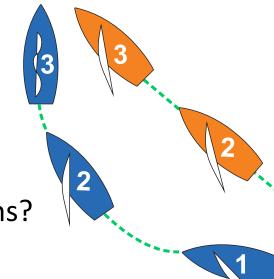
The Start

Prior to starting signal...

R/C

Boats approaching line to start.

- What is happening?
- What *rules* apply?
- Who has what rights?
- Does the right-of-way boat have any limitations?



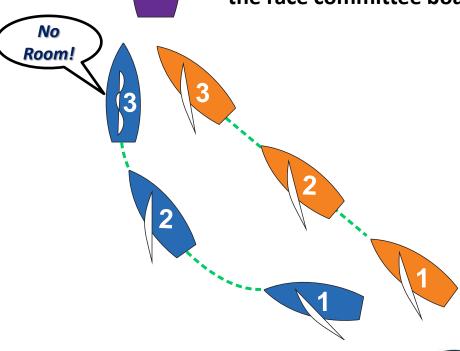
The Start – "Barging"

Prior to starting signal...

Part 2, Section C Preamble
 Section C rules (18, 19, & 20) do not apply at a starting mark surrounded by navigable water when approaching it to start.

- Rule 11 On the Same Tack, Overlapped
 Windward boat shall keep clear of a leeward
 boat.
- Rule 16.1 Changing Course
 As RoW boat changes course she shall give keep-clear boat *room* to *keep clear*.

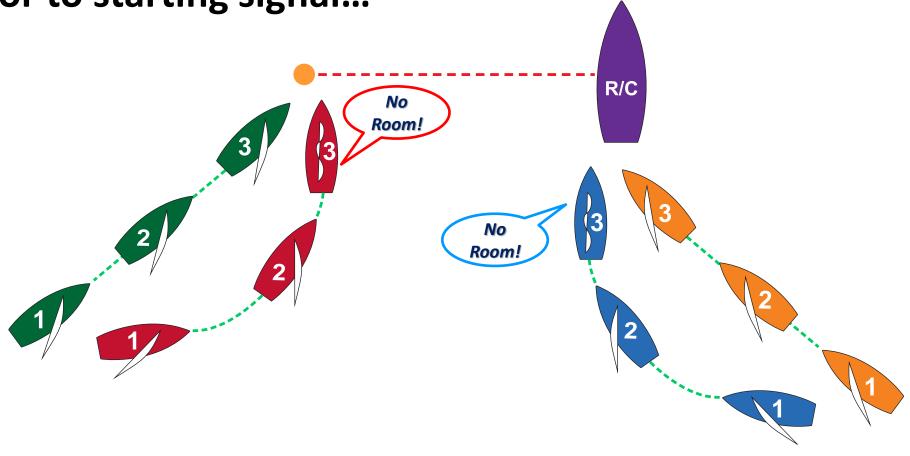
Blue must "shut the door" before Orange is trapped by the race committee boat.





The Start – "Barging"

Prior to starting signal...



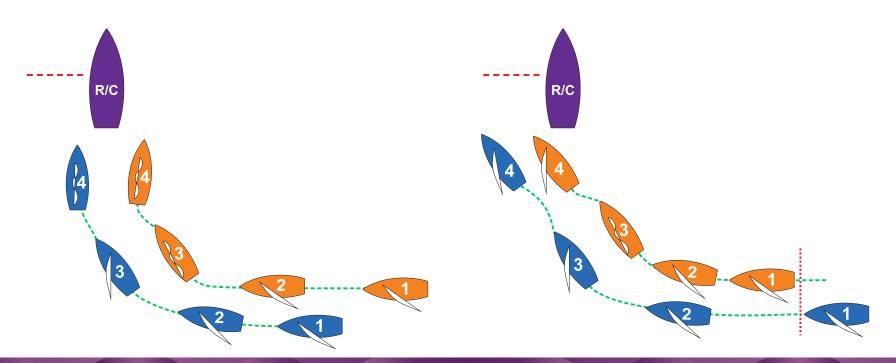
"Barging" can also apply at the pin-end of the starting line.



Rule 17 at the Starting Line

What about **BEFORE / AFTER** the starting signal?

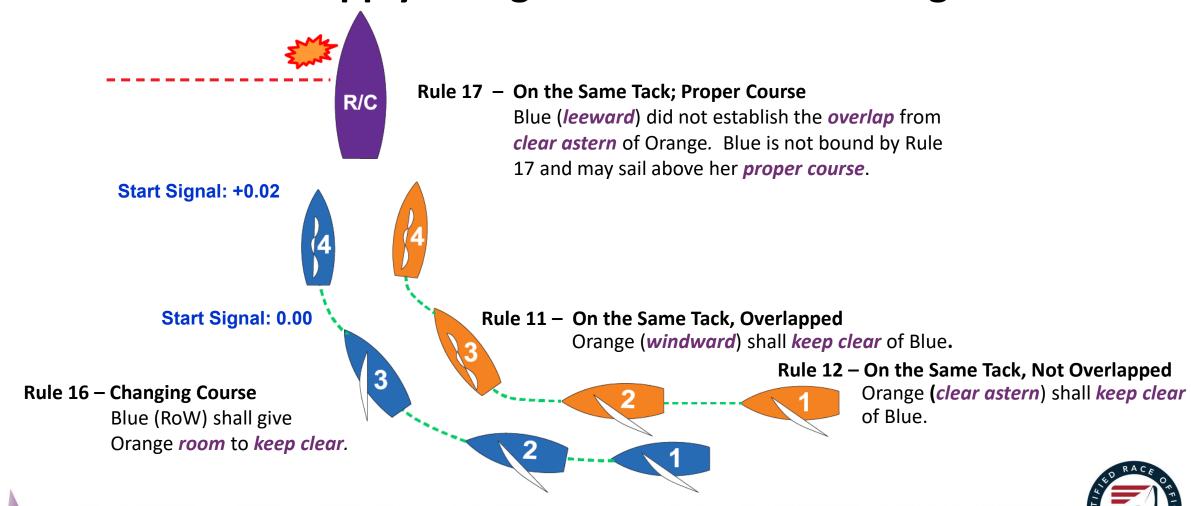
- How was the overlap established?
- Is there a Rule 17 proper course limitation on the leeward boat?
- Before the starting signal Blue has no proper course, but after the starting signal Blue may be required
 by rule 17 to sail her proper course, depending on how the overlap was established.





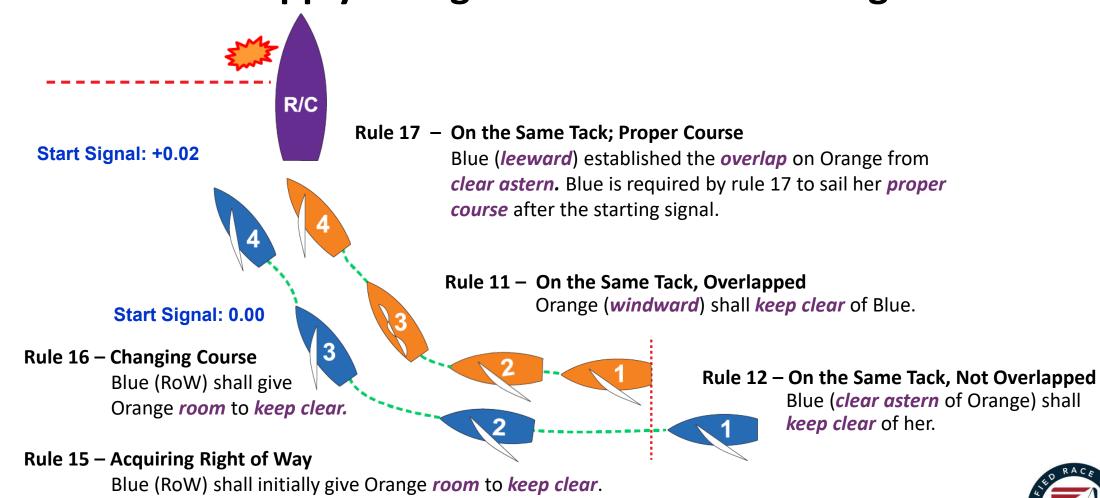
Rule 17 at the Starting Line

The rules that apply change as the situation changes...



Rule 17 at the Starting Line

The rules that apply change as the situation changes...



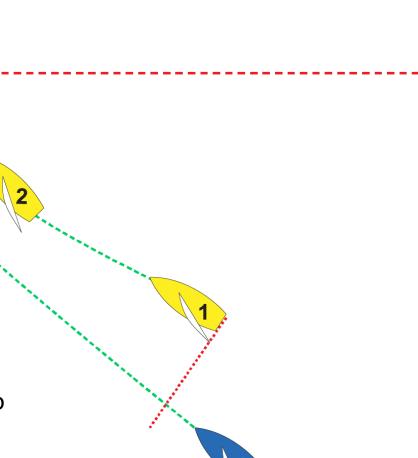
The Start

What is Blue's *Proper Course*?

 After the starting signal, Blue (leeward) may not sail above her proper course (rule 17) which, when sailing to windward, is usually close-hauled.

 However, in order to pass on the correct side of the starting mark, Blue's proper course may be to momentarily luff up to head-to-wind (def. Proper Course).

 Yellow must keep clear of Blue (rule 11), but while Blue is changing course, she must give Yellow room to do so (rule 16).





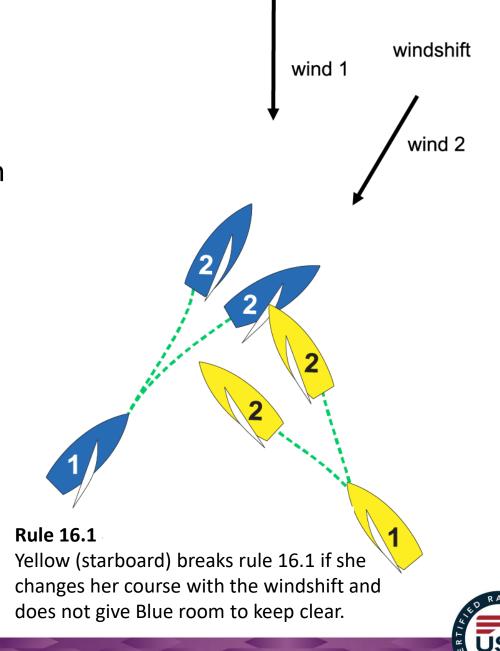
Windward Legs

Rule 10: Port must keep clear.

Rule 16.1: Protects the *keep clear* boat from the right-of-way boat's unpredictable or last-second changes of course, which would prevent *port* from *keeping clear*.

Possible conclusions:

- Port kept clear
- Port did not keep clear
- Starboard did not give room while changing course...



Windward Legs

So how close is too close?

- On a two-lane road, when wanting to pass, it depends...
 - Are you driving a race car or a tractor?
 - What are you passing?
 - What's coming in the opposite direction?





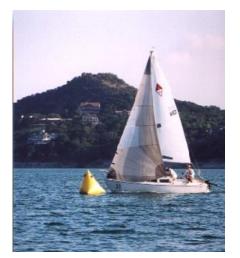


Windward Legs

So how close is too close?

- In sailboat racing it also depends on...
 - Distance between boats
 - Speed of boats
 - Size, maneuverability of boats
 - Visibility between boats
 - Angle of convergence
- These are the key facts needed to reach a conclusion.



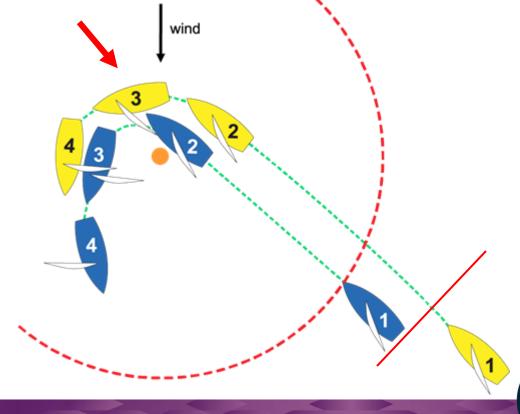




Not overlapped at the zone (3 hull lengths)

Yellow must give Blue mark-room, which includes room for Blue to bear away to round or pass mark on the required side, and to leave it astern. (def. mark-room).

 Rule 18 applies until Blue either leaves the mark astern, passes head to wind, or leaves the zone.



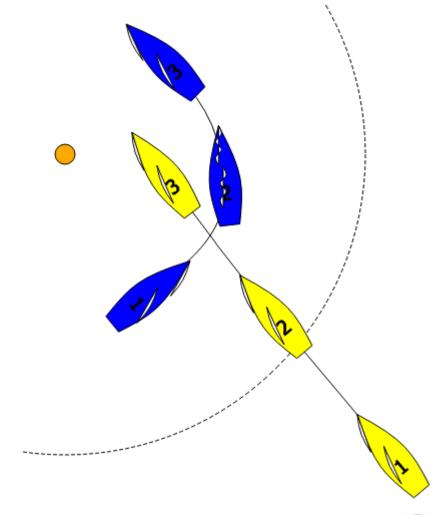
Rule 18.3 – Tacking in the Zone

Blue passes head to wind from *port* to *starboard tack* in the *zone* of a mark to be left to port. Therefore, rule 18.2 does not apply between her and another boat on *starboard tack* that is *fetching* the *mark*.

Yellow has been on *starboard tack* since entering the zone. Therefore, rule 18.3 applies and Blue

- a) shall not cause Yellow to sail above close-hauled to avoid contact, and
- b) shall give mark-room if Yellow becomes *overlapped* inside her.

No rule is broken.





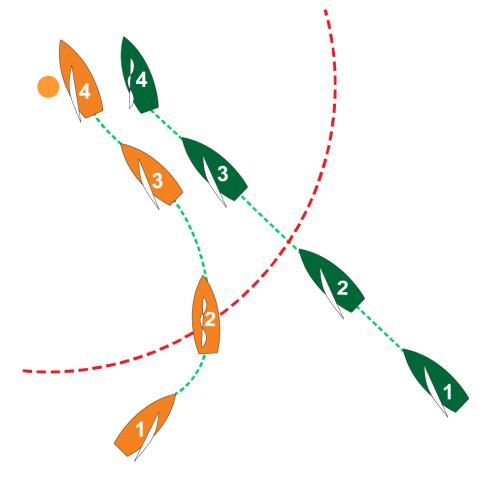
Rule 18.3 – Tacking in the Zone

Orange passes head to wind from *port* to *starboard tack* in the *zone* of a mark to be left to port. Therefore, rule 18.2 does not apply between her and Green on *starboard tack* that is *fetching* the *mark*.

As Green has been on *starboard tack* since entering the *zone*, rule 18.3(a) and 18.3(b) apply.

At position 4, when Orange luffs above close-hauled to clear the *mark* she causes Green to sail above close-hauled to avoid contact.

Orange breaks rule 18.3(a).





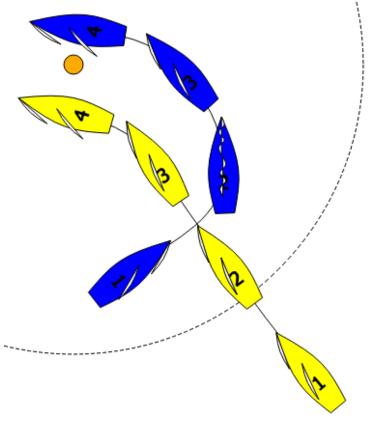
Rule 18.3 – Tacking in the Zone

Blue passes head to wind from *port* to *starboard tack* in the *zone* of a mark to be left to port. Therefore, rule 18.2 does not apply between her and Yellow on *starboard tack* that is *fetching* the *mark*.

As Yellow has been on *starboard tack* since entering the *zone*, rule 18.3(a) and 18.3(b) apply.

At 3, Yellow becomes **overlapped** inside Blue. At 4, Blue fails to give Yellow **mark-room**.

Blue breaks rule 18.3(b)





Rule 18.3 – Tacking in the Zone

Blue and Yellow pass head to wind from *port* to *starboard tack* in the *zone* of a mark to be left to port and are then fetching the *mark*. Therefore, rule 18.2 does not apply between them and Blue must *keep clear* of Yellow until she is on a close-hauled course.

As neither boat has been on *starboard tack* since entering the *zone*, neither rule 18.3(a) or rule 18.3(b) apply.

At 2, Blue is on a close-hauled course and becomes the right-of-way boat and Yellow must *keep clear*. When Blue luffs, she must give Yellow room to *keep clear* under rule 16.1, which she does.

(Changed 2025-2028) The change was that up

No rule broken.

(Changed 2025-2028) The change was that under the previous rules, once Blue passed head to wind, she was on the same tack and overlapped with Yellow, and as such was entitled to mark-room under previous rule 18.2(a). That loophole was shut in the new 18.3 by 18.3 shutting off rule 18.2 whenever a boat tacked in the zone, whether or not the other boat had been on starboard tack since entering the zone.

Starboard Rounding

Blue and Yellow are approaching the windward *mark* to be rounded to *starboard*. Blue, on *port*, is *fetching* the *mark*. Yellow, on *starboard*, tacks from *starboard* to *port clear ahead* of Blue (position 2) and gets down to close-hauled just prior to position 3. Blue luffs to avoid hitting Yellow's stern (position 3).

Who has right-of-way and what rules apply?

At position 1?

Yellow (rule 10 – starboard)

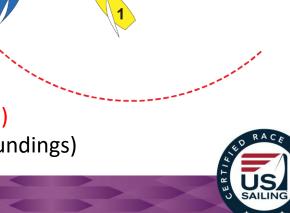
At position 2?

Blue (rule 13 – tacking)
 (rule 15 – acquiring RoW does not apply)

At position 3?

Yellow (rule 12 – clear ahead)
 (rule 15 - acquiring RoW)

(rule 18.2(c) – does not apply because boats are not overlapped)
(rule 18.3 – tacking in the *zone* - does not apply at *starboard* roundings)



Starboard Rounding

Blue and Yellow are approaching the windward *mark* to be rounded to *starboard*. Blue, on *port*, is *fetching* the *mark*. Yellow, on *starboard*, tacks from *starboard* to *port clear ahead* of Blue (between positions 3 & 4) and gets down to close-hauled just after position 4. Blue starts to duck at position 3 and obtains an inside overlap at just before position 5.

Who has right-of-way and what rules apply?

At position 3?

Yellow (rule 10 – starboard)
 (rule 16 – changing course)

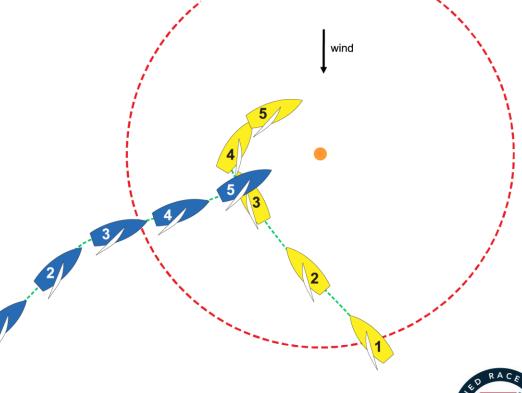
At position 4?

Blue (rule 13 – tacking)
 (rule 15 – acquiring RoW does not apply)

At position 5?

Blue (rule 11 – *leeward*)
 (rule 15 acquiring RoW)
 (rule 18.2(c) and (d) – *mark-room*)
 (rule 15 8.2(c) and (d) – *mark-room*)
 (rule 18.3 – tacking in the *zone* –

does not apply at starboard roundings)



Windward Mark

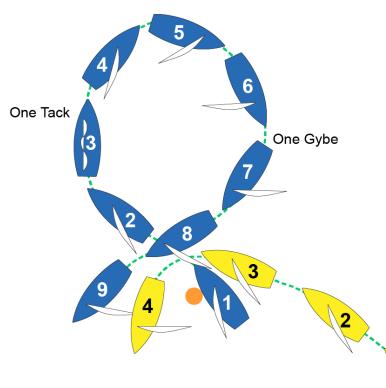
Rule 31 – Touching a *Mark*

• Rule 31 – "While racing, a boat shall not touch...a mark that begins, bounds, or ends the leg

of the course on which she is sailing..."

• Rule 44.1 – Blue may take a One-Turn Penalty for breaking rule 31.

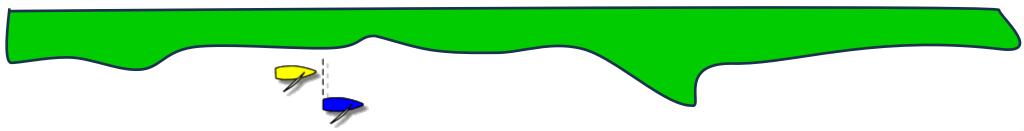
- Rule 44.2 After getting well clear of other boats as soon as possible, a boat takes a penalty by making the required number of turns in the same direction, each turn including one tack and one gybe.
- Rule 21.2 Blue must keep clear of other boats while doing her penalty turn.



Continuing Obstructions

Rule 19.2 Giving Room at an Obstruction

- (c) While boats are passing a *continuing obstruction*, if a boat that was *clear astern* and required to *keep clear* becomes *overlapped* between the other boat and the *obstruction* and, at the moment the *overlap* begins, there is not *room* for her to pass between them,
- 1) she is not entitled to *room* under rule 19.2(b), and
- while the boats remain overlapped, she shall keep clear and rules 10 and 11 do not apply.

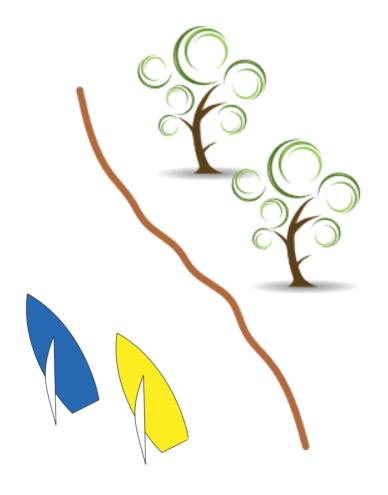




Continuing Obstructions

Continuing Obstruction (New Definition 2025-2028) An **obstruction** is a **continuing obstruction** when the boat with the shortest hull referred to in the rule using the term will pass alongside it for at least three of her hull lengths. A vessel under way, a boat **racing**, or a race committee vessel that is also a **mark** are not a **continuing obstruction**.

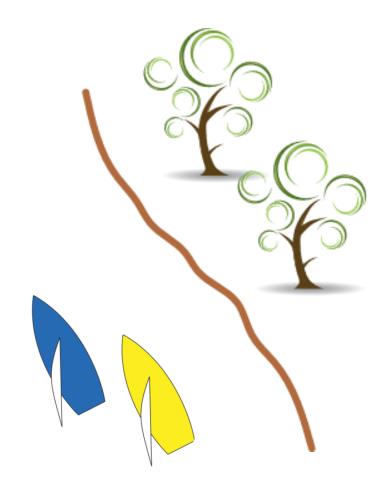
 There is no zone at an obstruction to which rule 19 applies.





Key Points About Continuing Obstructions

- 1. A boat clear astern and required to keep clear is entitled to room if she becomes overlapped between the boat that was clear ahead and a continuing obstruction, as defined, provided that there was room to pass between them when the overlap began.
- 2. When the nature of a continuing obstruction changes because of a projection or shallows, these features form part of the continuing obstruction, and a boat that has properly established an inside overlap is then entitled to any necessary additional room.

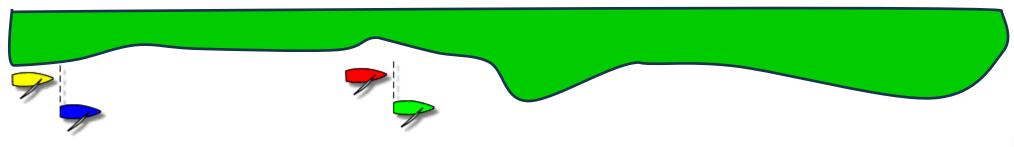




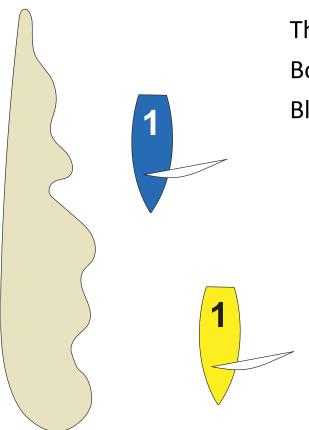
Continuing Obstructions

To determine whether a boat establishing an inside overlap at a continuing obstruction is entitled to room requires the position of the outside boat to be frozen, but the positions of other boats in the vicinity are not frozen and must be moved forward in their same relative positions.

- Yellow becomes overlapped between the Blue and the continuing obstruction and, at that moment there was room for her to pass.
- Red becomes overlapped between the Green and the continuing obstruction and, at that moment there was NOT room for her to pass.



Rule 19.2 (c) Giving Room at a Continuing Obstruction



The shore is a continuing *obstruction*.

Both Blue and Yellow are on *starboard tack*.

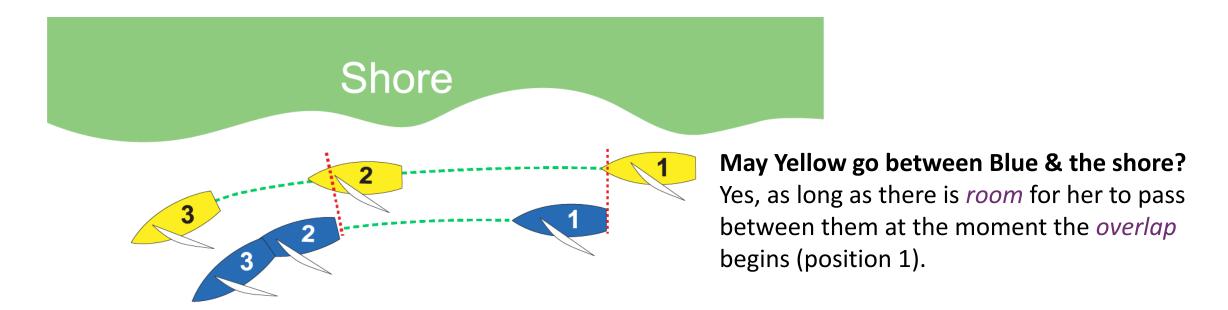
Blue is *clear astern* and required to *keep clear* of Yellow. (rule 12)

Blue wants to go between Yellow and the shore but at the moment Blue *overlaps* Yellow, if there is not *room* for her to pass between Yellow and the *obstruction*, she is not entitled to *room*. (rule 19.2 (c))

In this case Blue, with her boom out, is too wide to pass between the shore and Yellow-so she'd better not go in there.

Would the situation be different if Yellow were on *port* tack? Yes, rule 10 would apply.

Rule 19.2 (c) Giving Room at a Continuing Obstruction



Is Yellow entitled to room?

If Yellow is *overlapped* (position 2) and needs more *room* to pass a point of land or shoal (position 3), Blue must bear off to provide that *room*.



Rule 17 – On the Same *Tack*; *Proper Course*

How was the *overlap* established?

 Did the *leeward* boat become *overlapped* from *clear astern* within two of her hull lengths of the *windward* boat?

What is *proper course*?

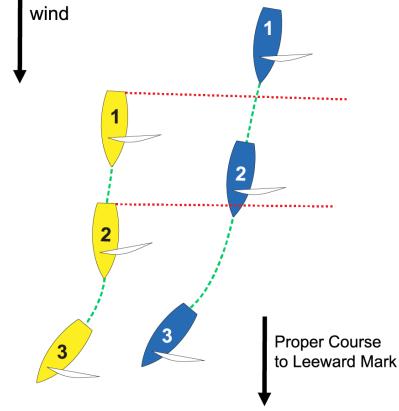
- A course a boat would choose in order to *sail the course* as quickly as possible in the absence of the other boats referred to in the rule using the term.
- A boat has no proper course before her starting signal.
- Different boats may have different *proper courses* at the same time.



 Blue became overlapped from clear astern and then luffed above her proper course. The intent was to make it difficult for Yellow to stay ahead.

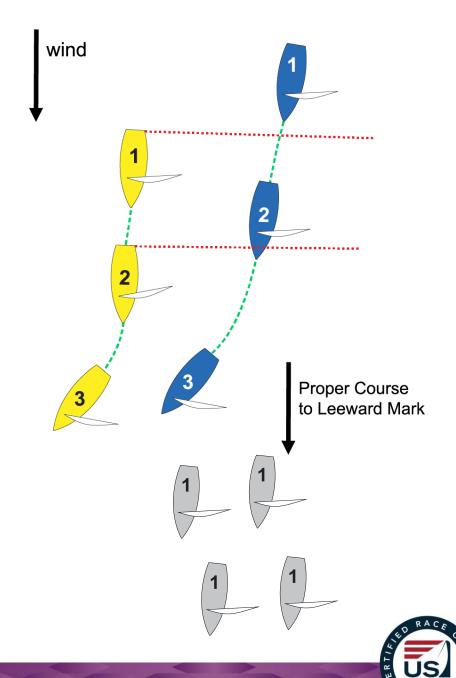
In the absence of Yellow,
 Blue would not luff.

• Blue broke rule 17.

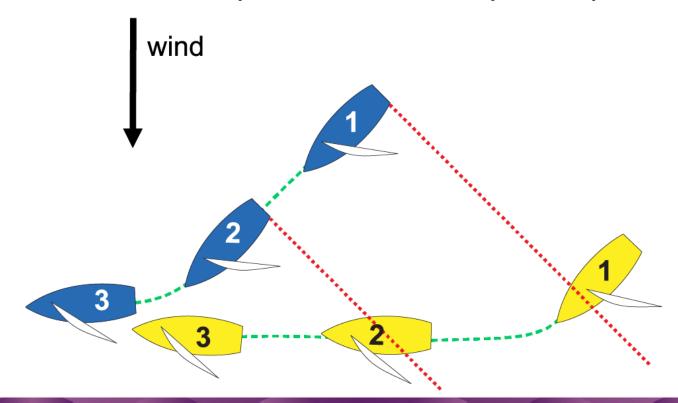




- Blue became overlapped from clear astern and then sailed high to go above the slower gray boats in front of her.
- In the absence of Yellow, Blue would still sail high of the gray boats.
- Because she would do this even in the absence of Yellow, it is a legitimate *proper course*.



- Yellow established an overlap to leeward while more than two hull lengths away from Blue.
- Yellow is not restricted by rule 17 and may sail up to head to wind.



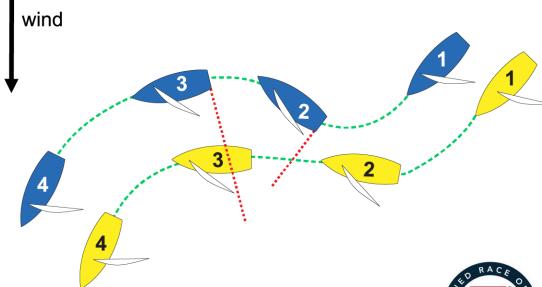


Position 1: Before reaching position 1 Blue had established an *overlap* to windward of Yellow (no rule 17 restriction).

Position 2: Blue luffs hard breaking the overlap.

Position 3: Blue bears away causing the *overlap* to begin again. Yellow does not have to give Blue *room* to *keep clear* under rule 15 since she gained *leeward* right-of-way as a result of Blue's actions.

Position 4: Yellow must promptly bear away to sail her *proper course* because she obtained her *overlap* from *clear astern* of Blue.



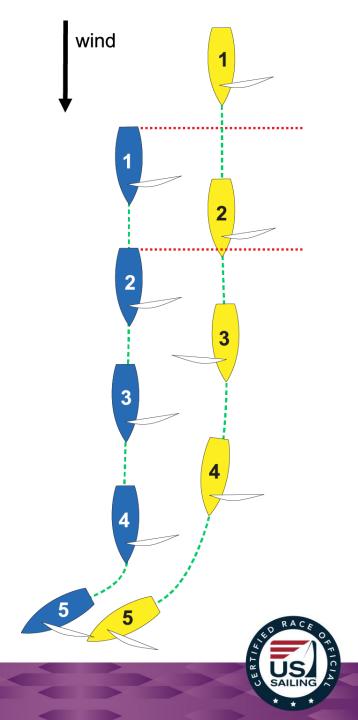
Position 1: No overlap.

Position 2: Yellow becomes *overlapped* to *leeward* of Blue from *clear* astern and within two hull lengths to *leeward* of Blue.

Position 3: Yellow gybes to *port*. Blue and Yellow are still *overlapped* because both are >90° off the wind; however, rule 17 applies only while they remain on the same *tack*.

Position 4: Yellow gybes back to *starboard*.

Position 5: Yellow may luff because at Position 4 she did not become *overlapped* with Blue from *clear astern*, so she is not restricted by rule 17. However, rule 15 requires Yellow to **initially** give Blue *room* to *keep clear*. Then, as she changes course, Yellow must give Blue additional *room* to *keep clear* under rule 16.1.

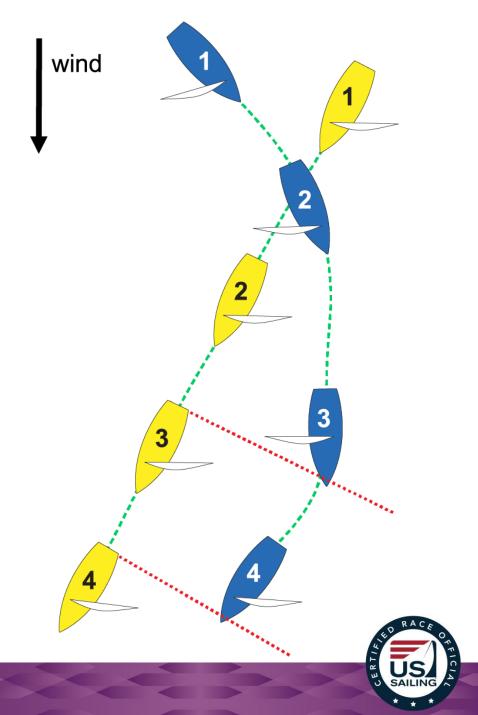


Between positions 1 and 2 Blue (*port*) passes *clear astern* of Yellow (*starboard*).

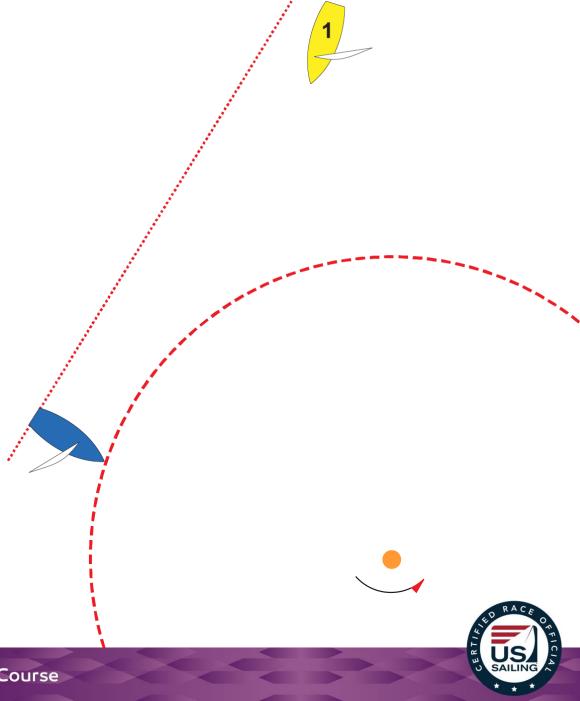
In position 3, Blue bears away creating an *overlap*. Because Blue & Yellow are both sailing > 90° off the wind, even though they are on opposite tacks they are *overlapped*.

In position 4, Blue gybes. As soon as her boom crosses centerline Blue & Yellow are immediately *overlapped* on the same tack.

Because Blue established her *overlap* from *clear astern* when the boats were on opposite tacks, rule 17 does not apply and Blue can luff to head to wind, but must give Yellow *room* to *keep clear*, under rules 15 and 16.1.



Yellow (*starboard*) is on the opposite *tack* and well behind Blue (*port*), but Yellow has an inside *overlap* when Blue reaches the *zone*.



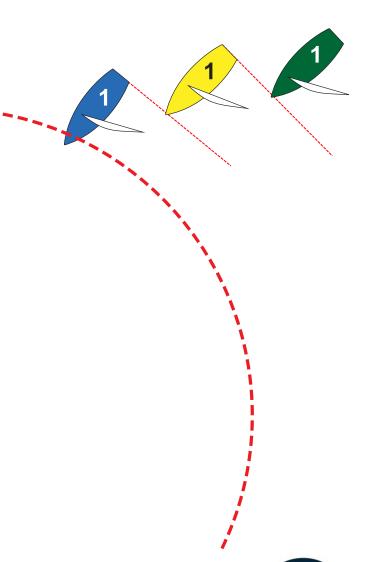
Giving Mark-Room and Keeping Clear

- Green is the inside windward boat.
- She does not have right-of-way (rule 11).
- Blue and Yellow must give Green space to sail to the *mark* because her *proper course* is to sail close to it, and then space to round the *mark* on the required side. (rule 18.2(a)(1) & def. "*mark-room*")



Giving Mark-Room and Keeping Clear

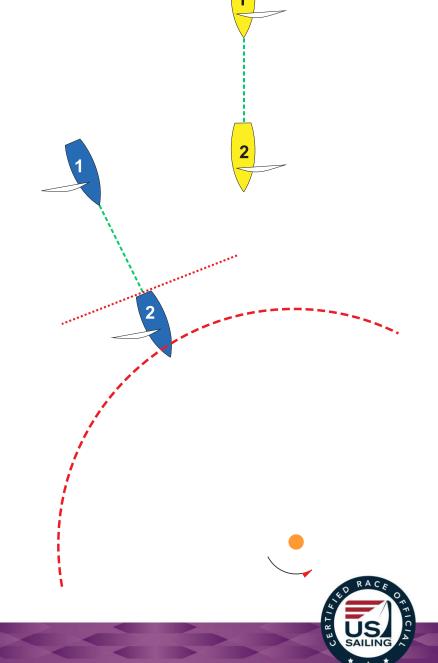
- Green is the inside *leeward* boat.
- She is the right-of-way boat (rule 11).
- Because Yellow is in-between Green and Blue, and overlapped with both, Green is overlapped with Blue (see def. *Clear Astern* and *Clear Ahead*; *Overlap*).
- Green and Yellow must gybe when it is their *proper course* to so do if the mark is not a gate mark (rule 18.4).





Position 1: Yellow (*starboard*) is the right-of-way boat. (rule 10)

Position 2: When Blue reaches the *zone*, she is *clear ahead* of Yellow. Rule 18.2(a)(2) requires Yellow to give Blue *mark-room*.

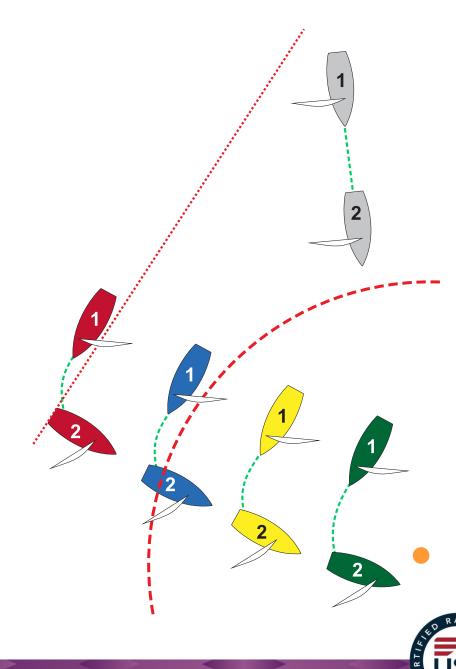


Under rule 18.4 "when an inside *overlapped* right-of-way boat must gybe at a *mark* to sail her **proper course**, until she gybes she shall sail no farther from the *mark* than needed to sail that course. "

- Yellow must gybe at the mark.
- Yellow may not luff away from the mark prior to gybing if that takes her farther from the mark than her proper course (rule 18.4).
- If this is a gybe *mark* then gybing right at the *mark* might be Yellow's *proper course*.
- If this is a leeward *mark* then making a tactical rounding (swing wide-cut close) might be Yellow's *proper course*.
- If this was a gate *mark* rule 18.4 would not apply.



- At position 1, the positions of Green,
 Yellow and Blue make it obvious that Red is outside the zone.
- At position 2 Gray is overlapped with Red. (def. "overlap")
- Gray and Red continue to be overlapped when the first of them reaches the zone.
- Red must give Gray mark-room.
 (rule 18.2(a)(1) & def. "mark-room")

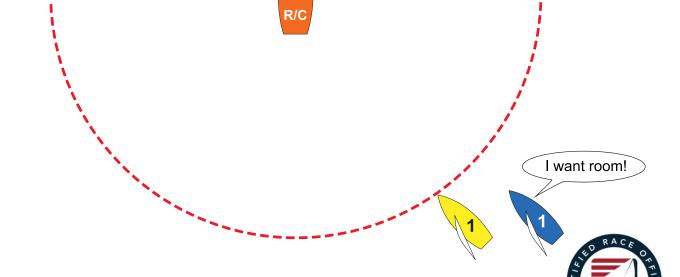


The Finish

• The preamble to Section C of Part 2 turns Rule 18 off at a starting *mark*, but it does not turn it off at a finishing *mark*.

Rule 18.1(a) turns rule 18 off at a windward mark (including a windward finishing mark) when the two boats are coming into the mark on opposite tacks.

 Rule 18.2(a)(1) requires Yellow (outside) to give Blue (inside)
 mark-room.



The Finish (Changed 2025-2028)

"A boat *finishes* when, after her starting signal, any part of her hull crosses the finishing line from the course side. However, she has not *finished* if after crossing the finishing line she

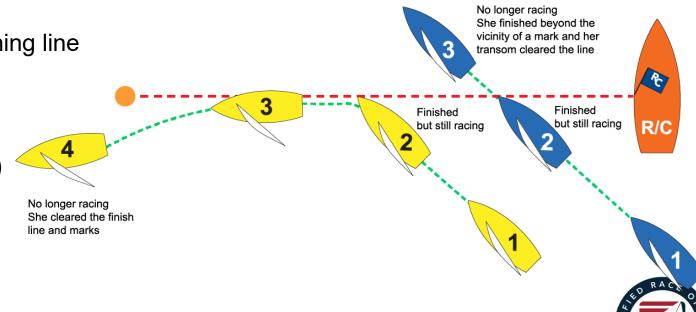
- (a) takes a penalty under rule 44.2
- (b) corrects an error in *sailing the course* made at the line, or
- (c) continues to sail the course.

After *finishing* she need not cross the finishing line completely. The sailing instructions may change the direction in which boats are required to cross the finishing line to finish."

Both boats finish at position 2.

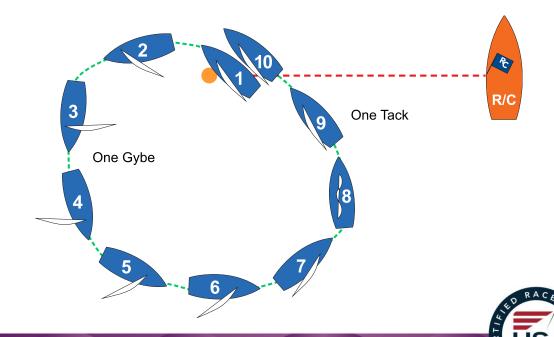
 Yellow does not need to cross the finishing line completely.

 A boat is racing until she finishes and clears the finishing line. (Case 127) (Position 3 for Blue/Position 4 for Yellow)



The Finish

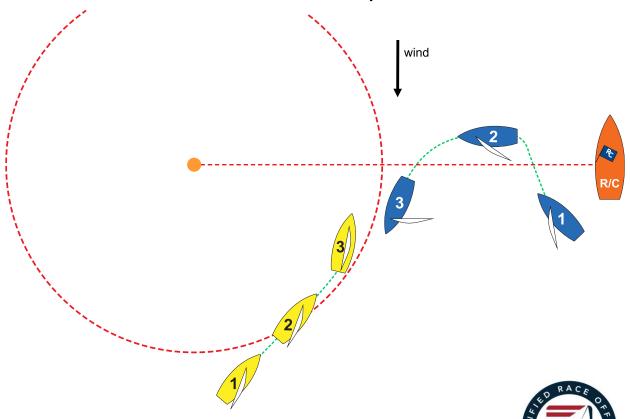
- If a boat touches a finishing *mark* before clearing the finishing line, she must complete a One-Turn Penalty and then sail completely to the course side of the line before *finishing*.
- In this example, Blue completed her gybe (position 4) and completed her tack (position 9) then re-crossed the finishing line to *finish*.
- A boat can complete her One-Turn Penalty anywhere, but after completing it she must sail completely to the course side of the line and *finish*.



The Finish

Rule 23.1 – "If reasonably possible, a boat not *racing* shall not interfere with a boat that is *racing*." At position 2 Blue has *finished* and is no longer *racing*. At position 3 she interferes with Yellow.

- Interference is adversely affecting a boat's forward motion or maneuverability.
- This applies both before and after *racing*.
- Be careful where you sail; watch your wind shadow and physical presence.
- The Preamble to Part 2 limits penalties against boats not *racing* to those under rule 14 when injury or serious damage occurs, or to those under rule 23.1.



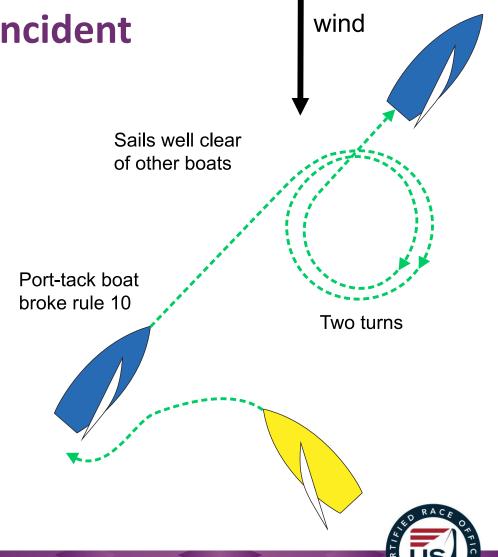
Penalties

Rule 44 Penalties at the Time of an Incident

"A boat may take a Two-Turns Penalty when she may have broken one or more rules of Part 2 in an incident while *racing*. . . . However, . . .

(b) if the boat caused injury or serious damage, or despite taking a penalty, she gained a significant advantage in the race or series her penalty is to retire." (rule 44.1)

"After getting well clear of other boats as soon after the incident as possible, . . ." (rule 44.2)





to the US Sailing Judges Committee for creating this presentation!

