

Changes to the Racing Rules of Sailing for 2009–2012

From USSailing



PROBLEMS WITH THE OLD RULES

- **Section C was very complicated**

- **Changes In Right-Of-Way:**

What do “conflict” and “precedence” mean in the present rules?

Can Rule 18 override Rule 14?

- **Most sailors were not sailing to the rule:**

Nobody put zones around obstructions, especially boats racing.

About-to-round was ill defined and rarely used. Sailors began to apply Rule 18 at the zone.

Room not defined before boats reached the mark.

- **Rule 18 makes no sense at a continuing obstruction that is also a mark.**

MAJOR CHANGES

- **There are now 3 rules in Section C instead of 2**

Rule 18 Marks, Rule 19 Obstructions and Rule 20 Room-to-Tack.

- **Rule 18 applies when either boat reaches the zone not when boats are “about to round.”**
- **3-length zone instead of 2 for most races.**
- **New definition. Mark Room defines room approaching the mark as well as at the mark.**
- **No zones at obstructions that are not marks.**
- **No change in right-of-way (well almost none. See Rule 19.2(c))**
- **Exoneration for breaking right-of-way rules while taking mark room to which one is entitled (Automatic 64.1(b))**
- **Reorganized rule on room-to-tack at an obstruction (Rule 20)**

SECTION C LAYOUT

- **Preamble: No Section C Rule applies at starting marks surrounded by navigable water, etc. just as in the old rule.**
- **Rule X.1 always describes when Rule X applies.**
- **Meat is in Rules 18.2 (at marks), 19.2(b) (at obstructions) and 19.2(c) (continuing obstructions).**
- **Rules 18.3 and 18.4 are substantially unchanged.**

WHEN DOES EACH RULE APPLY

- **None apply at starting marks surrounded by navigable water, when approaching to start or starting.**
- **Rule 19.2(b) and (c) apply when boats are passing a continuing obstruction which cannot be a vessel underway.**
- **Rule 19.2(b) applies at all other obstructions that are not marks.**
- **Rule 16 applies at all other times (i.e. at marks that are not continuing obstructions the boats are passing at the time).**

RULE 18.1

- **Rule 18 applies between 2 boats when the first of them reaches a 3-length zone at the mark.**
- **Rule 18 does not apply when old Rule 18 did not apply:**
 - to boats on opposite tacks on a beat.
 - to boats on opposite tacks when one of them has to tack but the other does not.
- **Rule 18 does not apply when one boat is approaching a mark and the other is leaving it.**
- **Rule 18 only applies at marks.**

RULE 18.2 AND MARK ROOM

- **New definition — Mark-Room. A boat entitled to Mark-Room gets room to sail to the mark and then room to round on her proper course.**
- **Lock In/Lock Out provision same as in old rule — clear ahead at zone or overlapped at zone gets Mark-Room throughout her rounding even if overlap situation changes.**
- **An outside or clear astern boat at the zone is only required to give Mark-Room (no change in the right-of-way):**

If the inside/clear-ahead boat has right-of-way she can make a tactical approach.

Otherwise, she only gets room to sail to the mark.

- **Doubt about overlaps resolved as in old Rule 18.**

RULE 18.3 AND 18.4

- **Rule 18.3 is harder to read but is fundamentally the same as in the old rules. If a boat tacks inside the zone she cannot cause the other boat to sail above close hauled or prevent her from passing the mark.**
- **Rule 18.3 solves a problem. Old Rule 18.3 did not apply to boats that never completed their tacks. New Rule 18.3 uses Rule 13 instead of completing a tack in the zone as the criteria for its application. Fleet racers should notice no change.**
- **New Rule 18.4 is the same as the old rule. A boat that must gybe at a mark cannot sail farther from the mark before gybing than her proper course.**
- **But new Rule 18.4 does not apply at gate marks.**

RULE 18.5 EXONERATION

- **New Rule 18.5 replaced ideas of “conflict” and “precedence” between Section C and Sections A and B.**
- **While a boat entitled to Mark-Room is taking Mark-Room she is exonerated if she breaks:**
 - a Section A right-of-way rule on the way to the mark, or
 - a Section A right-of-way rule or Rule 15 or 16 by rounding the mark on her proper course.
- **Rule 14 is never “turned off” and Rules 15 and 16 are turned off only when it is necessary.**

RULE 19, ROOM TO PASS AN OBSTRUCTION

- **No zone around an obstruction (no Mark-Room)**
- **When there is a choice which side of an obstruction to pass, the right-of-way boat gets to make that choice.**
- **Rule 19 applies only when there is an overlap.**
- **Outside boat must give the other boat room between her and the obstruction.**
- **Rule for passing continuing obstructions is shorter but meaning remains unchanged**
- **No special exoneration for breaking rules of Section A or B. Just usual exoneration if she is compelled to break a rule when she is denied room (see rule 64.1(b))**

RULE 20 ROOM TO TACK AT AN OBSTRUCTION

- **Rule is organized to present sequence of events first, then a new exoneration rule and finally prohibited hails.**
- **Only a slight change in the game for reasons of safety. A boat hailed for room-to-tack must respond by tacking or hailing "you tack" even if some conditions of the rule are not met.**
- **A boat hailing when safety does not require her to change course substantially, or when the other boat is fetching an obstruction that is also a mark breaks rule 20.3, even though the boat she hailed must comply with rule 20.1 and give the hailing boat room to tack. (The hailed boat should then protest the hailing boat for breaking Rule 20.3.)**

WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOU

- **At marks, bigger zones mean responsibilities are sorted out earlier, before there is a problem.**
- **Better specified time at which Rule 18 begins to apply.**
- **Mark-Room obligation applies while sailing to the mark as well as at the mark.**
- **No zone around right-of-way boats that are obstructions. Especially important at start and at marks.**
- **At an obstruction that is not a mark, if there is no room and an inside boat entitled to room can bail out, she must do so and protest, rather than forcing her way in when there is clearly no room.**
- **Note also that old Rule 17.2 has been deleted. This is a major game change that will affect boats when trying to pass to leeward on a run. The boat clear ahead may now maneuver as she pleases to prevent the overtaking boat from passing. This change was opposed by the US and Canadian members of the ISAF Racing Rules Committee; however, it was passed by a majority of one. It seems the majority of the committee members are umpires who wanted to see this rule deleted. If enough American sailors object to this rule being deleted, the US representatives can make a concerted effort to have it restored in the next 4-year version of the RRS. To register your objection contact the members of the US SAILING Racing Rules Committee listed on the US SAILING web site.**