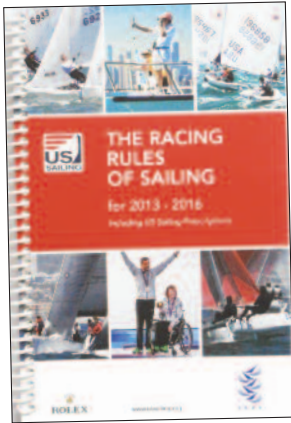




## The new racing rules are here!



The new racing rules are available online for free from the International Sailing Federation at:

[www.sailing.org](http://www.sailing.org)

You can also get a rulebook from your national sailing authority. The new red US rulebook above is free for all members of US Sailing. To get a copy go to:

[www.ussailing.org](http://www.ussailing.org)

It's that time of the quadrennium once again. The summer Olympic Games are over and now we have a new rulebook for the next four years!

The Racing Rules of Sailing are constantly under review, as sailors and rulemakers try to make the rules easier to understand while keeping the 'game' of sailing essentially the same. That is what they have done with the new 2013-2016 rulebook, which incorporates all the changes that have been discussed for the past four years.

The old 2009 rulebook introduced major changes in the rules that applied at marks and obstructions. This time the alterations are not so extensive. There is an overdue rewrite of rule 20 (Room to Tack at an Obstruction), a reorganization of the exoneration rules (new rule 21), changes in several of the definitions (along with moving all the definitions to the front of the book!), and a number of less significant tweaks.

But don't worry – the sport of sailing will still look almost exactly the same as it has the past four years! In fact, most of the rules in the new book retain exactly the same wording as before.

The goal of this issue is to explain what's different between the new (2013-2016) rules and the old (2009-2012) rules. There isn't room to cover every change or explain each rule in great detail, but I've tried to include all of the most significant changes that sailors should know. I will be taking a much more in-depth look at individual rules in future issues.

While you are reading this newsletter, I highly recommend keeping a rulebook handy. This will give you the full text of every rule discussed here plus all other rules including appendices, race signals and definitions. Note that the Definitions and Parts 1-7 in the rulebook have vertical lines in the margins to mark all the places where the text of a rule has been changed, deleted or added. Good luck! •

### ISSUE # 124

#### The 2013-16 Rules!

<b>THEME</b> The new rulebook .....	1
<b>DEFINITIONS</b> <i>Keep clear, Room, Mark</i> ...	2
<b>DEFINITIONS</b> <i>Mark-room, Zone</i> .....	4
<b>RULE 18</b> <i>Mark-room</i> .....	6
<b>RULE 20</b> <i>Room to tack at obstructions</i> ...	8
<b>RULE 21</b> <i>Exoneration</i> .....	10
<b>PROTESTS</b> <i>Penalties, Redress</i> .....	12
<b>OTHER CHANGES</b> .....	14
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL RULES</b> .....	16



**Questions about the new rules?**  
 We are using the Speed & Smarts Facebook page for answers to subscriber questions about the new rules. You can find us at:

[www.Facebook.com/SpeedandSmarts](http://www.Facebook.com/SpeedandSmarts)



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# Changes in the definitions

There are 22 definitions in the rulebook, and 16 of them have remained exactly the same in the new 2013-16 rules. Of the six that have changed, three are explained on these two pages. *Mark-room* is discussed on page 4, and *Finish* is covered on page 15. The last one, *Party*, has been reorganized so it is clearer and expanded to include additional parties that were previously missing.

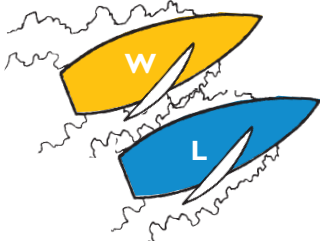
Perhaps the biggest change is that, after 16 years of living in the back of the rulebook, all the definitions have returned to the front (where they were until 1996). Apparently, the rulemakers are once again favoring the philosophy that knowledge of the definitions is a prerequisite for understanding the rest of the rules.

## A subtle new requirement for keeping clear.

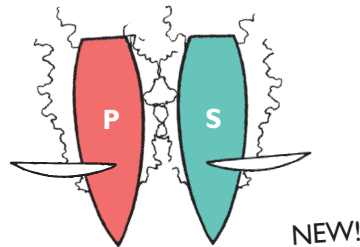
There are two changes in the definition of 'Keep Clear.'

The first is a general reorganization of the rule to emphasize that a boat may need to fulfill two requirements in order to keep clear of a right-of-way boat. A give-way boat must always allow the other boat to sail her course with no need to 'take avoiding action.' In addition, when boats are overlapped, the give-way boat must provide 'wiggle room.' In other words, she must be far enough away so the right-of-way boat can change course in both directions without immediately making contact.

The second change is the broadening of the 'wiggle room' requirement to all overlapped boats, not just those on the same tack. Here are two situations that help explain how this new provision works.



In the old rules, when two boats were overlapped on the *same* tack the give-way boat (W) was required to do two things in order to keep clear of the right-of-way boat (L). She had to: 1) allow L to sail her course with no need to take avoiding action; and also 2) permit L to alter course in both directions without immediately making contact. If W satisfied both of these conditions, she was keeping clear. This remains exactly the same under the new 2013-16 rules.



In the new rules, the requirement for 'wiggle room' applies to *all* overlapped boats. Even though the boats above are on opposite tacks, they are overlapped because both are sailing more than 90° from the true wind. Therefore, the give-way boat (P) must do two things to keep clear. She must: 1) allow S to sail her course with no need to take avoiding action; and also 2) permit S to change course in both directions without immediately making contact.

## 'Boat' versus 'Vessel'

The paragraph about Terminology in the rulebook's Introduction has been revised to clarify the difference between a 'boat' and a 'vessel' in the text of the rules. The term 'boat,' which is used in almost every rule, means the same thing it did in the old rulebook – a sailboat and the crew on board (note this could be a racing or non-racing sailboat).

A 'vessel' was not defined in past rulebooks even though this term was used in several rules (e.g. 1.1, old 22). The Introduction now explains that a vessel is 'any boat or ship.'

Here's an example of why this is important. According to the new rule 41 (Outside Help), after a collision you may receive 'help from the crew of the other vessel to get clear.' If you collide with a fishing boat, for example, it's OK for their crew to help you get untangled. Old rule 41 used the word 'boat' instead of 'vessel' – under that rule you were not 'legally' permitted to get help from the other craft unless it was a sailboat (see page 15).



JH Peterson photo

**When you are reading the rulebook, the word 'vessel' means any boat or ship, including any racing boats, cruising boats, motorboats and commercial vessels. The word 'boat' means a sailboat and the crew on board; this is normally a racing boat but could also be a cruising boat or daysailer.**

Red type, Green type

In the text of the rules throughout this issue, I am showing key words omitted from the old rule in red, and those added to the new rule in green.



### NEW DEFINITION: **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.

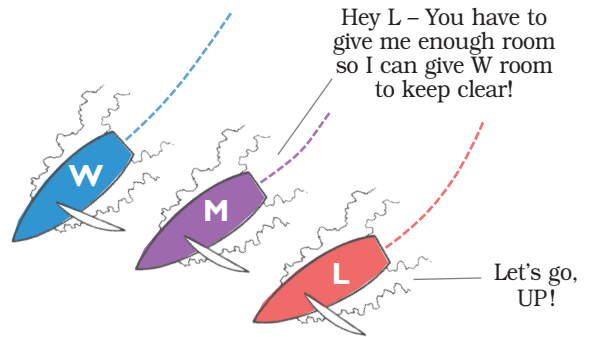
### OLD DEFINITION: **Keep Clear**

One boat keeps clear of another if the other can sail her course with no need to take avoiding action and, when the boats are overlapped on the same tack, if the leeward boat can change course in both directions without immediately making contact with the windward boat.

### New requirements for giving room.

The definition of “Room” has been expanded so that it now includes “space to comply with her obligations under the rules of Part 2 and rule 31” (see box). This makes it clear that a boat required to give room must provide enough space for the other boat to comply with rule 31 (Touching a Mark) and the rules of Part 2 (including all the right-of-way rules and their limitations).

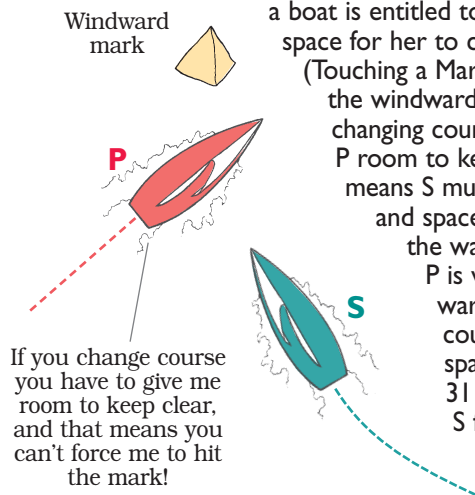
This broader obligation will typically come into play during situations that involve more than two boats. In a crowd, it's common that one boat will have to give room to a second boat, and that boat will simultaneously have to give room to a third boat (see right). In the old rules it wasn't completely clear that room for the second boat included the space she needed to give to the third boat. The new definition makes that very clear.



**Luffing obligations** – When a leeward boat (L) changes her course toward a windward boat (M), rule 16 (Changing Course) says that L must give M room to keep clear. “Room” is the amount of space that M needs in the existing conditions in order to stay out of L’s way.

According to the new definition of ‘room,’ it also includes the space that M needs to ‘comply with her obligations under the rules of Part 2 . . .’ When M responds to L, she changes course toward W. Rule 16 (which is in the rulebook’s Part 2) says M must give W room to keep clear. Therefore, the room that M gets from L has to include the room that she needs to give to W. Obviously L cannot turn too quickly when there is more than one boat affected by her luff.

**Room to avoid a mark** – Whenever a boat is entitled to room, this includes space for her to comply with rule 31 (Touching a Mark). In this situation at the windward mark, for example, S is changing course, so she has to give P room to keep clear (rule 16). This means S must allow P enough time and space to tack and get out of the way. However, in this case P is very close to the windward mark. If S changes course, she must give P space to comply with rule 31 by avoiding the mark. If S forces P to hit the mark, then S has not given P room to keep clear.



**NEW DEFINITION: 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 manoeuvring promptly in a seamanlike way.

**OLD DEFINITION: Room**

The space a boat needs in the existing conditions while manoeuvring promptly in a seamanlike way.

### What is considered part of a mark?

The old definition of ‘Mark’ said that any objects attached ‘temporarily or accidentally’ to a mark were not part of it, but this was not always so clear. What was the status, for example, of a keep-away buoy hanging off the stern of the starting line committee boat? The sailing instructions typically said this was part of the mark. But a keep-away buoy is temporary, so according to the definition it was not part of the mark. And SIs cannot change definitions.

To clarify the status of objects attached to marks, the rulemakers deleted the word “temporarily” from the new definition. This means that objects attached to a mark accidentally still are not considered part of the mark. These include large clumps of seaweed, floating logs, a drifting piece of line or anything else that is not supposed to be there.

Objects attached intentionally are now considered part of the mark (except for the mark’s anchor line, of course), even if they are only there for a short period of time. This includes a keep-away buoy that is hanging from the RC boat, a flag flying from its stern, and a motorboat tied to the side of the RC boat.

A ‘stand-off’ buoy at the boat end of the starting line is now clearly a part of that mark.



Text of the racing rules is © ISAF 2012

**NEW DEFINITION: Mark**

An object the sailing instructions require a boat to leave on a specified side, and a race committee boat surrounded by navigable water from which the starting or finishing line extends. An anchor line or an object attached accidentally to a mark is not part of it.

**OLD DEFINITION: Mark**

An object the sailing instructions require a boat to leave on a specified side, and a race committee boat surrounded by navigable water from which the starting or finishing line extends. An anchor line or an object attached temporarily or accidentally to a mark is not part of it.

# Mark-room and zone size

The definition of mark-room was new in the 2009 rulebook, and though the idea was good conceptually and worked well in practice, the wording was a bit difficult to understand. In particular, sailors had a hard time with the phrase “room to sail her proper course while at the mark.”

These words have been dropped from the new rulebook, and the definition of mark-room has been altered so it is more logical and easier to understand. In addition, there’s a change in the rule that previously allowed regatta organizers to modify zone size. Both are explained on these two pages.

## A kinder, gentler notion of mark-room!

The new definition of mark-room is easier to understand, and this will hopefully lead to more order and less confusion at mark roundings. Under the 2013 rulebook, a boat entitled to mark-room gets room to sail to the mark and around it in a seamanlike way. This means enough space for a boat, given the existing conditions, to sail safely around the mark without risk of hitting it or the boat outside of her.

Mark-room includes three specific things: 1) Room for a boat to leave the mark on the required side; 2) Room to sail to the mark when her proper course is to sail close to it; and 3) Room to round the mark as necessary to sail the course (see more on these pages). Mark-room does not include space for a boat to sail a proper or tactical course, and it includes room to tack only in limited circumstances.

### NEW DEFINITION: Mark-Room

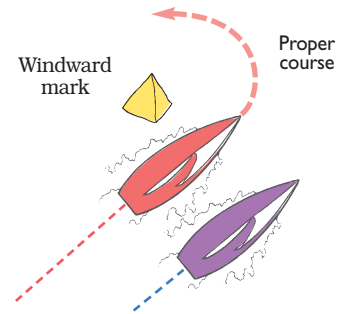
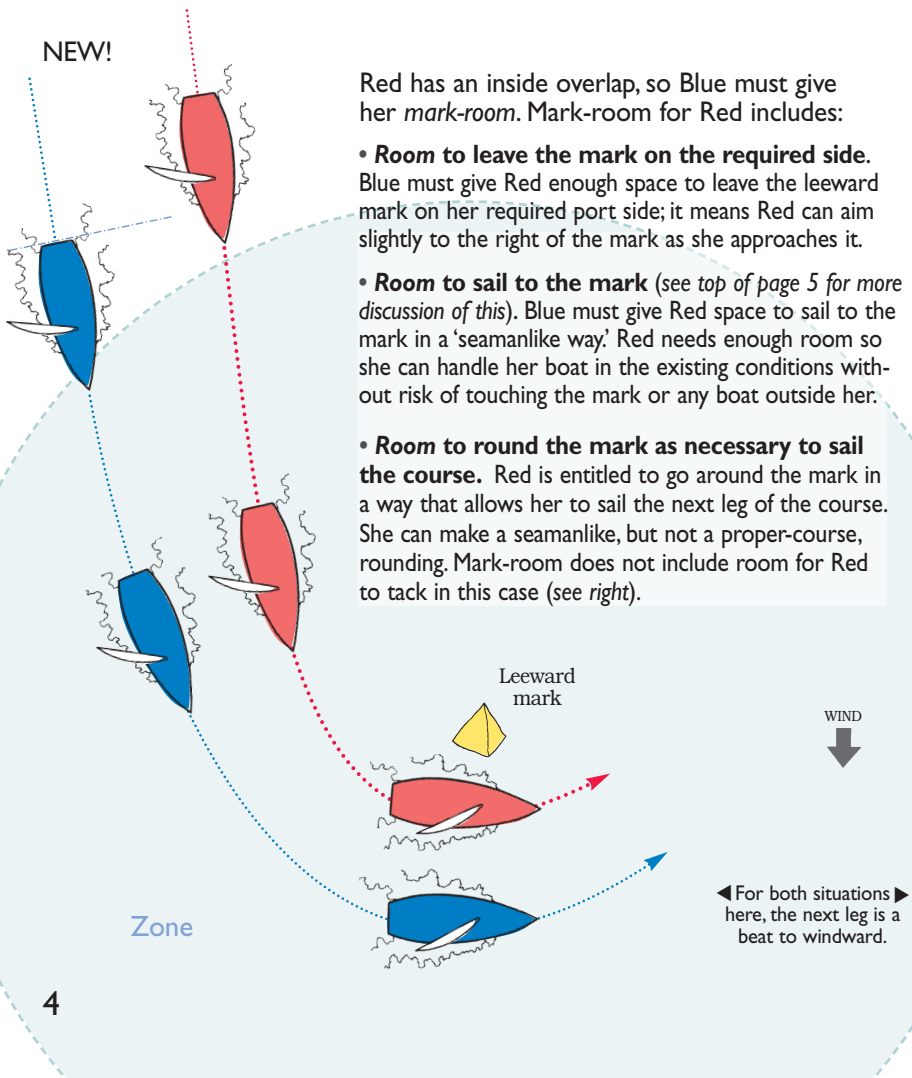
Room for a boat to leave a mark on the required side. Also, (a) room to sail to the mark when her proper course is to sail close to it, and

(b) room to round the mark as necessary to sail the course.

However, mark-room for a boat does not include room to tack unless she is overlapped inside and to windward of the boat required to give mark-room and she would be fetching the mark after her tack.

### OLD DEFINITION: Mark-Room

Room for a boat to sail to the mark, and then room to sail her proper course while at the mark. However, mark-room does not include room to tack unless the boat is overlapped to windward and on the inside of the boat required to give mark-room.

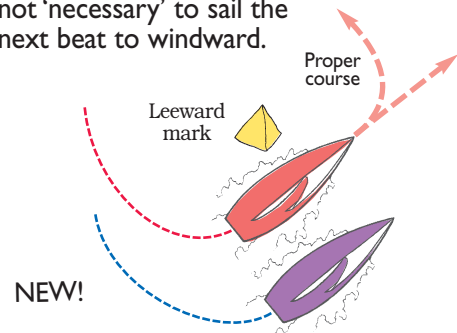


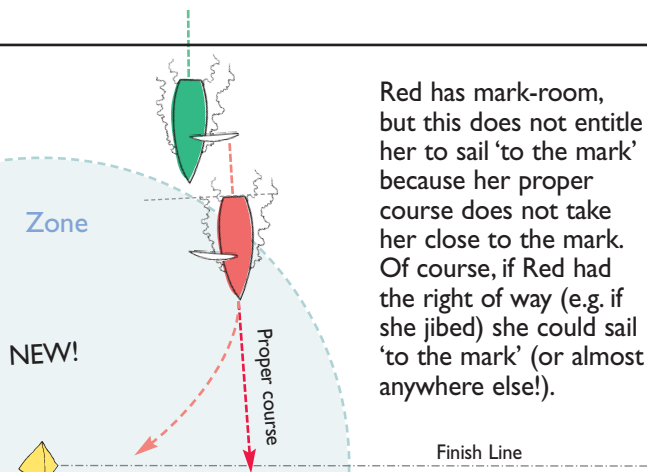
## Room to tack at the mark

When a boat has mark-room, does this entitle her to room to tack at the mark? In the old 2009 rulebook, the answer was ‘Yes’ if: 1) the boat was overlapped to windward and on the inside of the boat required to give mark-room, and 2) the boat was ‘at the mark’ and tacking was her proper course. In both situations shown above and below, mark-room for Red included room to tack.

The new definition is not so lenient. Now mark-room includes room to tack only if: 1) the boat is overlapped to windward and on the inside of the boat required to give room and she would be fetching the mark after her tack, and 2) tacking is ‘necessary to sail the course.’

The situation above at a windward mark meets both of these requirements, but the leeward mark rounding (below) does not because tacking is not ‘necessary’ to sail the next beat to windward.





Red has mark-room, but this does not entitle her to sail 'to the mark' because her proper course does not take her close to the mark. Of course, if Red had the right of way (e.g. if she jibed) she could sail 'to the mark' (or almost anywhere else!).

### Is your proper course close to the mark?

One of the most noticeable changes in the new definition of Mark-Room is the addition of the words "when her proper course is to sail close to it." Unlike the past four years, a boat with mark-room is now entitled to sail 'to the mark' only if her proper course takes her there.

However, this will not have a huge impact on mark roundings. Most rule 18 situations involve 'rounding' marks where a boat's proper course is to go around the mark. So mark-room includes room to sail to the mark, just as it did for the past four years.

One place where this new change could make a difference is at marks that boats do not have to round. These 'passing' marks include the ends of the finish line (above), for example. When a boat has mark-room here, this may not actually include room to sail 'to the mark'.

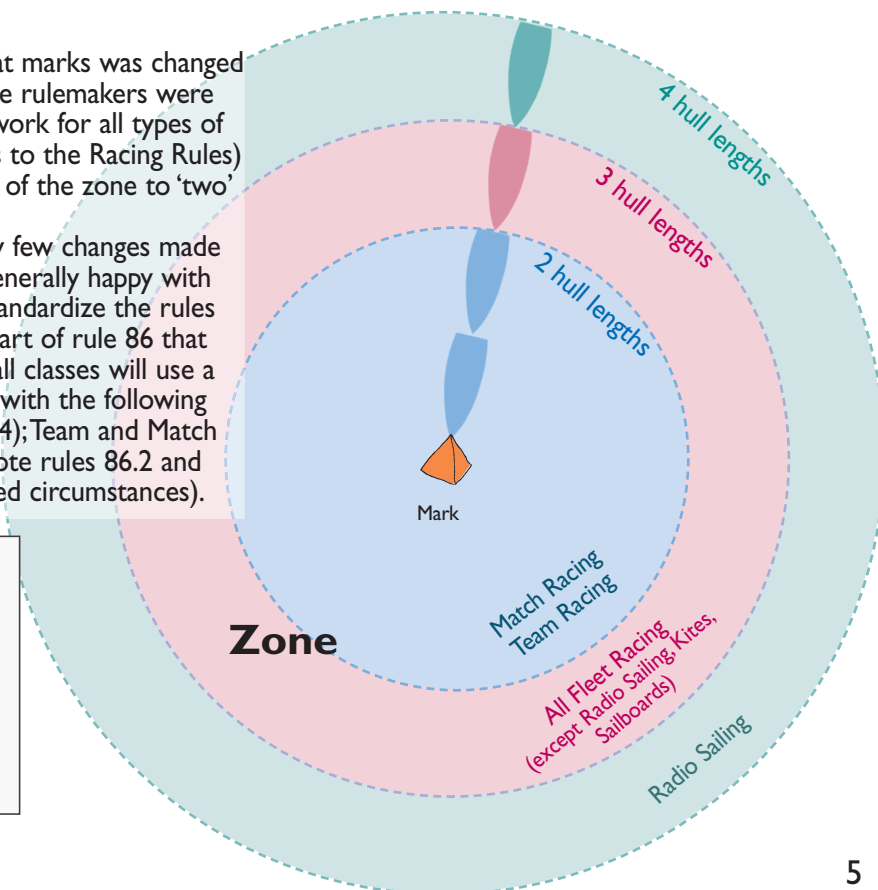


Boat 50 entered the zone with an inside overlap on Boat 23, so she is entitled to mark-room. Since Boat 50 does not have the right of way, she can take only the minimum amount of room provided by the definition. That is, she can take enough room to 1) leave the mark on the required side; 2) sail to the mark in a seamanlike way; and 3) round the mark as necessary to sail the course (i.e. she can turn up to closehauled around the mark to sail the next beat).

### How big is the 'zone' now?

In the 2009 rulebook, the radius of the zone at marks was changed from two hull lengths to three hull lengths. The rulemakers were not sure how well this new zone size would work for all types of racing, so they also modified rule 86 (Changes to the Racing Rules) to allow regatta organizers to change the size of the zone to 'two' or 'four' hull lengths.

During the past four years there were very few changes made to zone size at regattas, and sailors seemed generally happy with three hull lengths. Therefore, in an effort to standardize the rules for all classes, the new rulebook deletes the part of rule 86 that allowed zone size to be changed. This means all classes will use a zone of three lengths for the next four years, with the following exceptions (see *the Appendices*): Radio Sailing (4); Team and Match Racing (2); Kites and Sailboards (no zone). (Note rules 86.2 and 86.3 could allow changes to zone size in limited circumstances).



#### NEW 86 Changes to the Racing Rules

In rule 86.1(b), the sentence shown below from the 2009-2012 rules has been deleted.

#### OLD 86 Changes to the Racing Rules

86.1(b) ... the sailing instructions may change to 'two' or 'four' the number of hull lengths determining the zone around marks, provided that the number is the same for all marks and all boats using those marks ...

# Changes to the Mark-Room rule

Rule 18 ('Mark-Room') is by far the longest and most complex rule in the rulebook. But unlike four years ago when it had a major overhaul, the new rule 18 has simply been tweaked in a few places to make it more functional and easier to understand. Those changes are explained on these pages.

The biggest change in rule 18 is the deletion of rule 18.5 Exoneration, but this won't affect racing too much because the main elements of that rule are included in new rule 21, which is also called Exoneration (see pages 10 and 11 for much more on that rule).

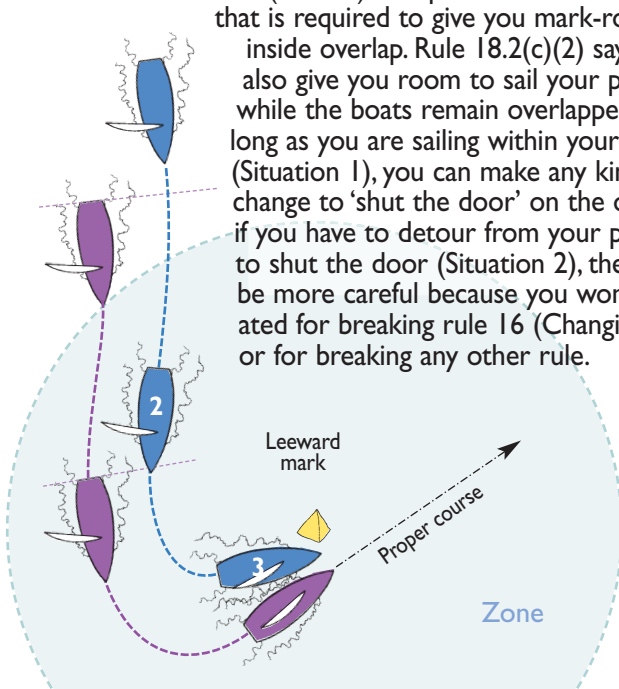


JH Peterson photo

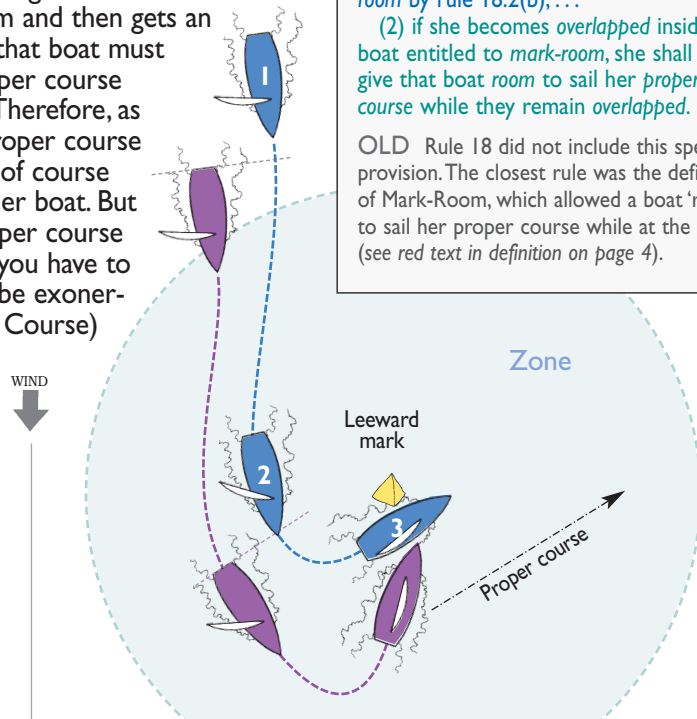
Note that mark-room no longer includes room for a boat to jibe around the windward mark unless jibing is 'necessary [for her] to sail the course.'

## 'Shutting the door' at a leeward mark

When a boat that owes you mark-room tries to cut inside at the leeward mark, can you luff up sharply to prevent her from going in there? The 2013-16 rulebook has a new rule (see box) that puts an additional obligation on a boat that is required to give you mark-room and then gets an inside overlap. Rule 18.2(c)(2) says that boat must also give you room to sail your proper course while the boats remain overlapped. Therefore, as long as you are sailing within your proper course (Situation 1), you can make any kind of course change to 'shut the door' on the other boat. But if you have to detour from your proper course to shut the door (Situation 2), then you have to be more careful because you won't be exonerated for breaking rule 16 (Changing Course) or for breaking any other rule.



**Situation 1** – Blue has to give mark-room to Purple. At position 2, Blue becomes overlapped inside of Purple. Therefore, in addition to providing mark-room, Blue has to give Purple room to sail her proper course while they remain overlapped. Purple luffs sharply to sail her proper course at the mark and Blue does not keep clear. Blue breaks rule 11 ('Windward/Leeward') and also rule 18.2(c)(2) (because she did not give Purple room to sail her proper course). Purple breaks rule 16 (Changing Course), but she is exonerated because she was sailing within the room to which she was entitled (see page 10).



**Situation 2** – This begins the same as Situation 1. Blue has to give Purple mark-room and then Blue gets an inside overlap at position 2. However, Purple sails farther past the mark and then luffs hard to keep Blue from rounding the mark inside of her. At position 3, Purple is sailing above her proper course and Blue is unable to keep clear. Purple breaks rule 16, but she is not exonerated this time because she is not sailing within the room or mark-room to which she is entitled. Blue breaks rule 11 but she is exonerated under rule 64.1(a) because she was compelled to break that rule when Purple broke rule 16.

### NEW 18 MARK-ROOM

#### 18.2 Giving Mark-Room

(c) When a boat is required to give mark-room by rule 18.2(b),...

(2) 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.

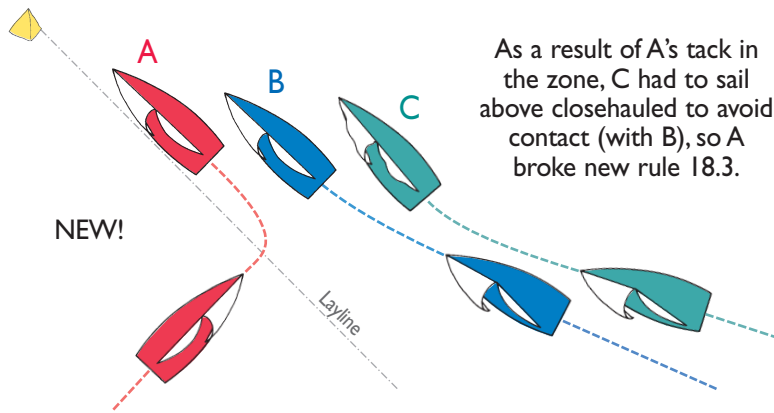
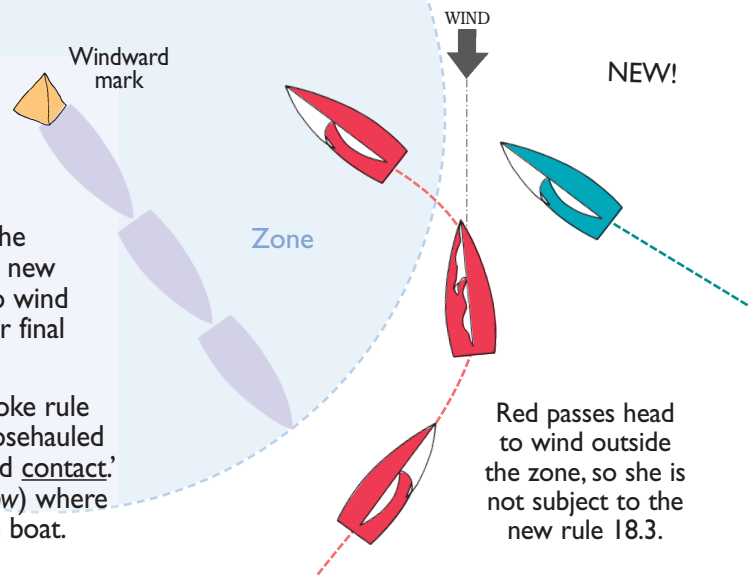
OLD Rule 18 did not include this specific provision. The closest rule was the definition of Mark-Room, which allowed a boat 'room to sail her proper course while at the mark' (see red text in definition on page 4).

**New rules at the windward mark**

Rule 18.3, which is now called ‘Tacking in the Zone,’ is the rule that discourages boats from approaching the windward mark on port tack. The new version of the rule has been tweaked in two significant ways:

► The old rule 18.3 applied to any boat that was ‘subject to rule 13 in the zone’ (i.e. it applied whenever a boat entered the zone before she reached her new closehauled course). In the new rulebook, rule 18.3 turns on only when a boat passes head to wind inside the zone (see *right*). This means you can now make your final port-tack approach a little closer to the mark.

▼ Under the old rules, a boat that tacked inside the zone broke rule 18.3 if a boat that was fetching the mark had to sail above closehauled ‘to avoid her.’ The new rule replaces that phrase with ‘to avoid contact.’ This could make a difference in multi-boat situations (see *below*) where a windward boat (C) has to head up to avoid hitting a middle boat.



**NEW 18.3 Tacking in the Zone**

If a boat in the zone passes head to wind and is then on the same tack as a boat that is fetching the mark, rule 18.2 does not thereafter apply between them. The boat that changed tack (a) shall not cause the other boat to sail above close-hauled to avoid contact or ...

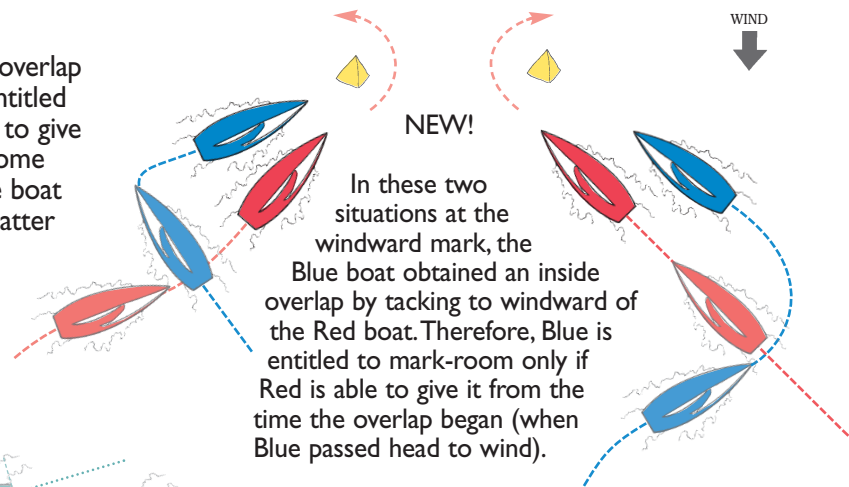
**OLD 18.3 Tacking When Approaching a Mark**

If two boats were approaching a mark on opposite tacks and one of them changes tack, and as a result is subject to rule 13 in the zone when the other is fetching the mark, rule 18.2 does not thereafter apply. The boat that changed tack (a) shall not cause the other boat to sail above close-hauled to avoid her or ...

**Tacking into a late inside overlap**

When a boat comes from behind and gets an inside overlap before either boat reaches the zone (*below*), she is entitled to mark-room ... but only if the outside boat is able to give mark-room from the time the overlap began. If for some reason (e.g. the presence of other boats) the outside boat cannot create enough space for the inside boat, the latter is not entitled to mark-room. This provision of rule 18.2e (see *box*) stays the same in the new rulebook.

However, new rule 18.2e adds one more time when the new outside boat is protected from late inside overlaps. Now, if the other boat tacks into a windward inside overlap (see *right*), she is entitled to mark-room only if the outside boat is able to make enough room from the time the overlap began (i.e. from the moment the boats were on the same tack).

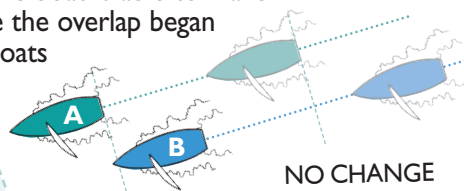


**NEW 18.2 Giving Mark-Room**

(e) If a boat obtained an inside overlap from clear astern or by tacking to windward of the other boat and, from the time the overlap began, the outside boat has been unable to give mark-room, she is not required to give it.

**OLD 18.2 Giving Mark-Room**

(e) If a boat obtained an inside overlap from clear astern and, from the time the overlap began, the outside boat has been unable to give mark-room, she is not required to give it.



If a boat (B) comes from clear astern and gets an inside overlap on A before the zone, B is entitled to mark-room, but only if A is able to give mark-room from the moment the overlap began.

## A brand new rule 20!

In the last edition of the rulebook the rule-makers worked hard on rules 18 and 19 and made big changes there. This time it was rule 20 (Room to Tack at an Obstruction) that got the overhaul! The new version of this rule is designed to clarify the process of hailing and responding for room to tack at obstructions.

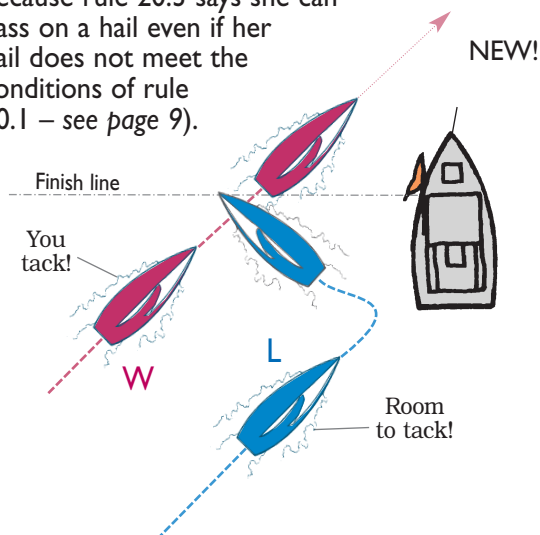
In addition, there have been several slight game changes made. For example, a boat that is hailed for room to tack can now pass on that hail to a third boat. And if the boat you hail for room to tack is fetching the obstruction/mark, you won't be penalized unless they actually have to change course. Explore these two pages for a lot more about this new rule.

### Hailing for room to tack at marks

The old rules said that a boat was not permitted to hail for room to tack when the obstruction was a mark that the hailed boat was fetching. For example, in the situation below two close-hauled boats were approaching the committee boat at the starboard end of the finish line. L hailed for room to tack while W was fetching this mark; therefore L broke the old rule 20.

The new rule 20 is very similar, but there's a slight change. Rule 20.1c (see box) now says that a boat shall not hail, "if the obstruction is a mark and a boat that is fetching it would be required to respond and change course." In other words, in the situation below L would not be penalized because, although W is required to respond to L's hail, W does not have to change her course.

On the other hand, imagine a situation where W is not fetching the RC boat, but a third boat to windward of W is fetching it. L can hail W (because W is not fetching the mark), but if W passes on that hail to the third boat and if she has to change course, then L breaks rule 20.1c. (Note that W wouldn't be penalized in this case because rule 20.3 says she can pass on a hail even if her hail does not meet the conditions of rule 20.1 – see page 9).

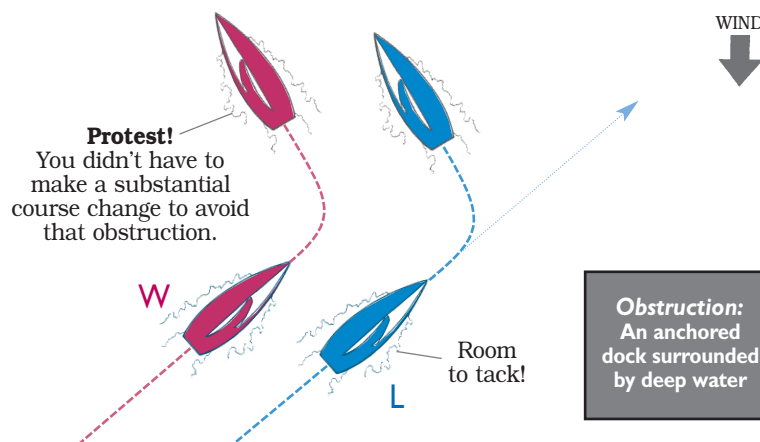


### Now you must always respond to a hail

In the old version of rule 20, when a boat made an incorrect hail for room to tack it wasn't always clear whether the hailed boat was required to respond or not. Now there's no question.

The new rule 20.2b says "The hailed boat shall respond even if the hail breaks rule 20.1." In other words, the hailed boat must respond by tacking or replying "You tack" even if: a) the hailing boat could avoid the obstruction without a substantial course change; or b) the hailing boat is sailing below close-hauled; or c) the obstruction is a mark that the hailed boat is fetching.

▼ In the situation below, the Blue boat (L) hails for room to tack even though she doesn't have to make a substantial course change to avoid the obstruction safely. Can W ignore this hail? No! Rule 20.2b says W has to respond (by tacking as soon as possible or immediately replying "You tack") even if L's hail breaks rule 20.1. If W thinks that L's hail is improper, her only recourse is to protest. (Note, however, that rule 20 does not apply when boats are approaching a starting mark to start, so a boat does not have to respond to a hail made in that situation.)



#### NEW 20 ROOM TO TACK AT AN OBSTRUCTION

##### 20.1 Hailing

When approaching an *obstruction*, a boat may hail for *room to tack* and avoid a boat on the same *tack*. However, she shall not hail if

- (a) she can avoid the *obstruction* safely without making a substantial course change,
- (b) she is sailing below close-hauled, or
- (c) the *obstruction* is a mark and a boat that is *fetching* it would be required to respond and change course.

##### 20.2 Responding

- (a) After a boat hails, she shall give the hailed boat time to respond.
- (b) The hailed boat shall respond even if the hail breaks rule 20.1.
- (c) The hailed boat shall respond either by tacking as soon as possible, or by immediately replying "You tack" and then giving the hailing boat room to tack and avoid her ...

#### OLD 20 ROOM TO TACK AT AN OBSTRUCTION

##### 20.1 Hailing and Responding

When approaching an *obstruction*, a boat sailing close-hauled or above may hail for *room to tack* and avoid another boat on the same *tack*. After a boat hails,

- (a) she shall give the hailed boat time to respond;
- (b) the hailed boat shall respond either by tacking as soon as possible, or ...

##### 20.3 When Not to Hail

A boat shall not hail unless safety requires her to make a substantial course change to avoid the *obstruction*. Also, she shall not hail if the *obstruction* is a mark that the hailed boat is *fetching*.



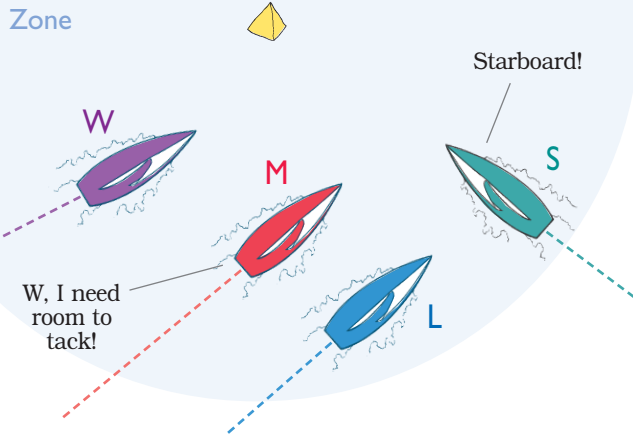
## Rule 20 – Room to Tack at an Obstruction

### Conflict between rule 20 and rules 18 or 19

The old preamble to Section C said, “When rule 20 applies, rules 18 and 19 do not.” That rule was not very clear. Here is how the rulebook now handles these conflicts:

**Rules 19 and 20** – In the old rulebook, rule 19 (Room to Pass an Obstruction) turned off whenever rule 20 applied (see *old Section C Preamble*). That is no longer the case. In this situation, M and W are approaching an obstruction (S). Rule 19.2a says that M (the right-of-way boat) can choose to pass this obstruction on either side. In other words, she can avoid S by bearing off or by tacking. If M wants to tack, she must hail W in accordance with rule 20. If M doesn’t hail (or if W fails to respond,) M has to avoid S by going behind her. Rule 19 still applies, so L has to give M room to pass between her (L) and S.

**Rules 18 and 20** – New rule 20.2e clarifies exactly when and to whom these rules apply. When M and W enter the zone they are overlapped, so rule 18.2b says the outside boat (M) must give mark-room to the inside boat (W). Once M hails for room to tack, however, rule 18.2 does not apply between M and W. W is no longer entitled to mark-room and must respond to M’s hail. Rule 18.2 does not apply to these boats again until M has tacked and avoided W. Note that M and L were also overlapped when they entered the zone. Even though M hails W for room to tack, rule 18.2 still applies between M and L.



### NEW 20 ROOM TO TACK AT AN OBSTRUCTION

#### 20.2 Responding

... (e) From the time a boat hails until she has tacked and avoided the hailed boat, rule 18.2 does not apply between them.

#### OLD Preamble to Section C

Section C rules do not apply at a starting mark surrounded by navigable water or at its anchor line from the time boats are approaching them to start until they have passed them. When rule 20 applies, rules 18 and 19 do not.

### Now you can ‘pass on’ a rule 20 hail

Rule 20.3 (see box) is one of the most significant additions to the new rulebook. This rule allows a boat that has been hailed for ‘room to tack’ to pass on that hail to another boat on the same tack. Here is how it works:

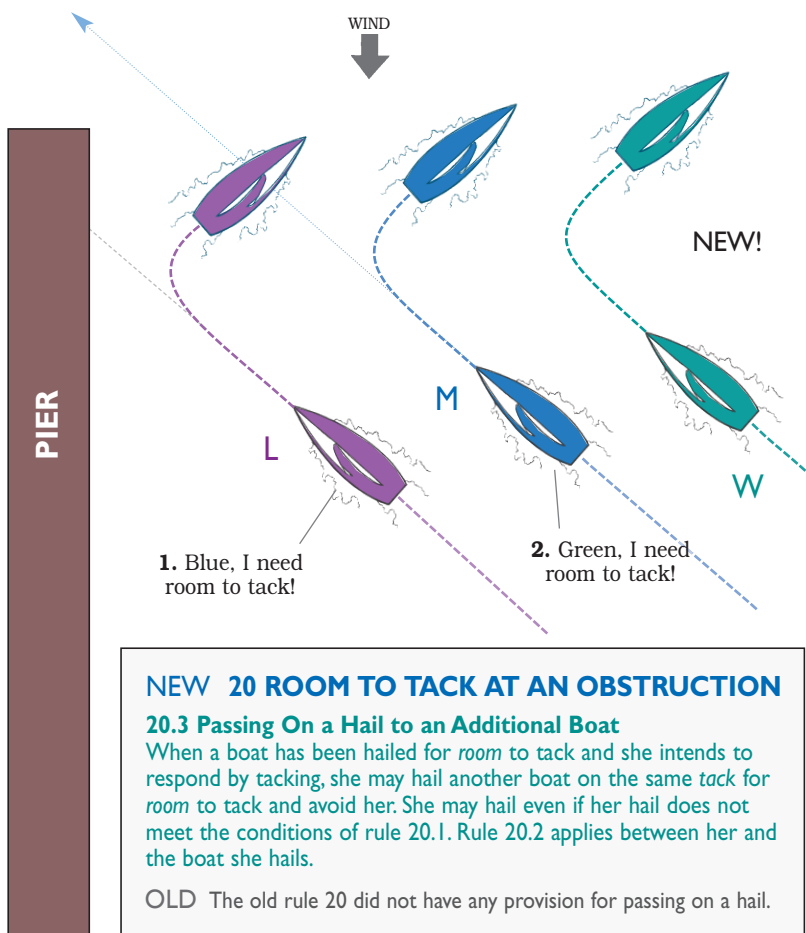
◀ In this scenario, three overlapped boats are sailing closehauled toward an obstruction. The leeward boat L is aimed directly at the pier, so she hails the middle boat (M) for room to tack.

M is too close to say “You tack” so her only option is to ‘tack as soon as possible.’ However, she cannot tack without hitting W. Therefore, M hails W for room to tack.

Under the old rules, this was not technically permitted because M did not have to make a ‘substantial course change to avoid the obstruction.’ That put M in a tough position, so the rulemakers clarified this rule.

Now whenever a boat is hailed for room to tack and she intends to respond by tacking, she can hail another (a third) boat on the same tack for room to tack. She can do this even if her hail does not meet the conditions of rule 20.1 (see page 8). So, in the situation shown here, M can hail W for room to tack even though M is not aiming at the obstruction.

Note that in a three-boat situation L must hail early enough so two boats have time to respond.



### NEW 20 ROOM TO TACK AT AN OBSTRUCTION

#### 20.3 Passing On a Hail to an Additional Boat

When a boat has been hailed for room to tack and she intends to respond by tacking, she may hail another boat on the same tack for room to tack and avoid her. She may hail even if her hail does not meet the conditions of rule 20.1. Rule 20.2 applies between her and the boat she hails.

OLD The old rule 20 did not have any provision for passing on a hail.

# A new consolidated rule of exoneration

Rule 21 (Exoneration) is a brand new rule that combines the exoneration provisions of rules 18 and 20 (and exoneration for rule 19) into one place. It makes exoneration consistent for all the rules of Part C (At Marks and Obstructions) and thereby simplifies this concept for sailors. A couple of notable changes:

- At marks, a boat sailing within the mark-room to which she is entitled will be exonerated for breaking rule 15 (Acquiring Right of Way) or 16 (Changing Course). Previously she was exonerated for breaking those rules only while sailing her PC at the mark.

- In the old rules, the exoneration provisions did not apply to an inside boat that was entitled to room at an obstruction under rule 19, but they do now!

Here is a closer look at how exoneration works in each of the rules of Part C (18, 19 and 20).

## NEW 21 EXONERATION

When a boat is sailing within the *room* or *mark-room* to which she is entitled under a rule of Section C, she shall be exonerated if, in an incident with a boat required to give her that *room* or *mark-room*,

- (a) she breaks a rule of Section A, rule 15 or rule 16, or
- (b) she is compelled to break rule 31.

## OLD 18 MARK-ROOM

### 18.5 Exoneration

When a boat is taking *mark-room* to which she is entitled, she shall be exonerated (a) if, as a result of the other boat failing to give her *mark-room*, she breaks a rule of Section A, or

- (b) if, by rounding the *mark* on her *proper course*, she breaks a rule of Section A or rule 15 or 16.

## OLD 19 ROOM TO PASS AN OBSTRUCTION

There was no exoneration provision in the old rule 19.

## OLD 20 ROOM TO TACK AT AN OBSTRUCTION

### 20.2 Exoneration

When a boat is taking room to which she is entitled under rule 20.1(b), she shall be exonerated if she breaks a rule of Section A or rule 15 or 16.

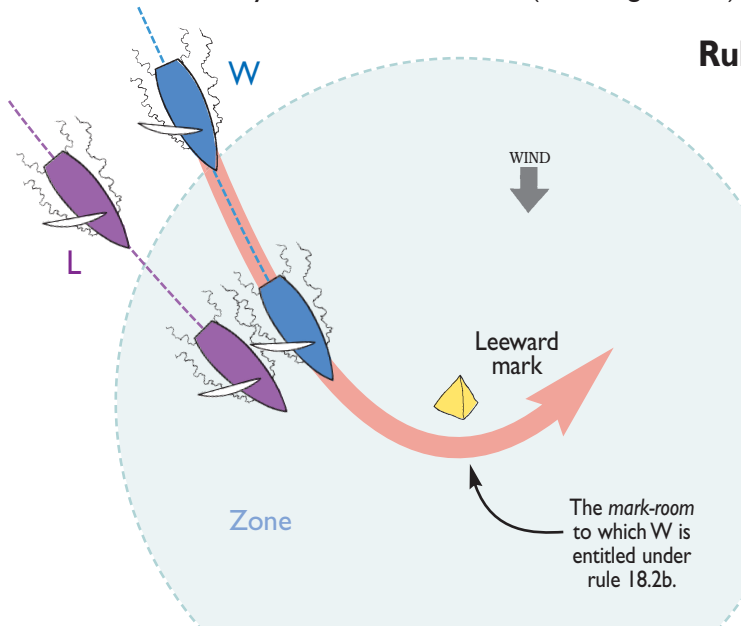
## Exoneration while taking *mark-room*

While boats inside the zone approach and round a mark, an outside or clear-astern boat must give *mark-room* to an inside or clear-ahead boat. *Mark-room* includes room to leave a mark on the required side, sail to the mark in a seamanlike way and round the mark as necessary to sail the course.

If the boat entitled to *mark-room* does not have the right of way, she must keep clear of the outside boat. However, as long as she is sailing within the *mark-room* to which she is entitled, she will be exonerated if she is compelled to break rule 31 (Touching a Mark) or if she breaks any

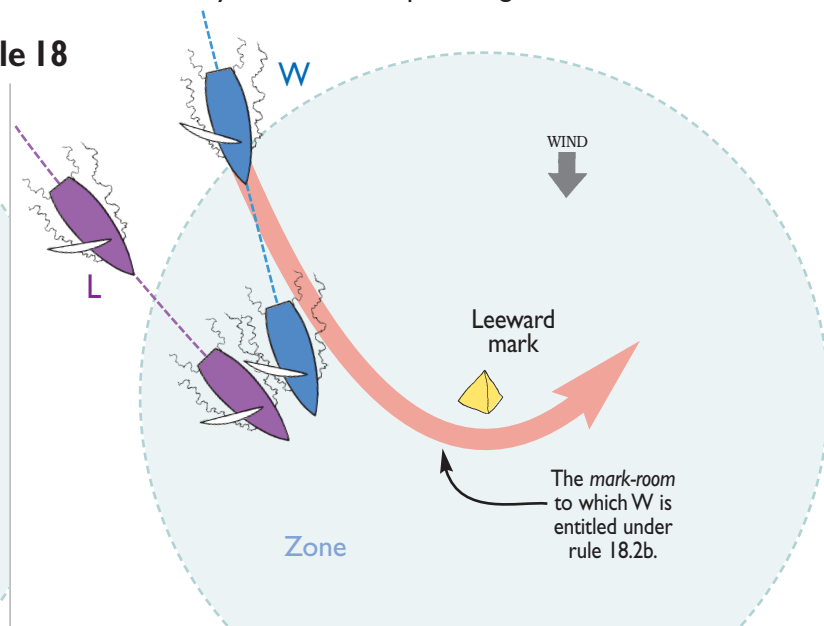
of these rules: 10, 11, 12, 13, 15 or 16.

Basically, as long as a boat does not sail too wide of the mark, she is protected while she rounds it in accordance with the definition of *mark-room*. If she breaks any of the rules listed above, she will be exonerated and the other boat will be penalized for not providing *mark-room*.



The Blue boat (W) has an inside overlap when the first boat gets to the zone, so the Purple boat (L) must give her *mark-room*. However, W is also a windward boat so she must keep clear of L. As long as W is sailing within the *mark-room* to which she is entitled (represented by the red arrow), she will be exonerated for breaking rule 11 if she fails to keep clear of L (and L will be penalized for breaking rule 18.2b).

## Rule 18

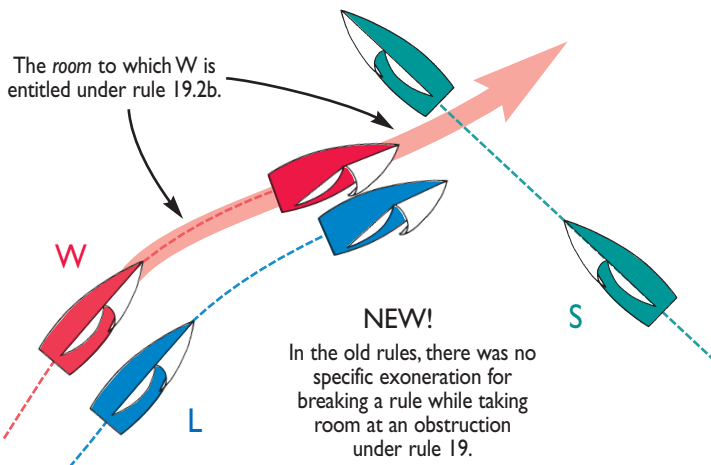


The Blue boat (W) has an inside overlap, so the Purple boat (L) must give her *mark-room*. After the boats enter the zone, they converge until there is slight contact. W is the windward boat, so she breaks rule 11. Will she be exonerated for this? No – because she was not sailing within the *mark-room* to which she was entitled (shown by red arrow). W took too much space and did not keep clear, so she will be penalized.

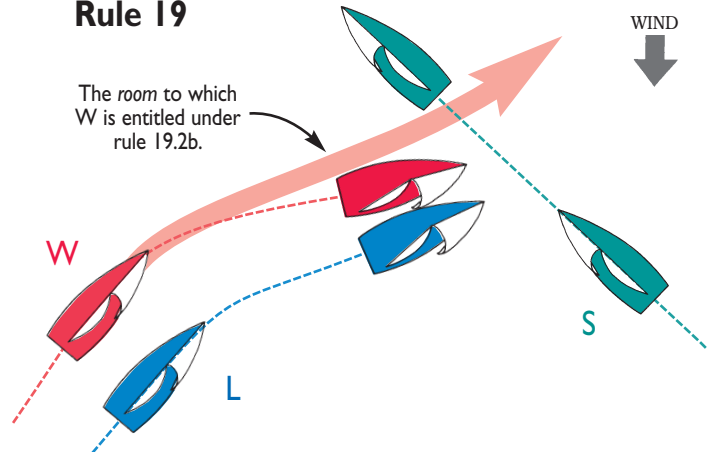
### Exoneration when passing obstructions

The old rule 19 did not have any exoneration provision. If you were inside at an obstruction and the outside boat didn't give you enough room, you would not be exonerated for breaking a right-of-way rule unless you could show that the other boat compelled you to break it. In most cases involving room at obstructions, the inside boat could avoid breaking a rule by going on the other side of the obstruction, so there were few cases of exoneration.

That is different in the new rulebook. Now rule 19 is included along with 18 and 20 as rules where a boat that breaks a rule can be exonerated if she is sailing within the room to which she is entitled. In rule 19, 'room' for an inside boat is the space she needs, in the existing conditions, to pass safely between the outside boat and an obstruction. As long as a boat operates within this room, she'll be exonerated for breaking a rule listed in rule 21.



### Rule 19



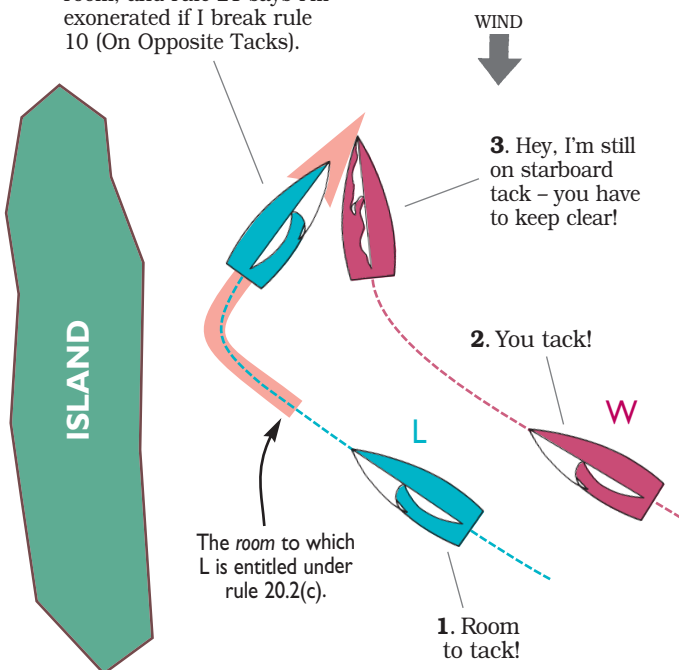
• In both of these situations, Boat S has the right of way on starboard tack and therefore she is an obstruction to W and L. Since W and L are overlapped and passing an obstruction, the outside boat (L) must give room to the inside boat (W). At the same time, W is a windward boat so she must keep clear of L according to rule 11.

ABOVE: W is entitled to take just enough room (shown by the red arrow) to sail safely between L and the obstruction S. If W takes more room than this, she will not be exonerated by rule 21 for breaking rule 11 (or any of the other rules listed in rule 21). In this case, W will be penalized for not keeping clear as the windward boat.

LEFT: W is sailing within the room to which she is entitled (represented by red arrow), so she will be exonerated if she breaks rule 11 by failing to keep clear of L. In this case, L will be penalized for breaking rule 19.2b because she didn't give W room to sail between her and the obstruction (S).

4. Protest! Rule 20.2(c) says you have to give me room, and rule 21 says I'm exonerated if I break rule 10 (On Opposite Tacks).

### Rule 20



### Exoneration when hailing for room to tack

The third time when a boat might be exonerated by rule 21 for breaking a right-of-way rule is when she is taking room under rule 20 (Room to Tack at an Obstruction).

According to rule 20.2c (see page 8), when a boat hails for room to tack and then the hailed boat says "You tack," the hailed boat must give the hailing boat "room to tack and avoid her." In other words, the hailing boat is entitled to the amount of space needed to complete her tack and then avoid the boat that said "You tack."

If the hailing boat breaks a right-of-way rule while she is sailing within this room, she'll be exonerated by rule 21.

◀ In this situation, two closehauled boats are heading toward an obstruction. The leeward boat (L) cannot tack without fouling the windward boat (W), so she hails for "Room to tack." W responds by replying "You tack!" This means L must tack 'as soon as possible,' and W must give L 'room to tack and avoid her.'

L begins to tack right away, but just as she is completing her tack she has contact with W who is head to wind and still on starboard tack. It is clear that L broke rule 10 (On Opposite Tacks) or rule 13 (While Tacking). However, she will be exonerated by rule 21 because she was sailing within the room to which she was entitled. W will be penalized for breaking rule 20.2(c).

# Penalties, protests, redress . . . oh my!

There are few sailors in the world who enjoy getting into a protest, whether they are protesting or being protested. And there are many sailors who almost never go to the ‘room.’ But even if you are one of those people, you should still have a good working knowledge of the rules about protests and redress. These rules had a number of changes in the 2013-16 rulebook, and I’ve tried to explain the most important ones on these pages.

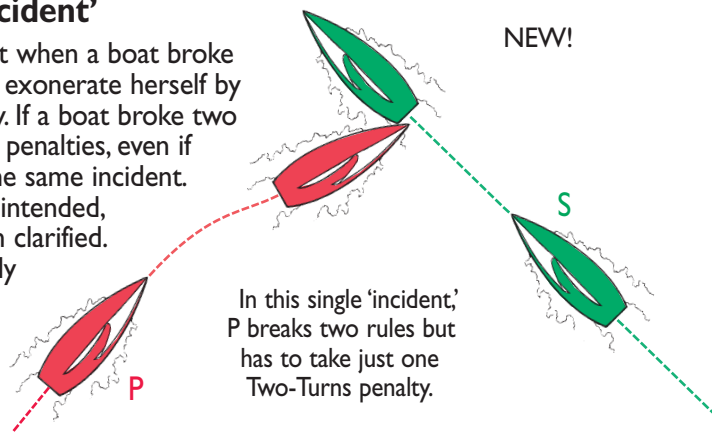
Rule 69 (Allegations of Gross Misconduct) was reorganized and has quite a few changes, but I chose not to discuss that rule here. Read it if you want, but hopefully you won’t ever need to know what it says.

If you sail in the United States, make sure you read the US prescriptions to rules 60.3, 63.2 and 63.4 (plus all the other US prescriptions). These provide very important information about your rights whenever there is a redress hearing.

## One penalty per ‘incident’

The old rule 44.1 said that when a boat broke a rule of Part 2 she could exonerate herself by taking a Two-Turns Penalty. If a boat broke two rules she had to take two penalties, even if she broke both rules in the same incident. That is not what the rule intended, so new rule 44.1 has been clarified. Now you have to take only one penalty for each incident in which you break one or more rules.

► In this situation, S has the right of way, so P bears off to pass behind her. But P mis-judges her duck and touches the corner of S’s transom. P breaks rule 10 (On Opposite Tacks) and also 14 (Avoiding Contact). In order to exonerate herself, does P have to take one penalty or two? In the old rules, the answer was, technically, two. Now it is clear that P has to take just one Two-Turns Penalty because she broke both rules in the same incident.



### NEW 44 PENALTIES AT THE TIME OF AN INCIDENT

#### 44.1 Taking a Penalty

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. She may take a One-Turn Penalty when she may have broken rule 31. Alternatively, sailing instructions may specify the use of the Scoring Penalty or some other penalty, in which case the specified penalty shall replace the One-Turn and the Two-Turns Penalty . . .

#### OLD 44.1 Taking a Penalty

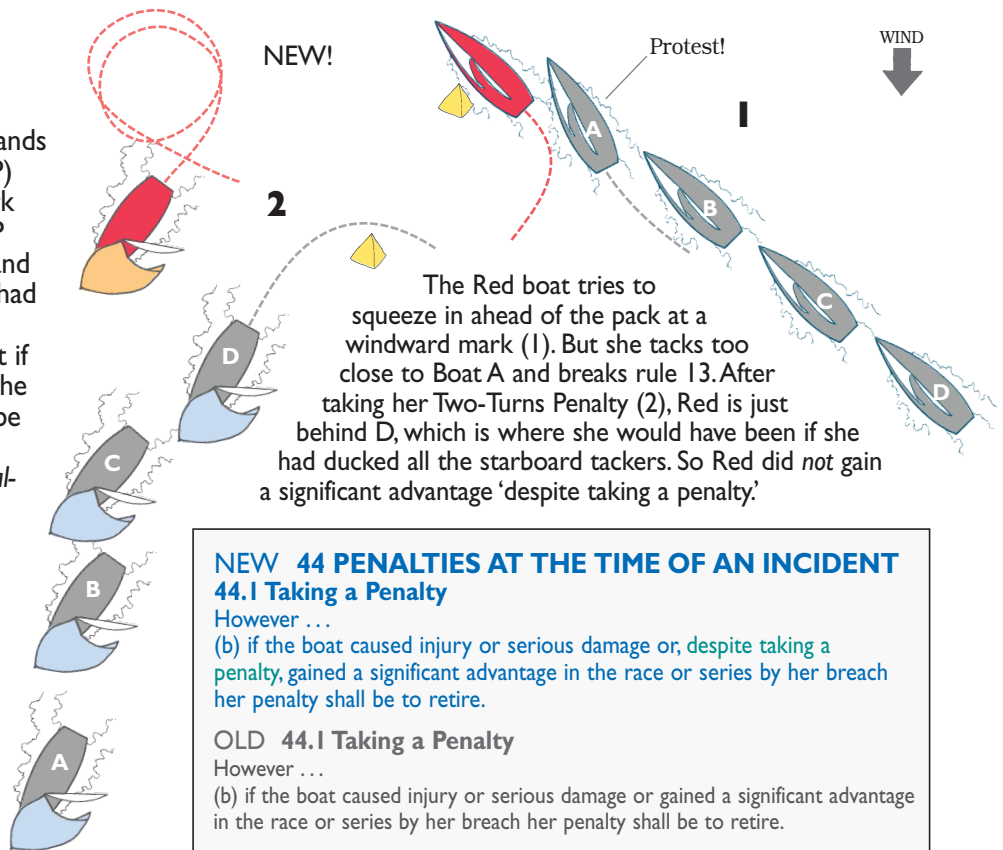
A boat may take a Two-Turns Penalty when she may have broken a rule of Part 2 while racing or a One-Turn Penalty when she may have broken rule 31. Sailing instructions may specify the use of the Scoring Penalty or some other penalty.

## ‘Significant advantage’ is now judged after taking a penalty

There was an interesting protest case a couple years ago that ended up in the hands of the US Appeals Committee. A boat (P) that was approaching the windward mark tacked too close to a starboard tacker. P did her Two-Turns Penalty immediately and came out of it behind all the boats that had been near her at the mark.

However, the old rule 44.1b said that if a boat ‘gained a significant advantage in the race . . . by her breach her penalty shall be to retire.’ The rule did not say ‘gained a significant advantage after taking her penalty’; therefore P was disqualified because when she broke the rule this gave her a significant advantage (temporarily until she did her turns), and this DSQ was upheld on appeal.

The rulemakers did not intend for the rule to be applied this way, so the wording of rule 44.1b has been changed in the new rulebook. Now the judgment of whether a boat has gained a significant advantage or not is clearly to be made after she takes a penalty.



### NEW 44 PENALTIES AT THE TIME OF AN INCIDENT

#### 44.1 Taking a Penalty

However . . .

(b) if the boat caused injury or serious damage or, despite taking a penalty, gained a significant advantage in the race or series by her breach her penalty shall be to retire.

#### OLD 44.1 Taking a Penalty

However . . .

(b) if the boat caused injury or serious damage or gained a significant advantage in the race or series by her breach her penalty shall be to retire.

### Evidence from the jury

The old rule 63.6 said that a member of the protest committee who saw an incident was permitted to give evidence (and therefore be questioned) during a hearing. However, there was no requirement for a judge to reveal that he or she had witnessed the incident and therefore no way for the parties to know if any jury member might: a) have valuable information for the hearing; or b) base their decision on what he or she saw.

Now rule 63.6 requires any PC member who saw an incident to state that fact while the parties are present. Either party (or the jury) could then call that judge as a witness and have them give evidence.

#### NEW 63 HEARINGS

##### 63.6 Taking Evidence and Finding Facts

... A member of the protest committee who saw the incident shall, while the parties are present, state that fact and may give evidence ...

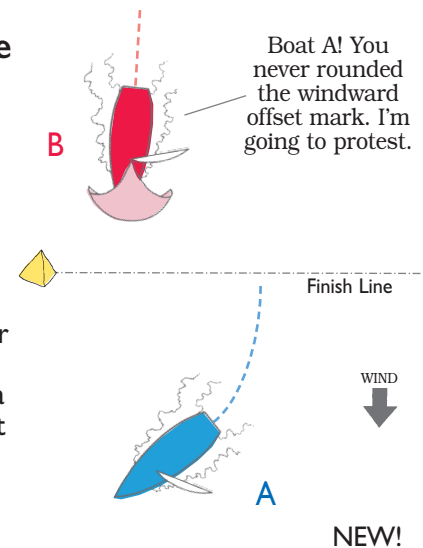
##### OLD 63.6 Taking Evidence and Finding Facts

... A member of the protest committee who saw the incident may give evidence ...

### Protests for not sailing the course

If you see another boat round a mark the wrong way or miss a mark completely, do you have to notify them immediately or at the finish or on shore or ...? Under the old rules it wasn't clear.

Now there is a totally new section in rule 61.1(a) that answers this question (see box). According to 61.1(a)(3), if you intend to protest another boat that makes an error in sailing the course (i.e. a boat that breaks rule 28), you do not have to hail or display a red flag. However, you do have to notify that boat at any time before she finishes or 'at the first reasonable opportunity' after she finishes (which might be on shore if you were not near her in the race).



#### NEW 61 PROTEST REQUIREMENTS

##### 61.1 Informing the Protestee

(a) A boat intending to protest shall inform the other boat at the first reasonable opportunity. When her protest will concern an incident in the racing area that she was involved in or saw, she shall hail 'Protest' and conspicuously display a red flag at the first reasonable opportunity for each. She shall display the flag until she is no longer racing. However ...

(3) if the incident was an error by the other boat in sailing the course, she need not hail or display a red flag but she shall inform the other boat before that boat finishes or at the first reasonable opportunity after she finishes ...

OLD Rule 61.1 did not include anything specific about protesting a boat that did not sail the course correctly. The best reference on this situation was ISAF Case 112.

### Changes in requesting redress

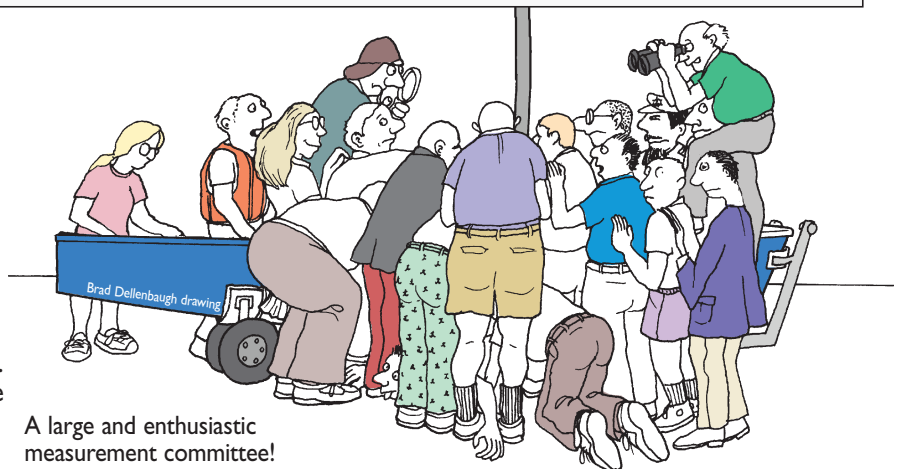
The rule that explains everything you need to know about requesting redress is rule 62 (see box). The new version of this rule has three improvements for the redress process:

#### 1. Redress is now available for the future

– Requesting redress has always been an option for races that occurred in the past, but now the words “or may be” have been added to rule 62.1. If something happens that could hurt your score in a future race or series, you can ask for redress. For example, if the RC changes the notice of race just before a regatta in a way that will be unfair for certain boats, they can now request redress.

2. **The measurement committee is now included** – Under the old rule 62.1(a) you could request redress for “an improper action or omission of the race committee, protest committee or organizing authority,” but what if a separate measurement committee made an error when they measured your boat? Now they're included.

3. **A request must identify the reason for making it** – In the past a request for redress had to be submitted in writing, but it did not have to include anything about why it was being made. To make redress requests more consistent with protests and more helpful for juries and parties, rule 62.2 (not shown here) now says your written request must 'identify the reason for making it.'



A large and enthusiastic measurement committee!

#### NEW 62 REDRESS

62.1 A request for redress or a protest committee's decision to consider redress shall be based on a claim or possibility that a boat's score in a race or series has been or may be, through no fault of her own, made significantly worse by

(a) an improper action or omission of the race committee, protest committee, organizing authority, equipment inspection committee or measurement committee for the event ...

#### OLD 62 REDRESS

62.1 A request for redress or a protest committee's decision to consider redress shall be based on a claim or possibility that a boat's score in a race or series has, through no fault of her own, been made significantly worse by

(a) an improper action or omission of the race committee, protest committee or organizing authority ...

# More changes in the new rulebook

The bulk of this issue has been dedicated to the new 2013-16 rule changes that will likely have the biggest impact on your racing. However, quite a few other rules have been tweaked at least a little. Most of these changes were simply to make the rule easier to read and understand. But a few could affect your racing, at least once or twice during the next four years. Here are some more subtle changes that will be good to know just in case.

## 22 Moving Astern

Rule 22.3 (which used to be 21.3) says that a boat moving astern by backing a sail shall keep clear of one that is not. This new rule clarifies that moving astern means going backward *through the water* (not necessarily over the bottom if, for example, there is current).

## 42 Propulsion

There have been several changes made in rule 42.3 Exceptions, which lists permitted kinetics:

- Pumping is now allowed to accelerate a boat down the “front” (rather than the “leeward side”) of a wave. This allows pumping to surf when the waves are not lined up with the wind (rule 42.3c).
- When you pump, you can now use any method (e.g. grabbing the vang) to pull in the sail once for each wave or gust. Under the old rules you could only pull on the sheet or guy (rule 42.3c)
- Rule 42.3e is brand new: If a batten is inverted, you can pump the sail until it is no longer inverted. However, you cannot do this if it “clearly propels the boat.”

## 44.1 Other Penalties

When boats break a rule or touch a mark, they can usually exonerate themselves by taking a Two-Turns or One-Turn Penalty. But sometimes the SIs specify the use of the Scoring Penalty or another penalty. When this happens, the specified

penalty replaces both the Two-Turns and One-Turns penalties.

## 60 Right to Protest

A competitor can protest another boat for breaking a rule of Part 2 only when he or she “was involved in or saw the incident.” That part of rule 60.1 stays the same. What’s new is that the same criteria now apply when you protest a boat for touching a mark (breaking rule 31); i.e. you can do that only if you were involved in or saw the incident.

## 67 Rule 42 and Hearing Requirement

The old rule 67 allowed the protest committee to penalize without a hearing a boat that broke rule 42 (Propulsion). Furthermore, a DSQ under that rule was not excludable, which was quite harsh. That rule has been deleted in the new rule-

book because Appendix P (Special Procedures for Rule 42) achieves the same purpose in a fairer and more consistent way.

## 70 Appeals and Requests to a National Authority

Rule 70.1 gives a boat the right to appeal ‘a protest committee’s decision or its procedures.’ That stays the same in the new rules. However, there is one big addition: new rule 70.1b says, “A boat may appeal when she is denied a hearing required by rule 63.1.” If the jury refuses to hold a hearing a boat can now appeal, even if the right of appeal is denied under rule 70.5!

## 90.3 Scoring

New rule 90.3c says that when a race committee realizes that it has scored a boat incorrectly it must



JH Peterson photo

**RULE 49** (Crew Position; Lifelines) used to say that when boats had upper and lower lifelines of wire, crewmembers could hike as shown here. The new rule 49 has deleted “of wire” because many boats now use high-tech rope lifelines. So this kind of hiking is allowed as long as a boat has upper and lower lifelines.

Note that class rules can change rule 49 (see rule 86.1c). The Melges 24 Class, for example, changes rule 49.2 to say that lifeline ‘tension may be modified’ (rule 49 says lifelines must be ‘taut’). Also, if the class rules don’t specify the material or minimum diameter of lifelines, they must comply with corresponding specifications in the ISAF Offshore Special Regulations (see [sailing.org/racingrules/documents](http://sailing.org/racingrules/documents)).

correct the score and make the corrected scores available to competitors. Scoring corrections do not have to be made by the jury.

**76 Exclusion of competitors**

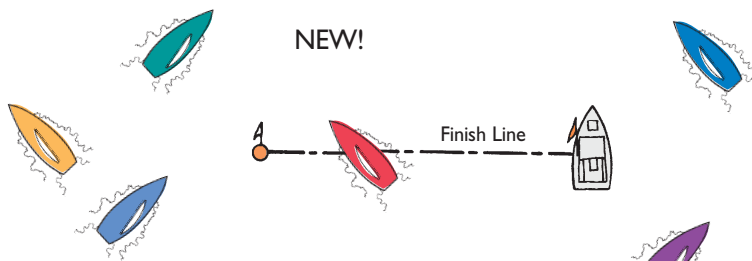
The organizing authority has always had the right to reject the entry of a boat or to exclude a competitor, subject to certain limitations in rule 76 and its prescription. The rule now clearly allows a boat to request redress if she feels the rejection or exclusion is improper.

**The Appendices**

Quite a few changes have been made in the appendices. Appendix D (Team Racing), for example, has been modified so when a boat hails for room to tack at an obstruction, her helmsperson must make certain hand signals. Be sure to read carefully any Appendix that applies to your racing (and note changes are *not* marked in the margins).

**A new definition of ‘Finish’**

The boats below are sailing the second beat of a twice-around course and one of them (the Red boat) sails through the finish line (which was set up early for another class). Has this boat finished the race? Under the old definition of Finish (see below), the answer was, technically, yes. But that is not what the rulemakers intended, so they added (c) to the new definition (below). Now a boat that sails through the finish line is not considered to have finished if she ‘continues to sail the course.’



**NEW DEFINITION: Finish**

A boat finishes when any part of her hull, or crew or equipment in normal position, 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 under rule 28.2 made at the line, or
- (c) continues to sail the course.

**OLD DEFINITION: Finish**

A boat finishes when any part of her hull, or crew or equipment in normal position, crosses the finishing line in the direction of the course from the last mark, either for the first time or after taking a penalty under rule 44.2 or, after correcting an error made at the finishing line, under rule 28.1.

**RULE 41: Getting outside help**

Several changes have been made to improve the new rule 41 (Outside Help), which describes when a boat can, and can’t, get help from outside sources:

- The words “in danger” have been added to 41(a). This will encourage help to be given and received when sailors are in danger. For example, if a race committee or spectator boat picks up a sailor who fell overboard (and is in danger) and puts them back on board their racing boat, that boat can now continue in the race (*but see below*). In the old rules, such a boat would have had to retire unless the crewmember was helped because he or she was ill or injured.

- When a boat receives help under rule 41(a) for a crewmember who is ‘ill, injured or in danger,’ that boat can be protested and penalized if she gained a ‘significant advantage’ in the race. For example, if a lot of boats capsize in a heavy-air race and the race committee feels the sailors are in danger and helps only a few boats get righted, those boats probably gained a significant advantage and should receive an appropriate penalty. Note this could be less than a DSQ.

- If you collide with a ‘vessel’ (e.g. a fishing boat, RC boat or other sailboat) you can receive help from their crew to get clear (41b). In the old rules, you could get such help only when you collided with a ‘boat’ (i.e. a sailboat).

**NEW 41 OUTSIDE HELP**

A boat shall not receive help from any outside source, except

- (a) help for a crew member who is ill, injured or in danger;
- (b) after a collision, help from the crew of the other vessel to get clear ...

However, a boat that gains a significant advantage in the race from help received under rule 41(a) may be protested and penalized; any penalty may be less than disqualification.

**OLD 41 OUTSIDE HELP**

A boat shall not receive help from any outside source, except

- (a) help for an ill or injured crew member;
- (b) after a collision, help from the crew of the other boat to get clear ...

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## The 2013-2016 Racing Rules

## Basic Principle, Rule 55

### New environmental rules

The sport of sailing is so dependent on the environment that it seemed only a matter of time before the rulebook would do more to encourage sailors to help protect it.

In past editions of the racing rules, the only reference to helping the environment was an optional entry in Appendix L (the Sailing Instructions Guide) about not putting trash in the water. This was used often enough that it is now a new rule (55) in Part 4 of the rulebook (see box). The word “intentionally” has been added to prevent penalizing a boat for inadvertently

allowing trash to go in the water, such as when she capsizes.

Unlike all other rules in Part 4, rule 55 (Trash Disposal) applies ‘at all times when boats are on the water,’ not just while they are racing (see Part 4 preamble). Sailors can protest other boats for breaking rule 55 just like any other rule, and the penalty is retirement or disqualification, not just two turns.

The rulemakers took an even more significant step toward protecting the environment when they added a new Basic Principle (see box) at the beginning of the 2013-

16 rulebook. This puts forth the general belief that sailors should take an active role in minimizing the ‘adverse environmental impact of the sport of sailing.’ Like the basic principle ‘Sportsmanship and the Rules,’ this is now a major principle underlying all the rules.

#### NEW BASIC PRINCIPLE

##### Environmental Responsibility

Participants are encouraged to minimize any adverse environmental impact of the sport of sailing.

OLD There was no rule like this in any previous rulebook.

#### NEW 55 Trash Disposal

A competitor shall not intentionally put trash in the water.

#### OLD APPENDIX L Sailing Instructions Guide

24 TRASH DISPOSAL  
Boats shall not put trash in the water . . .

#### NEW Part 4 Preamble

Part 4 rules apply only to boats racing. However, rule 55 applies at all times when boats are on the water.

#### OLD Part 4 Preamble

Part 4 rules apply only to boats racing.



JH Peterson photo

Find all online documents mentioned in the rulebook at: [sailing.org/racingrules/documents](http://sailing.org/racingrules/documents)