

**This guide is intended to provide quick reference to the main rules needed on the water.** The guide does not attempt to simplify the rules or replace the rule book, but it does pick out the rules that are needed to make the game work so that we can all enjoy it. Numbers in [xx] refer to the rule numbers in the Racing Rules of Sailing so that as you want to learn more, you can find the rule in the book.

The sport is self-policing. There are no referees or umpires for most racing. We will all make mistakes and misjudgements that cause us to break a rule from time to time. When we know we have broken a rule, we are expected to take a penalty. If there is no damage or injury, then the penalty is either a one or two turns, each including a tack and a gybe [44]. You will need to read the sailing instructions (SI) to check the number of turns required, but if the SI are silent, then it is two turns for a boat to boat incident and one turn for hitting a mark of the course. If there is damage or injury, then a boat that knows she has broken a rule should retire by informing the race committee.

If two boats cannot agree which has broken a rule they may protest. The protest will be heard by a committee after racing. However, protesting is not compulsory. Often, if both competitors go to an experienced racer with good rules knowledge and talk through the incident, they will learn more and avoid the problem next time.

The sport does have a few rules that apply all the time:

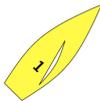
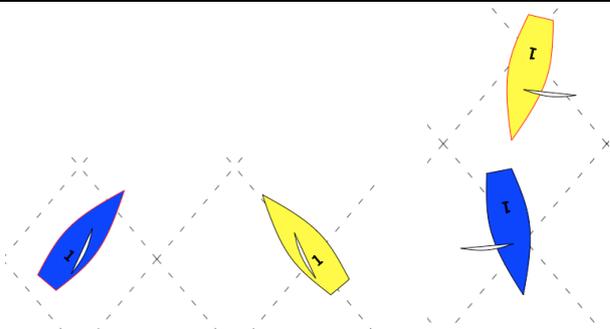
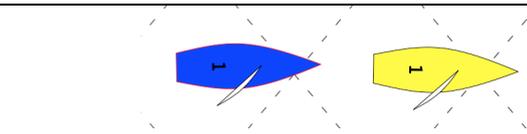
- You must have appropriate life-saving equipment on board and you must help anyone in danger. You may be able to get redress if you need to stop to help another boat. [1 and 62.1(c)]
- You must race fairly. This means complying with the rules and behaving in a sporting manner. [2, 3 and 69]
- You must decide for yourself if you and your boat are capable and suitable for the prevailing conditions. [4] Ask more experienced sailors to help you make this decision if you are not certain.
- Avoid contact with other boats if possible. [14]

## THE RIGHT-OF-WAY RULES

### Keeping Clear and Right-of Way [Definition].

Between any two boats, one will be required to Keep Clear, the other is the Right-of-Way boat. There are just 4 basic Right-of-Way Rules based on the concept of Keeping Clear and only one of these will apply at any particular time. If you are required to Keep Clear you must not make the Right-of-Way boat alter course to avoid risk of contact.

On the other hand, if you are the Right-of-Way boat and you alter course, you must do so slowly enough that a Keep Clear boat affected has the time to respond promptly and in a seamanlike way. (rule 16)

|  | Keep Clear       | Right-of-Way | Blue (dark) must keep clear of Yellow (light)  |
|--|------------------|--------------|--|
| If printed black & white:<br><br>Blue (dark)<br><br>Yellow (light) | Port<br>[10]     | Starboard    |   |
| These two rules only apply to boats on the same tack   | Windward<br>[11] | Leeward      |  |
|  | Astern<br>[12]   | Ahead        |  |
|  | Tacking<br>[13]  | Not Tacking  |  |

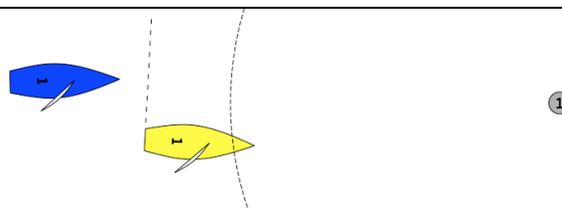
**THE RULES at MARKS and OBSTRUCTIONS**

Some special rules are needed to help us round marks and pass obstructions and these can be quite complex, but here are the basic ones you need.

Don't touch marks or mark boats [31]

**ROUND MARKS**

If you are clear astern at three lengths give mark-room the boat ahead while rounding [18.2(b)].



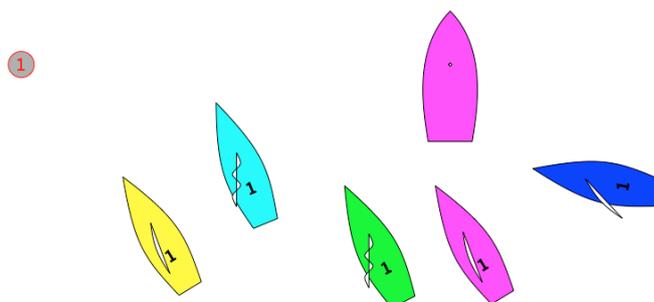
If boats are overlapped inside you – give them room, even if, at a leeward mark, you are on Starboard and they are on Port. [18.2(a)]



The same applies when passing obstructions but they have no three-length zone. If you can give room when the overlapped is established, you must do so [19.2.(b)]

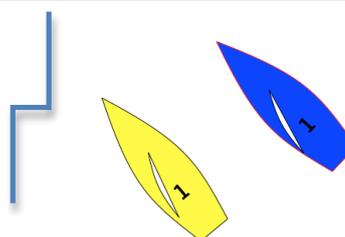
**EXCEPT WHEN STARTING**

Blue (dark) has no right to room at a starting mark (which may be a boat or other object). [Section C pre-amble]



**Also At Obstructions**

Yellow may call 'Room to Tack'. Blue must tack or call 'You Tack' and then keep clear. [20]



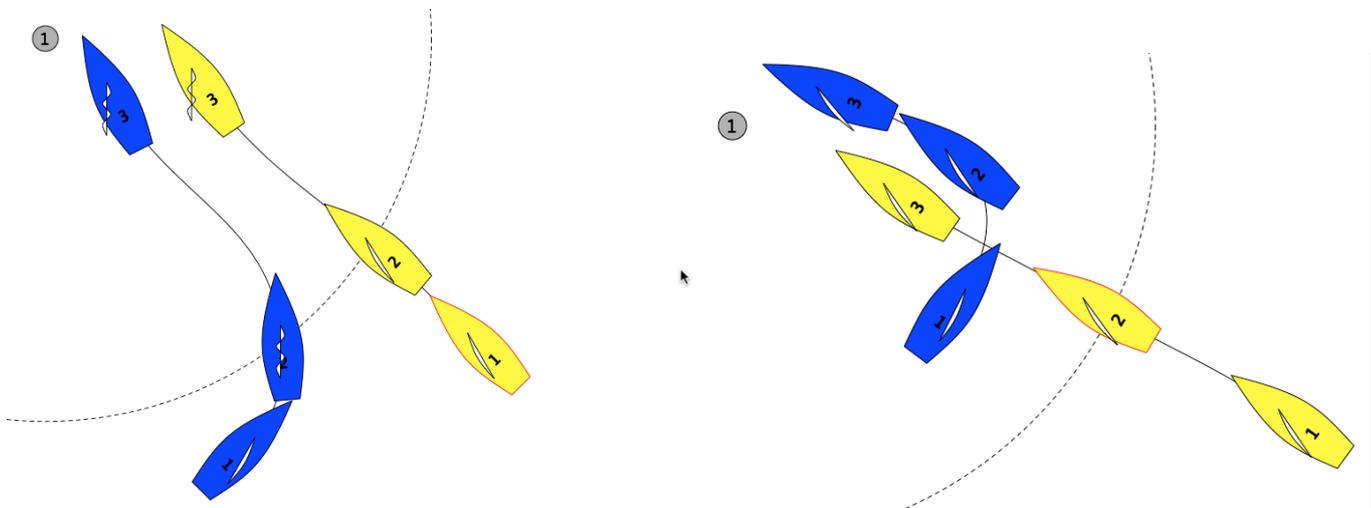
**THE WINDWARD MARK**

When boats are on opposite tacks at a windward mark, this is a port-starboard situation [10]. Blue is not entitled to room and must keep clear. [18.1(a)]



If Yellow, on starboard, is fetching the port-hand mark and Blue changes tack (passes head to wind) in the three-length zone and is then fetching the mark, special rule [18.3] applies.

If Yellow needs to sail above close-hauled to avoid contact with Blue, then Blue breaks rule 18.3. If Yellow establishes an overlap inside Blue, however late, Blue must give Yellow room. The only rule that limits Yellow is rule 14, avoiding contact. If Yellow is forced the wrong side of the mark, Blue breaks 18.3.



**PROPER COURSE**

Yellow astern, sailing higher and faster, establishes an overlap to leeward of Blue. As she has been sailing this course for some time, this her proper course [Definition] and Blue must keep clear. [11]. Yellow must give Blue room to keep clear after the overlap is established. [15]

