

Racing Rules

Definition Continuing Obstruction

An urgent submission from US Sailing

Purpose or Objective

To return the new definition *Continuing Obstruction* to a version originally approved by the WS RRC in 2022 which helps assure consistent application of rules 18 and 19 at large obstructions that are also *marks* of a course.

Proposal

Change the recently accepted proposal 008-23 (Yellow Paper) to use the first sentence in previously approved submission 004-22.

*An obstruction ~~is~~ **becomes** a continuing obstruction when a boat **is passing it and** will pass alongside it for at least three of her hull lengths.*

Alternative wording shown below would also work.

*An obstruction ~~is~~ **becomes** a continuing obstruction when a boat **begins passing alongside it and** will ~~pass alongside it for~~ **need** at least three of her hull lengths **to pass it**.*

Current Position

As above.

Reasons

1. Submission 008-23 enables boats to establish before they are passing a large mark, such as an island or breakwater, that it is a continuing obstruction and only rule 19 applies. This will create a significant 'game change' in many venues where competitors are familiar with using rule 18 when they reach the zone of such a mark, and then applying rule 19 as the inside or clear ahead boat in the zone begins to pass the obstruction. There are several situations where 008-23 may create uncertainty with regard to which rules apply and when.

(a) When a course has both small and large islands as marks, rule 18 will apply at some islands and not others. This inconsistency may cause confusion.

(b) What happens if the boats don't agree that the mark is a continuing obstruction? For example, one of them decides that it won't require three of her hull lengths to pass it.

(c) What rules apply if the mark is a long freestanding breakwater or a long thin island and the course needed to leave it on the required side is to only pass one of its ends, but never pass alongside the obstruction?

2. In contrast, the proposed change enables initial establishment of mark-room obligations at all sizes of islands that are marks, and allows both boats to know when the mark is large enough to become a continuing obstruction (emphasis on 'becomes'). This is when the first boat begins passing it and it is clear based on the size of the obstruction that she will need at least three hull lengths to continue to pass it. At that point the mark becomes a continuing obstruction; rule 18 no longer applies and rule 19 begins to apply, consistent with rules 18.1(d) and the last sentence of rule 19.1.

3. When boats are approaching a mark that is a large/long obstruction under the proposed definition, rule 18.2 applies at the zone and has several advantages over rule 19 with respect to overlaps; i.e., rules 18.2(a), (b), and (e) which protect the mark-room rights of the boat initially entitled to mark-room, and have been in rule 18.2 for a long time. *Note: references here are to 'new' rule 18.2.*
