

Racing Rules of Sailing

Rule 18.3

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Please consider this submission as a matter of pressing importance.

Purpose or Objective

To preserve several features of the version of Rule 18.3 that was proposed by the Rule 18 Working Party for consideration at the November 2023 meeting of the Racing Rules Committee.

Proposal

Delete rule 18.3 and replace it with:

18.3 Tacking in the Zone

If a boat passes head to wind from *port* to *starboard tack* in the *zone* of a *mark* to be left to port, rule 18.2 does not apply between her and another boat on *starboard tack* that is *fetching* the *mark*. If the other boat has been on *starboard tack* since entering the *zone*, the boat that passed head to wind

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

Current Position

Rule 18.3 as it appears in the 2020-2024 edition of the RRS:

18.3 Passing Head to Wind in the Zone

If a boat in the *zone* of a *mark* to be left to port passes head to wind from *port* to *starboard tack* and is then *fetching* the *mark*, she shall not cause a boat that has been on *starboard tack* since entering the *zone* to sail above close-hauled to avoid contact and she shall give *mark-room* if that boat becomes *overlapped* inside her. When this rule applies between boats, rule 18.2 does not apply between them.

Reasons

1. We agree with the Rule 18 WP that the important 'Rule 18.2 does not apply' part of the rule should be stated up front rather than as an afterthought that can be lost at the end of the rule.
 2. We feel the first sentence of the current rule is too long and difficult to follow, so we like the idea of breaking this into more digestible pieces.
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3. We agree with the Rule 18 WP about numbering the two requirements for the boat that has changed tacks. This format gives sailors and protest committees the opportunity to refer by number to the parts of the rule that can be broken, for example: "Boat A broke rule18.3(a)."

We did not agree with additional numbering in the Rule 18 WP proposal because having (a), (b), (1) and (2) in such a short rule is cumbersome. We feel the priorities with numbering are the two actionable parts of the rule ('a' and 'b' above) which contain requirements of the rule that a boat can break.

4. We prefer a slight change in word order in the first sentence to make it clearer and more readable. On the other hand, the current word order can be preserved, if desired, with no effect on the rest of this proposal.
 5. We support using 'Tacking in the Zone' as the title of this rule. That describes in common language what this rule is generally all about, and it fits perfectly with the new title of rule 18.4 ('Gybing in the Zone').
 6. For all these reasons, we ask that this submission be considered as a matter of pressing importance.
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