

Changes to the Racing Rules of Sailing for 2025 that affect sailors

Presented by

Richard Slater – International Judge

John Standley - International Judge

Melanie Peasey – Safety, Rules and
Representation Co-ordinator

When do the rules apply

Revision The racing rules are revised and published every four years by World Sailing, the international authority for the sport. This edition becomes effective on 1 January 2025 except that for an event beginning in 2024 the date may be postponed by the notice of race. Marginal markings indicate important changes to Parts 1–7 and the Definitions in the 2021–2024 edition. No changes are contemplated before 2029, but any changes determined to be urgent before then will be announced through national authorities and posted on the World Sailing website.

A change already made

Obstruction

An *obstruction* is

- (a) an object that a boat could not pass without changing course substantially, if she were sailing directly towards it and one of her hull lengths from it;
- (b) an object, **area or line** that is so designated in a *rule*; **or**
- (c) an object that can be safely passed on only one side; or
- ~~(d) an area or line in a *rule* that boats are prohibited from entering or crossing.~~

However, a boat *racing* is not an *obstruction* to other boats unless they are required to *keep clear* of her or, if rule 22 applies, avoid her.

Change already made

As printed in book

Proper Course

A course a boat would choose in order to complete the leg she believes she is on as soon as possible in the absence of the other boats referred to in the rule using the term. A boat has no *proper course* before her starting signal.

Changed to read

Proper Course

A course a boat would choose in order to ~~complete the leg she believes she is on as soon~~ **sail the course as quickly as possible** in the absence of the other boats referred to in the rule using the term. A boat has no *proper course* before her starting signal.

Change already made

The reference to 60.5(d) in rule 60.5(c)(4) has been changed to read 60.5(d)(1).

There are also a few other minor change to various rules to add commas or full stops and correct typos but no changes to meaning.

RACE SIGNALS - ABANDONMENT



First sentence for each is amended to say:
All races in progress are *abandoned*.

Introduction Terminology

Boat

A sailboat and the crew onboard, **that are subject to the *rules*.**

Reason for Change

The current meaning of 'boat' includes a sailboat with no connection to the event, which clearly is not governed by the racing rules

New Definitions

Committee

The protest committee, the race committee or the technical committee.

Continuing Obstruction

An *obstruction* is a *continuing obstruction* when the boat with the shortest hull referred to in the rule using the term will pass alongside it for at least three of her hull lengths. However, the following are not a *continuing obstruction*: a vessel under way, a boat *racing*, or a race committee vessel that is also a *mark*.

Changed Definitions

Finish

A boat finishes when, after her starting signal, any part of her hull 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 in sailing the course made at the line, or
- (c) continues to sail the course.

After finishing she need not cross the finishing line completely.

The sailing instructions may change the direction in which boats are required to cross the finishing line to finish.

Changed definition

Mark-Room

Amended to:

Room for a boat

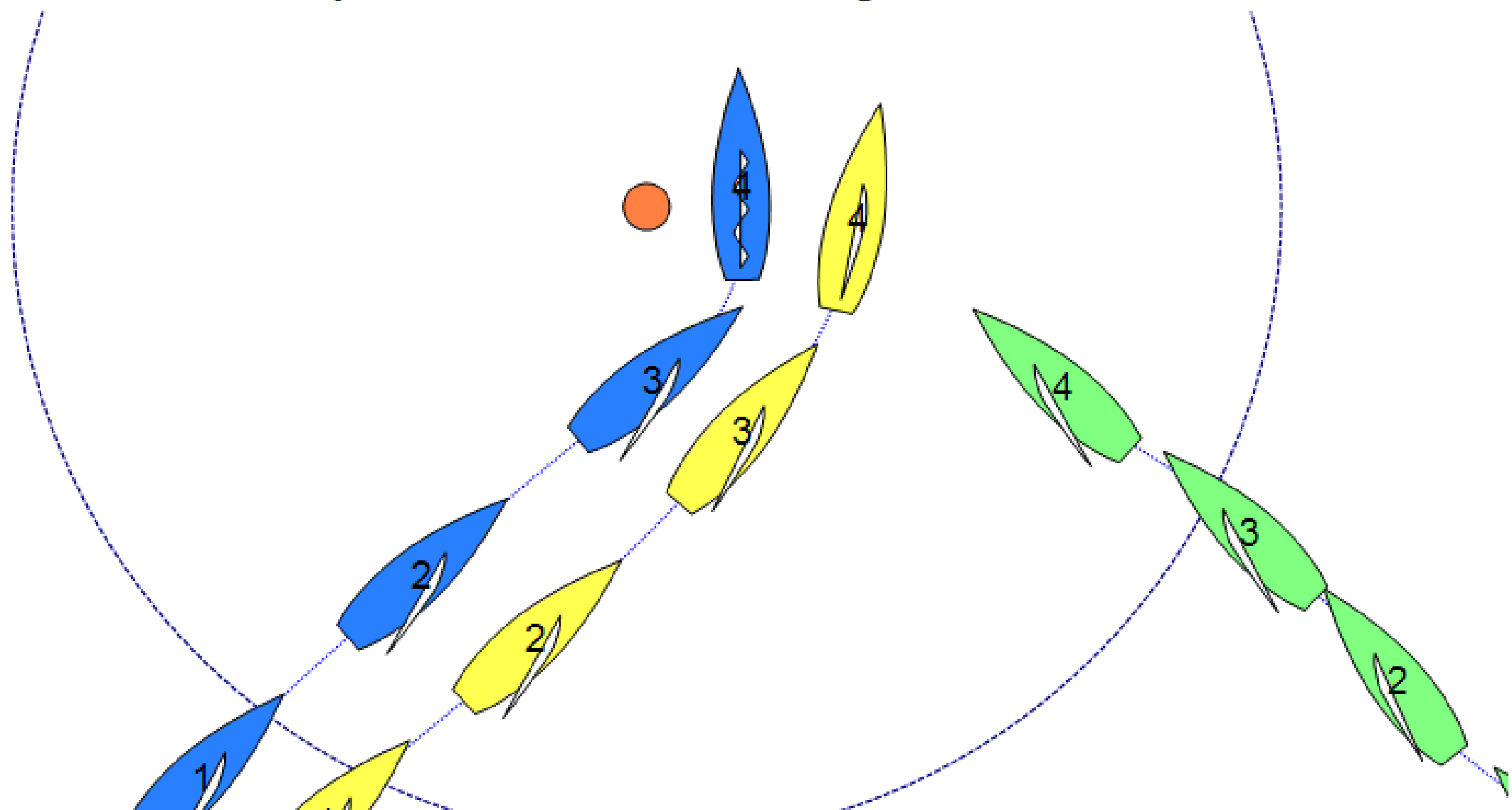
- (a) to sail to the *mark* when her *proper course* is to sail close to it,
- (b) to round or pass the *mark* on the required side, and
- (c) to leave it astern.

The phrase:

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

Has been deleted

No real change as Yellow is required to give Blue room to keep clear under rule 16 when she luffs. Also yellow does not want to be delayed from tacking herself as there may be other boats coming in on starboard



Changed Definitions

Party

Changes only for new definitions and rule number changes. Meaning unchanged.

Rule

Added to part (a) of the definition:

.... **not the Basic Principles** or

The Basic Principles are: Sportsmanship and the Rules and Environmental Responsibility.

Sail the Course

Rewritten more clearly but not changed

Rule Changes – Rule 14

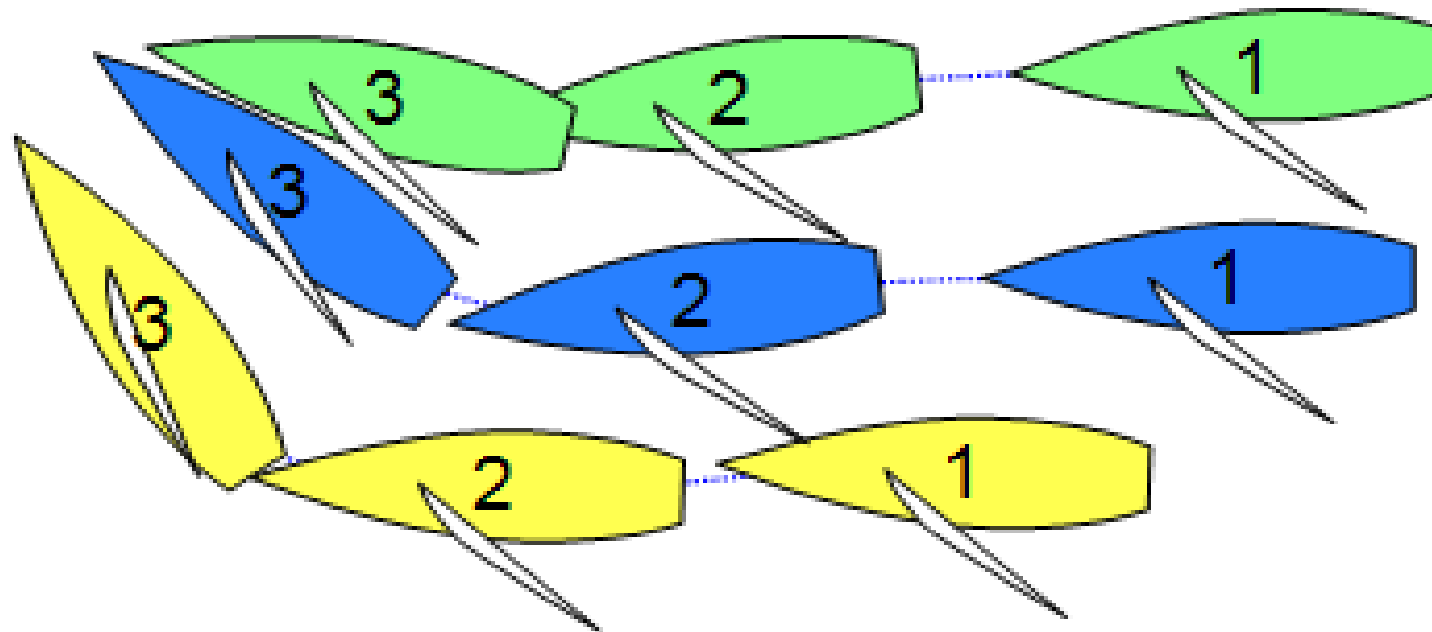
14 AVOIDING CONTACT

If reasonably possible, a boat shall

- (a) avoid contact with another boat,
- (b) not cause contact between boats, and
- (c) not cause contact between a boat and an object that should be avoided.

However, a right-of-way boat, or one sailing within the room or mark-room to which she is entitled, need not act to avoid contact until it is clear that the other boat is not keeping clear or giving room or mark-room.

Yellow luffs hard and breaks rule 16.
Green is unable to keep clear of Blue
Although there is no contact between Yellow and Blue
Yellow breaks rule 14(b) as she caused the contact
between Blue and Green



Rule 17

17 ON THE SAME TACK; PROPER COURSE

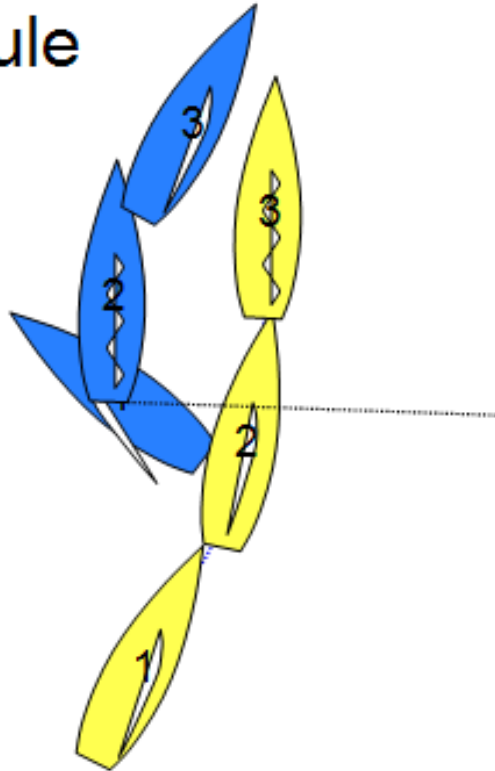
If a boat clear astern becomes overlapped within two of its hull lengths to leeward of a boat on the same tack, it shall not sail above its proper course while they remain on the same tack and overlapped within that distance, unless in doing so it promptly sails astern of the other boat.

~~This rule does not apply if the overlap begins while the windward boat is required by rule 13 to keep clear~~

This is a small game changer

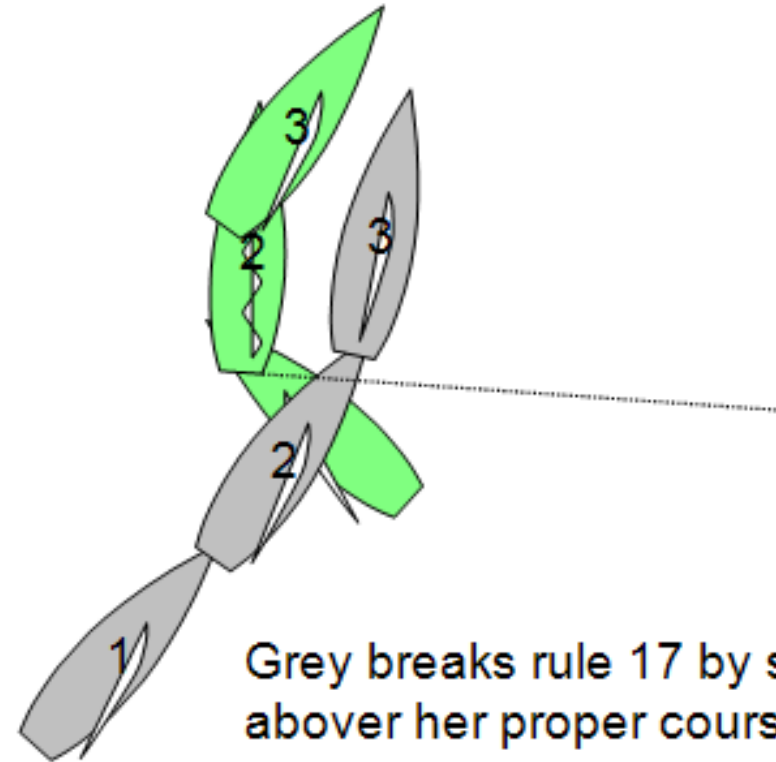
Rule 17 Last sentence removed

Old rule



Yellow does not break rule 17 when she luffs at posn 2 as overlap established while Blue was tacking

New rule



Grey breaks rule 17 by sailing above her proper course

Rule 18

Rule 18, which is the rule that applies while rounding marks, has been rewritten in an effort to make it more easily understood.

There are changes to the layout and rule numbering

There was no real intention to change the meaning of the rule but there are a couple of changes that hopefully make the rule easier to understand.

Rule changes –18.2

Rule 18.2, Giving mark-room

This rule has been rewritten and is mostly unchanged, except as shown below:

Old rule

18.2(b) If a boat is *clear ahead* when she reaches the *zone*, the boat *clear astern* at that moment shall thereafter give her *mark-room*.

New rule

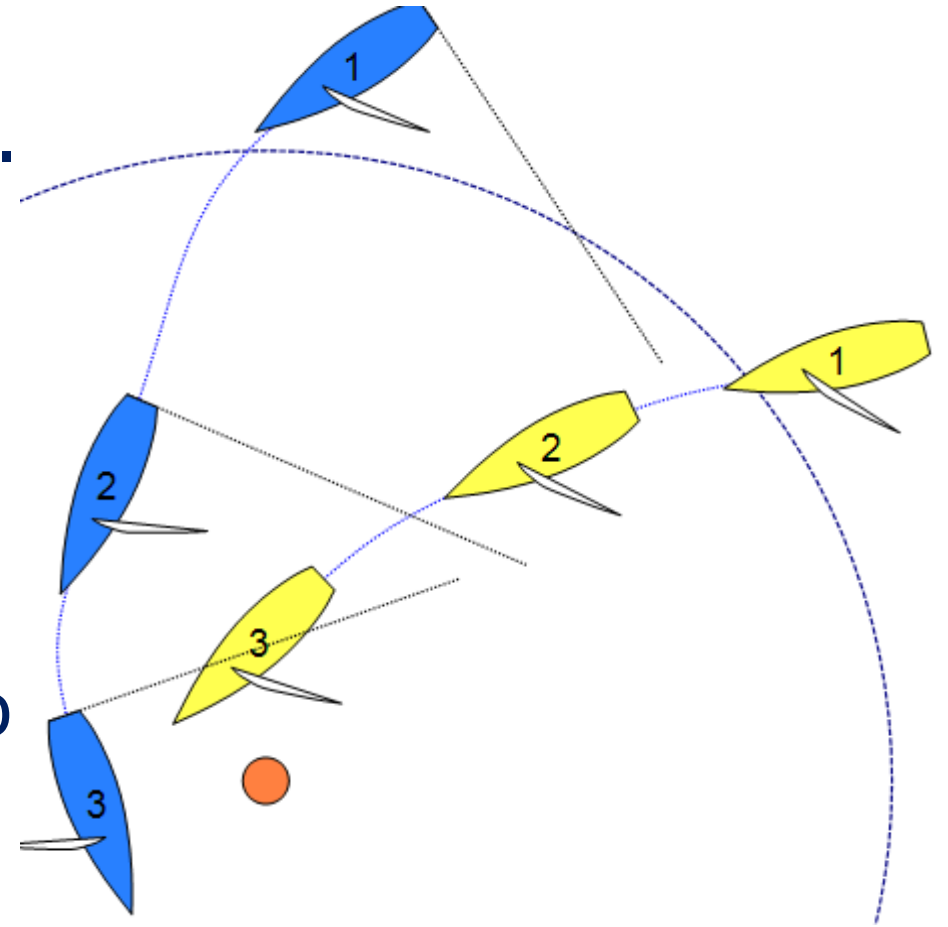
18.2(a)(2) if the boats are not *overlapped*, the boat that has not reached the *zone* at that moment shall give the other boat *mark-room*.

Old rule

Yellow is not clear ahead when she reaches the zone. 18.2(b) does not apply. 18.2(a) applied if the boats become overlapped. Caused problems with late overlaps.

New rule

Boats are not overlapped when Yellow reaches the zone. Boat not in zone has to give mark-room. Gives certainty.



Rule changes –18.3

18.3 Tacking in the Zone

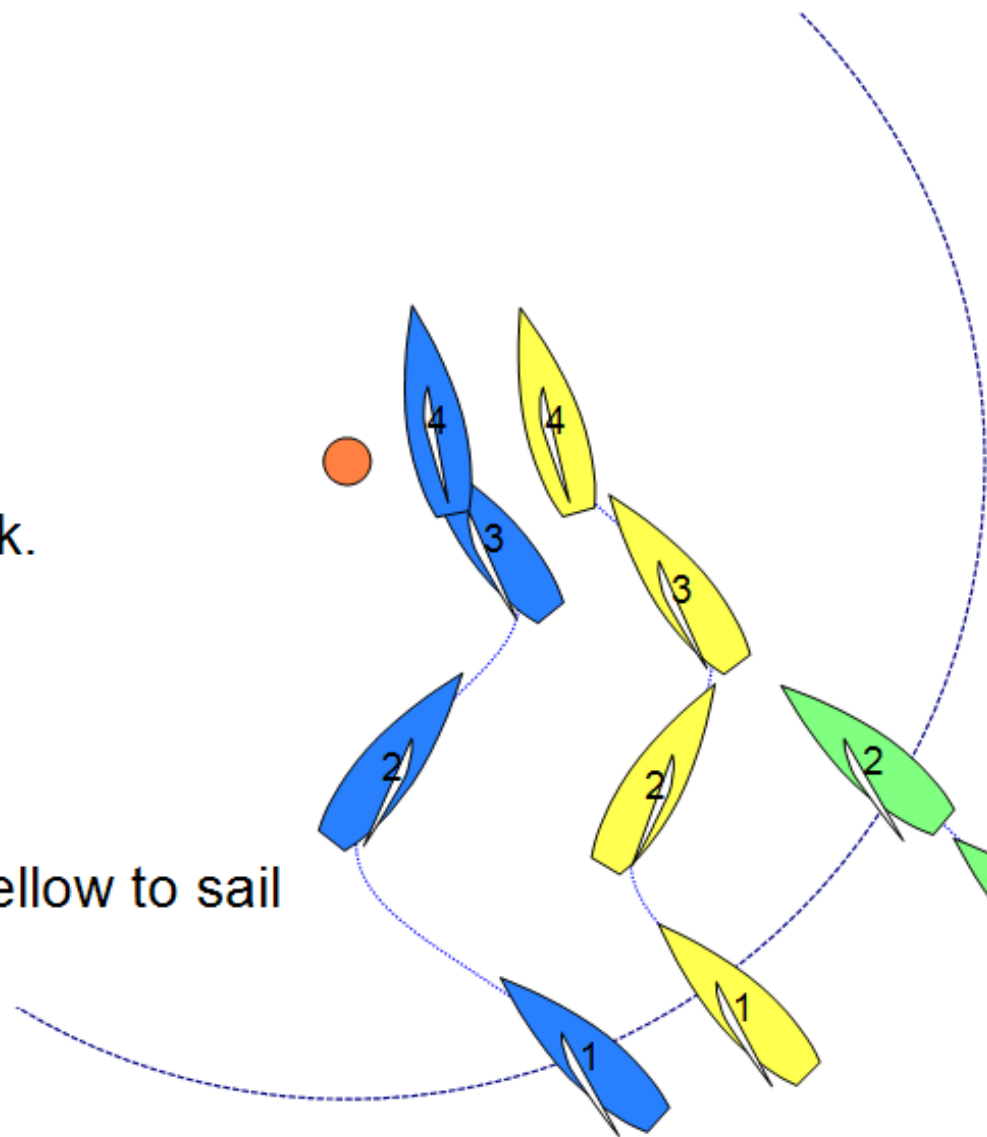
If a boat passes head to wind from port to starboard tack in the zone of a mark to be left to port, rule 18.2 does not apply between her and another boat on starboard tack that is fetching the mark.

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.

If both boats tack in the zone

At position 3 Blue has tacked from Port to Starboard to leeward of Yellow who is fetching the mark.
Rule 18.2 does not apply between them.
Blue is not entitled to mark-room but
Yellow must keep clear as required by rule 11.
BUT if Yellow has been on Starboard since entering
the zone then Blue would break 18.3 as she caused Yellow to sail
above close hauled to avoid her.



Rule changes – Obstructions

Rule 19.2(a) A right-of-way boat may choose to pass an *obstruction* on ~~either~~ her port or starboard side. If a right-of-way boat changes course when choosing on which side to pass the *obstruction*, she shall give the other boat *room to keep clear*.

Rule 20, Room to tack at an obstruction

20.1, Hailing

A boat may hail for *room* to tack and avoid a boat on the same *tack* by hailing 'Room to tack'.

You must now use those words to call for room to tack

Rule changes

Rule 28 Sailing the course

The wording has been simplified to tie in with the amended definition *sail the course* but there is no change in the effect of the rule.

Rule 32, Shortening or abandoning after the start.

The wording of 32.1 and 32.2 has been simplified without changing the rule.

A new part has been added, for completeness but without changing the practice:

32.3 To *abandon* the race, the race committee shall display flag N, N over H, or N over A, with three sounds.

Rule changes

Rule 34, Mark Missing

34 MARK MISSING

If a mark is missing or out of position while boats are racing, the race committee shall, if possible,

- ~~(a) Replace it in~~ **move it** to its correct position or ~~substitute~~ **replace** it with a new one of similar appearance, or
- (b) ~~Substitute~~ **replace** it with an object displaying flag M and make repetitive sounds.

Rule 35, Race Time Limit and Scores

Minor changes to maintain consistency with the revised definition of *'sails the course'*

Rule changes

Rule 40, Personal flotation devices

Rule 40.2, When rule 40.1 applies

Amended to bring in class rule requirements. Flag Y does not have to be displayed to require PFDs to be worn if the rule is stated to apply in the class rules or the NOR or SIs.

Rule 44.3, Scoring penalty

Rule 44.3(a) Amended to require that the availability of a scoring penalty be stated in the NOR or SIs.

Rule 44.3(c) Changed to '**points**' rather than 'places'.

Rule changes

Rule 50, Competitor clothing and equipment

Amended to: (a) expand the list of excluded clothing; and (b) revise the rules for crew harnesses (previously called 'trapeze harnesses') and remove the ability of class rules to vary the specifications.

Note that the requirement for a harness to comply with ISO 10862 has been removed.

Rule 56, Title added to as shown: Fog signals and lights; traffic separation schemes; **tracking systems**

New rule added

56.3 When a *rule* requires a boat to be equipped with an Automatic Identification System transponder or any other tracking device, it shall not be turned off or its effectiveness intentionally reduced.

Rule changes

Part 5, Protests, Redress, Hearings, Misconduct and Appeals.

The whole of this part of the rules has been rewritten and restructured to give greater clarity to the rules involved (2021-24 RRS 61 – 67 and 69 -71 become 2025-28 RRS 60 – 65 and 69 – 72),

New rule 60.3(a)

60.3(a) When delivered, a protest shall be in writing and identify the protestor, the protestee, and the incident
Actual requirements for a valid protest have been reduced but if the above information is not complete when you submit your protest then it will be invalid.

Previously some information could be added later.

Rule changes



76 EXCLUSION OF BOATS OR COMPETITORS

76.1 The organizing authority or the race committee may reject or cancel the entry of a boat or exclude a competitor, provided

- (a) it does so before the start of the first race **after receipt of the entry for the boat or the competitor,** and
- (b) it states a **proper** reason for doing so. **The reason shall be provided promptly in writing if requested by the boat or competitor.**

There are other changes of minor importance to this rule brought about by other definitions or rule changes and numbers, which are sidelined in the rule book.

Appendices



Changes to the appendices to the rules are not sidelined. They are however available in the study guide version of the rules available on the WS website

Appendix A, Scoring

This appendix now refers to races 'scored' rather than 'completed' due to a change in rule 90.3(a). There are some other changes in wording consequent from changes to definitions and rules.

However, **in practice scoring is unchanged.**

There are no changes of any significance in appendices G (identification on sails), J (Notices of race and sailing instructions), R (procedure for appeals and requests) and S (Standard sailing instructions).

The Australian Sailing online version of the rules (which include the prescriptions) has been updated to include the urgent changes highlighted in slides 3, 4 and 5.

World Sailing has issued a study guide which highlights the changes, and this is available here:

[Microsoft Word - 2 Study Version of The Racing Rules of Sailing for 2025-2028.docx](#)

If you have any questions or queries, please submit these via the link on the Australian Sailing website <https://www.sailing.org.au/contact>