

Racing Rules of Sailing

New Case

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Proposal

CASE X

Rule 16.1, Changing Course

Rule 18.2, Mark-Room: Giving Mark-Room

Definitions, Mark-Room

Definitions, Room

When a boat is entitled to room, the space she is entitled to includes space to comply with the rules.

Assumed Facts for Question 1

Boats A, B and C are overlapped and on the same tack when the first of them reaches the zone of a mark. A is on the outside, C is on the inside and B is between them.

Question 1

Does rule 18.2 require A to give enough space to B to enable B to give mark-room to C?

Answer 1

Yes. While C is sailing to the mark, B must give her room to sail to the mark. While C is at the mark, B must give her room to sail her proper course. In both cases, the definition room requires B to give C the space that C needs while manoeuvring in a seamanlike way. A must give mark-room to B. It is not seamanlike to force another boat to break a rule, so A must give B sufficient space to comply with her obligations to C. Therefore, rule 18.2 requires A to give B room to give C mark-room.

Assumed Facts for Question 2

Boats L, M and W are overlapped and on the same tack with L to leeward, W to windward and M between them. L has no proper course restriction and she luffs.

Question 2

Does rule 16.1 require L to give enough room to M to enable M to give room to W to keep clear?

Answer 2

Yes. See Answer 1 above. When M changes course, rule 16.1 requires her to give room to W to keep clear. Therefore L must give M sufficient space for M to comply with her obligation to W.

Assumed Facts for Question 3

On their approach to the starting line to start, Boats L and W are overlapped on starboard tack approaching the mark at the starboard end of the starting line. L is to leeward of W. L allows W space to sail between herself and the mark, and W avails herself of the space L freely gives. After they are alongside the mark L luffs, and by luffing promptly in response, W keeps clear of L. However, in order to keep clear of L, W is compelled to touch the mark.

Question 3

Does L comply with rule 16.1?

Answer 3

No. L's change of course compelled W to break rule 31. It is not seamanlike to hit a mark and therefore L did not give W space to keep clear in a seamanlike way. L breaks rule 16.1 and, under rule 64.1(c), W is exonerated from her breach of rule 31.

Current Position

None. This is a new case.

Reason

To clarify the interpretation of the definition, Room.