Racing Rules of Sailing

Definition Clear Astern and Clear Ahead; Overlap and Rule 18.1

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Purpose or Objective

To clarify the application of rule 18.1, including the removal of the words "beat to windward".

This proposal comprises two interdependent changes which must be considered together.

Proposal

Amend the definition Clear Astern and Clear Ahead; Overlap as follows:

Clear Astern and Clear Ahead; Overlap One boat is clear astern of another when her hull and equipment in normal position are behind a line abeam from the aftermost point of the other boat’s hull and equipment in normal position. The other boat is clear ahead. They overlap when neither is clear astern. However, they also overlap when a boat between them overlaps both. These terms always apply to boats on the same tack. They apply to boats on opposite tacks only when rule 18 applies between them or when both boats are sailing more than ninety degrees from the true wind.

And amend rule 18.1 as follows:

18.1 When Rule 18 Applies

Rule 18 applies between boats when they are required to leave a mark on the same side and at least one of them is in the zone. However, it does not apply

(a) between boats on opposite tacks on a beat to windward,
(b) between boats on opposite tacks when the proper course at the mark for one but not both of them is to tack,
(c) between a boat approaching a mark and one leaving it, or
(d) if the mark is a continuing obstruction, in which case rule 19 applies.

Rule 18 no longer applies it ceases to apply between boats when mark-room has been given and the mark no longer influences the course of the boat entitled to mark-room.

Current Position

See above.
Reasons

1. This proposal is intended to be a simplification of the current rule with no change in the way the game is played.

2. There are recent problems with the interpretation of "on a beat to windward" in rule 18.2(a) which resulted in the revised Case 132. While the case has provided a stop-gap it has flaws and potentially writes a rule. If this submission is approved, case 132 can be deleted.

3. The deletion of the words "when rule 18 applies between them" in the definition of Overlap makes rules 18.1(a) and (b) redundant.

4. When none of rules 18.2 to 18.4 apply, it is no longer necessary to turn off rule 18.1. This avoids the complex on/off flip-flop with rule 18.1 whilst carrying forward obligations in rule 18.2 to thereafter give mark-room.