Racing Rules of Sailing

Definition Mark-Room and Rule 18.1

A submission from US Sailing

Purpose or Objective
To improve and better align the definition mark-room and rule 18.1 (as approved in 2018).

Proposal 1
Change Definition Mark-Room as follows:

Mark-Room  Room for a boat to leave a mark on the required side. Also,
(a) room to sail to the mark when her proper course is to sail close to it, and
(b) room to round or pass the mark as necessary to sail the course sail to the next mark, or to finish, until she is past the mark and her course is no longer influenced by it without touching the mark.
However, [no further changes]

Proposal 2
Change 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 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

The wording of the definition Mark-Room and rule 18.1 for the 2021-2024 RRS, based on changes approved in 2016, 2017 and 2018, is:

**Mark-Room** Room for a boat to leave a mark on the required side. Also,
(a) room to sail to the mark when her proper course is to sail close to it, and
(b) room to round or pass the mark as necessary to sail the course without touching the mark.

However, [no further changes]

### 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 between boats when mark-room has been given and the mark no longer influences the course of the boat entitled to mark-room.

### Reasons

1. On October 31, 2018, World Sailing approved a new definition sail the course. This definition describes the string rule, and adds nothing about what a boat must do while rounding or passing a mark, other than passing it on the required side, which is already granted in mark-room. As a result, the meaning of the phrase “as necessary to sail the course” is no longer relevant for the specific room granted in Mark-Room (b). The proposed language, “as necessary to sail the next leg, or finish” is a clear and logical replacement, and it is consistent with long standing Cases 25 and 118, which indicate that room to round a mark includes room to make the course change necessary to sail to the next mark.

2. On October 31, 2018, World Sailing approved a new sentence at the end of rule 18.1 that establishes a final condition for when rule 18 no longer applies between boats: “the mark no longer influences the course of the boat entitled to mark-room.” At the same time, World Sailing approved an additional condition, “without touching the mark” at the end of mark-room (b). It is not clear that these two conditions are the same, and mark-room already includes room to avoid touching the mark, so the definition’s last condition may seem to the reader to be redundant. The proposed replacement of these words in mark-room (b) with “until her course is no longer influenced by the mark” more clearly defines the final component of mark-room a boat needs to complete her rounding or passing of the mark. As
a result, the last sentence in rule 18.1 only needs to say, “Rule 18 no longer applies between boats when mark-room has been given”, as proposed in Proposal 2. This makes a cleaner rule and puts the specification for the end of the obligation in the definition, where it belongs.

3. The statement that a boat is entitled to mark-room at least until she is past the mark is in new Case 144. The abstract of that case says, “An obligation to give mark-room continues until the entitled boat has passed the mark, leaving it on the required side.” [Emphasis added]. That statement is not explicitly supported by any rule or definition. The proposal corrects that problem.

4. The addition of the words “and her course is no longer influenced by it” at the end of Mark-Room (b) extends the application of mark-room beyond the point where the boat has completed passing the mark for those situations when she continues to need the protection of rule 18. For example, in strong current, a boat entitled to mark-room may have put the mark astern but still needs to manoeuvre in certain ways to avoid being swept into the mark; the added words state that she is still entitled to room to manoeuvre in those ways.