Racing Rules of Sailing

Rule 18.3

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Purpose or Objective

To simplify the rule and to confirm its application when the incident is between more than two boats.

Proposal

18.3 Tacking When Approaching a Mark in the Zone

If two boats were approaching a mark on opposite tacks and one of them changes tack, and as a result is subject to rule 13 in the zone when the other is fetching the mark. If a boat in the zone passes head to wind and is then on the same tack as a boat that is fetching the mark, rule 18.2 does not thereafter apply between them. The boat that changed tack

(a) shall not cause the other boat to sail above close-hauled to avoid contact, or prevent the other boat from passing the mark on the required side, and

(b) shall give mark-room if the other boat becomes overlapped inside her.

Proposal: Clean Copy

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(b) shall give mark-room if the other boat becomes overlapped inside her.

Current Position

As above.

Reasons
1. The words "approaching a mark" have been deleted from the rule as they are no longer necessary to limit application of the rule to marks and not to obstructions, and they are ambiguous and interpreted inconsistently by judges.

2. The words "approaching a mark" can be interpreted to apply when all relevant boats are outside the zone thus creating a potential conflict with rule 18.1.

3. The reference at the start of the existing rule to "two boats" has been deleted to address the potential conflict noted by ISAF RRC when applying the rule to scenarios with three or more boats.

4. At a port hand windward mark, when two port tack boats both change tack onto starboard in the zone, the proposed rule handles the scenario adequately and any additional text would add complexity with no corresponding benefit.

5. At a port hand windward mark, when a port tack boat tacks to leeward of two overlapped starboard tack boats that are fetching the mark, if the result is that only the windward of the two fetching boats needs to sail above close-hauled the revised words allow the tacking boat to be penalized.

This submission was prepared by the ISAF Section C Working Party.