Racing Rules of Sailing

Urgent change to Appendix C

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee and the Chairman of the Match Racing Committee

Proposal

Add new rule C2.12 and amend CALL UMP 34 accordingly:

C2.12 Rule 18.2(e) is changed to ‘If a boat obtained an inside overlap from clear astern and, from the time the overlap began, the outside boat has been unable to give mark-room, she is not required to give it.’

Current Position

There is currently no rule C2.12 in Appendix C.

Reason

Under the current wording of Rule 18.2(e), a boat that creates an inside overlap other than from clear astern is entitled to mark-room, whether or not the outside boat is able to give it at the time the overlap is created.

This has resulted in the following Call in the Call Book for Match Racing:

CALL UMP 34

Rule 18.1 When Rule 18 Applies
Rule 18.2 Giving Mark-room
**Question 1**

Yellow on starboard tack and Blue on port tack, both close-hauled, are approaching the windward mark. Blue bears away and passes astern of Yellow. Yellow luffs slowly and nearly stops head to wind with the mark abeam. While Yellow is luffing Blue tacks to starboard and bears away towards the mark. Yellow does not give room at the mark, and Blue luffs to avoid a collision. There is a Y-flag from Blue. What should the call be?

**Answer 1**
When Yellow enters the zone the boats are on opposite tacks on a beat to windward. Therefore, rule 18 does not apply. When Blue has passed head-to-wind, the boats are overlapped on the same tack and are both in the zone. Therefore, rule 18 applies. There was neither an overlap nor were they clear ahead/clear astern when the first of the two boats entered the zone. Rule 18.2(a) applies and this requires Yellow to give Blue as an inside boat mark-room.

18.2(e) does not apply because the overlap was created during the tack and not from clear astern. Although Blue is keep-clear boat, she is entitled to room to sail to the mark and then room to sail her proper course while at the mark. Yellow fails to give this room. Penalize Yellow.

**Question 2**
Would the answer be different if Blue completes her tack outside the zone?

**Answer 2**
No. However, if Blue becomes overlapped from clear astern, and if Yellow is unable to give Blue mark-room, rule 18.2(e) applies. Display the green and white flag. If Yellow is able to give mark-room to Blue, but fails to give mark-room, she breaks rule 18.2(b). Penalize Yellow. (italics supplied to distinguish from the text of the reasons for the proposal).

In match racing, where only two boats are involved in a match, and where the lead boat often tries to protect her lead by “closing out” her opponent at the windward mark, the lead boat is now restricted in that endeavor. The lead boat must now anticipate that the trailing boat may create a windward/inside overlap at the mark, not from astern, but by tacking into an overlapped position. If the lead boat has luffed at the mark to deny the trailing boat mark-room and if the trailing boat
tacks into an overlapped position thereafter, the trailing boat is entitled to mark-room, whether or not the lead boat is able to give that room when the overlap was created. In fact, the tacking boat will be exonerated for bearing away, while still tacking, onto the right-of-way boat, thus forcing the right-of-way boat to alter course.

This is a major game change in match racing and was not intended when the rule was created for fleet racing.

Another unintended consequence is that the rule, as it now stands, creates a greater likelihood for contact as the trailing boat will try to enforce its rights to mark-room although the leading boat may be unable to give it, especially since the trailing boat knows that she will be exonerated for the contact (assuming there is no damage or injury – Rule 14 - and since, in match racing, ‘damage’ is usually confined to incidents where the cost of repair is more than $100 to $250).

By eliminating the words “…from clear astern…” from Rule 18.2(e), a boat that was unable to give mark-room when the overlap began, no matter how established, would not be required to give mark-room.

This proposal would re-establish the way the game was played prior to the 2009-2012 Racing Rules of Sailing and would reduce the chances of contact at the windward mark.