Racing Rules of Sailing

Rule 18.3

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Purpose

To simplify and clarify rule 18.3 and limit its application to those situations for which it is intended.

Proposal

18.3 Tacking in the Zone

If a boat in the zone of a mark to be left to port passes head to wind from port to starboard tack 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 shall not cause the other boat that has been on starboard tack since entering the zone to sail above close-hauled to avoid contact or prevent the other boat from passing the mark on the required side, and she shall give mark-room if the other boat becomes overlapped inside her. When this rule applies between boats, rule 18.2 does not.

Current Position

As above.

Reason

Some complexity in the application of the current rule 18.3 was highlighted in Case 133. Rule 18.3's purpose is to help an orderly rounding of port-hand windward marks by limiting the rights of boats that approach on port and tack onto starboard in the zone. The rule should be restricted to this. The proposed amended rule:

1. Makes the rule (which is an exception to the normal 18.2) apply only when necessary:
   • At windward marks to be left to port. It is unnecessary and has undesirable consequences at starboard marks.
   • Between a boat that tacks in the zone and one that does not. This removes the complexity with two boats that tack in the zone shown in Case 133.

2. Includes only the tacking boat in the initial 'when it applies' clause to make the purpose and application clearer.

3. Is simpler. The statement about rule 18.2 not applying (necessary so that rule 18.2(e) does not apply) is moved to the end. The redundant phrase 'or prevent her from rounding the mark' is removed.