Racing Rules of Sailing

Rule 19.1

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Purpose or Objective

To remove an unintended, unforeseen and unnecessary complication involving rules 19.2(b) and 18.2 that has caused questions from competitors and judges during the last year.

Proposal

19.1 When Rule 19 Applies

Rule 19 applies between two boats at an obstruction except when it is also

(a) when the obstruction is a mark the boats are required to leave on the same side,

or

(b) when the obstruction is a third boat that is overlapped with each of the other boats and rule 18.2 applies between her and each of them.

However, at a continuing obstruction, rule 19 always applies and rule 18 does not.

Current Position

As above.

Reason

After the start when three boats approach a mark, rule 18 is intended to apply and it reliably produces fair and orderly roundings. When two overlapped boats pass an obstruction, including an obstruction that is a boat racing, rule 19.2(b) is intended to apply and it too produces fair and orderly outcomes.

Over the past year, competitors and judges have noticed that there are several problematic situations in which both rule 19.2(b) and rule 18.2 apply at the same time. In all of them, there is no need for rule 19.2(b), and it complicates the analysis of the situations and may result in unfair outcomes that were unintended when the Section C rules were written.

The diagram below shows one example of such a problematic situation. This is a situation that occurs frequently in fleet racing. Rule 18.2 covers the situation adequately. There is no need for rule 19.2(b) to apply and it can lead to unintended consequences. For example, if O does not give I sufficient space for I to give M room as required by rule 19.2(b), then, to avoid penalization under rule 19.2(b), I must pass the mark on the wrong side. If I fails to do so, no current rule will exonerate her for breaking rule 19.2(b). Under proposed rule 19.1(b), however, rule 19.2(b) would not apply and, therefore I would not be required to pass the mark on the wrong side. Rule 18.2(b)
would apply and I would be exonerated under rule 21 if she broke either rule 11 with respect to M or rule 31 by touching the mark.

The mark is a leeward mark to be left to port with the next leg to windward. Under the current rules:
(1) Rule 18.2(b) requires M to give mark-room to I.
(2) Rule 18.2(b) requires O to give mark-room to M and I.
(3) Rule 19.2(b) requires I to give room to M to pass between her and O.