

Racing Rules of Sailing

Case 132

A submission from US Sailing

Purpose

To revise Case 132, a case that has had significant unintended consequences involving rule 18.

Proposal

Revise Case 132 as follows:

CASE 132

Rule 18.1(a), Mark-Room: When Rule 18 Applies
Rule 42.3(c), Propulsion: Exceptions

Interpretation of the phrase ‘on a beat to windward’.

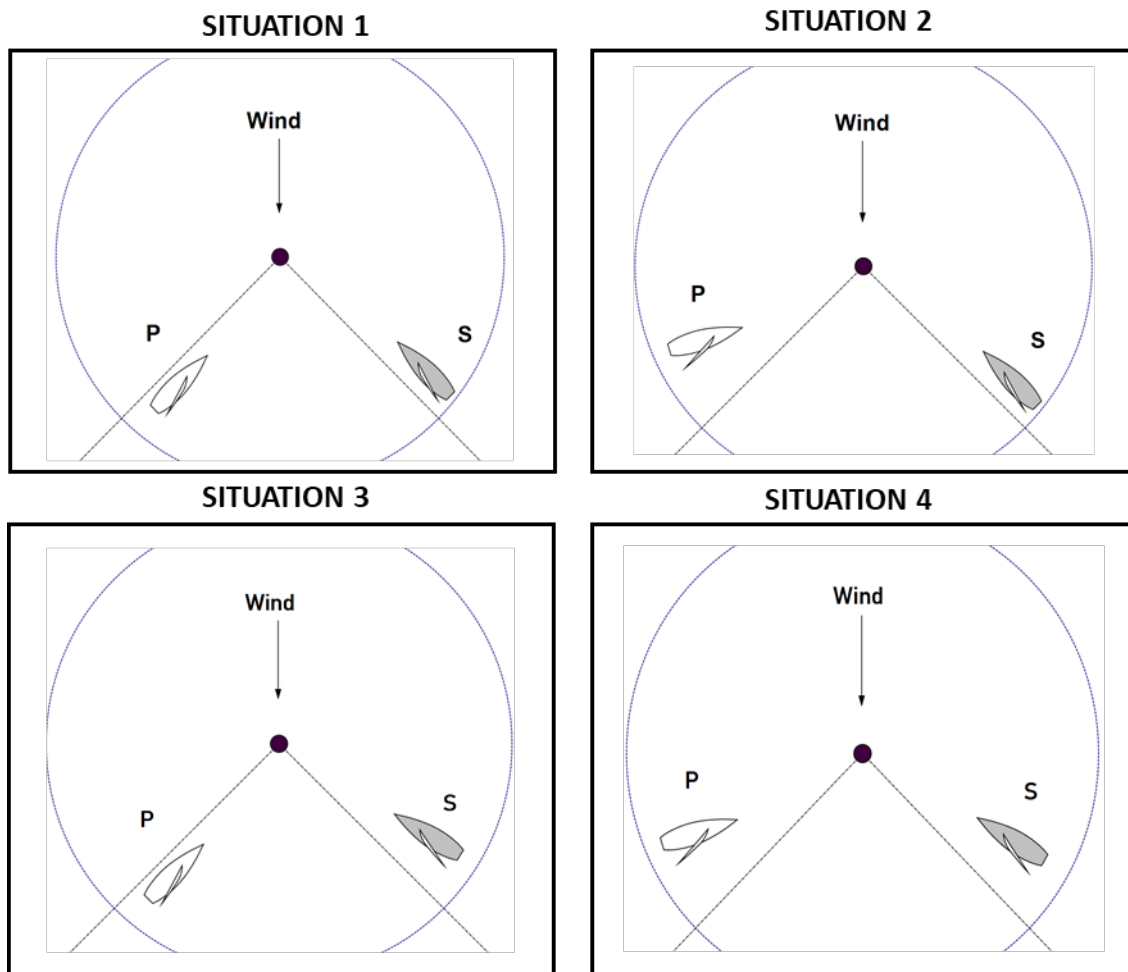
Question 1

Rule 18.1(a) states that rule 18 does not apply between boats on opposite *tacks* on a beat to windward. For the purpose of rule 18.1(a), when are boats ‘on a beat to windward’?

Answer 1 – Option 1

For the purpose of rule 18.1(a), which is only needed in multi-boat situations when one boat is in the zone, two boats on opposite tacks are considered to be ‘on a beat to windward’ when their proper course is close-hauled or above, or when one or both of them have overstood the close hauled layline to the mark and are consequently sailing below close-hauled.

Consider the following four situations, each involving boats on opposite tacks in the zone of a mark to be left to port. The mark could be a windward mark, a finishing mark at the port end of a finishing line, a windward gate mark, or a limit mark that is not a rounding mark.



In each of these situations, the boats shown are ‘on opposite tacks on a beat to windward’ and, therefore, rule 18 does not apply between them.

Answer 1 – Option 2

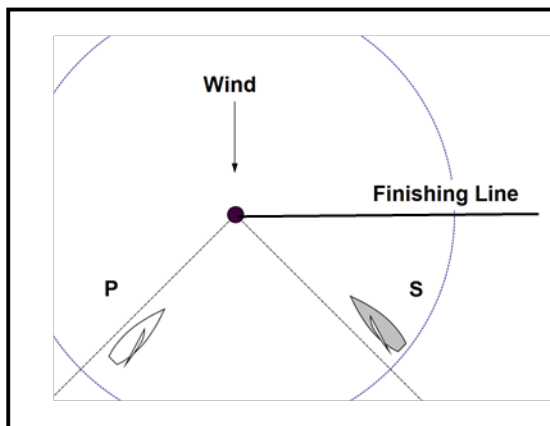
Two or more boats are referred to as ‘on a beat to windward’, when they are on a leg, or part of a leg, of the course that is upwind. A leg of the course is a ‘beat to windward’ if it is aligned so that, as boats sail to the mark that ends the leg, they must spend most of their time sailing close-hauled and, usually, spend some time on each tack.

However, when a port- and a starboard-tack boat are approaching a mark that ends a beat to windward and are in the zone around that mark, one or both of them may sail below close-hauled. This can occur for various reasons – for example, one or both of them may have overstood the mark, or the starboard-tack boat may have borne off to discourage the port-tack boat from tacking to leeward of her.

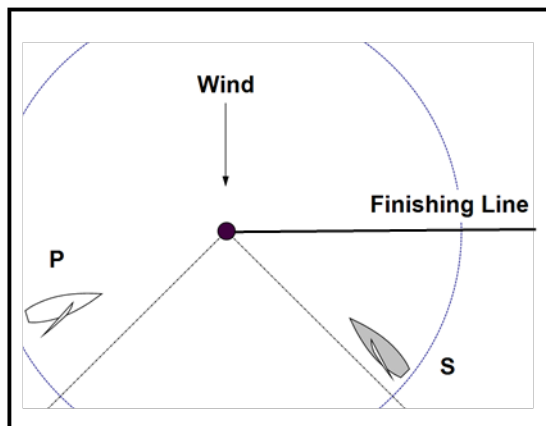
Consider the following four situations, each involving boats on opposite tacks in the zone of a mark to be left to port. Although the diagrams show a finishing mark at the port end of a finishing

line, they apply equally well to a windward mark, or a windward gate mark, or a limit mark that is not a rounding mark.

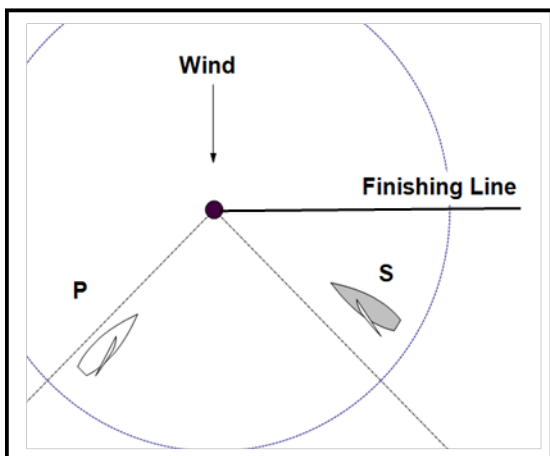
SITUATION 1



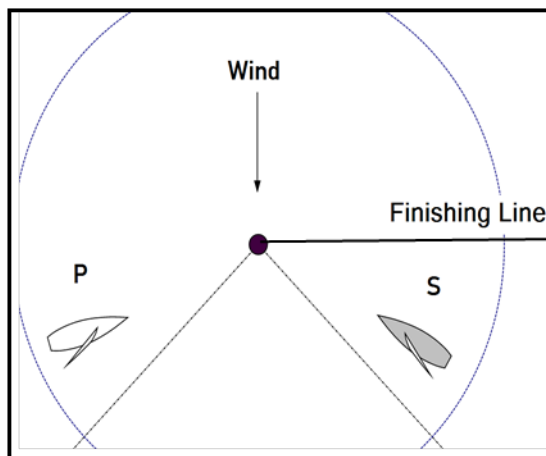
SITUATION 2



SITUATION 3



SITUATION 4



In each of these situations, the boats shown are ‘on opposite tacks on a beat to windward’ and, therefore, rule 18 does not apply between them.

There are times during a race, for example when a major wind shift occurs, that a leg that began as on offwind leg becomes ‘a beat to windward’. In such a case, only that part of the leg sailed in the new wind becomes ‘a beat to windward’, and only boats in the new wind are ‘on a beat to windward’.

As another example, suppose the direction of the course to the next mark for a fleet of boats is north, and the fleet starts to sail the leg to that mark in a north wind. When the fleet is, say, halfway up the leg, the wind shifts 30 degrees to the west. Now, on the approach to the mark that ends the leg, boats to the west can reach on port tack well below a close-hauled course, while boats to the east must continue to sail close-hauled and spend time on both port and starboard tack. If a boat sailing close-hauled on starboard tack meets a boat reaching on port in the zone (as in Situation 2), those two boats are on a beat to windward for the purpose of rule 18.1(a).

Question 2

Rule 42.3(c) states that a single pull on any sail when surfing or planing is possible is permitted except on a beat to windward. For the purpose of rule 42.3(c), when is a boat 'on a beat to windward'?

Answer 2

Rule 42 addresses each boat in a race individually. For the purpose of rule 42.3(c), a boat is 'on a beat to windward' provided that, in the absence of all other boats, the course she would sail to sail the course and finish as soon as possible is close-hauled or above.

Current Position

Current Case 132.

Reason

The current version of Case 132 states that a boat is on a beat to windward when the course she would sail to finish as soon as possible in the absence of all other boats is a close-hauled course or above. That interpretation causes a problem with rule 18.1(a) at an upwind finish. Consider Situation 2 in the diagrams above with boats S and P on opposite tacks approaching a finishing mark for an upwind finish. P has overstood the mark and, to finish as soon as possible, she will sail below close-hauled to the mark. Therefore, under current Case 132's interpretation, P is not on a beat to windward. The result is that rule 18.1(a) does not 'switch off' rule 18 when the mark is the finishing mark at the port end of the finishing line. Rule 18.1(b) does not switch off rule 18 at such a finishing mark because neither boat has to tack at that mark. Therefore, P is entitled to mark-room under rule 18.2(b). This is not the 'game' that competitors have been sailing under for the past several decades.

The problem described here has been publicized widely during the last year, and a question asking whether rule 18 applies between P and S in Situation 2 has been received by the Q&A Panel. It is important to revise Case 132 as proposed as soon as possible so that it will no longer be the case that Case 132 implies that P is entitled to mark-room in Situation 2.