Racing Rules of Sailing

Definition - Mark-Room

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee

Purpose or Objective

To correct flaws and remove ambiguities from the definition of Mark-Room.

Proposal

Delete the definition Mark-Room and replace with:

Mark-Room  Room for a boat to leave a mark on the required side. Also,

(a)  room to sail to the mark when her proper course is to sail close to it, and

(b)  room to round the mark as necessary to sail the course.

However, mark-room does not include room for a boat to tack unless she is overlapped inside and to windward of the boat required to give her mark-room and she would be fetching the mark after her tack.

Current Position

Mark-Room  Room for a boat to sail to the mark, and then room to sail her proper course while at the mark. However, mark-room does not include room to tack unless the boat is overlapped to windward and on the inside of the boat required to give mark-room.

Reason/s

This revision corrects flaws and removes ambiguities from the current definition as follows:

1. The current definition includes room to sail to the mark when the mark is a passing or finishing mark that is nowhere near the boat's proper course. That provision is unnecessary, and gives the boat entitled to mark-room more power than she needs to pass the mark in a seamanlike way. The proposed definition removes this flaw.

2. The word "at" in the current definition and the change of rights during the transition from "to" to "at" the mark have caused difficulties in interpretation. The proposed definition does not use "at" terminology and avoids the "to" to "at" transition. It replaces these by rights that depend on a boat's proper course and the rounding necessary to sail the course. This is easier to judge, less ambiguous, and takes other boats into account.

3. The current definition grants room to sail a proper course while at the mark, which is a broader right than is needed for orderly mark roundings. Under the proposed definition, the right of the boat that has mark-room is always to sail a seamanlike course (to or round the mark).
4. The current definition's provision for room to tack can be interpreted to give rights to tack in situations where the tack is not to fetch the mark, which was not intended. The proposed definition clarifies when that provision should apply.

5. Because of 1 and 2 above, an extra rule 18.2(c)(2), covering the situation when a boat required to give mark-room establishes an inside overlap, is proposed in a separate submission. That separate submission is integral to this submission.

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