

ISAF Racing Rules Question and Answer Service



Q&A 2009-022

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Definitions

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*.

Proper Course A course a boat would sail to *finish* as soon as possible in the absence of the other boats referred to in the rule using the term. A boat has no *proper course* before her starting signal.

Question 1

Is a boat entitled to mark-room allowed to make a tactical approach/tactical rounding (often called “wide in, tight out”) of the mark or is boat entitled to mark-room only allowed to a seamanlike approach/rounding?

Answer 1

Mark-room is split into two aspects:

- (i) Room to sail to the mark. If the boat entitled to mark-room is the keep-clear boat, then room to sail to the mark is neither room to sail her proper course (if extra room is needed for a proper course approach), nor is it room to make a more tactical rounding. If the boat entitled to mark-room has right of way, she is free to sail any course within the limitations of the rules of Part 2, Section B, and, if it applies, rule 18.4.
- (ii) Then, room to sail her proper course while at the mark. A boat may sail her proper course from the time she is at the mark and while she rounds or passes the mark and until she no longer needs the mark-room. This course would therefore be the one the boat would sail in the absence of the other boats referred to in the rule.

Only an inside right-of-way boat that is entitled to mark-room may make a tactical approach and a tactical rounding. However, if the inside right-of-way boat is subject to rule 18.4, then, until she gybes, she may not sail farther from the mark than needed to sail her proper course. Note that a tactical rounding may be wider than a proper course rounding.

All published answers are based upon the 2009-2012 Racing Rules of Sailing

Question 2

Before the 2009 rules there was a difference in rounding a mark when the inside boat also had right of way and was specifically permitted to make a tactical rounding unlike a situation with an inside keep-clear boat where a tactical rounding was not permitted.

Is that situation continued under the 2009 rules?

Answer 2

There is no game change between the 2005 and 2009 rules for the purpose of room given or taken at a mark. The removal of the preamble to Section C in the 2005 rules that said 'To the extent that a Section C rule conflicts with a rule in Section A or B, the Section C rule takes precedence' means that there is now no precedence to any of the rules of Sections A or B, so those rules always apply whenever a boat is entitled to mark-room. As a result, the words 'and if the inside boat has right of way the outside boat shall also keep clear' are no longer necessary.