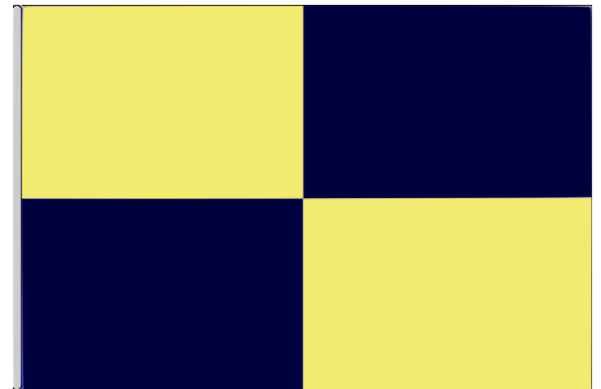


# The Racing Rules of Sailing

By: Dave Hubbard  
PJYC Fleet Captain

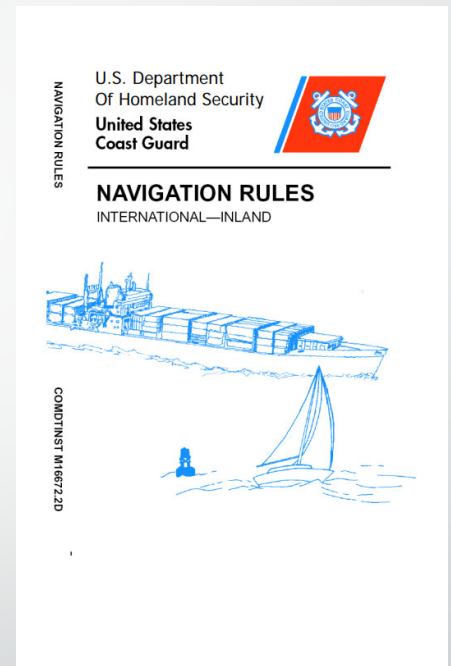
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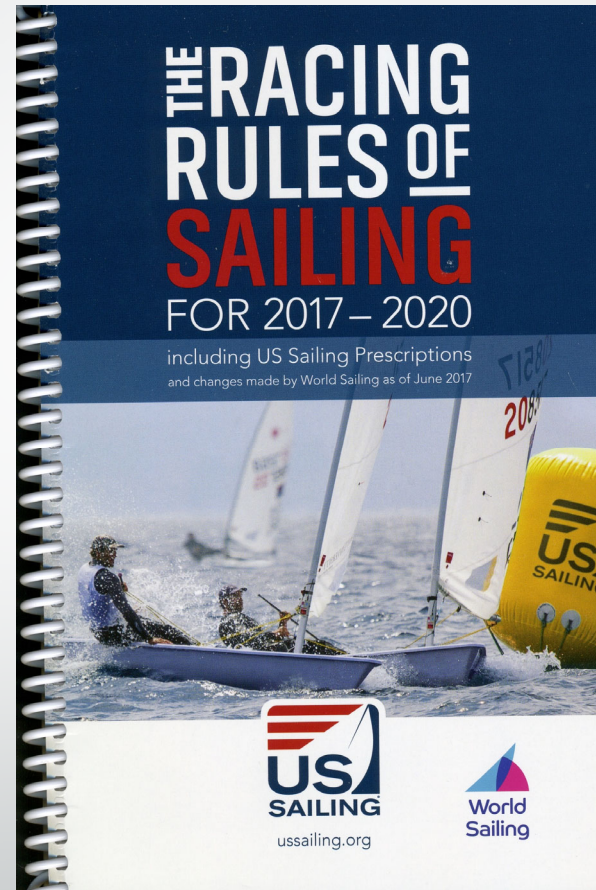
The RRS is based off the “72 COLREGS”:  
“International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea”

**“§ 88.05 Copy of Rules**

After January 1, 1983, the operator of each self-propelled vessel 12 meters or more in length shall carry on board and maintain for ready reference a copy of the Inland Navigation Rules. ” (39.4 feet)



# How to Read the RRS



# How to Read the RRS

## Overview

- The Whole Book is treated as the “Rules”.
- This includes the “Introduction” with “Terminology” as well as the “Definitions”.
- Includes adherence with all Coast Guard Rules.
- **Definitions** in the rules are shown in *italics* when meant to be interpreted according to the definition. These are important!
- Some rules apply to Racers, others apply to the Race Committee. A few apply to both.
- Some rules **MODIFY other rules!** Special cases.
- Gray Areas – See the ‘Case Book’

# How to Read the RRS

## Overview

### ***Rule***

- (a) The rules in this book, including the Definitions, Race Signals, Introduction, **preambles** and the rules of relevant appendices, but not titles;
- (b) World Sailing Advertising Code, Anti-Doping Code, Betting and Anti-Corruption Code, Disciplinary Code, Eligibility Code, Sailor Classification Code, respectively Regulations 20, 21, 37, 35, 19 and 22;
- (c) the prescriptions of the national authority, unless they are changed by the notice of race or sailing instructions in compliance with the national authority's prescription, if any, to rule 88.2;
- (d) the class rules (for a boat racing under a handicap or rating system, the rules of that system are 'class rules');
- (e) the notice of race;**
- (f) the sailing instructions; and**
- (g) any other documents that govern the event.

# How to Read the RRS

## Major Parts While Racing

- Part 1 – Fundamental Rules  
Mainly Safety and Sportsmanship.
- Part 2 – When Boats Meet  
All the “Right of Way” rules!
- Part 3 – Conduct of a Race  
For both Racers and Committee.  
Start Sequence, Penalties, Time limits, Changes to the course.
- Part 4 – Other Requirements when Racing  
Equipment, Safety, Propulsion, Outside Help, more on Penalties, Sails (changing, whisker poles, spinnaker poles, definition of Headsails), Trash Disposal.

# How to Read the RRS

## Misc Parts

- Part 5 – Protests, Redress, Hearings, Misconduct, Appeals  
What to do in the event of protests etc.
- Part 6 – Entry and Qualification  
Setting up a race.
- Part 7 – Race Organization  
For the Race Committee and Organizing Authority (PJYC)

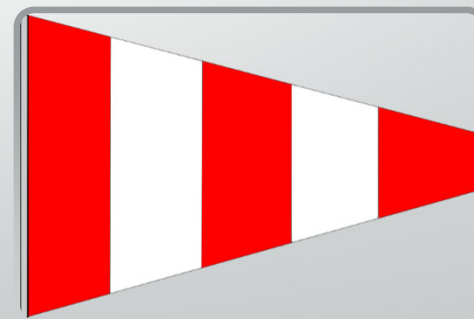
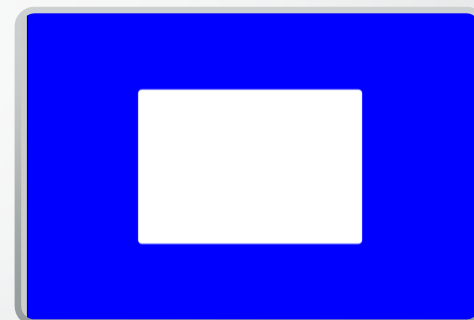


# How to Read the RRS

## Other Sections

The rest of the RRS include appendices on:

- Scoring
- Other types of racing – Match Racing, Windsurfing, Radio Remote Model Boat Racing, Kiteboard Racing, etc.
- How to write a “Notice of Race” (NOR) and “Sailing Instructions” (Sis)
- Guidelines for setting up courses.
- How to hold a hearing.
- Race Signals – The flags used and their purpose.





# Before you Head Out



Read the Sailing Instructions!



Check for "Signals Ashore"



Check the weather!

# Pre-Race



Check in: Do NOT use radio. Sail by the Committee Boat. (PJYC)

Hail with "<boat name> checking in with <number> souls onboard"



"*racing*" – See Definition. Begins with division Prep signal.



Rule 24.1 : "If reasonably possible, a boat not *racing* shall not interfere with a boat that is *racing*"

I.E. Stay clear of other boats near the line until your division begins its sequence.



Radio: Race is coordinated on VHF 72 (PJYC).

# Protests and Penalties

- Rule 61 – Red Flag, Hail 'Protest' at earliest opportunity. Notify RC within 2 hours after race finishes (unless otherwise stated in the Sis).
- Do not protest unless it is very clear and race outcome is affected.
- Take your penalty unless convinced you are in the right.
- Failure to take a penalty is a likely a DNE.

# Summary

Port/Starboard

Overlapped or Clear Ahead/Clear Astern

Windward/Leeward if Overlapped

Zone at Mark is 3 boat lengths

Zone rules don't apply on final approach to start

Positions when first boat reaches Zone sets the rights

Avoid Tacking in Zone

Avoid racing boats if you are not racing

No Crashing

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Rules

Part 2 – When Boats Meet

# Part 2 – When Boats Meet

## Preamble

*The rules of Part 2 apply between boats that are sailing in or near the racing area and intend to **race**, are **racing**, or have been **racing**. However, a boat not **racing** shall not be penalized for breaking one of these rules, except rule 14 when the incident resulted in injury or serious damage, or rule 24.1.*

*When a boat sailing under these rules meets a vessel that is not, she shall comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (IRPCAS) or government right-of-way rules. If the sailing instructions so state, the rules of Part 2 are replaced by the right-of-way rules of the IRPCAS or by government right-of-way rules.*

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Rules

Part 2 – Section A

Right of Way

(10 – 13)



# Rule 10 - Example

## 10 ON OPPOSITE TACKS

When boats are on opposite *tacks*, a *port-tack* boat shall **keep clear** of a *starboard-tack* boat.

**Tack, Starboard or Port** A boat is on the *tack*, *starboard* or *port*, corresponding to her *windward* side.

**Windward** See *Leeward and Windward*.

**Leeward and Windward** A boat's *leeward* side is the side that is or, when she is head to wind, was away from the wind. However, when sailing by the lee or directly downwind, her *leeward* side is the side on which her mainsail lies. The other side is her *windward* side. When two boats on the same *tack overlap*, the one on the *leeward* side of the other is the *leeward* boat. The other is the *windward* boat.

**Keep Clear** A boat *keeps clear* of a right-of-way boat

- (a) if the right-of-way boat can sail her course with no need to take avoiding action and,
- (b) when the boats are *overlapped*, if the right-of-way boat can also change course in both directions without immediately making contact.

## 11 ON THE SAME TACK, OVERLAPPED

When boats are on the same *tack* and *overlapped*, a *windward* boat shall *keep clear* of a *leeward* boat.

***Overlap*** See *Clear Astern* and *Clear Ahead; Overlap*.

***Clear Astern and Clear Ahead; Overlap*** One boat is *clear astern* of another when her hull and equipment in normal position are behind a line abeam from the aftermost point of the other boat's hull and equipment in normal position.

- The other boat is *clear ahead*. They *overlap* when neither is *clear astern*.
- However, they also *overlap* when a boat between them *overlaps* both.
- These terms always apply to boats on the same *tack*.
- They apply to boats on opposite *tacks* only when rule 18 applies between them or when both boats are sailing more than ninety degrees from the true wind.



## 12 ON THE SAME TACK, NOT OVERLAPPED

When boats are on the same *tack* and not *overlapped*, a boat *clear astern* shall *keep clear* of a boat *clear ahead*.



## 13 WHILE TACKING

After a boat passes head to wind, she shall *keep clear* of other boats until she is on a close-hauled course. During that time rules 10, 11 and 12 do not apply. If two boats are subject to this rule at the same time, the one on the other's port side or the one astern shall *keep clear*.

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Rules

Part 2 – Section B

General Limitations

(14 – 17)

## 14 AVOIDING CONTACT

A boat shall avoid contact with another boat if reasonably possible. However, a right-of-way boat or one entitled to *room* or *mark-room*

- (a) need not act to avoid contact until it is clear that the other boat is not *keeping clear* or giving *room* or *mark-room*, and
- (b) shall be exonerated if she breaks this rule and the contact does not cause damage or injury.

**Room** The space a boat needs in the existing conditions, including space to comply with her obligations under the rules of Part 2 and rule 31, while manoeuvring promptly in a seamanlike way.

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

# Some Definitions

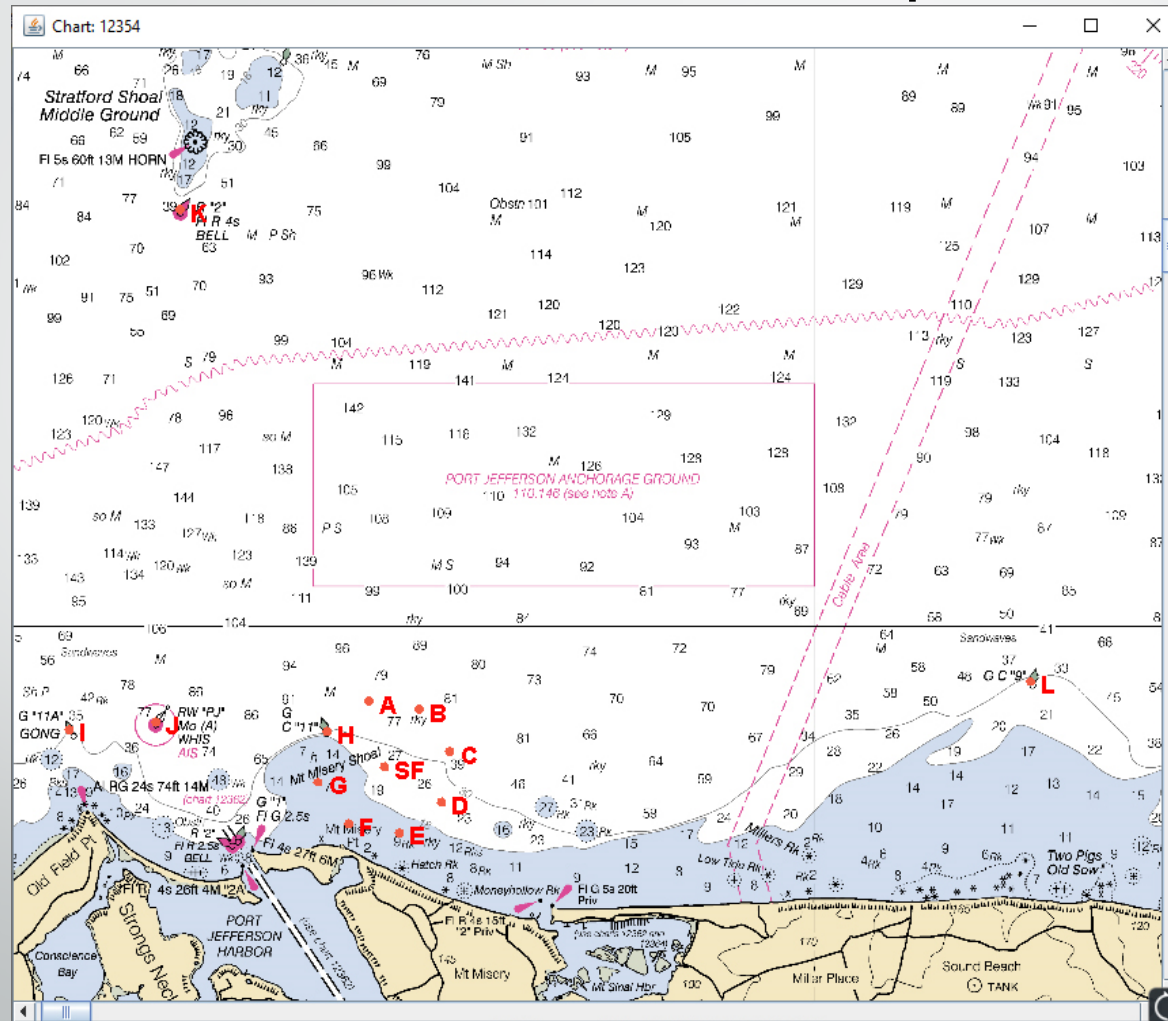
***Proper Course*** A course a boat would sail to *finish* as soon as possible in the absence of the other boats referred to in the rule using the term. A boat has **no *proper course* before her starting signal**.

***Mark*** An object the sailing instructions require a boat to leave on a specified side, and a race committee vessel surrounded by navigable water from which the starting or finishing line extends. An anchor line or an object attached accidentally to a *mark* is not part of it.

***Fetching*** A boat is *fetching* a *mark* when she is in a position to pass to windward of it and leave it on the required side without changing *tack*.



# Course Marks Example





## 15 ACQUIRING RIGHT OF WAY

When a boat acquires right of way, she shall initially give the other boat *room to keep clear*, unless she acquires right of way because of the other boat's actions.

## 16 CHANGING COURSE

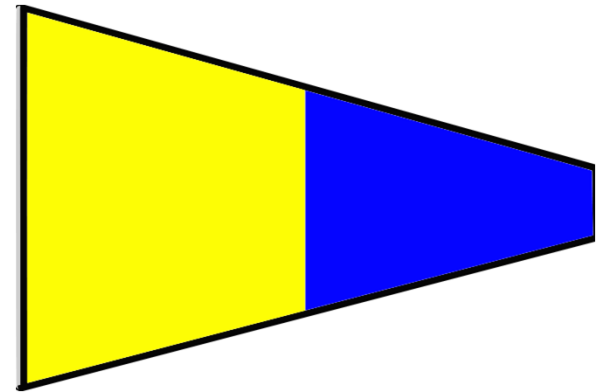
**16.1** When a right-of-way boat changes course, she shall give the other boat *room* to *keep clear*.

**16.2** In addition, when after the starting signal a *port-tack* boat is *keeping clear* by sailing to pass astern of a *starboard-tack* boat, the *star-board-tack* boat shall not change course if as a result the *port-tack* boat would immediately need to change course to continue *keeping clear*.

## 17 ON THE SAME TACK; PROPER COURSE

If a boat *clear astern* becomes *overlapped* within two of her hull lengths to *leeward* of a boat on the same *tack*, she shall not sail above her *proper course* while they remain on the same *tack* and *overlapped* within that distance, unless in doing so she promptly sails astern of the other boat. This rule does not apply if the *overlap* begins while the *windward* boat is required by rule 13 to *keep clear*.

**INTERMISSION**



The background of the slide is composed of two main colors: a bright blue on the left and a dark navy blue on the right. A diagonal line separates the two colors, running from the top left towards the bottom right. The text is white and positioned on the dark navy blue background.

Rules

Part 2 – Section C

Marks & Obstructions

(18 – 20)

## Some Definitions

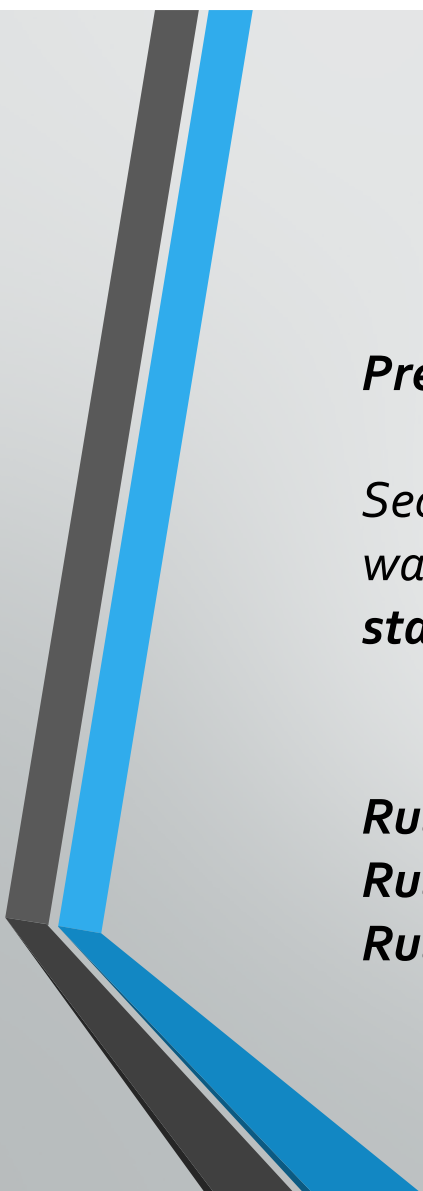
**Mark** An object the sailing instructions require a boat to leave on a specified side, and a race committee vessel surrounded by navigable water from which the starting or finishing line extends. An anchor line or an object attached accidentally to a *mark* is not part of it.

**Fetch** A boat is *fetching* a *mark* when she is in a position to pass to windward of it and leave it on the required side without changing *tack*.

**Obstruction** An object that a boat could not pass without changing course substantially, if she were sailing directly towards it and one of her hull lengths from it. An object that can be safely passed on only one side and an area so designated by the sailing instructions are also *obstructions*. However, a boat *racing* is not an *obstruction* to other boats unless they are required to *keep clear* of her or, if rule 23 applies, avoid her. A vessel under way, including a boat *racing*, is never a continuing *obstruction*.

**Clear Astern and Clear Ahead; Overlap** One boat is *clear astern* of another when her hull and equipment in normal position are behind a line abeam from the aftermost point of the other boat's hull and equipment in normal position. The other boat is *clear ahead*. They *overlap* when neither is *clear astern*. However, they also *overlap* when a boat between them *overlaps* both. These terms always apply to boats on the same *tack*. They apply to boats on opposite *tacks* only when **rule 18** applies between them or when both boats are sailing more than ninety degrees from the true wind.





## Part 2 – When Boats Meet

### Section C – Marks & Obstructions

#### ***Preamble:***

*Section C rules do not apply at a starting **mark** surrounded by navigable water or at its anchor line from the time boats are approaching them to **start** until they have passed them.*

***Rule 18: Mark-Room***

***Rule 19: Room to Pass an Obstruction***

***Rule 20: Room to Tack at an Obstruction***



# 18 MARK-ROOM

## Summary

**The Zone:** 3 boat lengths from mark. Closest boat is the measure.

**Rule 18 Does NOT Apply:**

- Outside the Zone.
- On final run towards the Starting line to start.
- Opposite Tacks at a windward Mark.
- After you have room to round and after you have rounded.

**Applies:**

- Between any of the boats that are within the zone (any part of the boat).
- Before a boat is on final run toward the starting line.
- Boats are on same tack.
- Based on Overlap situation when first boat entered the zone.

# 18 MARK-ROOM

## General Guide

- Avoid tacking in the zone if near other boats.
  - You lose all rights to room when you tack toward the mark (18.3).
  - Other rules can then come into play, 13 (Tacking), 16 (Changing Course), likely 17 (Close overlap)
- Boat positions when first boat enters the zone determines rights thereafter while in the zone.
- Inside Overlapped Boat, or Boat clear-ahead, **on zone entry**, has rights. (Think of Rules 11 and 12) Doesn't matter after first boat enters zone.
- At Downwind Mark, boat entitled to room that must gybe, must gybe onto proper course as soon as possible. You can't just keep holding another boat off. **ONLY IF YOU MUST GYBE.**

# 18 MARK-ROOM

## 18.1 When Rule 18 Applies

Rule 18 applies between boats when they are required to leave a *mark* on the same side and at least one of them is in the *zone*. However, it does not apply

- (a) between boats on opposite *tacks* on a beat to windward,
- (b) between boats on opposite *tacks* when the *proper course* at the *mark* for one but not both of them is to tack,
- (c) between a boat approaching a *mark* and one leaving it, or
- (d) if the *mark* is a continuing *obstruction*, in which case rule 19 applies.

# 18 MARK-ROOM

## 18.2 Giving Mark-Room

- (a) When boats are *overlapped* the outside boat shall give the inside boat *mark-room*, unless rule 18.2(b) applies.
- (b) If boats are *overlapped* when the first of them reaches the *zone*, the outside boat at that moment shall thereafter give the inside boat *mark-room*. If a boat is *clear ahead* when she reaches the *zone*, the boat *clear astern* at that moment shall thereafter give her *mark-room*.
- (c) When a boat is required to give *mark-room* by rule 18.2(b),
  - (1) she shall continue to do so even if later an *overlap* is broken or a new *overlap* begins;
  - (2) if she becomes *overlapped* inside the boat entitled to *mark-room*, she shall also give that boat *room* to sail her *proper course* while they remain *overlapped*.
- (d) Rules 18.2(b) and (c) cease to apply when the boat entitled to *mark-room* has been given that *mark-room*, or if she passes head to wind or leaves the *zone*.
- (e) If there is reasonable doubt that a boat obtained or broke an *overlap* in time, it shall be presumed that she did not.
- (f) If a boat obtained an inside *overlap* from *clear astern* or by tacking to *windward* of the other boat and, from the time the *overlap* began, the outside boat has been unable to give *mark-room*, she is not required to give it.

# 18 MARK-ROOM

## 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 *fetching* the *mark*, she shall not cause a boat that has been on *starboard tack* since entering the *zone* to sail above close-hauled to avoid contact and she shall give *mark-room* if that boat becomes *overlapped* inside her. When this rule applies between boats, rule 18.2 does not apply between them.

## 18.4 Gybing

When an inside *overlapped* right-of-way boat must gybe at a *mark* to sail her *proper course*, until she gybes she shall sail no farther from the *mark* than needed to sail that course. Rule 18.4 does not apply at a gate *mark*.

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Rules

Part 2 – Section D

Other Rules

(21 – 24)



# Part 2 – When Boats Meet

## Section D – Other Rules

*When rule 22 or 23 applies between two boats, Section A rules do not.*

### **21 EXONERATION**

When a boat is sailing within the *room* or *mark-room* to which she is entitled, she shall be exonerated if, in an incident with a boat required to give her that *room* or *mark-room*,

- (a) she breaks a rule of Section A, rule 15 or rule 16, or
- (b) she is compelled to break rule 31.

### **22 STARTING ERRORS; TAKING PENALTIES; BACKING A SAIL**

**22.1** A boat sailing towards the pre-start side of the starting line or one of its extensions after her starting signal to *start* or to comply with rule 30.1 shall *keep clear* of a boat not doing so until she is completely on the pre-start side.

**22.2** A boat taking a penalty shall *keep clear* of one that is not.

**22.3** A boat moving astern, or sideways to windward, through the water by backing a sail shall *keep clear* of one that is not.

# Part 2 – When Boats Meet

## Section D – Other Rules

*When rule 22 or 23 applies between two boats, Section A rules do not.*

### **23 CAPSIZED, ANCHORED OR AGROUND; RESCUING**

If possible, a boat shall avoid a boat that is capsized or has not regained control after capsizing, is anchored or aground, or is trying to help a person or vessel in danger. A boat is capsized when her masthead is in the water.

### **24 INTERFERING WITH ANOTHER BOAT**

**24.1** If reasonably possible, a boat not *racing* shall not interfere with a boat that is *racing*.

**24.2** If reasonably possible, a boat shall not interfere with a boat that is taking a penalty, sailing on another leg or subject to rule 22.1. However, after the starting signal this rule does not apply when the boat is sailing her *proper course*

The background of the slide is composed of two main geometric sections. On the left, there is a large blue triangle pointing towards the right. The rest of the slide is a solid black rectangle. The text is white and positioned on the black background.

# Rules

## Part 3 – Conduct of a Race

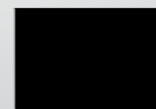
(25 – 36)

## Part 3 – Conduct of a Race

### 26 STARTING RACES

Races shall be started by using the following signals. **Times shall be taken from the visual signals; the absence of a sound signal shall be disregarded.**

<i>Minutes before starting signal</i>	<i>Visual signal</i>	<i>Sound signal</i>	<i>Means</i>
5*	Class flag	One	Warning signal
4	P, I, Z, Z with I, U, or black flag	One	Preparatory signal
1	Preparatory flag removed	One long	One minute
0	Class flag removed	One	Starting signal



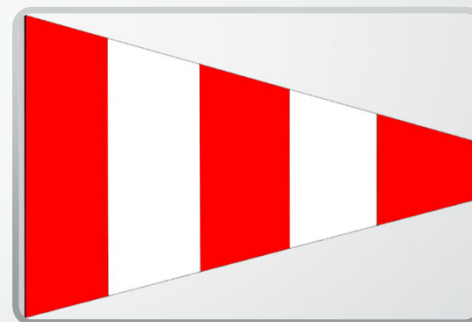
\*or as stated in the sailing instructions

The warning signal for each succeeding class shall be made with or after the starting signal of the preceding class.

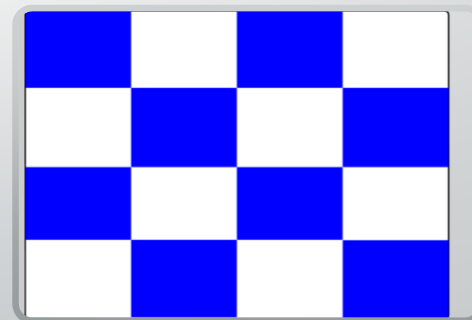
## Part 3 – Conduct of a Race

**27.3** Before the starting signal, the race committee may **for any reason** *postpone* (display flag AP, AP over H, or AP over A, with two sounds) or *abandon* the race (display flag N over H, or N over A, with three sounds).

AP:



November:



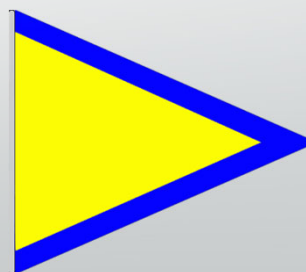
## Part 3 – Conduct of a Race

29 Recalls

Xray: Individual Recall:



First Substitute: General Recall:



# Part 3 – Conduct of a Race

## 29 Recalls

Xray: Individual Recall:



### 29.1 Individual Recall

When at a boat's starting signal any part of her hull, crew or equipment is on the course side of the starting line or she must comply with rule 30.1, the race committee shall promptly display flag X with one sound. The flag shall be displayed until all such boats have sailed completely to the pre-start side of the starting line or one of its extensions and have complied with rule 30.1 if it applies, but no later than four minutes after the starting signal or one minute before any later starting signal, whichever is earlier. If rule 30.3 or 30.4 applies this rule does not.

## Part 3 – Conduct of a Race

### 28 SAILING THE COURSE

**28.1** A boat shall *start*, sail the course described in the sailing instructions and *finish*. While doing so, she may leave on either side a *mark* that does not begin, bound or end the leg she is sailing. After *finishing* she need not cross the finishing line completely.

**28.2** A string representing a boat's track from the time she begins to approach the starting line from its pre-start side to *start* until she *finishes* shall, when drawn taut,

- (a) pass each *mark* on the required side and in the correct order,
- (b) touch each rounding *mark*, and
- (c) pass between the *marks* of a gate from the direction of the previous *mark*.

She may correct any errors to comply with this rule, provided she has not *finished*.



## Some Definitions

***Finish*** A boat *finishes* when any part of her hull, or crew or equipment in normal position, crosses the finishing line from the course side. However, she has not *finished* if after crossing the finishing line she

- (a) takes a penalty under rule 44.2,
- (b) corrects an error under rule 28.2 made at the line, or
- (c) continues to sail the course.

***Racing*** A boat is *racing* from her preparatory signal until she *finishes* and clears the finishing line and *marks* or retires, or until the race committee signals a general recall, *postponement* or *abandonment*.

## Part 3 – Conduct of a Race

### 31 TOUCHING A MARK

While *racing*, a boat shall not touch a starting *mark* before *starting*, a *mark* that begins, bounds or ends the leg of the course on which she is sailing, or a finishing *mark* after *finishing*.

***Finish*** A boat *finishes* when any part of her hull, or crew or equipment in normal position, crosses the finishing line from the course side. However, she has not *finished* if after crossing the finishing line she

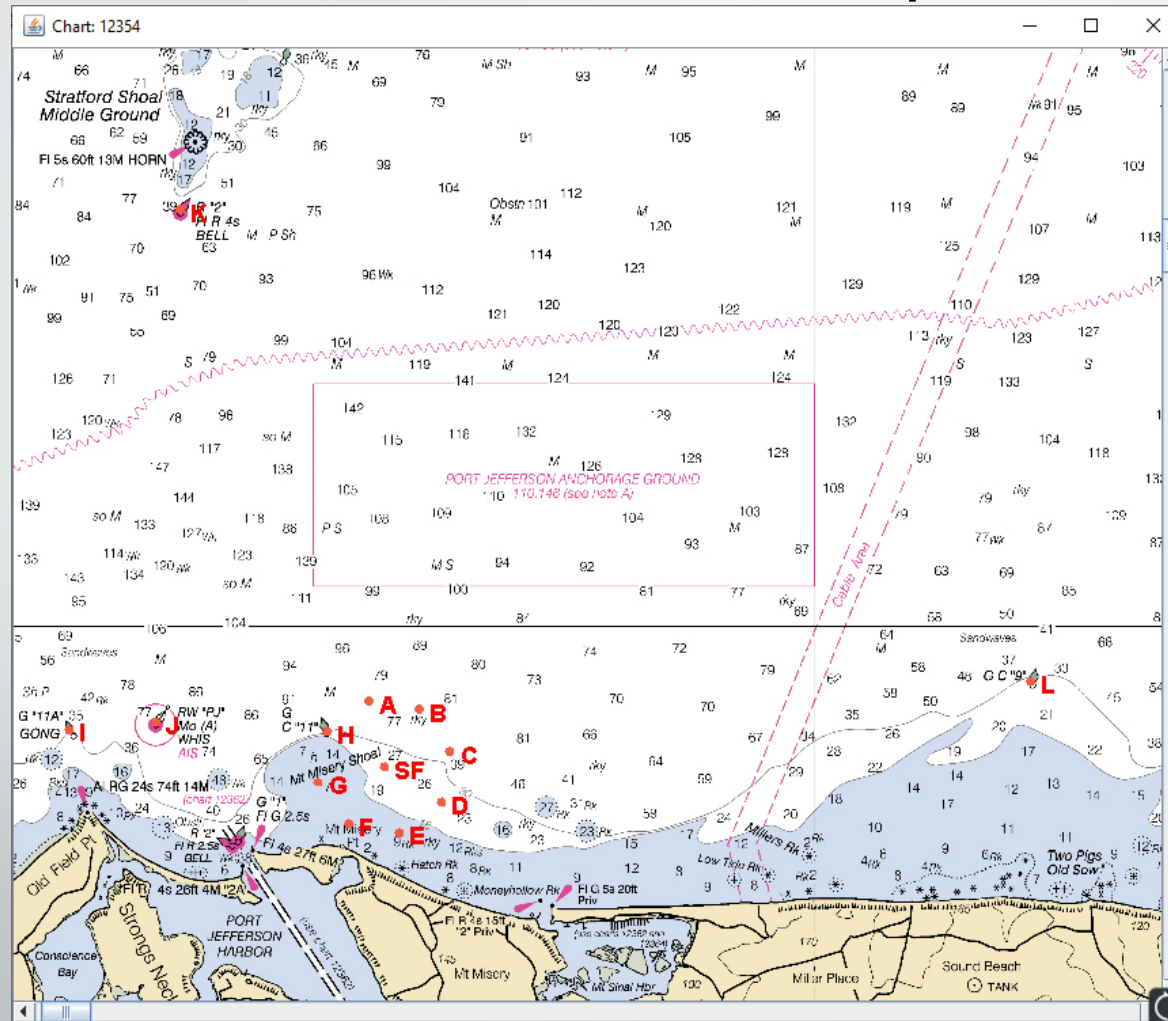
- (a) takes a penalty under rule 44.2,
- (b) corrects an error under rule 28.2 made at the line, or
- (c) continues to sail the course.

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Rules

Part 3 – Sail-Board Examples

# Course Marks Example



The background of the slide is composed of two main colors: a bright blue on the left and a dark navy blue on the right. A diagonal line separates the two colors, running from the top left towards the bottom right. The text is white and positioned on the dark navy blue background.

Rules

# Part 4 – Other Requirements

(40 – 55)

# Part 4

Rule 42 – Propulsion

Rule 44 – Penalties

Safety

Rule 50 – Sails, Poles, etc...

Rule 52 – Manual Power (No electric winches)

Rule 55 - Trash

## 44 PENALTIES AT THE TIME OF AN INCIDENT

### 44.1 Taking a Penalty

A boat may take a Two-Turns Penalty when she may have broken one or more rules of Part 2 in an incident while *racing*. She may take a One-Turn Penalty when she may have broken rule 31.

Alternatively, sailing instructions may specify the use of the Scoring Penalty or some other penalty, in which case the specified penalty shall replace the One-Turn and the Two-Turns Penalty. However,

(a) when a boat may have broken a rule of Part 2 and rule 31 in the same incident she need not take the penalty for breaking rule 31;

(b) if the boat caused injury or serious damage or, despite taking a penalty, gained a significant advantage in the race or series by her breach her penalty shall be to retire.

### 44.2 One-Turn and Two-Turns Penalties

After getting well clear of other boats as soon after the incident as possible, a boat takes a One-Turn or Two-Turns Penalty by promptly making the required number of turns in the same direction, each turn including one tack and one gybe. When a boat takes the penalty at or near the finishing line, she shall sail completely to the course side of the line before *finishing*.

# Miscellaneous Rules

## **45 HAULING OUT; MAKING FAST; ANCHORING**

A boat shall be afloat and off moorings at her preparatory signal. Thereafter, she shall not be hauled out or made fast except to bail out, reef sails or make repairs. She may anchor or the crew may stand on the bottom. She shall recover the anchor before continuing in the race unless she is unable to do so.

**47.2** No person on board shall intentionally leave, except when ill or injured, or to help a person or vessel in danger, or to swim. A person leaving the boat by accident or to swim shall be back on board before the boat continues in the race.

## **50.1 Changing Sails**

When headsails or spinnakers are being changed, a replacing sail may be fully set and trimmed before the replaced sail is lowered. However, only one mainsail and, except when changing, only one spinnaker shall be carried set at a time.

## **50.2 Spinnaker Poles; Whisker Poles**

Only one spinnaker pole or whisker pole shall be used at a time except when gybing. When in use, it shall be attached to the foremost mast.



# Miscellaneous Rules

## **51 MOVABLE BALLAST**

All movable ballast, including sails that are not set, shall be properly stowed. Water, dead weight or ballast shall not be moved for the purpose of changing trim or stability. Floorboards, bulkheads, doors, stairs and water tanks shall be left in place and all cabin fixtures kept on board. However, bilge water may be bailed out.

## **52 MANUAL POWER**

A boat's standing rigging, running rigging, spars and movable hull appendages shall be adjusted and operated only by the power provided by the crew.

## **55 TRASH DISPOSAL**

A competitor shall not intentionally put trash in the water. This rule applies at all times while afloat. The penalty for a breach of this rule may be less than disqualification.

# Summary

Port/Starboard

Overlapped or Clear Ahead/Clear Astern

Windward/Leeward if Overlapped

Zone at Mark is 3 boat lengths

Zone rules don't apply on final approach to start

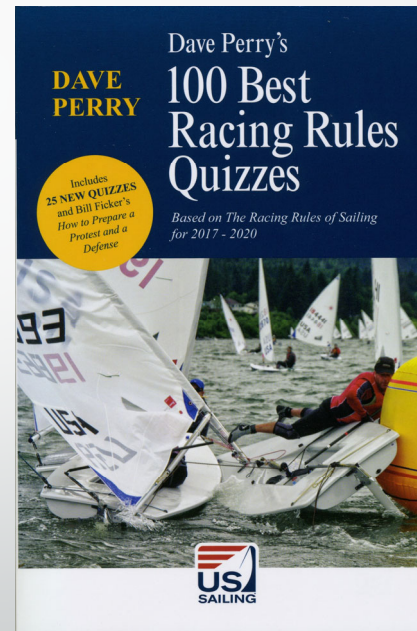
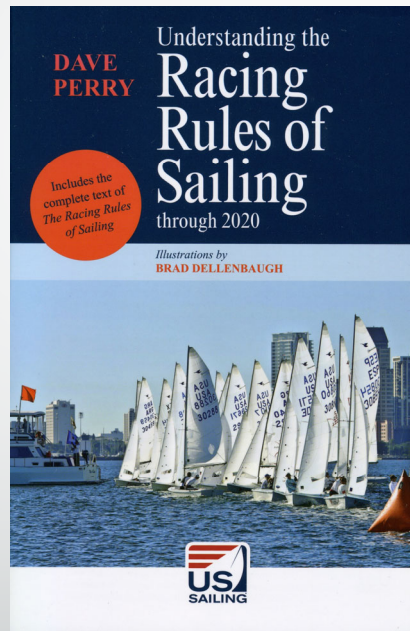
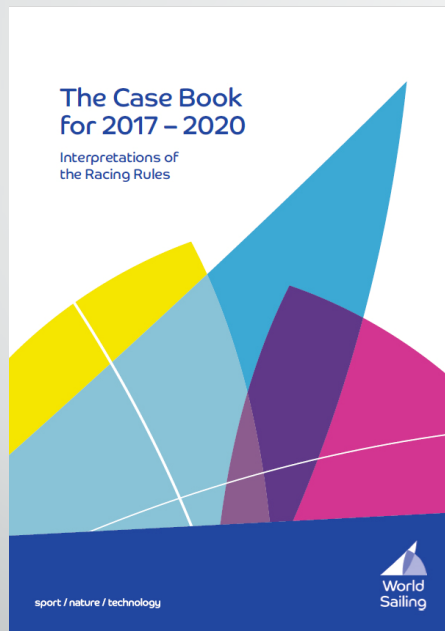
Positions when first boat reaches Zone sets the rights

Avoid Tacking in Zone

Avoid racing boats if you are not racing

No Crashing

# Resources





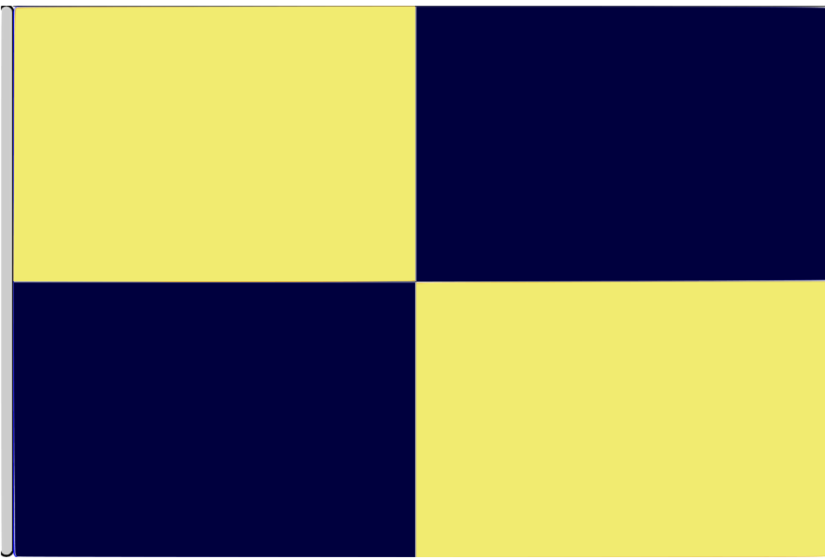
# Resources

<https://www.ussailing.org/competition/rules-officiating/dave-perrys-100-best-racing-rules-quizzes/>

<https://sailzing.com/category/rules-safety/racing-rules/>

[https://www.uksailmakers.com/rules-quiz?mc\\_cid=407abf6f20&mc\\_eid=ec9fo41dcf](https://www.uksailmakers.com/rules-quiz?mc_cid=407abf6f20&mc_eid=ec9fo41dcf)

<https://www.racetac.com/sailboard.htm>



Questions?