

O'pen Skiff World Championship 2022

Experimental Rule 18 explanation

This is a summary of the simplifications in the 2022 Test Rule 18. This summary represents the essence of the simplifications; it does not represent a thorough analysis of the rules.

1) “Mark-room” is now a boat’s “proper course” to and around or past the mark, whether the boat is a keep-clear boat or a right-of-way boat. No more distinction between a “seamanlike” and a “tactical” rounding. See the definition Mark-Room.

2) Now a right-of-way boat that must gybe in order to sail her proper course at a leeward mark cannot sail farther from the mark than her proper course, even when the mark is a gate mark. See rule 18.4.

The result of simplifications 1 and 2 is that at a leeward mark when two or more boats are overlapped, an inside boat entitled to mark-room can sail her proper course to and around or past the mark without risk of penalty, whether she is the keep-clear boat or the right-of-way boat, whether the mark is a single mark or a gate mark, and whether or not rule 17 applies.

This removes all the “it depends” from the question: “how much room can I take, or how much room do I have to give, at a leeward mark?” The answer now is: an inside boat can sail her proper course, and an outside boat has to give an inside boat room to sail her proper course.

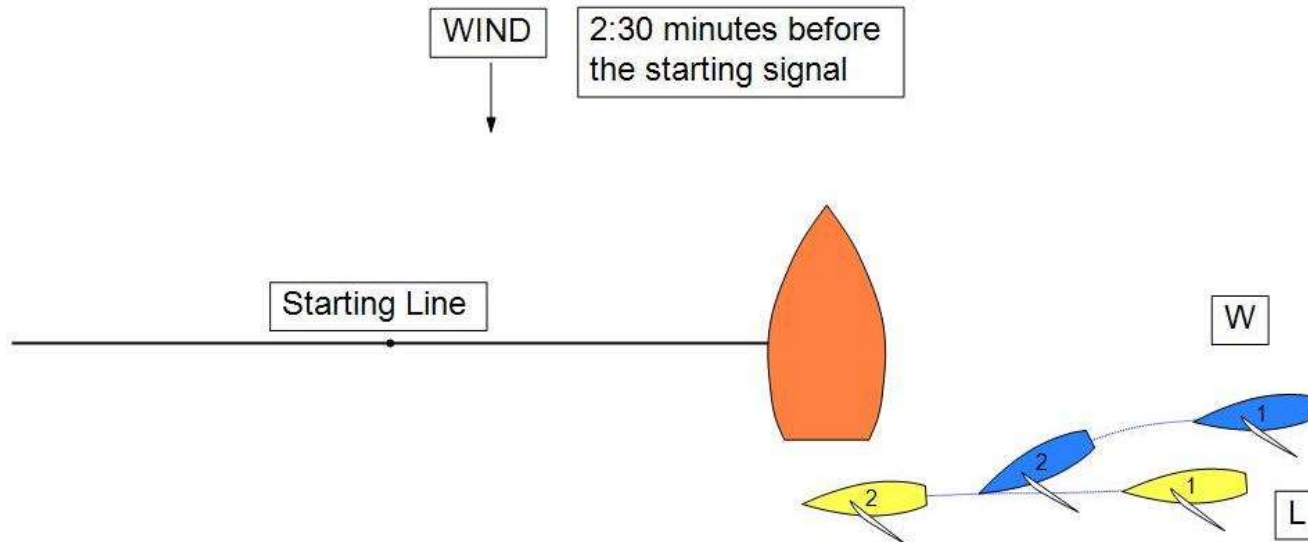
3) Two complex rules in 18.2 have been removed, specifically rules 18.2(c)(2) and 18.2(f).

- 4) Current rule 18.2(b), the most commonly used rule in 18.2, is now rule 18.2(a). The format is simpler as well. Current rule 18.2(a) is now rule 18.2(e).
- 5) Rule 18.3 has a new format that should make it easier to read and understand.
- 6) New rule 18.1(b) states a clear cut-off for when rule 18 no longer applies. Rule 18 turns off when the boat entitled to mark-room has left the mark astern and is on a course consistent with sailing the next leg, or she is no longer racing, which is a clear and quantifiable moment that sailors can generally see.
- 7) The vague phrase “from the time boats are approaching them to start until they have passed them” has been removed from the preamble to Part 2, Section C. Now windward boats are simply never entitled to room to pass to leeward of a race committee vessel when it is a starting mark.
- 8) Between the new definition Mark-Room, the preamble to Section C and rule 18, the 2022 Test Rule 18 has removed 108 words from the rule book; a 20% reduction of words.

Let's go step-by-step with examples

Change to the Preamble to Section C

A windward boat **is not entitled** to room to pass to leeward of a race committee vessel that is a starting mark **at any time**. She will need to slow down or otherwise position herself to be sailing astern of a nearby boat.



Comment: nothing is changed as in the past. It's Just a rewriting of the rule

Change to rule 18.2, Giving Mark-Room

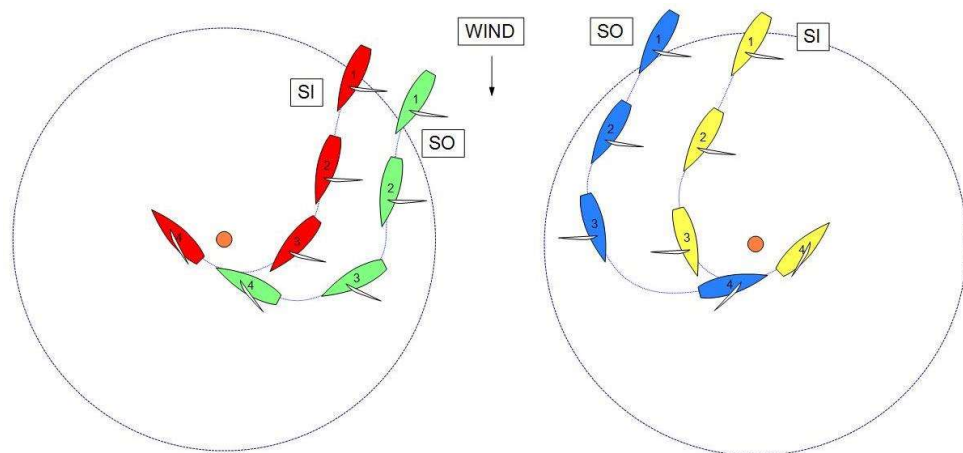
1) an inside keep-clear boat will now be able to sail her “proper course” to and around or past the mark rather than a “seamanlike course.” This will result in her being able to sail a little bit farther from the mark (“swing wide and cut close”).

Comment: In reality, in good racing, most outside boats unlock their bows and stay wide so they can round behind the boats they are giving mark-room to, and are not fussed if the inside boat swings wide and cuts close as well. So this will be a game change, but in some racing it will be just conforming the rule to the way sailors are currently playing the game.

2) At a mark beginning a run (windward mark, offset mark, mark 2 of a trapezoid course, etc.), a boat entitled to mark-room can gybe with the protection of mark-room if (a) gybing is her proper course, and (b) she has not left the mark astern.

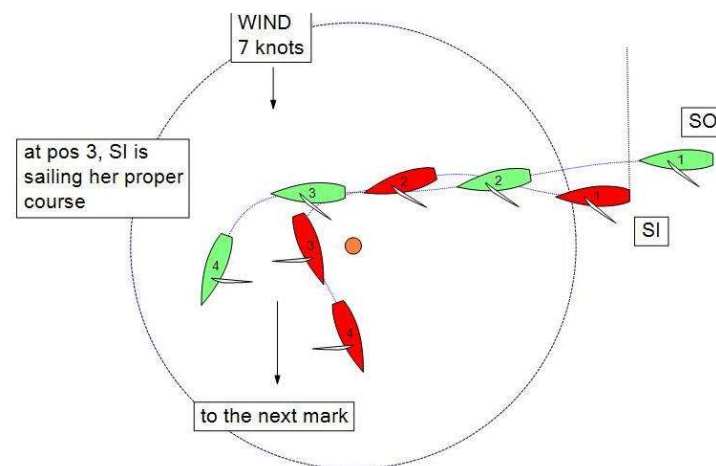
Comment: Much better now. In the past we knew when mark-room began but not when it ended (with the the protection given by owning the mark-room). Now we know

Examples

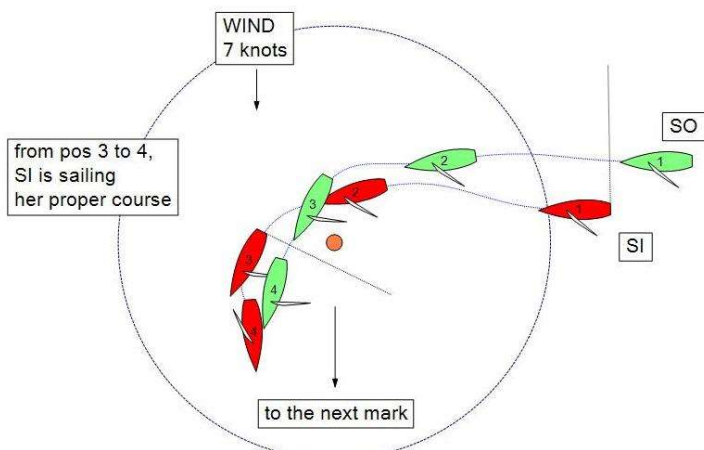


Under the test rule 18.2(a), both Red SI (a keep-clear boat) and Yellow SI (a right-of-way boat) can sail their proper courses to and around the mark without penalty. The same is true at a single leeward mark, a gate mark, and whether or not rule 17 applies.

Under test rule 18.2(a), SI is protected by “mark-room” when she gybes around the mark on her proper course, until she has left the mark astern.



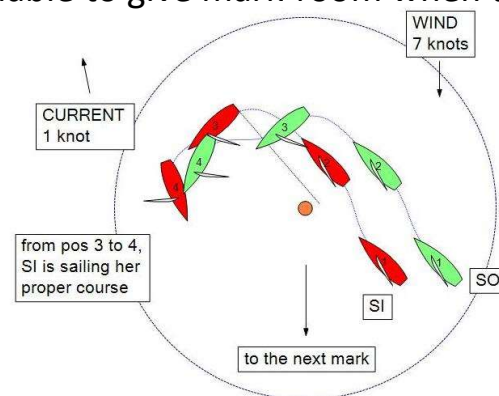
Examples



Under test rule 18.1(b), rule 18 no longer applies when the mark is astern of SI, so SI is not protected by “mark-room” when she gybes on her proper course after she has left the mark astern.

Under test rule 18.2(a), SI is protected by “mark-room” when she gybes on her proper course from pos 3 to pos 4, because she has not left the mark astern yet. SO breaks rule 18.2(a) by failing to give mark-room.

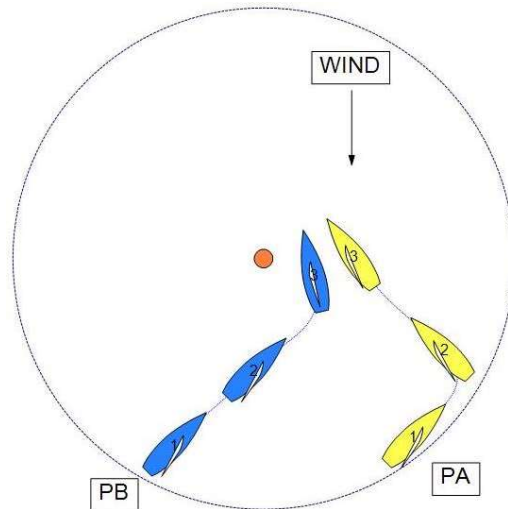
No rule 18.2(f) regarding the situation where an outside boat is unable to give mark-room when the overlap begins



Comment: If a boat is required to give mark-room, she will have to do so. If she is unable to do so, **she will have to do a better job planning ahead the next time.**

Changes to rule 18.3, Tacking in the Zone

- A boat that tacks in the zone when another boat is fetching the mark is not entitled to mark-room, and must complete her tack in compliance with rule 13, and then comply with rules 15 and 16.1 thereafter. This is true at both a port-hand and a starboard-hand mark. This will make boats either tack a little sooner, or decide not to tack and instead to either duck a starboard-tack boat (at a port-hand mark), or cross a port-tack boat and tack to windward of them (at a starboard-hand mark).

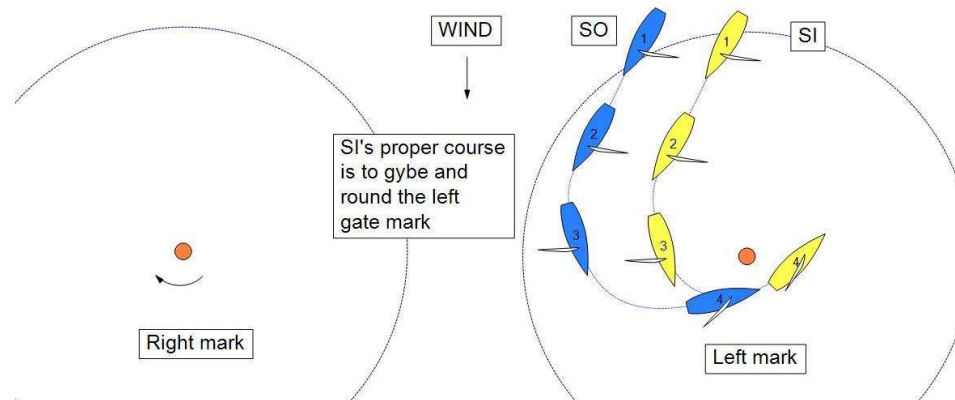


Comment: PB is not entitled to mark-room at position 3, and is not exonerated for her breach of rule 13.

Note, PB could have sailed astern of PA at pos 2, so PA has complied with rule 15.

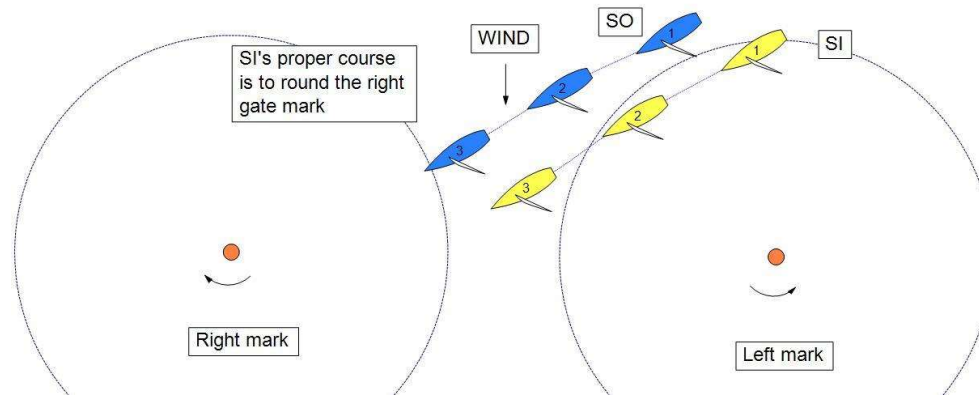
Changes to rule 18.4, Gybing

1) At a gate mark, inside overlapped boats (no more only «the right of way boat» as in the past) that must gybe in order to sail their proper course must not sail farther from the mark than their proper course. Right-of-way boats will not be able to sail wider than their proper course in the zone to attack or interfere with outside boats. But 99% of the time, a boat sails her proper course around the mark, so this is not a real game change.



Comment: This should be a welcomed game change. In the zone, crews are usually busy with all the boat handling needed to round the mark. Plus it can be fairly crowded. The zone should be a neutral zone where boats should be rounding the mark in an orderly and safe way, and not attacking outside boats who are in vulnerable positions due to the mark, the proximity of other boats, and the amount of boat handling that is often required to round the mark.

2) Right-of-way boats will still be able to sail into the zone of one gate mark on their proper course to the other gate mark and round the other gate mark, just as they can under the current rule 18.4, even without the current second sentence. If a boat is on her proper course to the other gate mark, she does not need to gybe at the first gate mark in order to sail her proper course. Therefore, rule 18.4 does not apply to her. So, no game change by eliminating the second sentence in rule 18.4.



Comment: Furthermore, in a survey of top sailors in all kinds of boats (high speed, dinghy and keelboats), all the respondents said it was unusual for a boat to sail into the zone of one gate mark and decide it was faster to round the other gate mark.

Please read carefully and feel free to lodge any clarification at the coach meeting on Jul 19th