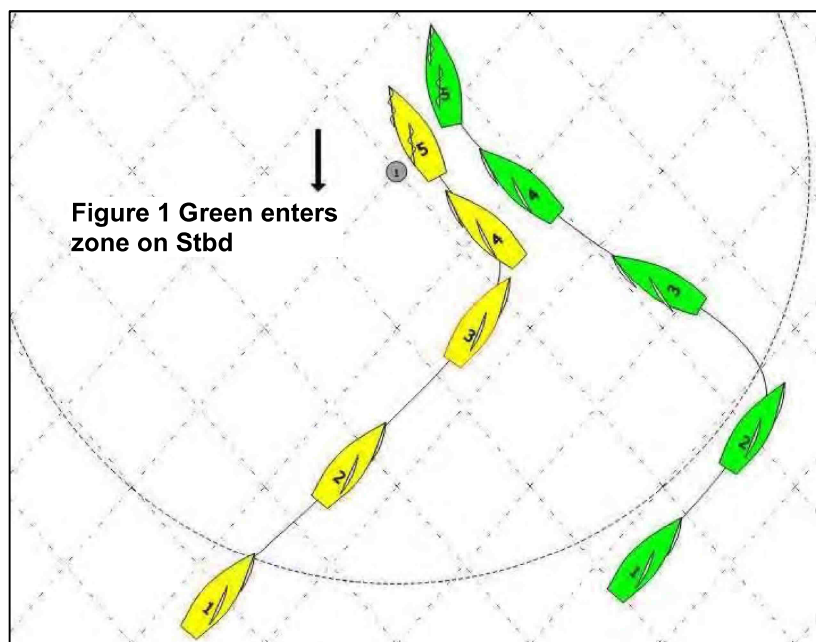


## More on the new RRS 18.3 Tacking in the Zone

### 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.

There are two qualifiers (or tests) in the new version of RRS 18.3 to determine if it applies. By saying that



this rule applies to marks to be left to port, it is excluding its application to marks to be left to starboard. The other is that RRS 18.3 now only applies if one boat enters the zone on starboard tack and is fetching the mark when another boat tacks to starboard to lay the mark.

First, let's look at what the rule says directly and then later, move on to what happens when the condition 'on Starboard since entering the zone' is not met.

Under this rule change, and for Marks to Port, in Figure 1, Green enters the zone on starboard so she meets the condition in RRS 18.3. Then Yellow on Port, tacks to starboard inside the zone

to fetch the mark. While Yellow was on Port at P3, she had to keep clear under R 10 P/S, and while tacking at P3 – P4 she is also subject to R 13 Tacking. After Yellow completes her tack to starboard, and because all the conditions of RRS 18.3 were met, she may not cause Green to sail above close hauled. If Yellow tacks outside Green (not shown), she must give Green Mark Room – in other words, if you enter the zone on starboard, the application of the new rule is basically the same as the previous version of RRS 18.3 with which we are familiar. So as drawn in this diagram, Green enters the zone on Starboard and Yellow forces Green above close hauled and breaks RRS 18.3.

Note that in this example above, under the previous and new versions of R18.3, when Yellow tacks inside Green, Yellow does NOT get Mark Room, and without Mark Room, she does NOT gain the exoneration protection of RRS 21. Yellow does get the benefit of RRS 11 (Windward/Leeward) after P4, except as limited by the phrase 'above close hauled'. As Yellow does NOT have Mark Room and RRS 21 Exoneration, when she gains ROW as leeward boat at P4, she has to give room for Green to stay clear under RRS 15 (ROW Changes) and as she luffs up, she is subject RRS 16.1 (ROW alters course) and has to give Green room to respond, in addition to not taking Green above close hauled.

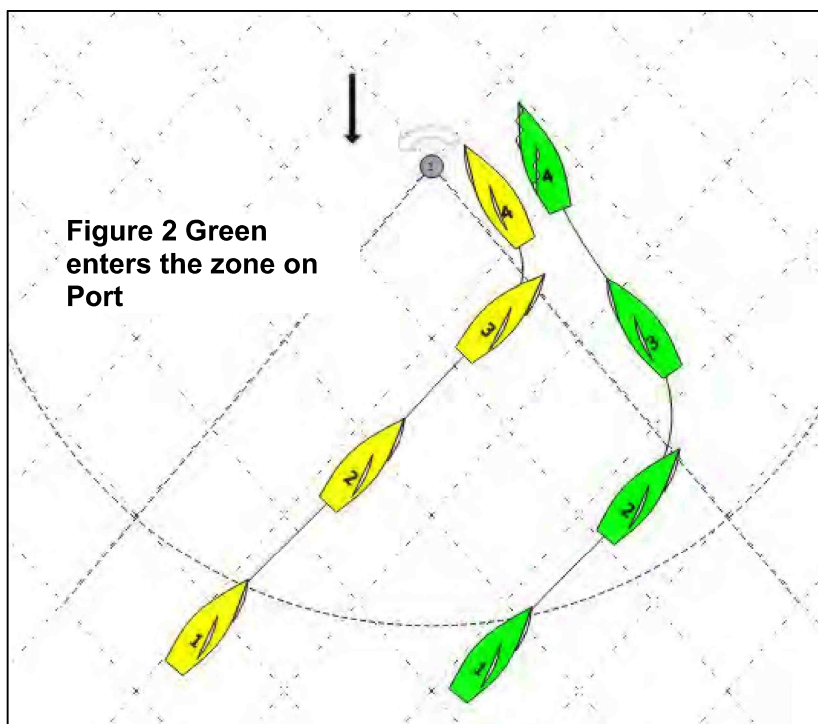
### What's Changed?

Under the previous version, and as long as Green was on starboard, then RRS 18.3 would apply, regardless of where Green tacked to starboard. The change with the new version of the rule is that if two port tack boats both tack (pass head-to-wind) inside the zone to fetch the mark on Starboard tack, then the conditions described in RRS 18.3 do not exist and so RRS 18.3 does NOT apply. As a consequence, the 'above close hauled' restriction goes away. And if RRS 18.3 does not apply then other rules will. Let's look at figure 2 to see what happens.

In Figure 2, Green enters the zone on Port and so the new RRS 18.3 does NOT apply after Green tacks to starboard. So Yellow does not (necessarily) break any rule when Green has to luff up above close hauled to avoid her at P4. When RRS 18.3 does not apply, and we have two boats overlapped in the zone, then RRS 18.2.a applies and the outside boat, Green has to give Mark Room to Yellow. **This is a big change with big consequences as Yellow with Mark Room, gains the additional exoneration protection of R 21.**

### 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.



**Figure 2 Green enters the zone on Port**

As always, at a mark, the other rules of **Part 2**

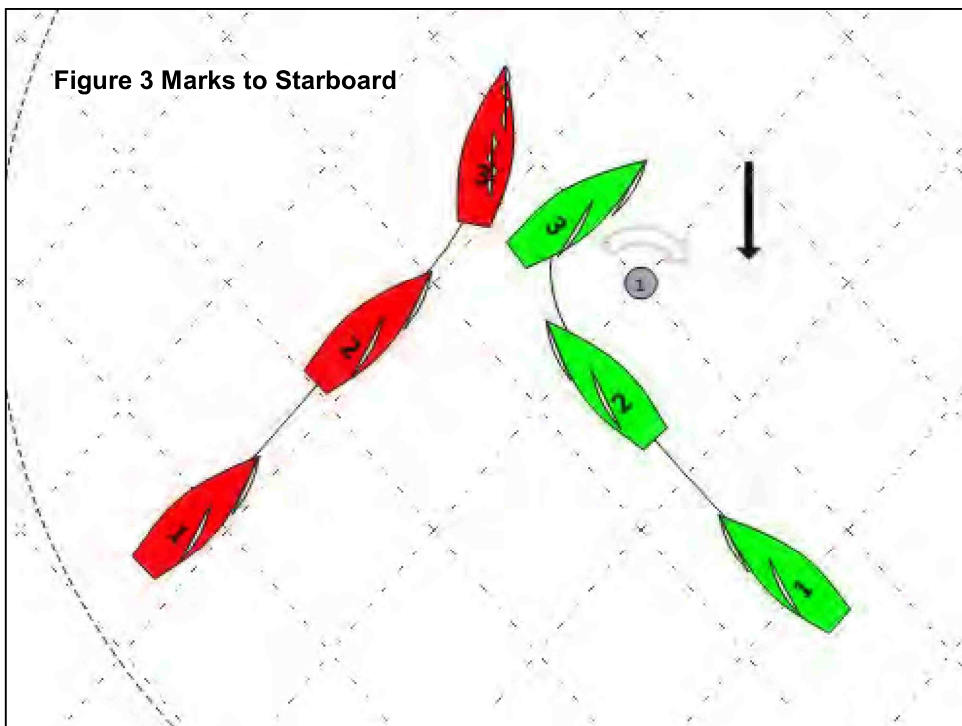
**When boats meet** apply to both boats; so RRS 13 Tacking applies to Green between P2 and P3 – Yellow only has to begin to keep clear under RRS 10 P/S after Green reaches her close hauled course. So no issues for either boat as drawn here. Now it gets more complicated. While RRS 13 Tacking should apply to Yellow between P3 and P4, there is a technicality. As soon as Yellow passes head to wind after P3, she is technically on starboard, even though the tack is not yet completed to a close hauled course. Why is this important? First, as Yellow and Green are now on the same tack, starboard, and they are overlapped and in the zone, RRS 18.2.a applies and gives Mark Room to Yellow (remember this is the big change), and as Yellow has Mark Room, she becomes exonerated under RRS 21 (which includes RRS 13 Tacking, and the room provisions under RRS 15 Change of ROW, and RRS 16.1 ROW alters course). So once Yellow has passed head to wind, Green has to stay clear or risks breaking RRS 18.2.a. So Green has to stay clear as weather boat (RRS 11 W/L) and has to give Mark Room under RRS 18.2.a, even if she has to luff above close hauled to give that Mark Room to Yellow.

To summarise the challenge of this new RRS 18.3, look at the first and second figures again – in the first, Green enters the zone on Starboard and Yellow would be penalized if Green has to luff above close hauled – whereas in the second diagram, Green does not enter on Starboard and has to give Mark Room to Yellow after Yellow passes head to wind if they become overlapped. So in the second figure, Green would be penalized if there was any contact between boats or with the mark. This is the opposite outcome from the Figure 1 scenario and so the location of Green passing head to wind relative to the zone is crucial to the outcome of any protest.

In my opinion, this will be a hard protest to settle if Green tacks close to the zone, “Was she inside or outside?” Unfortunately, there is no guidance in the new rules as to which boat has the ‘burden of proof’ in case of doubt. I think this is going to make for some tough protest hearings.

### Marks to Starboard

As Marks to Starboard is excluded from the new RRS 18.3, the luffing above close hauled restriction never gets to apply. The main tactical issue for Marks to Starboard will be that a boat fetching the mark on Port will have to be even more careful to avoid the starboard tack boat. This will have three steps.



At P1 and P2, Green is on Starboard and Red is on Port. As they are on opposite tacks on a beat, RRS 18.1.a says that RRS 18 does not apply, and Red must stay clear under RRS 10 P/S.

After P2, Green while still ROW on Starboard, luffs up to head to wind, and must give room for Red under RRS 16.1. (ROW alters course). Note that luffing to head to wind is not tacking – tacking only starts after Green passes head to wind.

Before P3, Green passes head to wind to Port, and

now starts her tack. Again that technicality – Green is technically on Port after she passes head to wind and so the boats are both on Port tack and overlapped in the zone. So Green gains Mark Room under RRS 18.2.a and Red must stay clear. As Green has Mark Room, she becomes exonerated under RRS 21 (which includes RRS 13 Tacking, and the room provisions under RRS 15 Change of ROW, and RRS 16.1 ROW alters course). So once Green has passed head to wind, Red has to stay clear or risks breaking RRS 18.2.a. So Red has to stay clear as weather boat (RRS 11 W/L) and has to give Mark Room under RRS 18.2.a, even if she has to luff above close hauled to give that Mark Room to Green.

## Our Bonus Section:

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