

ROUNDING THE MARK FROM THE PORT TACK LAYLINE



Photos by Allen Clark www.photoboot.com

The following series of pictures shows a good way to avoid the penalties imposed by **Rule 18.3 Tacking When Approaching a Mark.**

Although most sailors understand that approaching a mark on the port layline is not a good idea, it happens to the best of us. An unexpected lift, a missed call or being driven out by a windward boat are some of the ways we can end up in that unenviable spot. However the real problems start when you enter the zone on port tack because tacking in the zone is the equivalent of leading with your chin in a boxing match.

In the picture #1 of this sequence, sail # 18321 is in the zone on the port layline and about to reach the mark. As picture #2 shows, there is also a starboard tack boat approaching that is fetching the mark. While 18321 is crossing the starboard boat, she is not doing so with a large margin (picture #3).

Despite the temptation to tack and round the mark ahead of the starboard boat, 18321 correctly stays on port tack and crosses, allowing her (the starboard boat) to round the mark first (pictures 4, 5 & 6). By electing this course of action, 18321 has given up one boat length of distance and avoided a sure losing protest.

Had she tacked right at the mark (picture #2) and directly in front of the starboard tack boat, 18321 would have opened herself to a no win situation under Rule 18.3. All the starboard boat has to do is put her bow up above a close hauled course to protest under 18.3 (a) or dive to leeward to claim mark-room under 18.3 (b). Since there is no question that 18321 tacked in the zone, her chances of prevailing in a protest hearing are close to non-existent.

With thanks to UK Halsey – Newsletter May 2010