

Racing Rules of Sailing – 2025-28

Review of Differences/Changes

Black type indicates original text carried over from the 2021-24 RRS; Red type indicates new text for 2025-28 that replaces or adds to previous text. Green type indicates explanatory comment.

There are many Rules that are not listed here as there were no text changes included. Sailors are advised to read the new RRS 2025-28 in its entirety, to put the changes into context.

Appendices:

When the rules of an appendix (such as Appendix E) apply, they take precedence over any conflicting rules in Parts 1-7 and the Definitions.

Definitions:

Continuing Obstruction

An **obstruction** is a **continuing obstruction** when the boat with the shortest hull referred to in the rule using the term will pass alongside it for at least three of her hull lengths.

However, the following are not a **continuing obstruction**: a vessel under way, a boat **racing**, or a race committee vessel that is also a **mark**.

BKR Note 1: see below.

Finish

A boat **finishes** when, after **her starting signal**, any part of her hull 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, **(see BKR note 2)**
- (b) corrects an error in **sailing the course** made at the line, or
- (c) continues to **sail the course**.

After **finishing** she need not cross the finishing line completely.

The sailing instructions may change the direction in which boats are required to cross the finishing line to **finish**.

Mark-Room

Mark Room is room for a boat

- (a) to sail to the **mark** when her **proper course** is to sail close to it,
- (b) to round or pass the **mark** on the required side, and
- (c) to leave it astern. **(See BKR Note 3)**

Obstruction

An **obstruction** is

- (a) 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;
- (b) an object that is so designated in a **rule**;
- (c) an object that can be safely passed on only one side; or
- (d) an area or line in a **rule** that boats are prohibited from entering or crossing.

However, a boat **racing** is not an **obstruction** to other boats unless they are required to **keep clear** of her or, if rule 22 applies (**capsized, disabled boat**), avoid her.

Proper Course

A course a boat would choose in order to **complete the leg she believes she is on** 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.

Protest

An allegation made under rule **60** by a boat, **or** a **committee**, that a boat has broken a **rule**.

Sail the Course

A boat **sails the course** **when**

- (a) **she starts**;
- (b) a string representing her track until she **finishes**, when drawn taut,
 - (1) passes each **mark** of the course for the race on the required side and in the correct order (**including the starting marks**),
 - (2) touches each **mark** designated in the sailing instructions to be a rounding **mark**, and
 - (3) passes between the **marks** of a gate from the direction of the course from the previous **mark**; **and then**
- (c) **she finishes**.

A **mark** that does not begin, bound or end the leg the boat is sailing does not have a required side.

See **BKR Note 4**

Changes to Rules

14 AVOIDING CONTACT

If reasonably possible, a boat shall

- (a) avoid contact with another boat,
- (b) not cause contact between boats, and
- (c) not cause contact between a boat and an object that should be avoided.

However, a right-of-way boat, or one sailing within the **room** or **mark-room** to which she is entitled, need not act to avoid contact until it is clear that the other boat is not **keeping clear** or giving **room** or **mark-room**.

18 MARK-ROOM

18.1 When Rule 18 Applies

(a) 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

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

(b) Rule 18 no longer applies between boats when **mark-room** has been given.

18.2 Giving Mark-Room

(a) **When the first of two boats reaches the zone,**

(1) if the boats are **overlapped**, the outside boat at that moment shall give the inside boat **mark-room**;

(2) if **the boats are not overlapped**, the boat that has not reached the **zone**, at that moment shall give the other boat **mark-room**.

When a boat is required to give **mark-room** by **this** rule, she shall continue to do so **for as long as this rule applies**, even if later an **overlap** is broken or a new **overlap** begins.

(b) **Rule 18.2(a) no longer applies** if the boat entitled to **mark-room** passes head to wind or leaves the **zone**.

(c) When **rule 18.2(a) does not apply and the** boats are **overlapped**, the outside boat shall give the inside boat **mark-room**.

(d) 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**, **rules 18.2(a) and 18.2(c) do not apply between them**.

(e) If there is reasonable doubt that a boat obtained or broke an **overlap** in time, it shall be presumed that she did not.

18.3 Tacking in the Zone

If a boat passes head to wind from **port** to **starboard tack** in the **zone** of a **mark** to be left to port, rule 18.2 does not apply between her and another boat on **starboard tack** that is **fetching the mark**. If the other boat has been on **starboard tack** since entering the **zone**, the boat that passed head to wind

- (a) shall not cause the other boat to sail above close-hauled to avoid contact, and
- (b) shall give **mark-room** if the other boat becomes **overlapped** inside her.

18.4 Gybing **in the Zone**

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**.

19 ROOM TO PASS AN OBSTRUCTION

19.1 When Rule 19 Applies

Rule 19 applies between two boats at an **obstruction** except **when rule 18 applies between them and**

- (a) the **obstruction** is **the mark** or
- (b) the **obstruction** is another boat **overlapped** with each of them.

However, at a **continuing** **obstruction**, rule 19 always applies and rule 18 does not.

19.2 Giving Room at an Obstruction

(a) A right-of-way boat may choose to pass an **obstruction** on **her port or starboard** side. **If a right-of-way boat changes course when choosing on which side to pass the obstruction, she shall give the other boat room to keep clear.**

(b) When **the** boats are **overlapped**, the outside boat shall give the inside boat **room** between her and the **obstruction**, unless she has been unable to do so from the time the **overlap** began.

(c) While boats are passing a **continuing** **obstruction**, if a boat that was **clear astern** and required to **keep clear** becomes **overlapped** between the other boat and the **obstruction** and, at the moment the **overlap** begins, there is not **room** for her to pass between them,

- (1) she is not entitled to **room** under rule 19.2(b), and
- (2) while the boats remain **overlapped**, she shall **keep clear** and rules 10 and 11 do not apply.

20 ROOM TO TACK AT AN OBSTRUCTION

20.1 Hailing

A boat may hail for **room** to tack and avoid a boat on the same **tack** by **hailing 'Room to tack'**. However, she shall not hail unless

- (a) she is approaching an **obstruction** and will soon need to make a substantial course change to avoid it safely, and

(b) she is sailing close-hauled or above.

In addition, she shall not hail if the **obstruction** is a **mark** and a boat that is **fetching** it would be required to change course as a result of the hail.

See **BKR Note 5**

28 SAILING THE **COURSE**

28.1 A boat shall **sail the course**.

28.2 A boat may correct any errors in **sailing the course**, provided she has not **finished**.

BKR Note 6

PART 5

PROTESTS, REDRESS, HEARINGS, MISCONDUCT AND APPEALS has been totally rewritten but the essence of it remains the same.

PART 6

ENTRY AND QUALIFICATION has numerous changes but is only relevant to event organisers and entrants (big boats) – worth a read before you enter a big event though.

APPENDIX E

RADIO SAILING RACING RULES – CHANGES, ADDITIONS

E1.2 Terminology

The Terminology paragraph of the Introduction is changed so that:

(a) ‘Boat’ means a sailboat **that is subject to the rules**, controlled by radio signals and **has** no crew. However, in the rules of Part 1 and Part 5, rule E6 and the definitions **Party** and **Protest**, ‘boat’ includes the competitor controlling her.

(b) 'Competitor' means the person designated to control a boat using radio signals.

(c) In the racing rules, but not in its appendices, replace the noun 'race' with 'heat'. In Appendix E a race consists of one or more heats and is completed when the last heat in the race is completed.

E1.3 Rules of Parts 1, 2 and 7

(a) Rule 1.2 is deleted. (Need for PFDs)

(b) Hails under rules 20.1 and 20.3 shall include the sail number of the hailing boat followed by 'Room to tack'.

(c) Rule 22 is changed to: 'If possible, a boat shall avoid a boat that is disabled.'

(d) Rule 90.2(c) is changed to: Changes to the sailing instructions may be communicated orally to all affected competitors before the warning signal of the relevant race or heat. When appropriate, changes shall be confirmed in writing.

E2.3 Boat Out of Radio Control

A competitor whose boat loses radio control shall promptly hail '(The boat's sail number) out of control' and the boat shall retire.

E6 PROTESTS AND REQUESTS FOR REDRESS

E6.1 Protest Validity

Rule 60.4(a)(2) is changed to:

(a) A protest is invalid

(2) if it is from a boat that alleges a breach of a rule of Part 2, 3 or 4, but was not scheduled to sail in the heat where the incident occurred, or

Add new rule 60.4(a)(4):

(a) A protest is invalid

(4) if it is from a boat or competitor and alleges a breach of rule E2 or E3.7.

E6.2 Protest for a Rule Broken by a Competitor

When a committee learns that a competitor may have broken a rule, it may protest the boat controlled by that competitor.

E6.3 Informing the Protestee

Rule 60.2(a)(1) is changed to:

(1) If the protestor is a boat, she shall hail '(Her own sail number) protest (the sail number of the other boat)'.

E6.6 Redress Decisions

Rules 61.4(b)(2) and 61.4(b)(3) are changed to:

(2) injury, physical damage or becoming **disabled** because of the action of a boat that was breaking a rule of Part 2 and took an appropriate penalty or was penalized,

(3) injury, physical damage or becoming **disabled** because of the action of a vessel not **racing** that was required to keep clear or is determined to be at fault under the **IRPCAS** or a government right-of-way rule.

Add new rule 61.4(b)(6):

(6) external radio interference acknowledged by the race committee.

Add to rule 61.4(c):

If a boat is given redress because she was damaged, her redress shall include reasonable time, but not more than 30 minutes, to make repairs before her next heat.

E6.7 Rights of Parties

In rule 63.1(a)(4) 'the representatives of boats shall have been on board' is changed to 'the representative of each boat shall be the competitor designated to control her'.

E6.8 Hearing Procedure

Add new rule 63.4(f):

(f) When the **protest** concerns an alleged breach of a rule of Part 2, 3 or 4, any witness shall have been in the control area at the time of the incident. A witness **who** is a competitor, **and** who was not acting as an observer, **must** also have been scheduled to race in the relevant heat.

E8 CHANGES TO APPENDIX G, IDENTIFICATION ON SAILS

Rule G1, except the table of National Sail Letters, **and rule G2** are changed to:

G1 WORLD SAILING AND IRSA CLASS BOATS

Rule G1 applies to every boat of a class administered or recognized by World Sailing or by the International Radio Sailing Association (IRSA).

G1.1 Identification

(a) Unless her class rules state otherwise, a boat of a World Sailing or IRSA Class shall comply with rule G1 and shall carry:

- (1) on her mainsail, her class insignia and national letters (if required).
- (2) on all sails, her sail number.

(b) Sails shall comply with rule E8 at world and continental championships. At other events, they shall comply with these rules or the rules applicable at the time of their initial certification.

G1.2 National Letters

At IRSA world and continental championships and events described as international events in their notices of race and sailing instructions, a boat shall carry national letters from the table in Appendix G, rule G1 denoting:

- (a) when entered under rule 75(a), the boat's national authority, or
- (b) the competitor's country of residence, or
- (c) the national authority of the owner or competitor.

Note: An up-to-date version of the National Sail Letters table is available on the World Sailing website.

G1.3 Sail Numbers

(a) The sail number shall be the last two digits of:

- (1) the hull registration number, or
- (2) the competitor's or the owner's personal number allotted by the relevant issuing authority.

(b) A single digit hull number or personal number shall be preceded by a zero.

(c) If there is conflict between sail numbers, or if a sail number may be misread, the race committee shall require that the sail numbers of one or more boats be changed to numeric alternatives.

G1.4 Specifications

(a) National letters and sail numbers shall be in capital letters and Arabic numerals, clearly legible and of the same colour. The colour shall contrast with the colour of the body of the sail. Commercially available typefaces giving the same or better legibility than Helvetica are acceptable. Digital fonts are not acceptable.

(b) The height and spacing of letters and numbers shall be as follows:

	Dimension	Minimum	Maximum
Height of sail numbers		100 mm	110 mm
Spacing of adjacent sail numbers		20 mm	30 mm
Height of national letters		60 mm	70 mm
Spacing of adjacent national letters		13 mm	23 mm

G1.5 Positioning

- (a) Class insignia, sail numbers and national letters shall be positioned
- (1) on both sides of the sail;
 - (2) with those on the starboard side uppermost;
 - (3) approximately horizontally;
 - (4) with space for a prefix '1' in front of the sail number; and
 - (5) with no less than 40 mm vertical spacing between lines of numbers and letters on opposite sides of the sail.

However, symmetrical or reversed class insignia may be positioned back to back.

(b) Symmetrical or reversed class insignia shall be on the mainsail, above a line perpendicular to the luff through the three-quarter leech point, and may be positioned back-to-back. Otherwise, the vertical spacing shall be no less than 20 mm.

- (c) On a mainsail, sail numbers shall be positioned
- (1) below class insignia;
 - (2) above the line perpendicular to the luff through the quarter leech point;
 - (3) above national letters.

G1.6 Exceptions

Where the size of the sail prevents compliance with rule G1.4 or G1.5, they shall be amended as follows and in the following order of precedence:

- (a) sail numbers may extend below the specified line;
- (b) vertical spacing may be reduced to no less than 20 mm:
 - (1) first between sail numbers and national letters, and
 - (2) then between national letters;
- (c) height of national letters may be reduced to no less than 40 mm or shall be omitted;
- (d) vertical spacing of sail numbers may be reduced to no less than 20 mm;
- (e) height of sail numbers shall be reduced to less than 90 mm, but no less than 80 mm, or shall be omitted except on the largest sail.

G2 OTHER BOATS

Other boats shall comply with rule E8 unless the rules regarding the allotment, carrying and size of insignia, letters and numbers are changed by their national

authority or class association. Such changed rules shall, when practicable, conform to the above requirements.

Notes:

BKR Note 1: The walls of our sailing venues are continuing obstructions.

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, her hull shall be completely on the course side of the line before she finishes.

BKR Note 2: The bolding above is mine – note that it emphasises that penalties must be done ASAP and promptly, and penalties incurred when crossing the finish line must be completed on the course side of the line before finishing again.

BKR Note 3: Giving mark room includes room for the inside boat to sail to the mark, pass it on the required side and swing its stern cleanly in order to leave the mark astern without hitting the outside boat (or the mark). It will be the outside boat's fault if contact occurs because insufficient room was given for the inside boat to achieve all three aspects of mark room.

BKR Note 4: "Sailing the Course" correctly from start to finish is the **sole** responsibility of the competitor. Race officials can only ensure that the course is properly described via the pre-race briefing and via the Course Board. Race Officials can advise a boat when she appears to have made an error in sailing the course but that is usually deemed to be 'outside assistance' and therefore not legal. In fact the reason PROs don't do it is because they cannot possibly provide that information and 'assistance' to each and every boat throughout the course of a race – they have other things to do. So don't rely on the officials to tell you which way to go.

BKR Note 5: Usually a situation that justifies a hail of "Room To Tack" is somewhat urgent and needs to be responded to immediately, either with an immediate tack or a return call of "You Tack!". The responding boat should respond immediately irrespective of whether they think the hail is justified or not, and then protest you later if they didn't think it was. It will help if your initial hail includes the number of the boat you wish to respond, to attract their attention as soon as possible. So "Seven Six, Room To Tack!" shouted loudly should attract the necessary attention and immediate response to save your boat from crashing into a wall.

E1.3 (c) above suggests that the hail shall include the hailing boat's number but that is secondary to attracting the attention of the responding boat urgently so, in order to comply fully, make the hail as follows: "Seven Six!, Room To Tack for Six Nine!"

BKR Note 6: It's as simple as that, just sail the course. And it's almost never too late to go back and correct any errors you've made in sailing the course, except once you've crossed the finish line. Then it is too late.