

RADIO SAILING RULES MADE SIMPLE

There is a book with lots of pages relating to the rules of sailing. If you learn and understand all of them you are a better man (or woman) than me Gungadin. There are however some basic rules that you must know and follow. If you are new to radio sailing, established members will give you plenty of leeway to learn the rules but that leeway diminishes rapidly with each race. Here are the ones you MUST know and follow to the best of your ability. It is not fair to ruin another sailor's race because you caused a collision due to a rule infraction on your part. During a race with boats going hither and thither it is hard to know who has the right of way. You must as a beginner (which should carry over to when you are experienced) have a mind set so that you know which tack you are on at all times. A collision materializes very quickly in a crowded fleet and you wont have time to say to yourself, *"now self, let me see, ahh yes the wind is coming over the left hand side of my boat so that means I am on a Port tack, Port gives way to Starboard.....shit I am in the wrong, bang, too late.*

Where ever you are on the course, continuously say to yourself, I am on Port / Starboard tack. If you say I am on port tack look out for all other yachts and give way to them. There are exceptions here but you will learn these as you get more experienced.

If you hit another boat work out if you think you are in the wrong or if they are in the wrong. An experienced sailor will let you know pretty quickly if you are in the wrong. In the early stages of your sailing endeavors just do a 360degs turn and be done with it but at the end of the race go and apologize and ask him what you did wrong or you will just do it over and over again.

This is the etiquette for calling right of way. Remember, the meek might inherit the earth but they will never win a sailing race. Know your rules and use them.

EXAMPLE:

Two boats are beating upwind and converging on different tacks. Boat 45 on Starboard calls out to boat 54 who is on Port tack.

"54, 45 is on starboard"

54 thinks that he can cross in front of 45 but misjudges it and slams into the side of 45.

45 then protests.

"Protest 54, 45 was on starboard."

54 responds, **"Sorry 45 I will do a turn."**

After 54 has done his 360 turn he will call out, **"54 has completed his turn."**

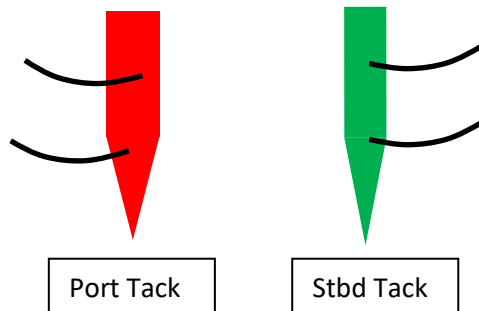
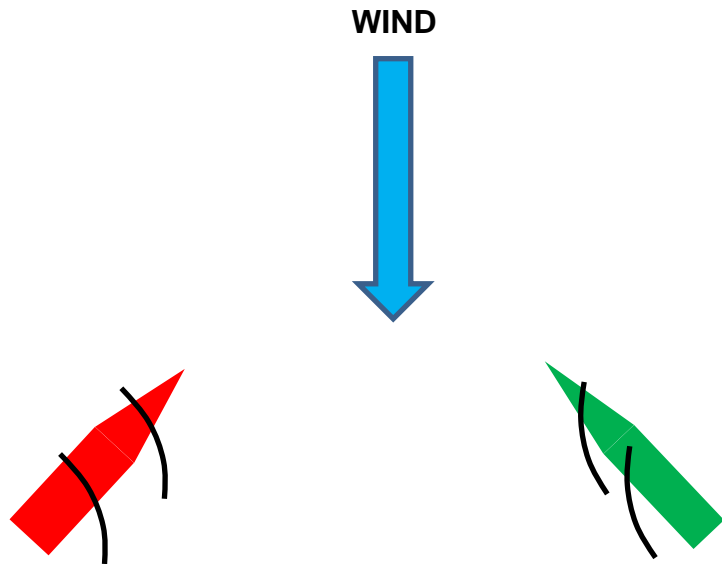
The PRO might or might not acknowledge 45 doing his turn, but at least 45 knows you have accepted the fact you made a mistake.

THE GOLDEN RULES

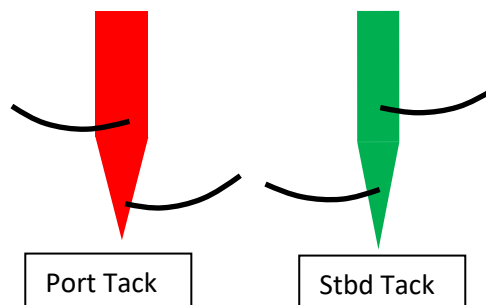
Herewith the 5 golden rules. If there are any you don't understand ask someone to explain them and remember.....think..... am I on Port or Starboard.

In all these examples the green boat has the right of way.

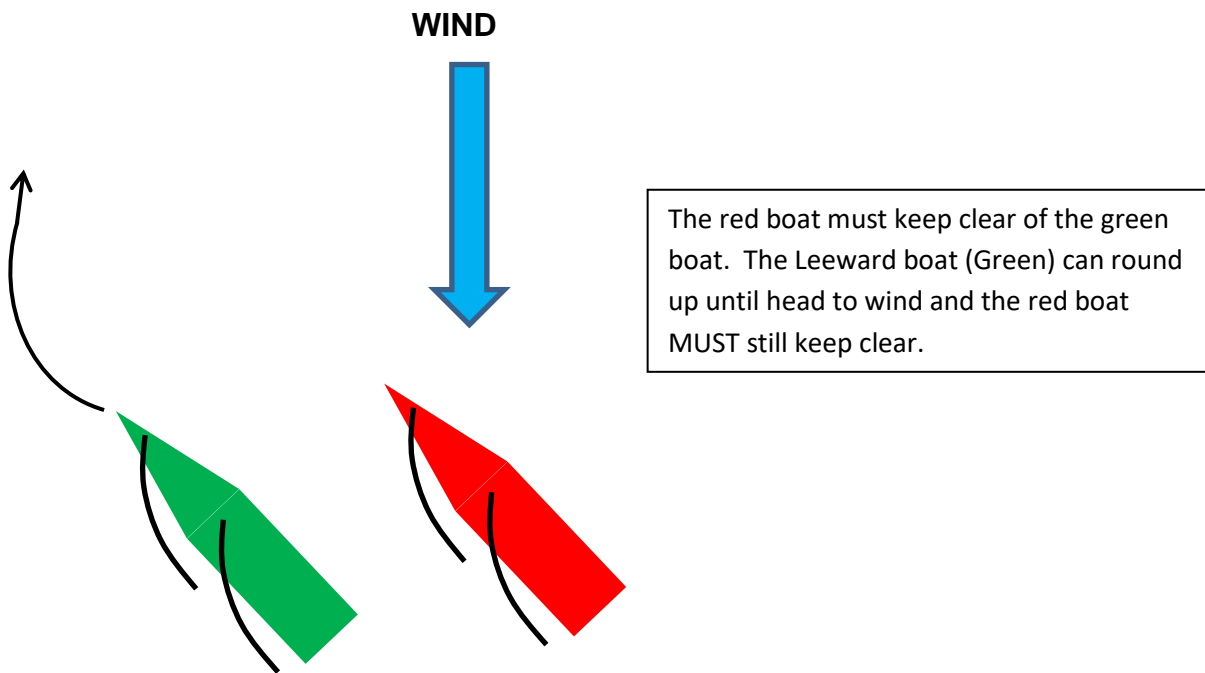
Rule #1 PORT TACKING BOAT WILL GIVE WAY TO STARBOARD TACKING BOAT



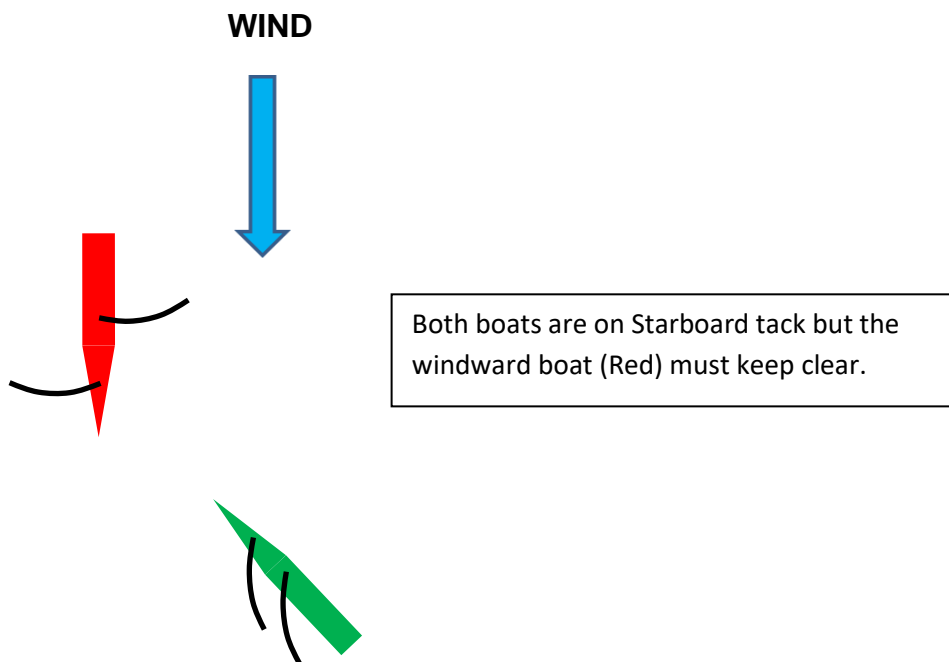
Note: It is the main that decides which tack you are on. The jib is irrelevant. If the main is over the left side of the boat you are on a starboard tack and vice versa.



Rule #2(A) WINDWARD BOAT WILL GIVE WAY TO LEEWARD (DOWNWIND) BOAT

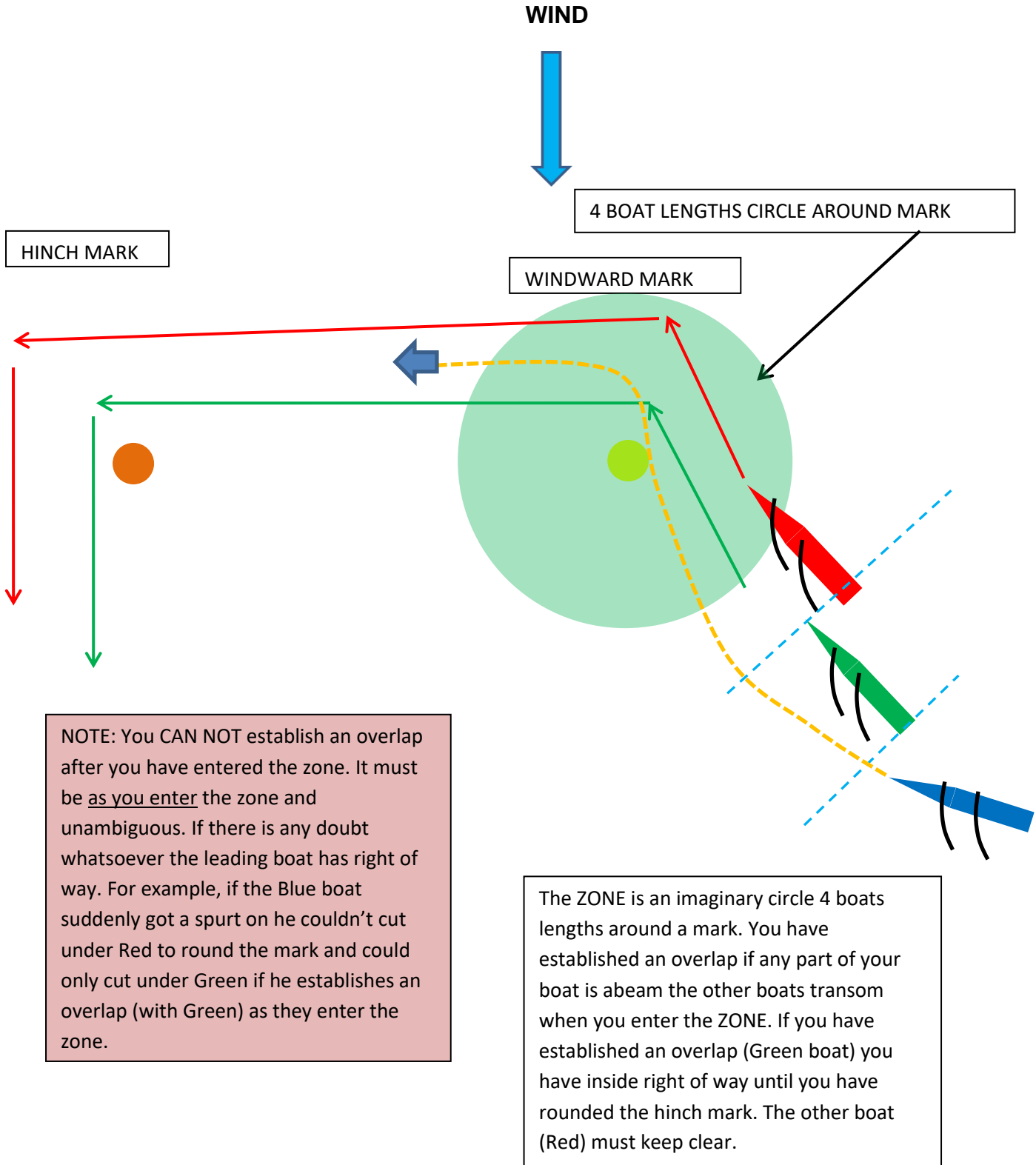


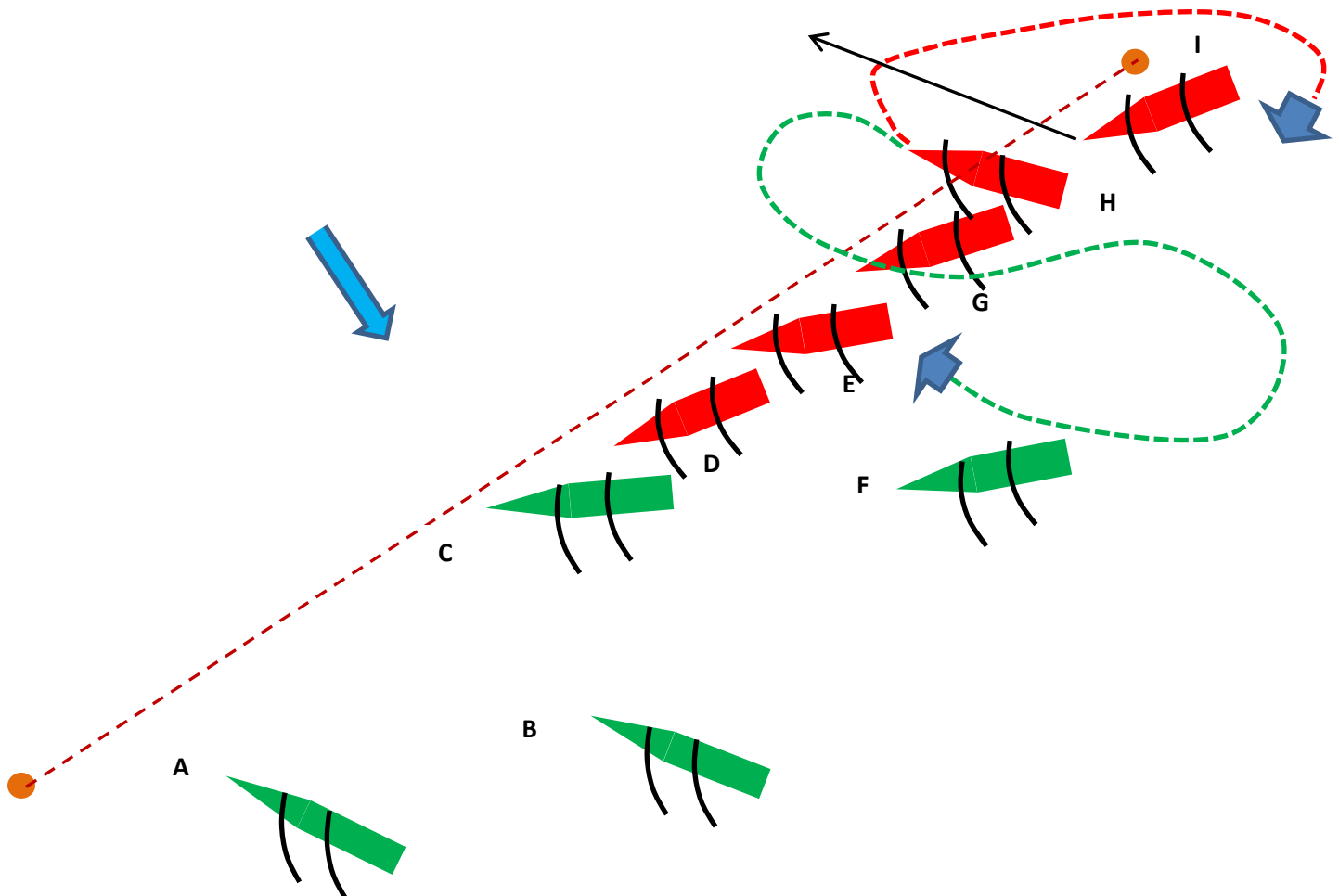
Rule #2(B) WINDWARD BOAT WILL GIVE WAY TO LEEWARD (DOWNWIND) BOAT



Rule #4 OVERLAP AT THE ZONE

This is a somewhat confusing rule but very important. If you are not 100% sure of how it works ask someone.



RULE #5**BARGING AT THE START**

Preceding the start gun everyone is sailing down the line on Starboard tack. The Red boats are all to windward of each other and to boat C. In other words, D must keep clear of C, E must keep clear of D, G must keep clear of E, H must keep clear of G and I must keep clear of H. The Green boats are pretty well on their own and are not a threat (or being threatened by anyone) except C who has the right of way. Now H has not been able to slow down and if he hits G he will be guilty of “barging” and subject to a penalty. His only choice is to round up which causes him to cross the start line early. He must now return to the off course side of the start line and start again. You cannot inconvenience someone while carrying out a penalty so H must keep clear of I and sail the green course not the red course.

Moral of the story. Timing is everything, but if you get it wrong be ready to take your lumps.

END

By David Odlum July 2024