

**Mark Roundings: Windward, Leeward, Gates and More
Presented by Mary Ellen Brown**

Know where you belong and Claim your space

- **Communication is your friend**
- **Gain Confidence and Protect yourself by learning sailing rules**
- **Be Corinthian**

Key Items

- The zone is a 3-boat length circle around a mark
- Boats overlapped between an outside boat and the mark when the first boat hits the zone have Mark Room
- There may be multiple boats with Mark Room
- Know where the zone is and be conscious if you go outside of the zone (resets)
- Learn how to slow down by centering your boom
- Perfect gate/leeward Mark rounding is start wide so you can sail tight next to the mark when going close hauled
- Windward laylines
 - When you are not laying the Windward mark most likely due to dirty air, you have other options other than tacking onto Port (and potentially fouling someone). Can jibe around, bear off to create space first and tack, or slow down and wait for an opening before you tack.
 - A Port Boat overlapped with a starboard Boat when the first boat hits the zone does not have Mark Room

How do I execute a successful leeward mark rounding?

- Communicate early and clearly
- When downwind, about 10-15 boat lengths from Mark look around and figure out who may be overlapped with who.
- Say “Linda, I may have room on you” or “Sally, I may have to give you room”
- There may be boats stacked up and if you are an outside boat, you may have to give room to a whole bunch of boats that you are not directly overlapped with.

Some Resources for Further Learning

1. US Sailing Rules of Racing
 - a. <https://www.ussailing.org/competition/rules-officiating/the-racing-rules-of-sailing-2021-2024/>
2. Dave Dellenbaugh Speed and Smarts Webinars
 - a. <https://www.speedandsmarts.com/>
3. Mike Ingham Sailing World articles and YouTube videos
 - a. Search Engine
4. Dave Perry’s books and quizzes – Get from US Sailing Web site above – Form a book club and do the quizzes
5. Learning by remembering your on-water interactions and discussing them on shore. Reference the Rules of Racing as part of the discussion

Mark Roundings – Building up the Basics

Important definitions

Marks

An object the sailing instructions require a boat to leave on a specified side, an RC Boat
The Anchor Line is not part of the mark
Marks are often where boats meet
Rules are in place to create order and prevent injury and damage

Layline

An imaginary line extending from the mark where a boat would be fetching the mark without tacking.

Fetching

A boat is fetching a mark when she is in a position to pass to windward of it and leave it on the required side without changing tack.

Zone

The zone is a 3 boat length circle around a mark. With different sized boats, it is the length of the first boat to enter the zone.

Mark-room

Is given to a boat overlapped inside another boat when the hull of the first boat enters the zone

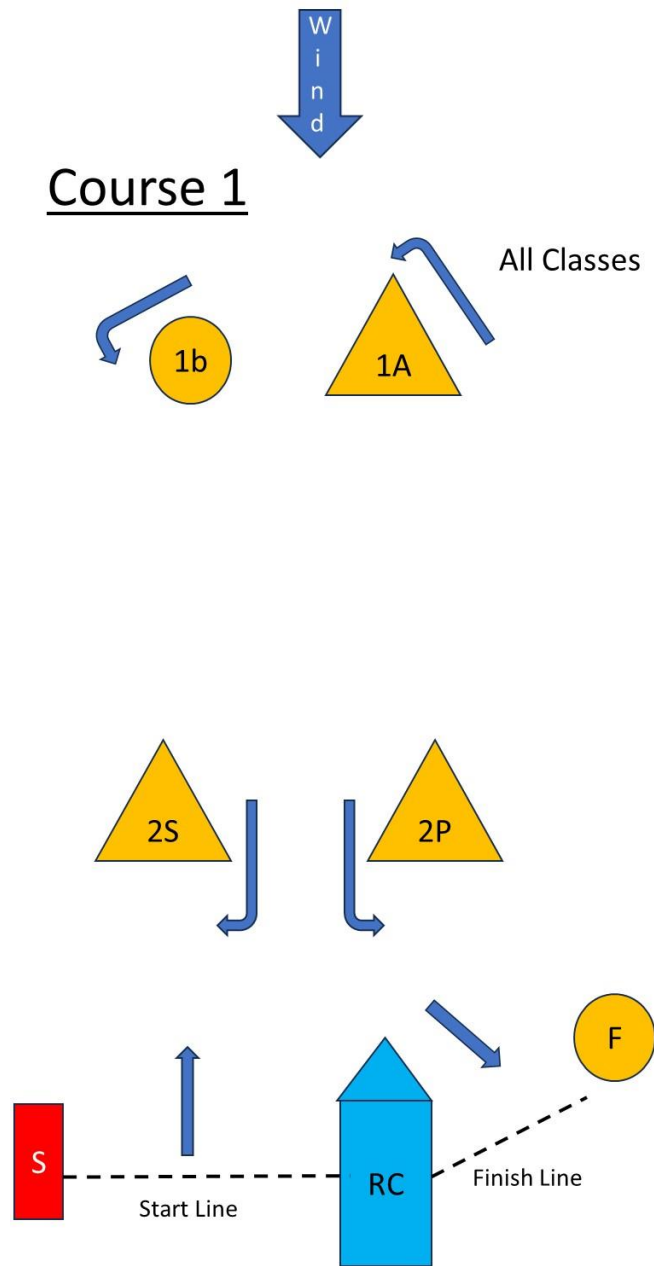
Overlap

When a boat overlaps with a line abeam from the aftmost point of the other boats hull

The Course

- Courses are described in the Sailing Instructions.
- Typical Courses have windward and leeward legs and sometimes a reach leg
- Courses are defined by Marks
- Marks are to be left on a specified side
- Note Anchor Lines are not Marks

Here is a typical windward and leeward course we often see.



This table identifies the marks and tells you which side to leave it on along with making you aware of which tack you will be on when you round the mark. Knowing which tack you are on will help you sort out handling “When boats meet”.

Mark	Mark Course ID	Mark Course Shape	Side of boat left to	Tack you are on when rounding
Start	S	Cylinder	Port	Starboard or Port
Committee boat at start	RC - Boat	Boat	Starboard	Starboard or Port
Windward	1A	Tetrahedron	Port	Starboard
Offset	1b	Ball	Port	Starboard
Right Gate (When facing downwind)	2S	Tetrahedron	Starboard	Starboard
Left Gate (When facing downwind)	2P	Tetrahedron	Port	Port
Left Downwind Mark before Finish	2P	Tetrahedron	Port	Starboard or Port
Finish	F	Ball or Tetrahedron	Port	Starboard or Port
Committee boat at Finish	RC	Boat	Starboard	Starboard or Port

Laylines

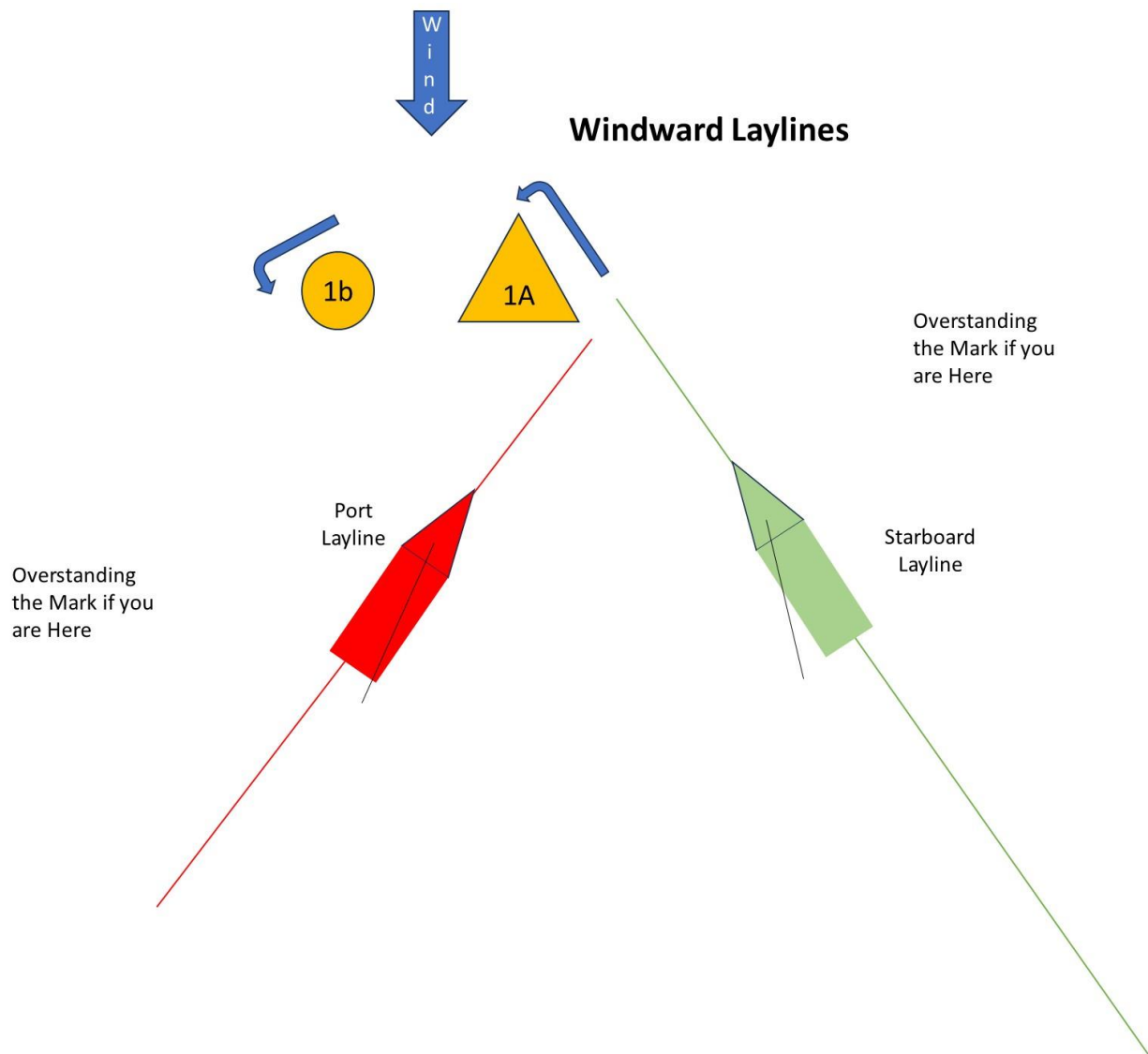
Layline - An imaginary line extending from the mark where a boat would be fetching the mark without tacking.

Fetching – A boat is fetching a mark when she is in a position to pass to windward of it and leave it on the required side without changing tack.

Overstanding – when you are outside of the layline.

- For example, when you are on **Starboard** Layline, overstanding is to the right
- When you are on **Port** Layline, overstanding is to the left.

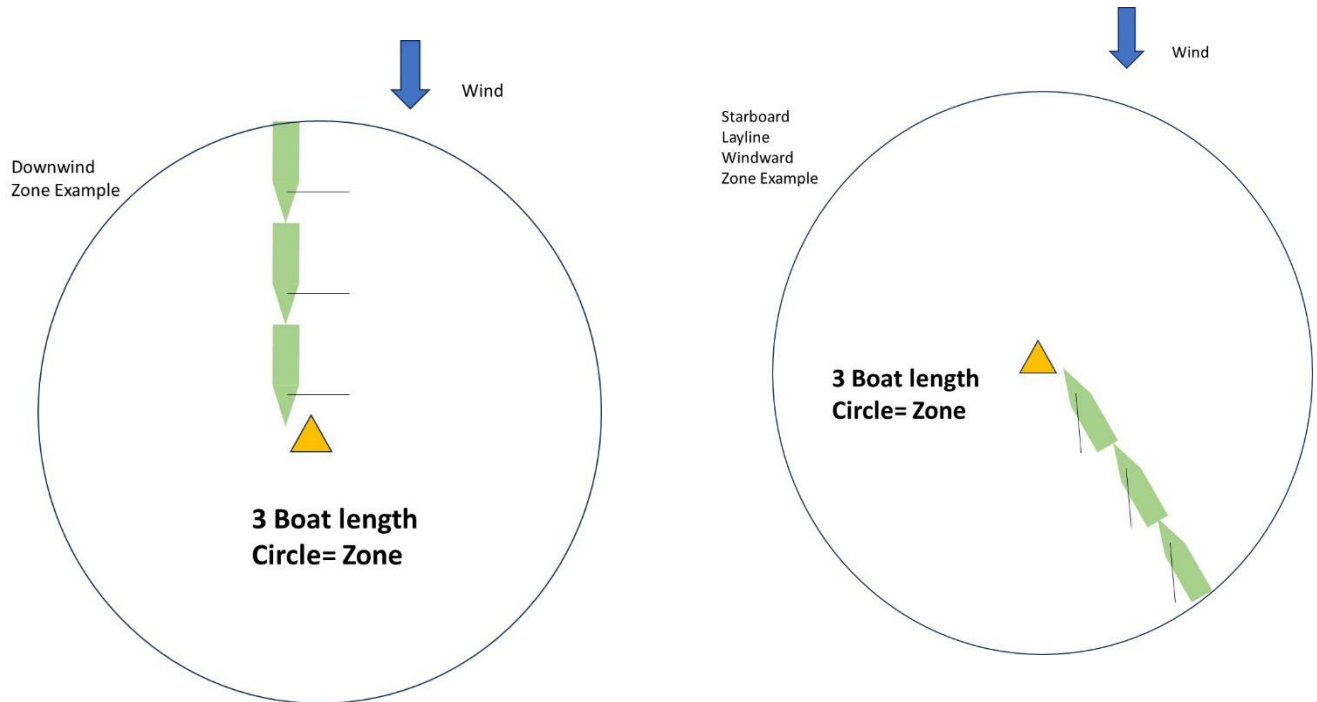
Here are the Port and Starboard laylines at a Windward Mark



Marks and the Zone

- Marks are often where boats meet
- Rules are in place to create order and prevent injury and damage
- Rules related to rounding marks

Zone – the zone is a 3 boat length circle around a mark. With different sized boats, it is the length of the first boat to enter the zone.

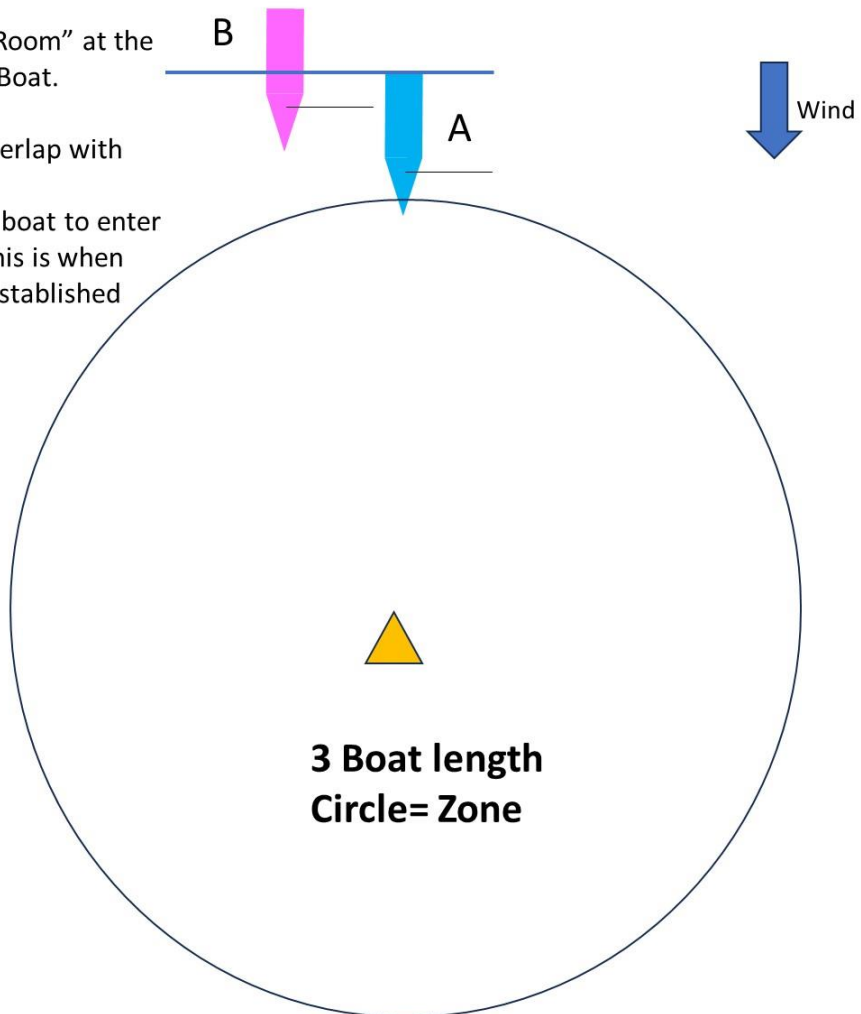


Mark Room – US Sailing Racing Rule 18

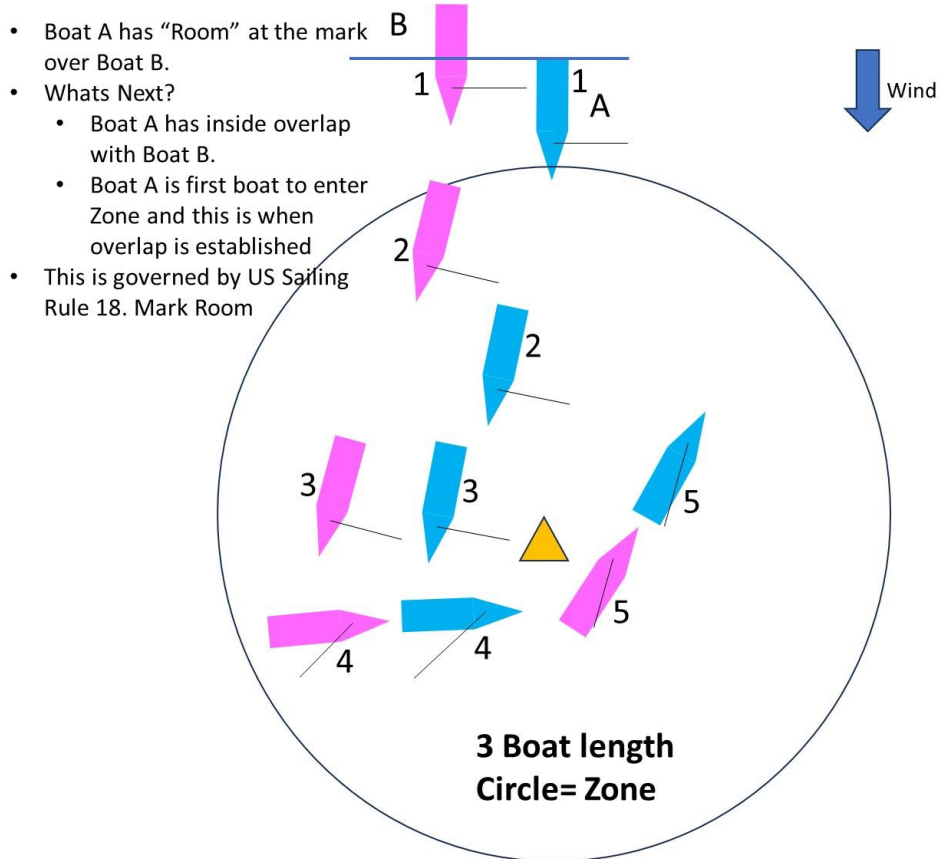
- **Mark-room** is given to a boat overlapped inside another boat when the hull of the first boat enters the zone
- **Overlap** is when a boat overlaps with a line abeam from the aftmost point of the other boats hull

Example

- Blue Boat has “Room” at the mark over Pink Boat.
- Why?
 - Blue has overlap with Pink.
 - Blue is first boat to enter Zone and this is when overlap is established
 - Rule 18.2

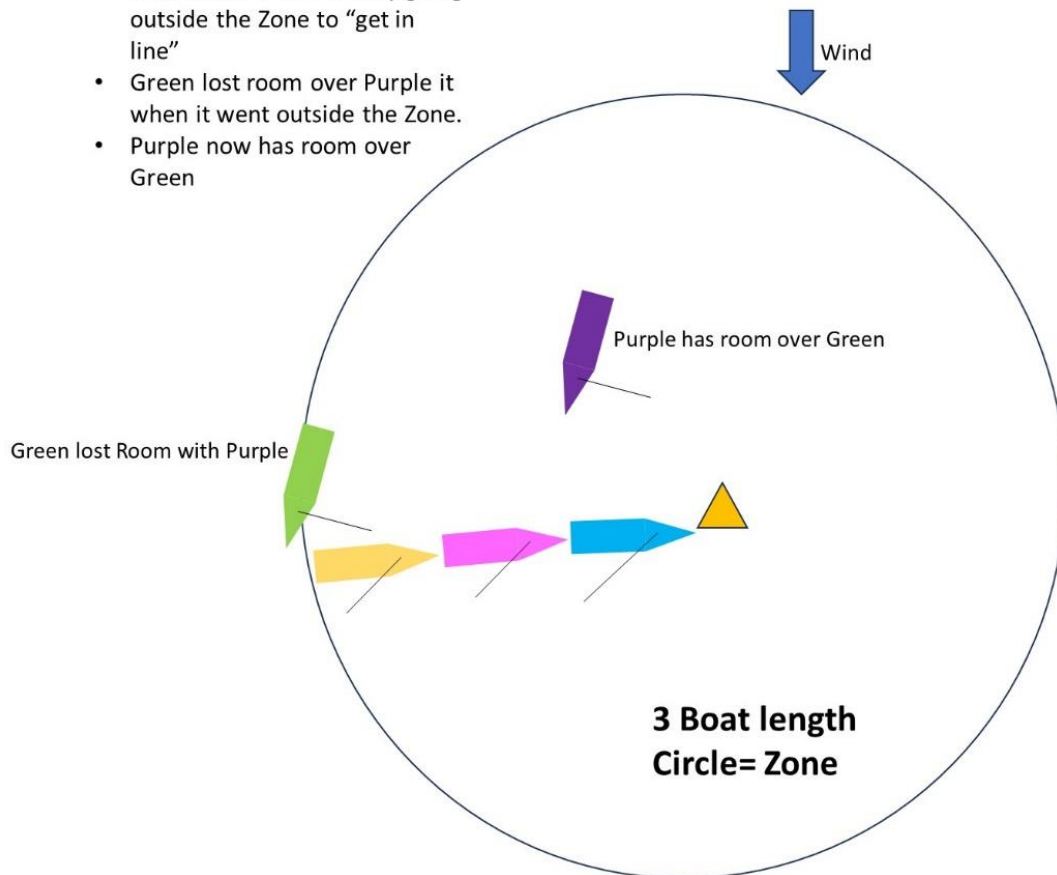


How is Room at the Mark executed? – Leeward Mark or Gates



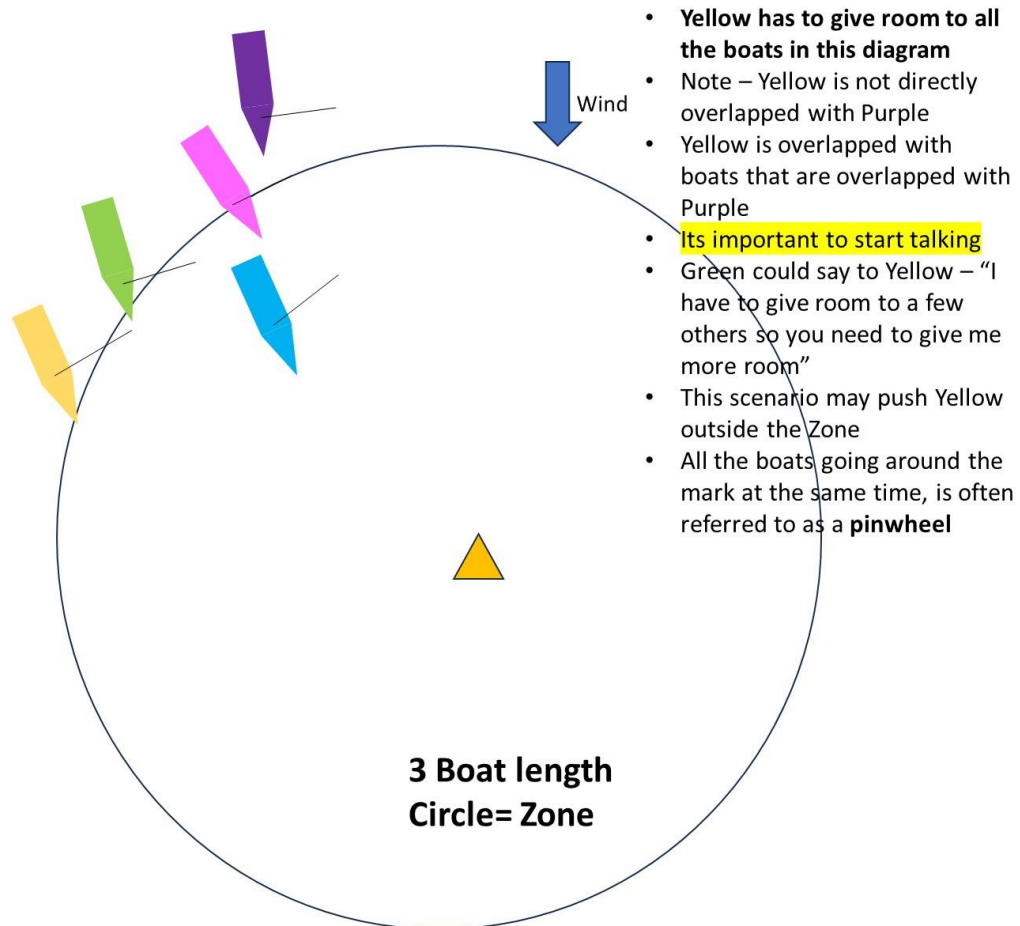
Mark Room is broken if a boat that previously had Mark Room goes outside the zone

- Here is a Scenario
- Careful to not break Room that was established when the first boat entered the zone by going outside the Zone to “get in line”
- Green lost room over Purple it when it went outside the Zone.
- Purple now has room over Green



Dealing with a Bunch of Boats

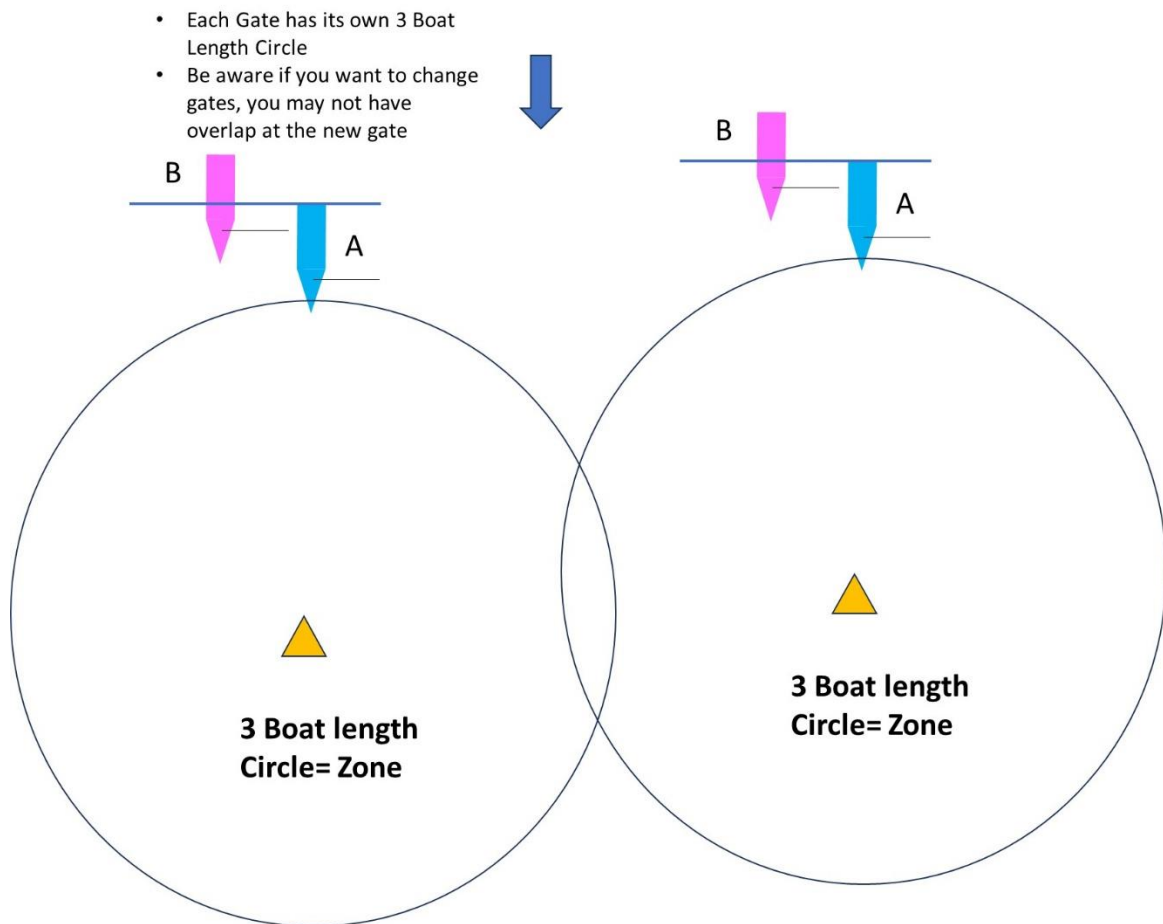
- There may be boats stacked up and if you are an outside boat, you may have to give room to a whole bunch of boats that you are not directly overlapped with.



Gates

Choosing a Gate

- Want to go to that side of the course
- Fewer Boats
- Better chance of clear air when going upwind
- Mark closer to you
- Many other reasons

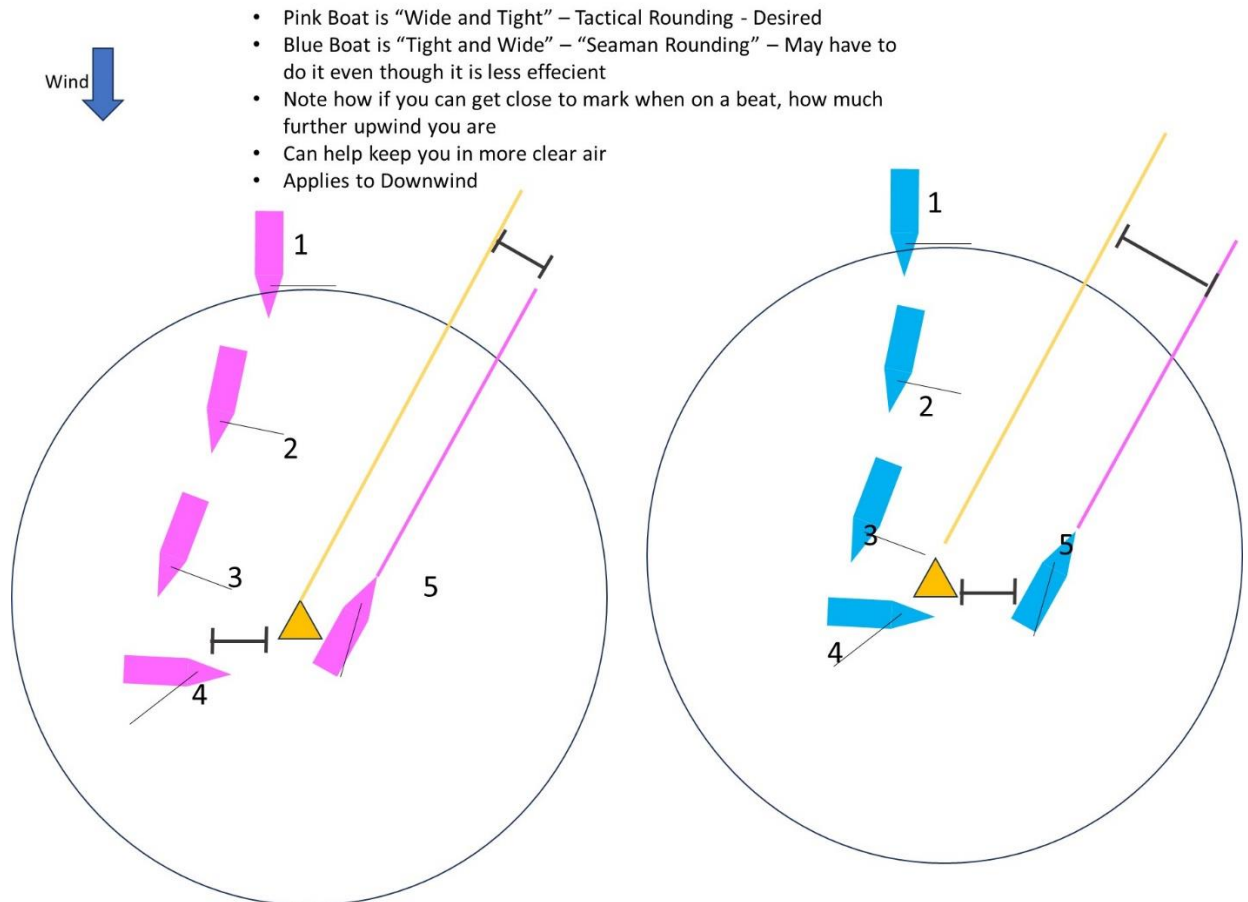


How do I execute a successful leeward mark rounding?

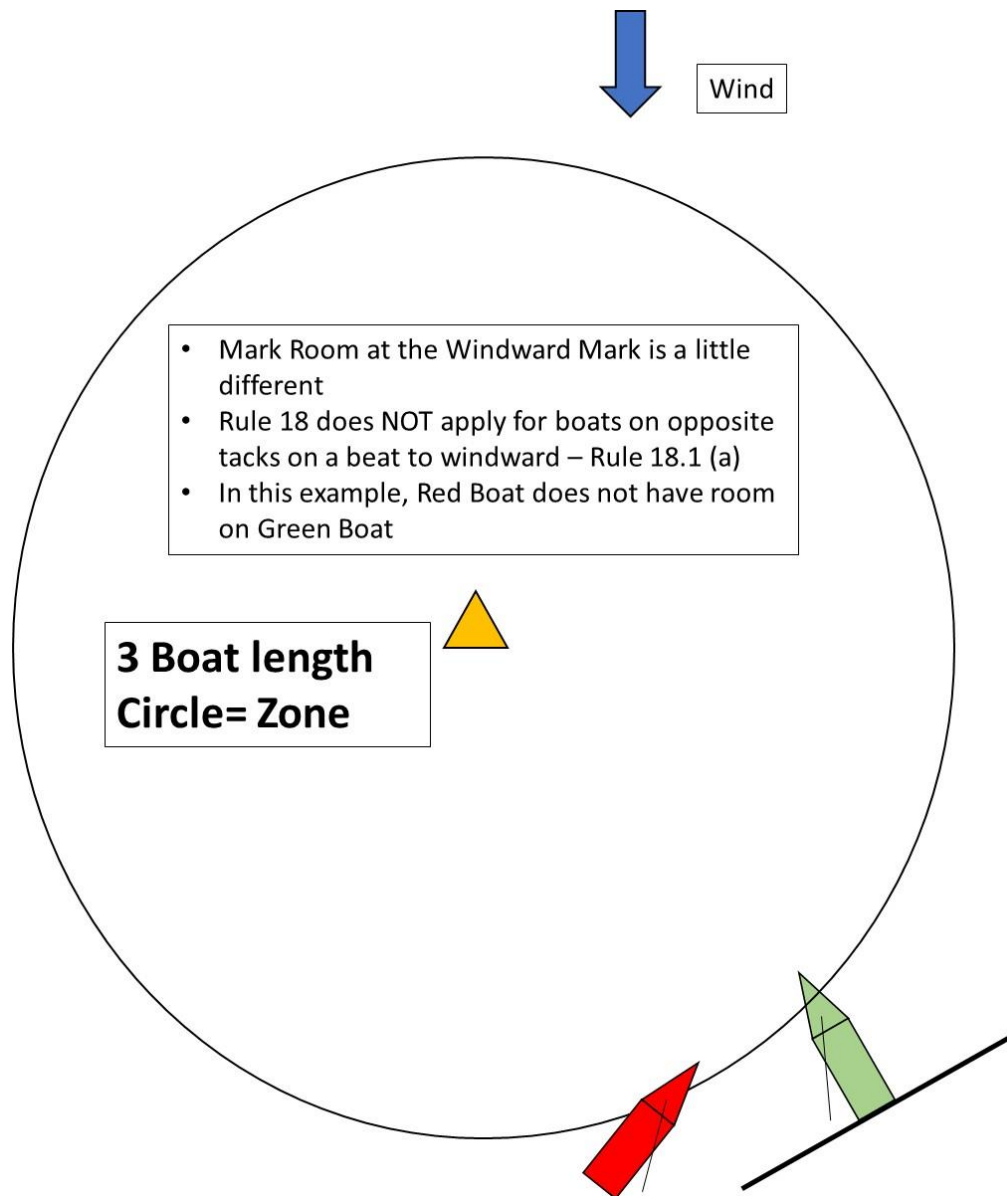
- Communicate early and clearly
- About 10-15 boat lengths from Mark look around and figure out who may be overlapped with who.
- Say “Linda, I may have room on you” or “Sally, I may have to give you room”

A Tactical Rounding – Leeward Mark or Gates

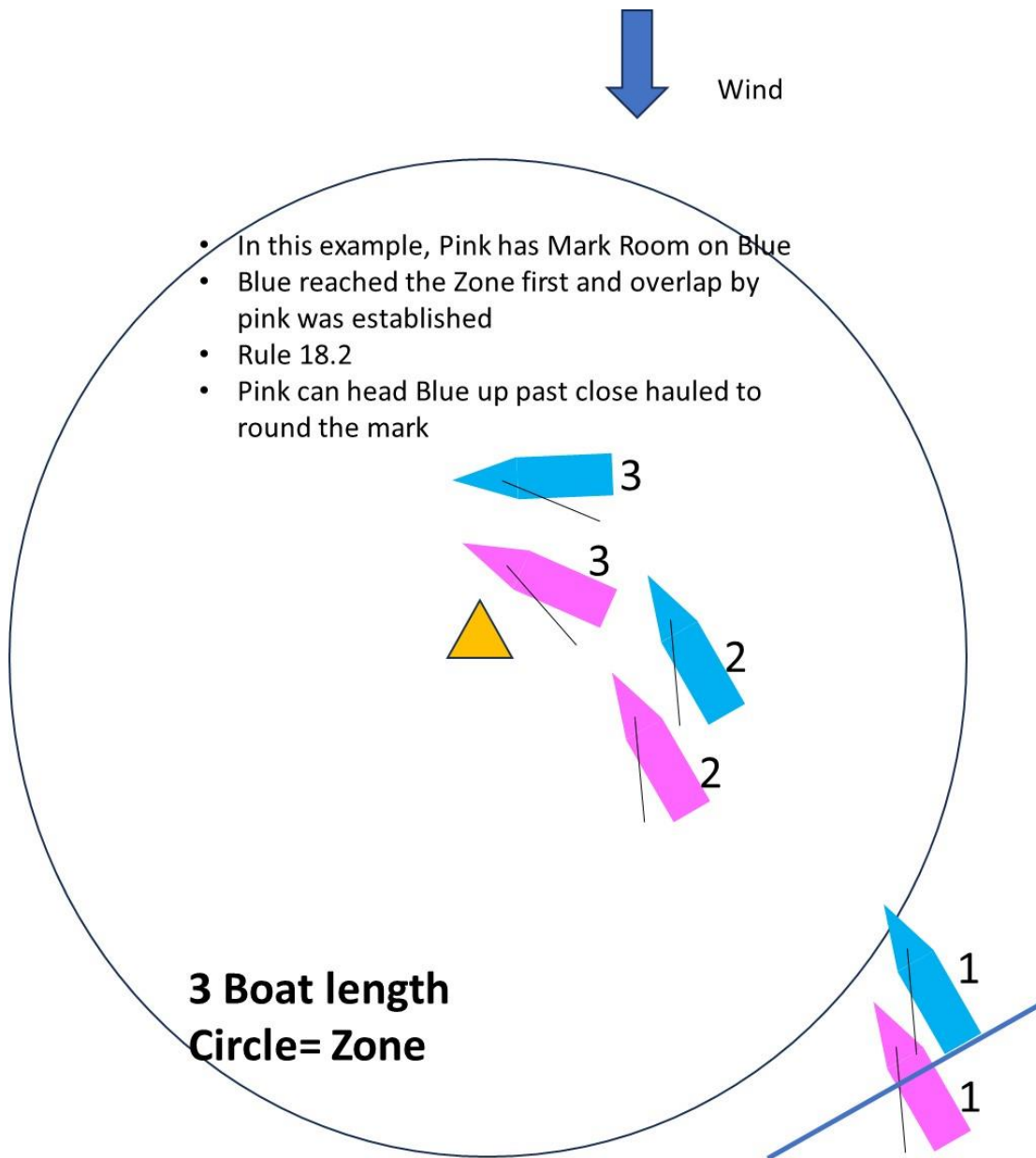
Should aim to do a “Tactical Rounding” – practice wide and tight rounding. Need to pull your sail in and hike hard when you head up wind.



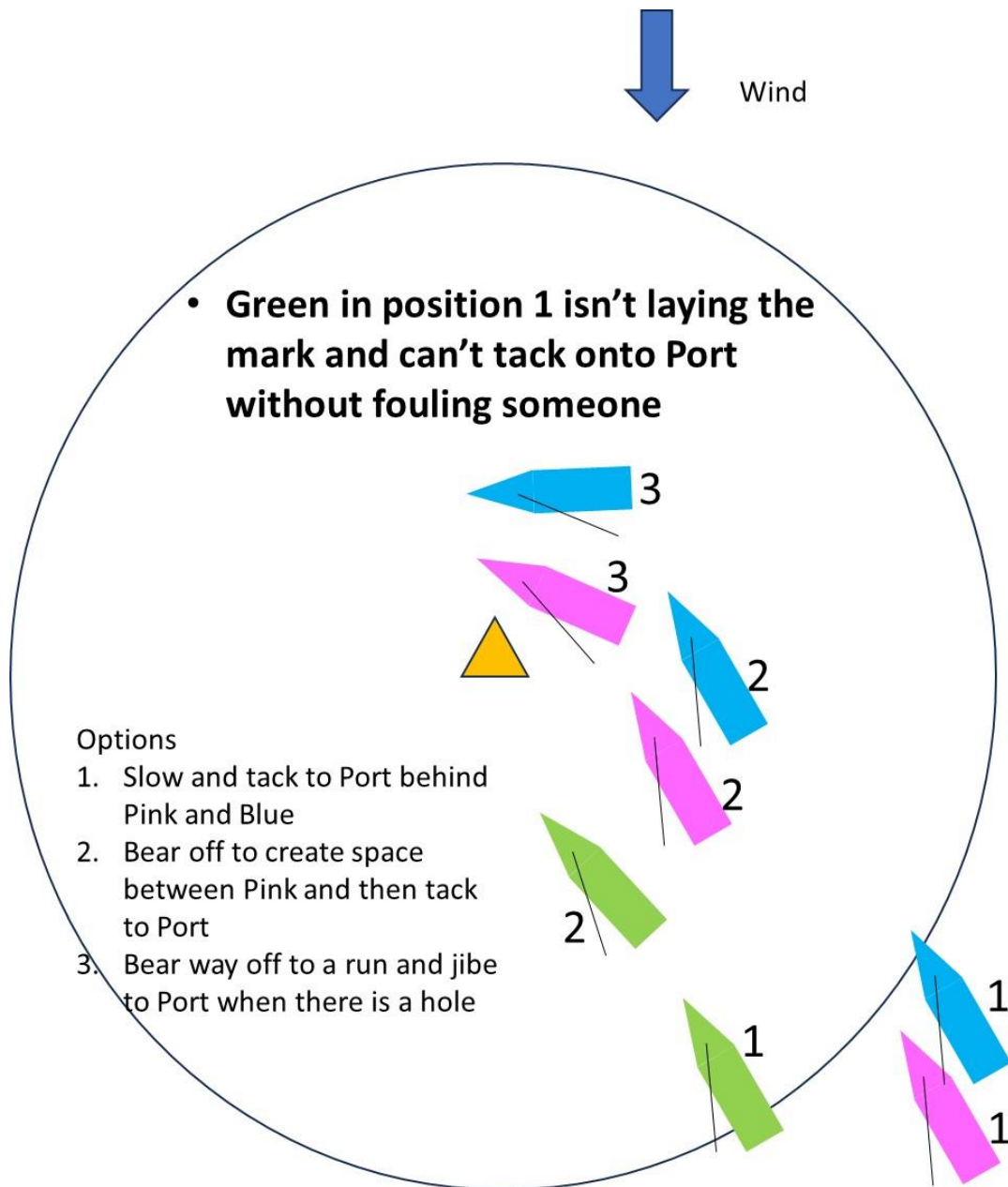
Mark room at the Windward Mark = Port/Starboard



Example - Mark Room at the Windward Mark



What You Can't do at a Windward Mark Rounding



Other things

1. How to slow down when going down wind
 - a. Centerline your boom – reduces the pressure on your sail
 - b. Do it soon enough that it helps put you where you want to be
2. Approaching the leeward mark
 - a. Think if you want to go after overlap and if you can acquire it in the time/distance left
 - b. Remember as boats start getting closer and the air gets disturbed, you may slow down which could change the overlap when you hit the zone and may change how to manage yourself when you are in the zone
 - c. Choosing the gate Factors
 - i. What side of the course do you want to end up on?
 - ii. Which gate is less crowded or has a complicated rounding?
 - iii. Which gate is closer?
 - iv. You might not have a choice because of where you are with respect to other boats
 - d. You may not know which gate the boat to your outside is going to go
 - i. It may impact the type of rounding you can do (wide and tight or tight and wide)
 - ii. Or they have to give you room still ...or not
 - iii. Communicate- Sometimes I ask “what gate are you thinking of?”
3. Leeward Mark rounding
 - a. Wide and Tight rounding gives you an advantage
 - b. Practice jibing and pulling in your sail efficiently and fast
 - c. Dirty air
 - i. It's inevitable
 - ii. Can tack out of it – Note what tack you are on – Port or Starboard and know if you need to stay clear of the boats going down wind
 - iii. Can stay on the same tack – may be in dirty air
 1. Reach down a bit and get below the dirty air plume of the boat in front of you
 2. Hang in there – often the boats in front of you are also in dirty air and will start tacking out
4. Managing the windward mark Starboard Layline
 - a. Don't Tack from Port to Starboard right in front of someone and cause them to head above close hauled to avoid you
 - b. If you are overstanding and are not 100% close hauled, expect Port tacker boats to tack under you to get inside of you and possibly head you to close hauled
 - c. If you are not making the mark, you may not be able to tack on Port to ladder out further because you may be blocked. You may need to head down wind or bear off until you have a lane to either jibe or tack onto Port and ladder out again.
 - d. When on Port you can duck Starboard boats to get to where you want to tack on the layline
 - e. Dirty air behind and under boats may cause you to have to Overstand the mark (go outside the layline)
 - f. Be mindful of coming in on Port in the zone – you do not have the right for Room if you have to head someone above close hauled
5. Rule 18 has some nuances that are the next level of understanding Room at the Mark

6. Set yourself up for success and communicate with your competitors
7. If you have a situation that you would like to figure out, take it ashore and talk it through – That's how you learn