

The New Section C Rules in Part 2 of *The Racing Rules of Sailing for 2009-2012*

*A Brief History
and
A Detailed Comparison of Each New Rule to the Corresponding 2005-2008 Rule*

By Dick Rose

With contributions from Ben Altman, Chris Atkins, Rob Overton and Richard Thompson

Note: The statements made and the opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and are not authoritative ISAF rules interpretations.

Part 1 – Background, Objectives and Principles

The old Section C rules, particularly old rule 18, were the most complicated rules in *The Racing Rules of Sailing for 2005-2008*. While competitors generally liked the ‘game’ they produced, many, including the last two ISAF Presidents, called for simplification.

In 2005 and 2006 the US SAILING Racing Rules Committee and the Royal Yachting Association Racing Rules Committee developed several drafts of possible revisions of Section C, and two preliminary US drafts were tested on the water by various fleets during the summer of 2006.

The new Section C rules (and related definitions) are the result of a process that was described to and approved by the ISAF Racing Rules Committee in November 2006. Using the US and RYA drafts and feedback from competitors and race officials as initial input, a special working party drafted the new Section C rules. Its members were Chris Atkins and Richard Thompson, from the UK, and Ben Altman, Rob Overton and the author, from the USA. In this paper the words ‘we’ and ‘our’ refer to the members of that working party.

The following objectives and principles were established in November 2006:

Objectives –

- The new Section C rules should reflect the way the average sailor perceives and interprets the old rules.
- The new rules should minimize changes to the way the ‘game’ is currently played.
- The new rules should, whenever two boats meet, make it clear whether rule 18 applies between them and, if so, how it applies.
- The new rules should be simpler than the old rules.

- The new rules should discourage contact by encouraging orderly behavior and discouraging last-minute claims.

Principles – To the extent possible,

- The new Section C rules should not ‘switch off’ either the basic right-of-way rules in Section A, rules 10 to 13, or the general limitations in Section B, rules 14 to 17.
- The new rules should eliminate ambiguities.
- The new rules should minimize exceptions.

Significant ways in which the new Section C rules achieve these objectives and follow these principles:

The new rules satisfy the first principle stated above by removing almost every instance in which a rule of Section C switches off a rule of Section A or B. These changes result in significant simplifications. (The sole exception to this principle is in rule 19.2(c) for continuing obstructions and, there, the exceptions will apply rarely and only for short periods of time.)

Old rule 18 began to apply when boats were ‘about to round or pass’ the mark – a vague, imprecise criterion that, even though Cases 84 and 94 attempted to explain it, was poorly understood by competitors and ignored by many. The ‘lock-in’ provisions for rights and obligations (in old rules 18.2(b) and (c)) were determined when one boat reached the two-length zone. New rule 18 eliminates the ‘about to round or pass’ criterion. It begins to apply at the same moment that the ‘lock-in’ provisions are determined and begin to apply – when one boat reaches the three-length zone. This simplifies the rule, eliminates the ambiguous ‘about to round or pass’ criterion, and makes it easier to determine when the rule applies. The change from a two-length zone to a three-length zone was tested on the water in 2006 by competitors in several fleets who reported that they preferred the three-length zone because it gave them more time to hail each other and sort out their rights and obligations before beginning to round the mark, with the result that mark roundings were more orderly and resulted in fewer protests.

In both old rule 18 and new rule 18, the principal rules governing mark roundings are numbered 18.2(a), (b) and (c). However, new rules 18.2(a), (b) and (c) are much shorter and clearer, and they benefit from the new definition, *Mark-Room*. There are two important new aspects of these new rules: (1) The new definition *Mark-Room* spells out the obligation of a boat that is clear astern or overlapped outside at the zone from the time the rule begins to apply until the other boat is alongside the mark. The old definition of room at a mark (which is found by reading the definition *Room* and the preamble to old rule 18) is deficient in that it did not cover this time interval. (2) The new rule resolves a frequently debated question by clearly stating that, if a boat entitled to mark-room under new rule 18.2(b) leaves the zone, the rule ceases to apply.

Under the old rules, the rules that applied at obstructions were the same as those that applied at marks. However, few competitors sailed as if the rules were the same at obstructions as they were at marks. They almost invariably did not consider the two-length zone around obstructions, especially when they were approaching a line of

starboard tack boats awaiting their start, all of which were obstructions. The new Section C rules cover room at obstructions in a separate new rule, rule 19. This rule, which does not in any way rely on the 'zone' concept, is essentially the simplified rule that most sailors sail by today at an obstruction. It more accurately reflects the 'game' that is played at obstructions today in fleet racing than does old rule 18. In addition, at an obstruction new rule 19 is far simpler than old rule 18.

Other ways in which the new rules achieve the objectives and follow the principles stated in November 2006:

The change in the definition *Clear Astern* and *Clear Ahead; Overlap* has another important benefit. Under the old definition two sport boats approaching a leeward mark to be left to starboard, and converging on opposite tacks at high speed with asymmetric spinnakers set, were not overlapped until rule 18 began to apply – at the moment they become 'about to round or pass' the mark. This created ambiguity about when the outside starboard boat was required to begin to give room, and it led to several serious collisions. Under the new definition, overlaps exist between boats sailing off-wind on opposite tacks, whether or not rule 18 applies, and the moment at which the new rule begins to apply is much clearer. These improvements should reduce the incidence of serious collisions between sport boats at leeward marks.

The course for many races requires boats to sail around an island. In such a case the island is a mark, but it is a continuing obstruction as well. It has, for decades, been unclear how to apply old rule 18 while passing such an island/mark. New rules 18.1(d) and 19 remove that ambiguity.

There has been debate between knowledgeable rules students about whether an obstruction that is another boat racing can ever be a continuing obstruction. The new last sentence for the definition *Obstruction* removes that ambiguity and simplifies new rule 19 by reducing the number of situations in which rule 19.2(c) applies.

There has been debate about the meaning of 'fetching'. A study of several dictionaries, including some devoted solely to nautical terms, has failed to resolve the debate because the term's definition differs from one dictionary to another. The ambiguity is removed by the inclusion of a new definition, *Fetching*.

The Racing Rules Committee asked that the new rules be drafted in such a way that the problems pointed out in Submissions 131-05, 132-05 and 125-06 were addressed and resolved.

Submissions 131-05 and 125-06 both addressed an unintended and, until recently, unnoticed consequence of old rule 18.3 – it did not apply to a boat that was subject to rule 13 in the zone, having not yet completed her tack. In addition, if the tacking boat became overlapped inside the fetching boat, the tacking boat was entitled to room under old rule 18.2(a). The change in the first part of new rule 18.3 removes the right of such a tacking boat to room and makes rule 18.3 applicable to her.

Submission 132-05 addressed the complex differences that existed under old rule 18 between the rights and obligations of a boat clear astern approaching a continuing

obstruction and one passing a continuing obstruction. There are no such differences in rights and obligations in the new rules.

New rule 20 is a revised version of old rule 19. In the revised rule, the obligations of each boat have been set out in logical time sequence. For safety, new rule 20 requires that a boat that hails for room to tack must be given room, even if safety does not require her to make a substantial course change to avoid the obstruction or if the hailed boat is fetching the obstruction. However, if her hail is improper for either of those two reasons, then she breaks new rule 20.3. This last feature of new rule 20 makes a ‘game’ change that enhances safety and may avoid some serious damage.

* * * * *

Part 2 – Detailed Comparison of the Old and New Section C Rules

Comparison of the old Section C preamble and old rules 18.2(d) and 64.1(b) to new rules 18.5, 64.1(c) and 20.2:

The old preamble to Section C has been deleted. New rules 18.5 and 20.2 deal with the situations to which the old preamble applied. The old preamble gave ‘precedence’ to a Section C rule that conflicted with a rule of Section A or B. That language was the source of a great deal of confusion and gave rise to many questions. New rules 18.5 and 20.2 do not give precedence to any rule, but under certain circumstances they will exonerate a boat that breaks a rule while taking mark-room or room to which she is entitled. Under the old rules, rule 64.1(b) provided exoneration to Boat B in situations in which, as a consequence of breaking a rule, Boat A compelled Boat B to break a rule. The new rules retain rule 64.1(b) unchanged (although it has been renumbered as rule 64.1(c)), and it too applies whenever a new Section C rule applies. Note that, when new rule 19 applies, there is no special new rule on exoneration like new rules 18.5 and 20.2. Therefore, when new rule 19 applies, the only exoneration rule that will apply is the old exoneration rule 64.1(b), renumbered 64.1(c).

Note that the old Section C preamble applied to all the rules of Sections A and B, including rule 14. Although I cannot think of an example, to the extent that any old Section C rule conflicted with rule 14, the old Section C rule would have taken precedence. However, new rules 18.5 and 20.2 do not ever exonerate a boat entitled to mark-room that breaks rule 14.

Note also that new rule 18.5 covers the situations that old rule 18.2(d) covered. It is for that reason that old rule 18.2(d) has been deleted.

Comparison of old rule 18.1 to new rule 18.1:

Old rule 18 applied at marks and obstructions. New rule 18 applies at marks, including marks that are also obstructions. New rule 19 applies at obstructions, but not at obstructions that are also marks. There is one exception: new rule 19 always applies at a continuing obstruction, even if the continuing obstruction is a mark.

When rule 18 begins to apply: The old ‘about to round or pass’ criterion for rule 18 beginning to apply is not in new rule 18; the new rule begins to apply between boats when one of the boats is ‘in the [new] zone.’ Two points are worth noting. The new zone is increased in size from a two-length zone to a three-length zone. Also, under old rule 18 the rule began to apply at a different time from the time at which the lock-in/lock-out provisions of old rules 18.2(b) and (c) began to apply. New rule 18 is simpler in that the time at which it begins to apply is the same time that the lock-in/lock-out provisions of new rules 18.2(b) and (c) begin to apply.

One of the advantages of the ‘about to round or pass’ criterion for old rule 18 being ‘switched on’ was that, in fast boats, very strong wind or strong favourable current, it could be argued that rule 18 began to apply further from the mark – at a (rather vaguely specified) distance from the zone. That is no longer the case. However, it should be noted that, when boats have been overlapped for some time before either of them reaches the zone, the outside boat’s obligation under rule 18.2(b)’s first sentence begins the moment one of the boats reaches the zone. Therefore, in order to comply with rule 18.2(b), a fast moving boat will have to anticipate this by sailing a course for some time before either boat reaches the zone so that she will be in compliance with the rule at the moment she reaches the zone. This means that if, while outside the zone, an outside right-of-way boat forces an inside boat to a course that does not enable the inside boat to sail to the mark in a seamanlike way, the outside boat risks breaking rule 18.2(b) at the moment rule 18.2(b) begins to apply.

There is a new provision in rule 86.1(b) permitting sailing instructions to change the zone size, under specified conditions, to either a two-length or a four-length zone. Without this provision the zone size, being specified in a definition, could not otherwise be changed. Organizers of events involving fast boats may want to take advantage of the option to change the zone to a four-length zone. On the other hand, organizers of events sailed in slower boats and/or on small bodies of water may want to take advantage of the option to change the zone to a two-length zone. We encourage organizing authorities only to change the zone size in exceptional circumstances where the need is clear. Frequent changes in the zone size from event to event risks introducing confusion and uncertainty.

When rule 18 ceases to apply: The old criterion for rule 18 ceasing to apply (when the boats ‘have passed’ the mark) has been deleted and not replaced. The new rule’s principal obligation, for one boat to give another mark-room, applies until it is no longer needed. However, note that when rule 18.2(b) applies, it may cease to apply sooner than the time at which mark-room is no longer needed. Rule 18.2(c) specifies two conditions under which rule 18.2(b) ceases to apply – if either boat passes head to wind or if the boat entitled to mark-room leaves the zone.

When rule 18 does not apply: New rule 18.1(c) states that rule 18 does not apply between a boat approaching a mark and one leaving it. This new provision is necessary to avoid a game change. What is stated in new rule 18.1(c) was implied by old rule 18.1’s first sentence, but it is not implied by the sentence in the new

rule that replaced that sentence. Note that neither ‘approaching’ nor ‘leaving’ are defined terms; we intend these to apply with their ordinary meaning – that a boat approaching the mark has yet to reach it, and a boat leaving a mark is in the final phase of her rounding or passing of it. Consider the analogy to a person who goes to a store, buys something, and leaves. He is approaching the store until he actually enters it; from then on, he is no longer approaching it. He is leaving the store from the time he pays and picks up his package of purchases until he arrives home. This asymmetry is intentional – consider two boats at a leeward mark, one of which, Boat A, arrives at the mark well before the other, Boat B. If A is finishing her rounding just as B reaches it, we want only the rules of Sections A and B to regulate their actions, even if A has not yet left the mark astern. On the other hand, if A and B are both alongside the mark at the same time we want rule 18 to apply between them, even if A arrived at the mark considerably before B did.

Old rule 18.1(a), which stated that rule 18 does not apply at a starting mark surrounded by navigable water that boats are approaching to start, has been moved to the preamble to new Section C. This was done because that exception applies to all the rules in new Section C.

***Mark-Room* – A comparison of the old and new rules with respect to what ‘room’ a boat is obligated to give while sailing to or at a mark:**

The old rules required boats to give ‘room’. The meaning of ‘room’ for the purposes of old rule 18 was stated in two sentences located in two widely separated places in the rulebook – in the Definitions section in the definition *Room* and in the preamble to rule 18. New rule 18 requires that a boat obligated to give room give ‘mark-room’, a new defined term.

The amount of space that constitutes ‘mark-room’ depends on where the boat entitled to receive mark-room is located. Before a boat entitled to mark-room is ‘at’ the mark she is entitled to ‘room to sail to [it]’. While she is ‘at’ the mark, she is entitled to ‘room to sail her proper course’. (The use of ‘to’ and ‘at’ in the definition *Mark-Room* is discussed in more detail below.)

The old definition of room at a mark was incomplete; the new definition *Mark-Room* is not. The old definition lacked two important features, both of which are covered by the new definition.

1. The old definition only granted room for an inside boat ‘to round or pass between an outside boat and [the] mark’, and it was silent on what room, if any, was granted between the time one of the boats entered the zone and the time the inside boat needed space between the outside boat and the mark. The new definition covers both those time intervals.
2. The old definition stated that it covered room ‘in rule 18.’ Old rule 18 imposed requirements to give room on ‘outside’ boats and also, in old rule 18.2(b), on boats clear ahead or clear astern. However, the old definition only specified room that an outside boat was required to give an inside boat. Thus, it was not at all clear what the obligation to

give room meant for a boat clear ahead or a boat clear astern that was required by rule 18.2(b) to give room.

The new term ‘mark-room’ only applies to the space that must be given under new rule 18, and that new rule applies only at marks (including marks that are also obstructions). However, if a mark is a continuing obstruction, then new rule 19 applies and new rule 18 does not. At obstructions that are not marks and at all continuing obstructions (including those that are marks), new rule 19 applies, and it only requires an outside overlapped boat to give ‘room’ and not ‘mark-room’.

The new definition *Mark-Room* answers a question that competitors have been asking for many years. It makes it clear at what time an outside leeward boat with luffing rights may no longer luff an inside windward boat towards the ‘wrong’ side of a mark. Consider two overlapped boats running on port tack to a leeward mark to be left to port. After one of the two boats is in the zone, the leeward boat is obligated by new rule 18.2(b) to give the windward boat ‘room ... to sail to the mark’ (see the first part of the definition *Mark-Room*). Inside the zone, if the outside boat were to luff the windward boat to a course taking her to the wrong side of the mark, the outside boat would not be giving the windward boat space to sail to the mark. Therefore, that luff would break new rule 18.2, even if the outside boat later bears off and lets the inside boat sail to the mark. If such an outside boat luffs the inside boat towards the wrong side of the mark before either of them is in the zone, then, provided she complies with rule 16.1, the outside leeward boat breaks no rule. Under the old rules, there was no clearly defined moment at which such a leeward boat could no longer luff the windward boat towards the wrong side.

The use of ‘to’ and ‘at’ in the definition *Mark-Room*:

Several experienced sailors, upon reading the new definition *Mark-Room*, have asked what ‘to’ and ‘at’ mean in that definition. In the Terminology section of the Introduction, readers are told that words such as ‘to’ and ‘at’ that do not appear in italics are ‘used in the sense ordinarily understood in nautical or general use.’ Look in *The shorter Oxford English Dictionary* and you will find many thousands of words in fine print devoted to ‘to’ and ‘at’. We must ask what those words mean in the context of the definition *Mark-Room* for a boat that is sailing a course in compliance with rule 28. We picked the words ‘to’ and ‘at’ instead of several alternative words because anyone at all fluent in English has learned to use those two two-letter words accurately in a variety of contexts.

An easy to visualize, land-based analogy may be helpful. Suppose that you are driving your car north towards and then into a traffic circle or roundabout. Cars in the circle are required to drive counterclockwise around a paved ‘island’ in the middle of the circle. You plan to drive around the island until you can exit headed west. First, you drive to a point where the northbound road intersects the traffic circle’s circular road – i.e., to a point at which you can begin to round the paved island. You leave the traffic circle using the exit that takes you to the road headed west. The island is analogous to a rounding mark for a racing sailboat, and your

car's track into the circle, around the island and out of the circle is analogous to that of a boat sailing to and around that rounding mark leaving it to port.

To drive the 'course' described above, you will first need to drive 'to' the circle – that is, to a point from which you can enter the flow of traffic around the island. Once you reach that point, you are 'at' the circle. From there you enter the circular road and drive on it until you reach the point at which you leave the circle on the westbound road. Carrying this analogy out onto the water, a boat is sailing 'to' a mark until she is in a position close to the mark from which she begins the maneuver of rounding or passing it on the required side. From that time, until she leaves the mark, she is 'at' it.

A boat entitled to '*room to sail to the mark*' is entitled to the space she needs in the existing conditions to sail promptly in a seamanlike way until she is in a position close to the mark from which to begin the maneuver of rounding or passing the mark on the required side. If a third boat is inside her and she is obligated to give a third boat mark-room, then she must be given space to comply with that obligation. If the mark is moving in large waves, then she must be given space to sail to it without risk of it touching her. While sailing '*to the mark*' if the boat entitled to mark-room is required to keep clear of the boat giving her mark-room, then she is not entitled to the space needed to sail her proper course to the mark – i.e., the course she would sail to the mark in order to finish as soon as possible in the absence of the boat obligated to give her mark-room. However, from the position where she can begin to maneuver to round or pass the mark until she leaves the mark, she is entitled to space to sail her proper course.

Comparison of the old definition *Two-Length Zone* to the new definition *Zone*:

- The old definition established a zone around both marks and obstructions. The new definition establishes a zone only around marks.
- The dimension that defines the zone has been increased from two hull lengths of the boat nearer to the mark to three hull lengths of the boat nearer to the mark.
- Otherwise, the wording of the old definition is identical to the wording of the new definition's first sentence.
- The new definition has a new second sentence stating that a boat is in the zone when any part of her hull is in the zone. Making the criterion of 'in the zone' depend on a part of the hull being in the zone has some advantages. (1) A boat with an extendable sprit can not get an advantage by extending or failing to extend her sprit near the perimeter of the zone. (2) It is easier to judge where your hull is than to judge where the foremost part of your spinnaker or sprit is. Therefore, the criterion should result in slightly more consistent and accurate judgments by competitors as to when their boat is 'in the zone.'
- Note: New rule 86.1(b) states that 'sailing instructions may change to 'two' or 'four' the number of hull lengths determining the *zone* around *marks*, provided that the number is the same for all *marks* and all boats using those *marks*.'

New definition *Fetching*:

- It turns out there was not agreement among various authoritative dictionaries, including several dictionaries of maritime terms, on crucial aspects of the meaning of the verb ‘to fetch’. The term is used in new rules 18.3, 20.3 and C2.6. Therefore, we thought it was necessary to include a definition.
- Note that, under the new definition in Definitions, a boat fetches a mark even if she must shoot to windward above close-hauled (without turning past head to wind) in order to pass to windward of it and leave it on the required side.

Reasons for changes in the definition *Clear Astern* and *Clear Ahead*; *Overlap*:

The new definition differs from the old definition in two respects.

- A new sentence was added for clarity. It states, ‘These terms always apply to boats on the same *tack*.’
- A significant addition was made to the last sentence. The added words are ‘or both boats are sailing more than ninety degrees from the true wind.’ There are two reasons for adding these words. (1) Suppose that two boats are running on opposite tacks alongside one another and approaching an obstruction (for example, an anchored boat). They plan to pass it so that the port-tack boat will be inside the starboard-tack boat as they pass. Without the added words, the boats would not be overlapped and, therefore, rule 19.2(b) would not require the starboard-tack boat to give the port-tack boat room. (2) Now, suppose that two sport boats are broad reaching at high speeds on opposite tacks towards a leeward mark to be left to starboard. If each of them holds her course, they will collide bow to bow just inside the zone. Without the added words, the boats are not overlapped until one of them is in the zone. With the added words, the boats are overlapped during their approach to the zone, making it clear to the starboard-tack boat that she will be obligated under rule 18.2(b) to give the port-tack boat mark-room beginning at the moment when the first of them is in the zone. Were it not for the added words, the boats would not be overlapped until new rule 18 began to apply – when one of them was in the zone.

Reasons for the added words in new rule 17:

The first sentence of new rule 17 (which, in the old rules, was numbered 17.1) has been changed by the addition of the words ‘on the same *tack*’ so that it now reads:

If a boat *clear astern* becomes *overlapped* within two of her hull lengths to *leeward* of a boat on the same *tack*, she shall not sail above her *proper course* while they remain on the same *tack* and *overlapped* within that distance, unless in doing so she promptly sails astern of the other boat.

These words were added to rule 17 to avoid ‘game changes’. (1) Without the added words rule 17 would continue to apply if a leeward boat to which rule 17 applied gybed twice. Under old rule 17.1, if a leeward boat to which rule 17.1 applied gybed twice she was no longer subject to rule 17. With the added words, new rule 17 leads to the same game. (2) Also, if the words had not been added to

rule 17, the rule would have imposed a strange and illogical requirement in the following situation. Suppose that, after having been clear astern, Boat L becomes overlapped with Boat W within two of her hull lengths to leeward of W. Then, while still within two lengths of W, L gybes. Now the boats are on opposite tacks, but, without the added words ‘on the same *tack*’, rule 17 would not permit L to sail above her proper course on her new tack – even though sailing above her proper course on her new tack would increase the separation between the boats.

Reasons for the changes in the definition *Obstruction*:

The new definition differs from the old definition in three respects:

- The words ‘or *mark-room*’ have been added to the penultimate sentence of the new definition (as they were in two places in rule 14 as well) to make it clear that a boat is an obstruction when two other boats are each obliged to give her mark-room.
- Rule 21 in the old rules will be numbered 22 in the new rules.
- The last sentence of the new definition is new. This is a significant change. That sentence states, ‘A vessel under way, including a boat *racing*, is never a continuing *obstruction*.’ It was unclear under the old rules whether a vessel under way was or was not a continuing obstruction. We debated whether such an obstruction should or should not be a continuing one, and we decided that the ‘game’ at obstructions would be simpler if it was not one. Also, we noted that new rule 19.2(c) is intended primarily to apply when boats are sailing as close as they can to a shoreline in order to escape the effect of a contrary current. We did not think that rule 19.2(c) was needed or helpful when the obstruction was a vessel under way.

Comparison of old rule 18.2(a) to new rule 18.2(a):

Old rule 18.2(a) began ‘When boats are *overlapped* the outside boat shall give the inside boat *room* to round or pass the *mark* or *obstruction*’. New rule 18.2(b) begins, ‘When boats are *overlapped* the outside boat shall give the inside boat *mark-room*’. There are some differences here: (1) As noted above, new rule 18 does not apply at an obstruction that is not also a mark; therefore, the words ‘or *obstruction*’ are not in new rule 18.2(a). (2) The new Section C rules do not use the phrase ‘round or pass’. (3) Also, the words ‘give the inside boat *mark-room*’ are appropriate here given the new definition *Mark-Room*.

One important point to note: Old rule 18.2(a) contained the statement, ‘and if the inside boat has right of way the outside boat shall also *keep clear*.’ The new rule does not contain such a statement. Nevertheless, because the new preamble to Section C and new rule 18 contain no statement ‘switching off’ or giving precedence to any of the rules of Sections A and B, the rules of Section A apply and, therefore, if the inside boat has right of way the outside boat must, in addition to giving mark-room, also keep clear. Therefore, the omission of ‘and if the inside boat has right of way the outside boat shall also *keep clear*’ does not change the game in any way.

New rule 18.2(a) differs from old rule 18.2(a) in how it deals with exceptions. The old rule was called a ‘Basic Rule’, but it contained a rather broad and cryptic last sentence, ‘Other parts of rule 18 contain exceptions to this rule.’ If you study old rule 18, you will find exceptions to old rule 18.2(a) in six places (twice in old rule 18.2(b), and once in each of the following old rules: 18.2(c), 18.2(e), 18.3 and 18.5). New rule 18.2(a) contains just one exception and that is explicit – new rule 18.2(a) does not apply if new rule 18.2(b) does apply.

New rule 18.2(a) does not have a title and is not referred to as a ‘Basic Rule’ as old rule 18.2(a) was. This is intentional. The situations covered by rule 18.2(b) comprise by far the most common applications of rule 18. Therefore, new rule 18.2(a) will only apply in situations that occur comparatively infrequently. For example, it will apply if boats become overlapped in the zone as a result of one of them tacking or if they become overlapped in the zone as Boat O does in Case 2 in *The Case Book for 2005-2008*. In that case a boat clear astern, Boat I, reached the zone before the boat clear ahead, Boat O. Later, when Boat O turned towards the mark, she became overlapped outside Boat I.

Comparison of old rules 18.2(b) and (c) to new rules 18.2(b) and (c):

There is an important rule simplification in new rule 18.2(b)’s second sentence. Compare that sentence to the first sentence of old rule 18.2(c). Under the latter, a boat that was clear ahead when she reached the two-length zone was given right of way over the boat clear astern. This led to some rather unusual rule reversals in which a port-tack boat had right of way over a starboard-tack boat, or a windward boat had right of way over a leeward boat. For example, under old rule 18.2(c), on a run if a boat on port tack reached the zone clear ahead of a boat clear astern on starboard tack, then the port tack boat held right of way until old rule 18 ceased to apply. Also, at a port rounding leeward mark, if a boat running on port tack reached the zone clear ahead of a boat clear astern that was also on port tack, and if inside the zone the boat clear astern became overlapped to leeward outside the other boat, then the inside boat, now the windward boat, had right of way over the outside boat, now the leeward boat. Such rule reversals will not occur under new rules 18.2(b) and (c).

The first sentence of new rule 18.2(b) replaces many of the applications of old rules 18.2(a) and 18.2(b). The second sentence of new rule 18.2(b) replaces the first sentence of old rule 18.2(c).

The first sentence of new rule 18.2(c) replaces old rule 18.2(b) and the second and third sentences of old rule 18.2(c). New rule 18.2(c)’s second sentence replaces old rule 18.2(c)’s fourth sentence.

New rule 18.2(c)’s second sentence contains new wording that answers a question that was frequently asked about old rules 18.2(b) and (c). That is, suppose boats are in the zone and subject to either old rule 18.2(b) or old rule 18.2(c) and that at a later time, but before they leave the mark on the next leg, they sail or are carried by current out of the zone. Does rule 18 cease to apply and, if so, when? Under new rule 18.2(c)’s last sentence the answer to the question is clear. Rule 18.2(b)

ceases to apply if the boat entitled to mark-room leaves the zone. When she reenters the zone, rule 18.2 will apply to her afresh.

Comparison of old rule 18.2(e)'s first sentence to new rule 18.2(d):

New rule 18.2(d) is, word for word, identical to old rule 18.2(e)'s first sentence.

Comparison of old rule 18.2(e)'s second sentence to new rule 18.2(e):

New rule 18.2(e) is designed to do what old rule 18.2(e)'s second sentence did. We changed the wording to fix what was judged to be a flaw in the old rule. The old rule applied 'if the outside boat is unable to give *room* when an *overlap* begins.' The new rule applies 'if ... from the time the *overlap* began, the outside boat has been unable to give *mark-room*.' We think the new rule's criterion is fairer. It will frequently be the case that a boat is unable to give mark-room at the instant that an overlap begins, but she will be able to do so a short time later. If rule 18.2 obligates an outside boat to give mark-room, she should do so if she can, and that is what new rule 18.2(e) requires.

Unlike old rule 18.2(e)'s second sentence, new rule 18.2(e) only applies to inside overlaps obtained from clear astern. The new condition limiting the rule's application to inside overlaps was added so that an outside boat could not deny an inside boat mark-room in the following situation. Suppose a boat obtains an outside overlap very close to another boat. Then the outside boat claims that, because she is very close to the other boat, she is unable to give the other mark-room. The new condition limiting the new rule's application to overlaps obtained from clear astern was added so that a boat that tacked into an outside overlap could not deny mark-room to the inside boat in the following situation. At a windward mark to be left to starboard, Boat S is close-hauled on starboard tack on a track slightly higher than her direct course to the mark. P tacks into a lee bow position very close to S and then P claims that from the time the overlap began (when P turned past head to wind) she was so close to S that she was unable to give S mark-room. We thought that gaining an advantage in these two situations by establishing an overlap very close to another boat was unfair.

Comparison of old rule 18.3 to new rule 18.3:

New rule 18.3 differs from old rule 18.3 in four respects.

- The words 'completes a tack in the *two-length zone*' have been replaced by 'changes *tack*, and as a result is subject to rule 13 in the *zone*'. This was done to eliminate an unintended loophole in old rule 18.3. This loophole was brought to the attention of the ISAF Racing Rules Committee by Submissions 131-05 and 125-06. To appreciate the problem, consider the following situation. In moderate winds and smooth seas two keel boats on opposite tacks are approaching a windward mark to be left to port. S is fetching the mark on starboard tack. Just outside the zone P changes tacks by turning past head to wind. P (now on starboard tack) does not immediately bear off to a close-hauled starboard tack course. Instead she 'shoots' to windward on a starboard-

tack course above close-hauled. While shooting to windward she is subject to rule 13. If we had retained old rule 18.3's wording, then rule 18.3 would not apply while P was 'shooting to windward' and S would have been required by rule 18.2 to give P mark-room (see ISAF Q&A 07-005). This is not the 'game' that the ISAF RRC wanted, and it instructed the committee drafting the new Section C rules to make sure that rule 18.3 applied to P in such a situation.

- The words 'on the required side' have been added in new rule 18.3(a). These were added to correct a small error in old rule 18.3(a). To see the error, consider this situation. Approaching a windward mark to be left to port, suppose that the tacking boat completes her tack directly in front of the fetching starboard-tack boat. The boat that had been fetching then bears off to avoid contact and, as a result, is no longer able to fetch the mark. That boat is not 'prevented from passing the mark'; she is only 'prevented from passing the mark on the required side.'
- By italicizing 'fetching' and including a new definition *Fetching*, we have clarified the meaning of the term.
- The words 'in which case rule 15 does not apply' have been deleted from new rule 18.3(b) because we did not believe they were needed now that a boat entitled to mark-room has the protection of new rule 18.5(b).

Comparison of old rule 18.4 to new rule 18.4:

There are two differences between old rule 18.4 and new rule 18.4.

- The new rule only applies at a mark and no longer applies at an obstruction that is not a mark. This rule is in the rulebook for reasons of safety. We did not think it was needed at an obstruction that is not a mark.
- The new rule does not apply at a gate mark because we felt that sometimes it is not clear which mark of a gate a leeward boat intends to round and that, in such a circumstance, safety would actually be enhanced by making rule 18.4 not apply at a gate mark.

Comparison of old rule 18, applied to obstructions, to new 19:

The new rules significantly change the rules that apply when passing an obstruction for two important and simple reasons – (1) the old rules were unnecessarily complex and, in common situations at a start or at a crowded off-wind mark, required judgments that would be difficult for any human mind to make. (2) Competitors did not sail by the old rules as they were written. Examples of the failings of the old rules for passing obstructions are easy to find. Here are two:

Example 1 Suppose, with about 40 seconds to go before a start, two overlapped starboard-tack dinghies, L and W, are approaching a line of starboard-tack dinghies that are all clear ahead of them, luffing their sails. L and W wish to find a gap in that line of dinghies and sail into it. Each and every boat in the line ahead

of L and W is an obstruction to both L and W (because L and W are required by rule 12 to keep clear of the boats in the line). Each boat in the line has a two-length zone around it. To apply old rule 18 to this situation, L and W must know whether or not they were overlapped when they entered each of these many zones. We have questioned experienced competitors and judges and rarely does anyone in either group consider these zones when analyzing a situation like this. To make matters even more complex, some or all of the boats in the line may also be continuing obstructions – experienced judges have spent many an hour debating whether they are or not.

Example 2 On a beat to windward, suppose L and W are both close-hauled on port tack approaching S, a boat close-hauled on starboard tack. There may, or may not, be a small overlap between W and L. W's bow may or may not be overlapped with L's stern. Both boats choose to bear off and duck behind S's stern. Under the old rules, W was only entitled to room from L if W was overlapped with L when L reached the two-length zone around S. Reports from sailors indicate that they did not consider the zone. Instead, L gave W room if W was overlapped with L while L was passing S.

New rules 19.1 and 19.2(b) give the sailing community short and simple rules for passing obstructions that operate in accordance with the way sailors report they sail at obstructions using the old rules. All parts of old rule 18 applied at obstructions, and this added to the complexity of the old rules at obstructions.

New rule 19.1 states that new rule 19 applies 'between boats at an *obstruction* except when it is also a *mark* the boats are required to leave on the same side' and at any continuing obstruction, including a continuing obstruction that is also a mark. Just as in the definition Mark-Room, the meaning of the word 'at' in rule 19.1 must be understood from the context in which it is used, where boats are in the vicinity of an obstruction and one is required by rule 19.2(b) to give the other room.

In that context, a boat is 'at' the obstruction when the boat entitled to room needs to make the seamanlike maneuver that will get her past it safely. In many cases, this will be when the boats are alongside the obstruction, and in fact in many cases the seamanlike maneuver will be to simply sail straight past the obstruction. But in other cases, rule 19 requires an outside overlapped boat to begin to give room before the boats are alongside the obstruction. For example, if the obstruction is directly in front of them, and the inside boat is so close to the obstruction that she needs to change course to avoid hitting it, then the boats are, in the context of rule 19, 'at' the obstruction. Also, if the inside boat's bow is ahead of the outside boat's bow, then the requirement on the outside boat clearly begins before the outside boat is alongside the obstruction.

Just as was noted with respect to the requirement to give mark-room under new rule 18, room under rule 19.2 must be given until the inside boat no longer needs it.

The role of the words ‘unless she has been unable to do so from the time the *overlap* began’ in new rule 19.2(b) are analogous to new rule 18.2(e)’s role in new rule 18.2. They put a boat that establishes a late inside overlap on notice that the outside boat does not have to give room at an obstruction if, from the time the overlap began, she has been unable to do so.

Note that there are two game changes in new rule 19.2(b).

1. Under old rule 18 if a boat was clear ahead when she reached the zone around an obstruction, old rule 18.2(c) required the boat clear astern to keep clear of the boat ahead until both boats had passed the obstruction. Under new rule 19.2(b), a boat that was clear ahead when she began to pass an obstruction must give room to a boat that was clear astern and becomes overlapped on the inside while the boats are passing the obstruction, provided she is able to do so. (Note that rule 19.2(c) contains an exception to this particular application of rule 19.2(b). That exception is discussed below.)
2. Under old rule 18 if boats were overlapped when the first of them reached the zone around an obstruction, old rule 18.2(b) required the outside boat to continue to give the other boat room if the overlap was later broken, and it denied room if the outside overlapped boat later became overlapped inside. Neither of those requirements is included in new rule 19.2(b).

New rule 19.2(a) brings into the rules a principle that has been stated for many years in ISAF Case 41 – when two overlapped boats are approaching an obstruction that can be passed on either side, an overlapped boat that has right of way may choose to pass the obstruction on either side. Strictly speaking, this rule is not ‘necessary’ in that it can be inferred from the rules of Part 2. However, sailors so frequently ask about this principle that we thought it worth the extra line of text to include the principle in new rule 19.

Continuing Obstructions – Comparison of old rule 18.5 to new rule 19.2(c):

New rule 19.2(c) replaces old rule 18.5. New rule 19.2(c) applies when, while boats are passing a continuing obstruction, a boat clear astern and required to keep clear becomes overlapped between the other boat and the obstruction. This can happen if both boats are on the same tack or if they are on opposite tacks, with the boat astern on port tack, and both are sailing more than ninety degrees from the true wind. In such situations, the boat clear astern is not entitled to room under rule 19.2(b) to pass between the boat ahead and the obstruction if, ‘at the moment the *overlap* begins, there is not *room* for her to pass between them.’

Note that new rule 19.2(c) does not apply on a run when a clear astern starboard-tack boat, S, is overtaking a clear ahead port-tack boat, P. In this case, P must keep clear of S. We thought that not applying new rule 19.2(c) in this case was fair. If P wants to keep her position close to the shore, she need only gybe onto starboard tack as S approaches, and she will be afforded the protection that rule 19.2(c) offers.

We note that rule 19.2(c) is the only rule in new Section C that ‘switches off’ any rules in Sections A or B. We tried several alternative drafts in an effort to avoid switching off rules 10 and 11, but we were unable to come up with acceptably simple wording.

Why there is an exoneration rule in new rule 18 and in new rule 20, but not in new rule 19:

There are two essential differences between new rules 18 and 19 with respect to exoneration. First, while rule 19 requires the outside boat to give room only when the boats are at an obstruction, rule 18 requires an outside boat to give the inside boat room to sail to the mark. In that situation, it will be very difficult for the boat entitled to room to argue successfully in a protest hearing that she was denied that room unless she forces the issue and sails to the mark, coming close to the other boat if she is denied room. Thus, she needs to be exonerated if, in taking room to which she is entitled, she breaks a right-of-way rule.

The second feature of rule 18 not present in rule 19 is that, in certain cases, the outside boat may be the one entitled to room – for example, suppose she entered the zone clear ahead of a boat and that boat subsequently sails between her and the mark. In this case, if the outside boat is not allowed to ‘close the door’, the inside boat will argue that she took room ‘freely given’. The outside boat will be forced to admit in a protest hearing that there was good separation between the boats during the rounding, and then argue that, hypothetically, she could have steered closer to the mark had the other boat not been in there. As experience showed in the 1997 RRS, the rewards for a clear-astern boat cutting inside at the mark outweigh the risks unless the outside boat is allowed to ‘close the door’ without being disqualified for breaking rule 16.1. And of course, she cannot argue that the other boat compelled her to do so, so rule 64.1(c) does not apply.

In the case of rule 19, there is no subtle, hard-to-prove period when the outside boat might fail to give room in a difficult-to-prove situation, and only the inside boat is ever entitled to room. The consequences to an inside overlapped boat of being denied room at an obstruction are dramatic and easy to describe in a protest hearing. Typically she will be compelled to break a right-of-way rule or carry out an unseamanlike maneuver. At a small obstruction she may be able to ‘bail out’ at the last moment and pass the other side of the obstruction. In the case where she is compelled to break a rule, rule 64.1(c) is sufficient to protect her. It may seem unfair that she might have to take some action that will hurt her in the race if she is denied room, but we felt that this is a rare situation – generally, outside boats routinely give inside boats room to pass obstructions.

The situation in new rule 20 is unique, in that the hailed boat is allowed to acknowledge her responsibility (by replying ‘You tack’) without immediately taking action to give the hailing boat room to tack. Clearly, the hailing boat may, in tacking and clearing the other boat, break various rules from Sections A and B – most commonly, rule 13. In most cases she was not ‘compelled’ to do so, so she needs to be exonerated for such behavior.

Comparison of old rule 19 to new rules 20.1 and 20.3 and the first sentence of the new Section C preamble:

With the two exceptions noted in the next paragraph, the rules that replace old rule 19 (new rules 20.1 and 20.3 and the first sentence of the new preamble to Section C) are intended to have the same impact – i.e., produce the same ‘game’ – as old rule 19.

The two exceptions are as follows: When a boat hails for room to tack (1) when safety does not require her to make a substantial course change to avoid the obstruction or (2) if the obstruction is a mark that the hailed boat is fetching, she will now, under the new rules, be entitled to room to tack and avoid the hailed boat. However, by hailing the hailing boat breaks new rule 20.3 and, after she has received the room for which she hailed, she should take the appropriate penalty under rule 44. Under the old rules, if a boat hailed for room in either situation (1) or situation (2) she would simply not be entitled to room to tack, and the hailed boat would not be penalized if she failed to give the hailing boat room.

These two ‘game’ changes were made for reasons of safety. Example: Suppose the obstruction is a small island that is a mark to be left to port. L and W are sailing close-hauled on starboard tack. W is barely fetching the obstruction/mark; L is not fetching. L hails for room. If W denies L room to tack, L could well be put in a situation in which she was at significant risk of hitting a rock or running aground. The two changes also will make the application of the rule easier on the water in the following way. If a boat sailing close-hauled or above hails for room to tack, the hailed boat will now always have to give her that room. (The only exception is when the obstruction is a starting mark surrounded by navigable water or its anchor line and boats are approaching them to start.)

Notes on other changes made in old rule 19:

- We have moved to the preamble to Section C the exception relating to an obstruction that is a starting mark surrounded by navigable water that boats are approaching to start. This was done because that exception applies to all the rules in Section C.
- The steps involved in complying with this rule are now stated in new rules 20.1(a), (b) and (c). The changes in wording were made to improve the organization and clarity of the rule.
- New rule 20.2 replaces the statement ‘switching off’ rules 10 and 13 that appears at the end of old rule 19.1. This change was made for several reasons: (1) consistency with our approach of, whenever possible, not ‘switching off’ Section A or Section B rules; (2) consistency with the approach taken in new rule 18.5; and (3) expanding exoneration to include other rules of Sections A and B that a boat might break while taking room she is entitled to under new rule 20.1(b).

Reasons for the addition to rule 86.1(b) related to the size of the zone:

Old rule 18 began to apply when boats were ‘about to round or pass a mark’ and, as a result, it began to apply to fast boats in strong winds, or boats that require considerable sail handling at the mark, further from the mark than for a single-handed dinghy in light winds. Old rules 18.2(b) and (c) stated that, in most situations, the rights and obligations between boats at a mark were ‘locked in’ after one of the boats involved reached a two-length zone around the mark. New rule 18 begins to apply when one of the boats involved is within three hull lengths of the mark. In addition, for most mark-rounding situations the rights and obligations between boats at a mark are ‘locked in’ after one of the boats involved reaches a three-length zone around the mark (see new rules 18.2(b) and (c)).

The change in rule 86.1(b) allows events to use either a two-length zone or a four-length zone in place of the three-length zone. However, when the zone size is changed, new rule 86.1(b) requires that the zone size be the same for all marks and for all boats using those marks. There is a new optional sailing instruction 1.5 in Appendix L, and its marginal note gives guidance to organizing authorities as to the conditions under which a change in zone size is appropriate. That marginal note recommends only using a two-length zone when the racing area is particularly small and only using a four-length zone when the boats racing are particularly fast.

For match racing and team racing the zone size will be two lengths, and for radio-controlled boats it will be four lengths (see new rules C2.3, D1.1(a) and E1.3(b)).

* * * * *

Part 3 – A Guide to What Happened to each of the Old Section C Rules

Explanation – How to Use this Guide:

The **old** Section C rules from the 2005-2008 racing rules are reprinted below. After each part of each old rule, you will find in **bold italics**, in brackets like these {*..*}, the location of the equivalent or replacement rule in the **new** Section C rules. On the last page, you will find the same treatment for the three definitions that were changed to accommodate the new Section C rules.

SECTION C *(from the 2005-2008 racing rules)*

AT MARKS AND OBSTRUCTIONS

To the extent that a Section C rule conflicts with a rule in Section A or B, the Section C rule takes precedence. {Deleted. Under new Section C rules, Section A and B rules will (almost) always apply. See also new 18.5 & 20.2.}

18 **ROUNDING AND PASSING MARKS AND OBSTRUCTIONS {18 & 19}**

In rule 18, **room** is **room** for an inside boat to round or pass between an outside boat and a **mark** or **obstruction**, including **room** to tack or gybe when either is a normal part of the manoeuvre. **{New definition Mark-Room}**

18.1 When This Rule Applies

Rule 18 applies when boats are about to round or pass a **mark** **{New 18.1, ‘in the zone’}** they are required to leave on the same side **{Unchanged}**, or an **obstruction** on the same side **{19 & 18.1(d)}**, until they have passed it **{Deleted, unneeded. See definition Mark-Room.}** However, it does not apply

- (a) at a starting **mark** surrounded by navigable water or at its anchor line from the time the boats are approaching them to **start** until they have passed them **{Preamble to new Section C}**, or
- (b) while the boats are on opposite **tacks**, either on a beat to windward or when the **proper course** for one of them, but not both, to round or pass the **mark** or **obstruction** is to tack **{New 18.1(a) & (b), which do not apply at obstructions.}**

18.2 Giving Room; Keeping Clear

- (a) OVERLAPPED – BASIC RULE
When boats are **overlapped** the outside boat shall give the inside boat **room** to round or pass the **mark** or **obstruction** **{New 18.2(a) and (b)}**, and if the inside boat has right of way the outside boat shall also **keep clear** **{Still true but not stated. Implied by the fact that the rules of Sections A & B always apply.}**. Other parts of rule 18 contain exceptions to this rule.
- (b) OVERLAPPED AT THE ZONE
If boats were **overlapped** before either of them reached the **two-length zone** and the **overlap** is broken after one of them has reached it, the boat that was on the outside shall continue to give the other boat **room**. **{New 18.2(b), 1st sentence}** If the outside boat becomes **clear astern** or **overlapped** inside the other boat, she is not entitled to **room** and shall **keep clear**. **{Deleted. Replaced by 18.2(c), 1st sentence}**
- (c) NOT OVERLAPPED AT THE ZONE
If a boat was **clear ahead** at the time she reached the **two-length zone**, the boat **clear astern** shall thereafter **keep clear**. **{Deleted. Replaced by 18.2(b), 2nd sentence}** If the boat **clear astern** becomes **overlapped** outside the other boat, she shall also give the inside boat **room**. **{Deleted. Replaced by 18.2(c), 1st sentence}** If the boat **clear astern** becomes **overlapped** inside the other boat, she is not entitled to **room**. **{Deleted. Replaced by 18.2(c), 1st sentence}** If the boat that was **clear ahead** passes head to wind, rule 18.2(c) no longer applies and remains inapplicable. **{18.2(c), 2nd sentence}**

- (d) CHANGING COURSE TO ROUND OR PASS
When after the starting signal rule 18 applies between two boats and the right-of-way boat is changing course to round or pass a *mark*, rule 16 does not apply between her and the other boat. *{18.5(b)}*
- (e) OVERLAP RIGHTS
If there is reasonable doubt that a boat obtained or broke an *overlap* in time, it shall be presumed that she did not. *{18.2(d)}* If the outside boat is unable to give *room* when an *overlap* begins, rules 18.2(a) and 18.2(b) do not apply. *{18.2(e), scope somewhat reduced}*

18.3 Tacking at a Mark

If two boats were approaching a *mark* on opposite *tacks* and one of them completes a tack in the *two-length zone* when the other is fetching the *mark*, rule 18.2 does not apply. *{18.3, slightly expanded in scope, & new definition Fetching}* The boat that tacked

- (a) shall not cause the other boat to sail above close-hauled to avoid her or prevent the other boat from passing the *mark*, *{18.3(a), clarified}* and
- (b) shall give *room* if the other boat becomes *overlapped* inside her, *{18.3(b)}* in which case rule 15 does not apply. *{Deleted}*

18.4 Gybing

When an inside *overlapped* right-of-way boat must gybe at a *mark* or *obstruction* to sail her *proper course*, until she gybes she shall sail no farther from the *mark* or *obstruction* than needed to sail that course. *{18.4. Scope reduced – no longer applies at an obstruction or at a gate mark.}*

18.5 Passing a Continuing Obstruction

While boats are passing a continuing *obstruction*, rules 18.2(b) and 18.2(c) do not apply. A boat *clear astern* that obtains an inside *overlap* is entitled to *room* to pass between the other boat and the *obstruction* only if at the moment the *overlap* begins there is *room* to do so. If there is not, she is not entitled to *room* and shall *keep clear*. *{19.2(b) and (c)}*

19 ROOM TO TACK AT AN OBSTRUCTION {20}

19.1 When approaching an *obstruction*, a boat sailing close-hauled or above may hail for *room* to tack and avoid another boat on the same *tack*. *{20.1, 1st sentence}* However, she shall not hail unless safety requires her to make a substantial course change to avoid the *obstruction*. *{Changed. See 20.3, 2nd sentence}* Before tacking she shall give the hailed boat time to respond. *{20.1(a)}* The hailed boat shall respond by either

- (a) tacking as soon as possible, in which case the hailing boat shall also tack as soon as possible, *{20.1(b) & (c)}* or

- (b) immediately replying ‘You tack’, in which case the hailing boat shall tack as soon as possible and the hailed boat shall give *room*, {20.1(b) & (c)} and rules 10 and 13 do not apply. {Deleted. Replaced by 20.2.}

19.2 Rule 19.1 does not apply at a starting *mark* surrounded by navigable water or at its anchor line from the time boats are approaching them to *start* until they have passed them {Preamble to new Section C} or at a *mark* that the hailed boat can fetch. {20.3 & new definition Fetching.} When rule 19.1 applies, rule 18 does not. {Preamble to new Section C}

Clear Astern and Clear Ahead; Overlap One boat is *clear astern* of another when her hull and equipment in normal position are behind a line abeam from the aftermost point of the other boat’s hull and equipment in normal position. The other boat is *clear ahead*. They *overlap* when neither is *clear astern*. However, they also *overlap* when a boat between them *overlaps* both. {Unchanged} These terms do not apply to boats on opposite *tacks* unless rule 18 applies. {Clarified, expanded in scope.}

Obstruction 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. An object that can be safely passed on only one side and an area so designated by the sailing instructions are also *obstructions*. However, a boat *racing* is not an *obstruction* to other boats unless they are required to *keep clear* of her, give her *room* or, if rule 21 applies, avoid her. {Unchanged, but scope expanded to include mark-room. New sentence added on continuing obstructions.}

Two-Length Zone The area around a *mark* or *obstruction* within a distance of two hull lengths of the boat nearer to it. {Deleted. Replaced by definition Zone. ‘In the zone’ defined.}