

***Mark-Room* in Team Racing – Digital N Course**

The goal of this ‘talk piece’ is to provide a basis for discussing how umpires should consistently determine when a boat, most often a ‘trapping’ boat, is still sailing ‘to the mark’, and when she is ‘at the mark’.

Mark-Room is *room* for a boat to sail to the *mark*, and then *room* to sail her *proper course* while at the *mark*. With some guidance from Q&A’s and recent US Appeals, we have a pretty good idea how to apply this definition in fleet racing when boats generally sail expeditiously around marks. However, it is much more difficult in team racing when boats entitled to *mark-room* are slowing down to trap competitors by sailing wide and then ‘closing the door’ that they have (purposely) left open.

As we all know under the current RRS, the *mark-room* definition, the rules of Part 2 are still on when rule 18 applies. When the rules of Part 2 combine with the exoneration limitations under rule 18.5, they reduce the freedom for a clear ahead boat to ‘own the zone’ when a boat clear astern at the zone ‘shall thereafter keep clear’. Many sailors still sail as if they ‘own the zone’ and end up getting penalized when they ‘close the door’ by breaking a rule of Part 2 without being exonerated under 18.5 (a or b). The challenge for umpires is to apply *mark-room* and rule 18 consistently at all marks; specifically to define the point when a boat entitled to *mark-room* is sailing ‘to the mark’ becomes ‘at the mark’ when it is not ‘alongside the mark’.

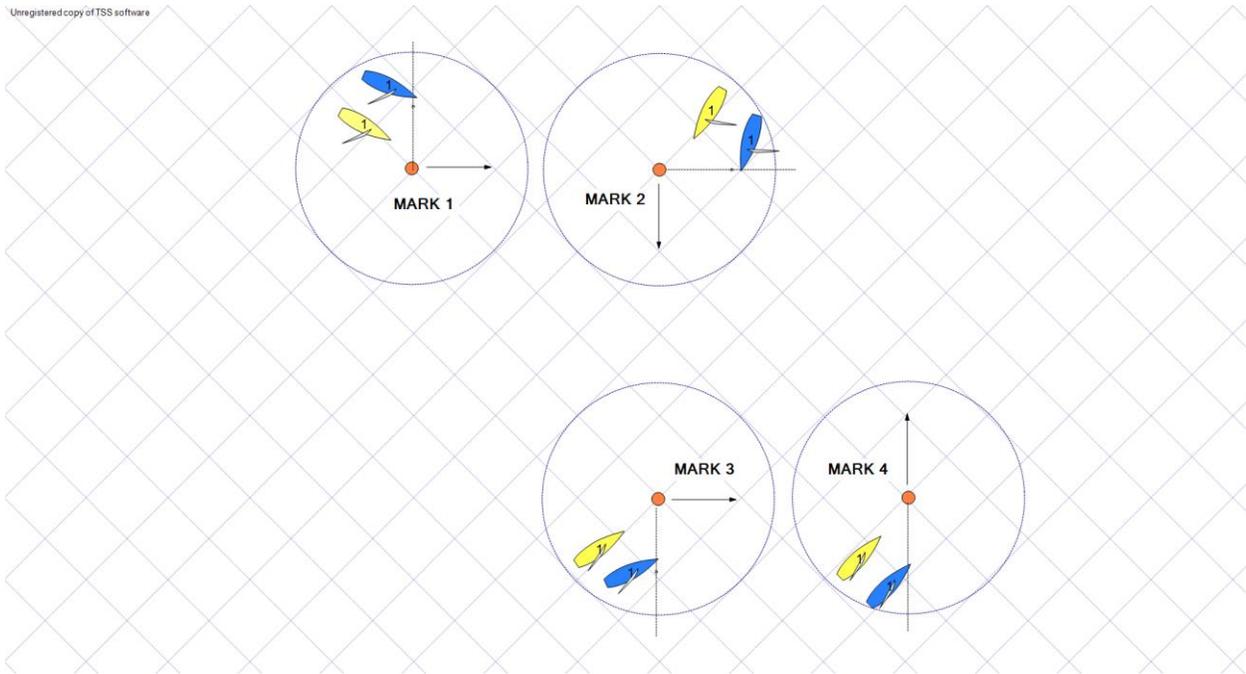
Team Race Calls E5 and H2 provide some good guidance for marks 1 and 2 on the starboard digital N course. In both calls the boat entitled to *mark-room* is shown (in the diagram) to be ‘at the mark’ when her bow reaches an imaginary line from the mark that is perpendicular to the course to the next mark, a time after which she is sailing a course that is ‘not consistent with sailing her *proper course* while at the mark’. In both calls, neither boat is entitled to exoneration under rule 18.5b for breaking a rule of Part 2.

Team Race Call J7 does not provide enough help for consistent determination of when the ‘trapping’ boat is at mark 3 on the digital N course, as the situation in J7 is at a leeward mark. I believe some of us would say that boat A is still sailing ‘to the mark’ from position 5 to 6, and when she breaks 16.1 with respect to X she is not entitled to exoneration under 18.5a (a different reason than in the call). As this call doesn’t apply to mark 3 on either the digital N or port ‘box’ course, Steve Wolff and I developed an event call ‘J7 with Mark 4’.

Because we wanted to be consistent with TR calls E5 and H2, we decided to both apply and illustrate the principle used in these calls to determine when the trapping boat reaches a point when she is ‘at the mark’. We used the imaginary line from the mark that is perpendicular to the course to mark 4 to define when the trapping boat is still sailing ‘to the mark’ and thus entitled to exoneration under 18.5a, and then when she is ‘at the mark’ and should be sailing her *proper course* (to mark 4) to be entitled to exoneration under 18.5b. The latest version, used at the Morgan and Hinman last year, is shown at the end of this talk piece.

If we agree that the ‘perpendicular to next course’ line is a the right place for the ‘crossover’ from ‘to the mark’ to ‘at the mark’ for marks 1, 2, and 3 on the digital N course, then we have to determine when the ‘trapping’ boat is ‘at the mark’ for mark 4. Here, it doesn’t seem to make sense that we would use a perpendicular from the upwind course because it is hard to execute a trap once a boat has passed the downwind extension of the upwind course. Thus the following set of diagrams represent a proposed basis by which we can call the ‘transition’ from ‘to the mark’ to ‘at the mark’ for the digital N course.

At each mark the yellow boat is sailing 'to the mark' and can 'close the door' and is entitled to the exoneration limitations under 18.5a so long as she is sailing 'to the mark'. The blue boat is 'at the mark' and must be sailing her *proper course* to be entitled to exoneration under 18.5b.



COMMENTARY

At mark 1 the yellow boat risks breaking rule 11 without exoneration under 18.5a if she aims directly 'at the mark' or below it to close the door. She must sail a course that would put her alongside the mark to be sailing 'to the mark'. The blue boat cannot 'close the door' and must come to her *proper course* to mark 2 to retain exoneration under 18.5b.

At mark 2 the best trap is coming back towards the mark on starboard, and the yellow boat can sail almost any course she chooses to 'close the door', even aiming to the right of the mark being careful not to break rule 16.1 where there is no exoneration under 18.5a. The blue boat is at the mark and must sail her *proper course* downwind (which may be on either tack) to retain exoneration under 18.5b.

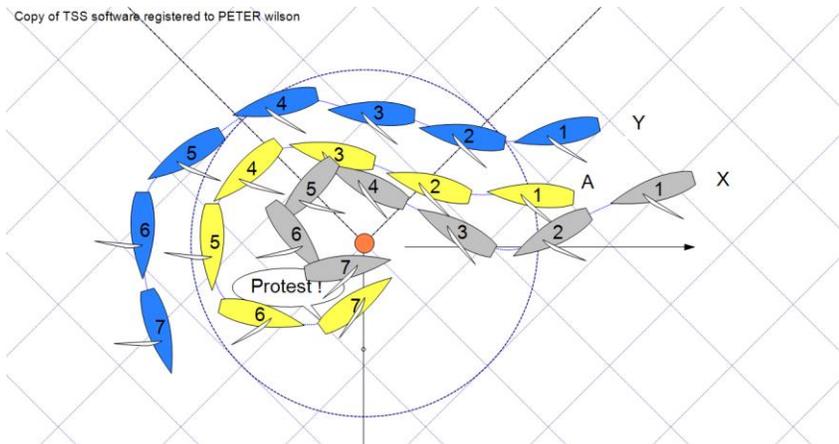
At mark 3 the yellow boat can sail above the mark to close the door on a windward port tack boat, but must be careful not to break rule 16.1 because she will have no exoneration sailing a course that is above 'to the mark'. However, if there is a starboard tack boat heading at her, she is a keep clear boat and can only retain her exoneration under 18.5a by sailing 'to the mark' (event call J7 with mark 4 question 3). The blue boat is at the mark and must sail her *proper course* to mark 4 to retain exoneration under 18.5b.

At mark 4 the yellow boat can sail above the mark to close the door on a windward port tack boat, but must be careful not to break rule 16.1 and lose exoneration 'coverage'. However, as at mark 3, if she risks breaking rule 10 with regard to a starboard tack boat, she must be sailing 'to the mark' to keep her exoneration under 18.5a. The blue boat is at the mark and must sail her *proper course* (most likely close-hauled) to retain exoneration under 18.5b.

Event Call J7 with Mark 4

QUESTION 1

When A reaches the zone of a downwind mark to be left to port prior to sailing to the offset mark (# 4), she is clear ahead of X, and overlapped with Y to windward. A luffs Y away from the mark without breaking rule 16. A remains inside the zone and then gybes and returns to prevent X from rounding the mark inside her. At position 6 boat A is still sailing to the mark. At position 7, boat A luffs up, clearly above her proper course to the next mark, and forces X to hit the mark. There is a protest. What should the call be?



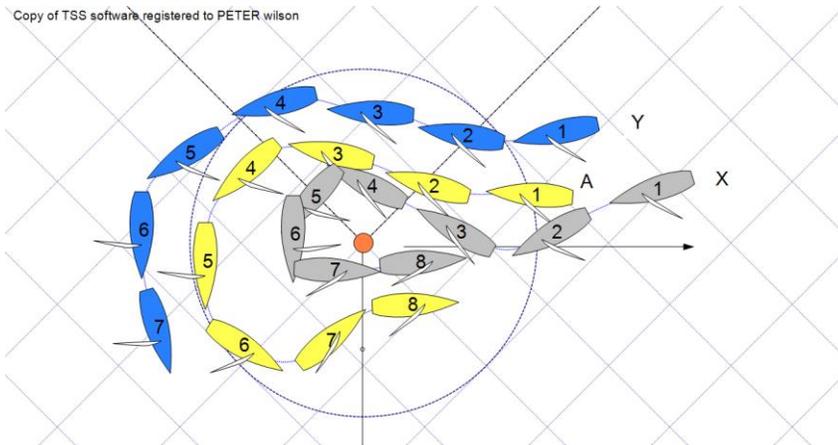
ANSWER 1

Because X was clear astern of A at the zone, rule 18.2 requires that she thereafter give A mark-room. Although rule 18 continues to apply while either of the boats are in the zone, the exoneration in rule 18.5(b) only applies to A's alteration of course so long as it is consistent with rounding the mark on her proper course. At position 6 A is still sailing 'to the mark', however when her bow crosses a line from mark 3 that is perpendicular to the course to mark 4, A becomes 'at the mark'. Because A's alteration of course at position 7 is not consistent with her proper course to the next mark, she breaks rule 16.1 by not giving X room to keep clear. Penalize A.

X is required by rule 11 to keep clear of A. However if the umpires decide that X would have kept clear if A had not broken rule 16.1, X will be exonerated under rule 64.1(c) for that breach. If the umpires decide that X was not keeping clear irrespective of the luff by A, penalize both; A for breaking 16.1 and X for breaking rule 11. If A luffs to 'close the door' before she reaches a line perpendicular from mark 3 to the course to mark 4, and gives X room to respond and X responds immediately, keeping clear by sailing to windward of the mark, then there is no penalty.

QUESTION 2

In a similar situation, A sails further around the zone executing her trap and attempts to close the door at position 7, but as she reaches the perpendicular to the course to the next mark, bears away to avoid contact with X. There is no contact, and A protests.

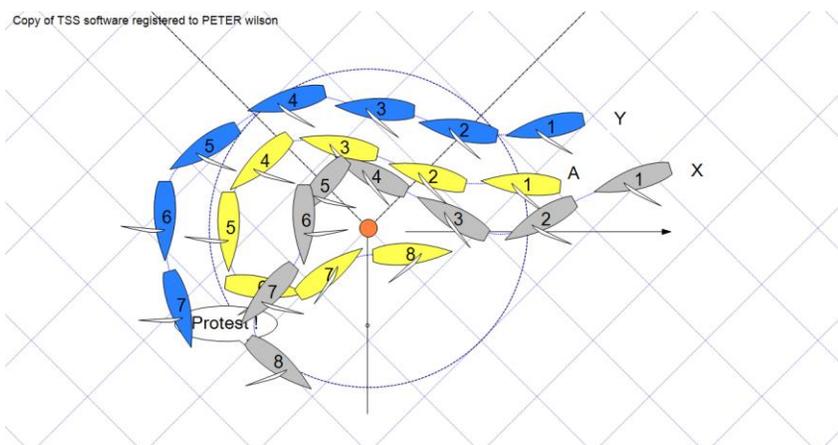


ANSWER 2

No penalty. X has given A mark room under 18.2b and has not broken rule 11.

QUESTION 3

In a similar situation A gybes after position 5 and heads up to sail to the mark. X does not gybe to go inside A at the mark but instead sails at her on starboard, and alters course to avoid contact between positions 6 and 7. X protests.



ANSWER 3

No penalty. At positions 6 and 7 boat A is still sailing to the mark, taking the mark-room to which she is entitled, and is not 'at the mark'. A breaks rule 10 but is exonerated under rule 18.5a because was sailing a course 'to the mark'. X gives A mark-room and complies with rule 18.2b.