

Changes in the new RRS for 2025-2028 – John Ball

Don't Panic!

The major change that will apply to Radio Sailing is a rewrite of R18.2 and 18.3 – the rules that apply at the majority of mark roundings. The good news is that with two exceptions these changes do not change the fundamentals of mark roundings that we know and love (sic) – just the sequence of rights and obligations has been reformatted and renumbered – more on this below.

Appendix E 1.3(b) hailing for room to tack at an obstruction has been changed to a prescribed hail that shall include [your sail number] and the words “Room to tack”. Interestingly, the big boats have copied this approach and R 20 Hailing for room to tack has adopted a similar hail.

Also affecting Radio Sailing, is a change in Appendix E8 which now clarifies that the class insignia and National Letters are only displayed on the main sail. This change reflects the IRSA supplementary rule for sail numbering for international events, that was developed several years ago to fix this issue. The IRSA classes changed the sail numbering section of their class rules to incorporate the IRSA version. Now that the RRS issue is fixed, the classes may remove that change and revert to Appendix E8.

Another change that happens throughout the new edition is that in many places a long sentence, or several sentences is now broken down into separate numbered items. This should improve understanding and make it easier to refer to a specific issue by rule number.

Going through the RRS in order, there are several changes to be aware of and understand.

The Definitions

A new definition for Committee that now includes the Protest, Race and Technical committees and allows simplified wording in several places, especially the right to protest.

A change to definition of Continuing Obstruction – should not affect Radio Sailing as we usually race ‘level boat’ or ‘one design’, and where boat lengths are very similar.

A change to definition of Finishing allows the SI to change direction for crossing the line could apply for special circumstances in big boat racing, but no likely impact for Radio Sailing.

A change to definition of Mark Room tries to add clarity for when mark room ends.

Mark-Room *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.

A change to definition of Obstruction restructures the wording but no difference in intent for Radio Sailing.

A change to definition of Proper Course now applies to the leg you think you are on instead of ‘sailing the course’.

A change to definition of Sail the Course is a restructuring of the wording and adds a new phrase that clarifies that a mark not on the current leg has no required side.

Changes to the Rules

To find the link to the new rules, go to my Racing Rules Reference Documents Page and scroll down.

<https://sites.google.com/site/johnsrcsailingrulesandtactics/racing-rules-reference-documents>

As you read the RRS, most changes are noted by a change bar in the right margin.

R 14 Avoiding Contact has been rewritten for improved clarity and added requirement to not cause contact with objects that should be avoided.

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*

R 18.2 is resequenced so that the normal approach (two boats on the same tack) is covered first. So the old 18.2(b) becomes the new 18.2(a) and the old 18.2(a) (which was the exception) is now moved down and becomes 18.2(c).

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.

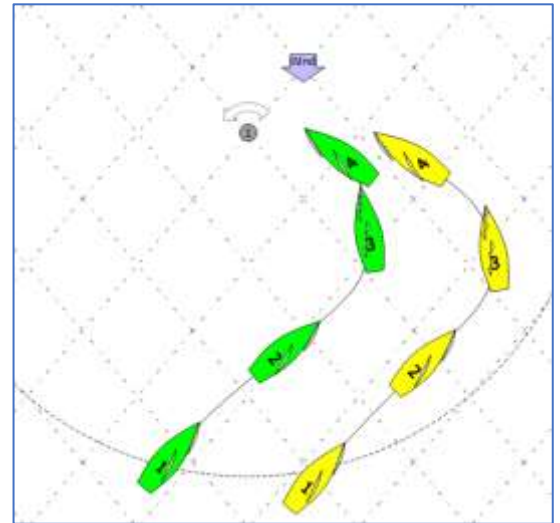
The main change is found in the new wording for R18.2(a)(2). Note that when not overlapped, the boat that has not reached the zone gives mark room to the boat that reached the zone first. This applies even if the outside boat is clear ahead.

R 18.3 Tacking in the zone, is rewritten but the meaning is the same with one important exception.

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.

Look at this diagram. Under the 2021-2024 RRS, Green would gain mark room under 18.2(a) as Yellow did not enter the zone on stbd. Under the new RRS there is a big change. The new 18.3 wording turns off 18.2 when the boat tacks to stbd when another boat is already fetching the mark on stbd. This prevents Green from obtaining mark room under new R 18.2(c). As Green does not gain mark room, she is subject to the rules of Part 2 (eg R 13 Tacking, R 15 give room when ROW changes, R 16.1 ROW alters course; without R 43 exoneration. The phrase about 'since entering the zone' and luffing above close hauled is still there and has moved to the last sentence.



R19.2(a) Giving room at an obstruction – the phrase 'either side' is replaced by 'port or starboard side' and an additional requirement added to give room while altering course.

R 28 is retitled Sailing the Course and the wording is clarified, but no change in meaning.

The rules of Part 5 about Protests, Redress, Hearing is rewritten. The only change I can see that affects Radio Sailing is the way a 3rd party protest is handled – currently the wording requires that you had to have been scheduled to race in that heat to have the right to protest – this is now validated in a hearing and the Protest Committee may declare that protest 'invalid' if you were not scheduled.

Appendix E 6.6 Redress now requires that to be granted redress by a boat breaking a rule of Part 2, that boat must have taken an appropriate penalty or been penalised. (This is an important change – so if you are fouled, it is even more important to protest)

Appendix E 8 has been rewritten for clarity but no changes in meaning, except for specifying that class insignia and Country code now only apply to the main sail.