

## Changes to RRS 17

We are grateful to Chris Simon, RYA Regional Rules Advisor, for identifying this issue and for the contribution of him and Ana Sanchez de Campo, Chairman of the World Sailing Racing Rules Committee, to this document.

In the 2025-2028 changes, the final sentence was removed from RRS 17 which is believed to have a significant effect on a particular situation when a boat tacks ahead of and close to another boat to end up on the same tack (slam-dunk).

In the 2021-2024 RRS, the final (and now removed) sentence of RRS 17 meant that the leeward boat had luffing rights if it were overlapped with the tacking boat when the tack was complete (i.e. when the tacking boat reaches close-hauled on the new tack). In the 2025-2028 RRS, with this sentence removed, this 'decision point' has moved to when both boats are on the same tack (i.e. when the tacking boat passes head-to-wind).

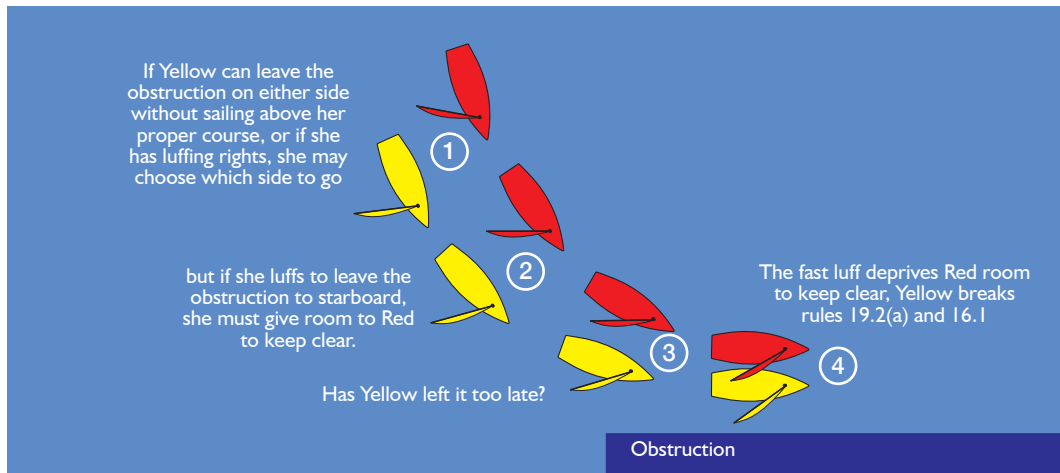
This has some implication on the text in *Rules in Practice*:

- On P46, You are A, bullet 3, last sentence should read: Because B was clear astern when you passed through head-to-wind, she does not have luffing rights so must not sail higher than her proper course, but you must keep clear. **(Rule 11)**
- On P46, You are B, bullet 2 should read: At the completion of A's tack you are overlapped to leeward of A, so you are the right of way boat. However, you cannot luff above your proper course since you became overlapped from clear astern and within a distance of two boat lengths of the windward boat. **(Rule 17)**
- On P57, lower diagram, You are B, bullet 1 should read: When A passed head-to-wind, you were clear astern. If you then choose to move inside and become overlapped to leeward of A, you won't have luffing rights. However, you can still luff as needed to sail your proper course around the mark (the path you would have taken if A hadn't been there). If you need to luff above close-hauled to be able to round the mark as necessary to sail the course, you will be exonerated if, by doing so, you fail to give A room to keep clear. **(Rules 17, 18.3, 43.1(b) & Definition Mark-Room)**
- On P57, lower diagram, You are B, bullet 2 should read: Whether or not you have luffing rights, if your proper course is to gybe at the mark, you mustn't sail higher than your proper course. **(Rule 18.4)**

The revised pages, incorporating these changes, are on the following pages.

obstruction and took the room she was entitled to, she was exonerated under rule 43.1(b) if, by doing so, she broke rule 16. At the same time, the keep-clear boat could be exonerated if the sudden and fast course change of the right-of-way boat did not permit her to keep-clear.

The change eliminates the possibility to exonerate the right of way boat, as a breach of rule 19.2(a) is not listed in rule 43.1(b).



### Hailing 'Room to tack', and the reply 'You tack'

When a boat sailing close-hauled (or above) is approaching an obstruction (for example a shoreline or shallow water) and will need to tack but cannot tack without interfering with another boat, typically on her windward quarter, she may ask for room to tack. The hailed boat must respond either by giving room or promptly tacking (or hailing a third boat for room to tack). This is one of the few situations where a boat is compelled to do something in response to a hail.

In the new rules the hailing boat must use the words 'Room to tack'. That is a rule change. The hailed boat if she elects not to tack, must hail, using the words 'You tack'.

There is no change to the requirement for the hailed boat to hail 'You tack' if she elects not to tack, but the requirement for the hailing boat requiring room to use the phrase 'Room to tack' is new.

### Slam Dunk

In the 2025-2028 changes, the final sentence was

removed from RRS 17 which is believed to have a significant effect on a particular situation when a boat tacks ahead of and close to another boat to end up on the same tack (slam-dunk).

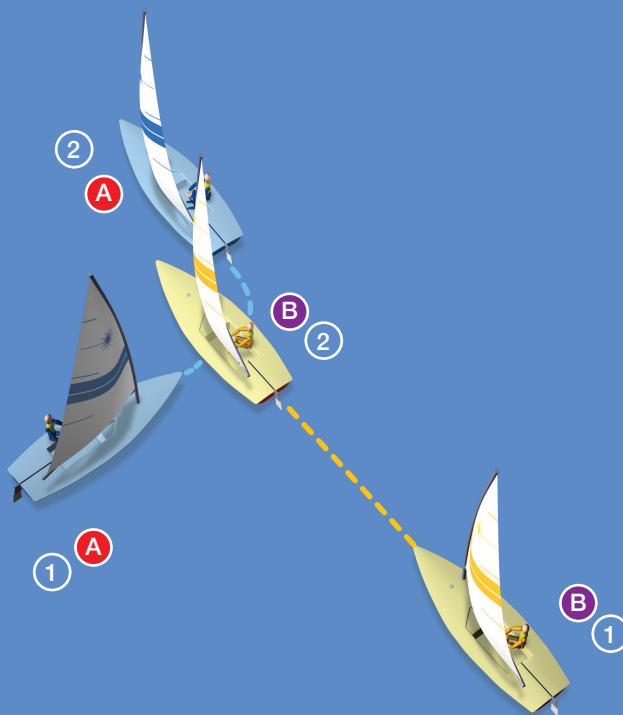
In the 2021-2024 RRS, the final (and now removed) sentence of RRS 17 meant that the leeward boat had luffing rights if it were overlapped with the tacking boat when the tack was complete (i.e. when the tacking boat reaches close-hauled on the new tack).

In the 2025-2028 RRS, with this sentence removed, this 'decision point' has moved to when both boats are on the same tack (i.e. when the tacking boat passes head-to-wind).

### 'N' flag displayed by the Race Committee

Signals used by the race committee; It is now made clear that the N flag (displayed alone or with H or A) refers only to races that are in progress and not races that have been completed. The race committee may abandon races that have been completed but that would be by a separate action, which does not require an on-the-water signal.

When A completes his tack he is overlapped to windward of B.



#### You are A:

- As you approach on port tack your obligation is simple – to keep clear of B. **(Rule 10)**
- While you are tacking (until you are close-hauled on the new tack) you must keep clear of B. **(Rule 13)**
- When your tack is complete, you are overlapped on B's windward bow putting B in your wind shadow. The manoeuvre is known as a 'slam dunk'. Because B was clear astern when you passed through head-to-wind, she does not have luffing rights so must not sail higher than her proper course, but you must keep clear. **(Rule 11)**
- At the completion of your tack you must not be so close to B that B cannot luff without immediately making contact with you. **(Rule 11 & Definition Keep Clear)**

#### You are B:

- You are the right-of-way boat throughout this manoeuvre, and unless you change course, you do not need to give A room to keep clear. If there is a lift (beneficial wind shift) just as A is passing ahead, you may be prevented from fulfilling your wish to luff for a few seconds. **(Rule 16.1)**
- At the completion of A's tack you are overlapped to leeward of A, so you are the right of way boat. However, you cannot luff above your proper course since you became overlapped from clear astern and within a distance of two boat lengths of the windward boat. **(Rule 17)**

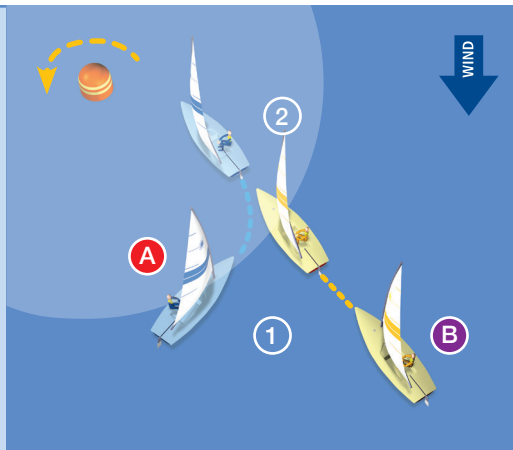
A passes head to wind inside the zone and completes the tack clear ahead of B.

#### You are A:

- As you tack you must keep clear of B. **(Rule 13)**
- If you complete your tack without forcing B to change course to avoid you, the next thing you have to worry about is that if B, with superior speed, can avoid you only by sailing above his close-hauled course, then you have broken a rule, and must take a penalty. **(Rule 18.3)**
- Furthermore, if B chooses to bear away and gets an overlap to leeward of you, you must give him mark-room. **(Rule 18.3)**
- Basically, for this manoeuvre to succeed, you must stay clear until you have left the mark astern. **(Rule 18.3)**

#### You are B:

- When A's tack is complete, you become the keep-clear boat, but if the only way you can avoid him is to luff above your close-hauled course, he has broken a rule and must take a penalty. **(Rule 18.3)**
- If you choose to bear away and get an overlap to leeward of A, A must give you mark-room and you may sail your proper course around the mark. **(Rule 18.3)**



of B, who is allowed to sail his proper course (the course he would have sailed had you not been there). **(Rule 18.3)**

#### You are B:

- When A passed head-to-wind, you were clear astern. If you then choose to move inside and become overlapped to leeward of A, you won't have luffing rights. However, you can still luff as needed to sail your proper course around the mark (the path you would have taken if A hadn't been there). If you need to luff above close-hauled to be able to round the mark as necessary to sail the course, you will be exonerated if, by doing so, you fail to give A room to keep clear. **(Rules 17, 18.3, 43.1(b) & Definition Mark-Room)**
- Whether or not you have luffing rights, if your proper course is to gybe at the mark, you mustn't sail higher than your proper course. **(Rule 18.4)**

