

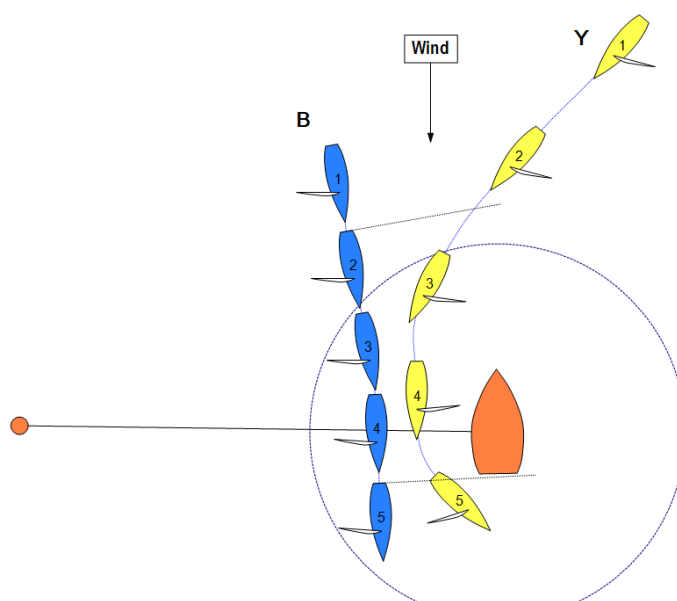
2026.002

Date of Publication: 7 April 2026

Mark-Room at a Downwind Finish

Question

In a team race B and Y are on a downwind leg to the finish. When B on port-tack reaches the zone of the boat end finish mark, Y on starboard-tack has not yet reached the zone. B is sailing her optimum VMG course to finish, and her proper course is not to sail close to the finish boat. At position 3, Y bears off to avoid contact with B and protests. B finishes ahead of Y and there is no contact. What should the call be?



Answer

Penalise Blue.

When B reaches the zone, Y has not reached it. Therefore, Y is required by rule 18.2(a)(2) to give B mark-room. Because B's proper course is not to sail close to the finish mark, Definition Mark-Room (a) does not apply, and B is not entitled to room to sail to the mark. But B is entitled to room to pass the mark on the required side (Definition Mark-Room (b)) and leave it astern (Definition Mark-Room (c)). At position 3, Y's course is not preventing B from passing the mark on the required side and leaving it astern, so Y complied with rule 18.2(a)(2) by giving B mark-room.

Since B could have changed course (or gybed) and therefore kept clear of Y and could have then passed the mark on the required side and left it astern, she was not sailing within the mark-room to which she was entitled when she failed to keep clear of Y and broke rule 10. B is not exonerated under rule 43.1(b) for breaking rule 10.