



TIBURON YACHT CLUB

The Ten Racing Commandments for Beginners

Below, you will find the Right-of-Way Rules for racing in a very brief and simplified form. They are intended as a starting point for new racers until they can become familiar with the intriguing intricacies of the current **Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS)**. These rules are not intended as a substitute for the official rules which are available from US Sailing.

Recommended Reading: *“Paul Elvstrom explains the Racing Rules of Sailing”*

<p>1. PORT/STARBOARD: When boats on opposite tacks meet, i.e. their booms are on opposite sides of the boat, the port tack boat must keep clear.</p> <p>The tack is named according to the windward side of the boat, i.e. the side opposite the boom. If, as you face forward, the right side of the boat is windward, you are on starboard tack. If not, you are on port (<i>in these diagrams right-of-way = white</i>)!</p>	
<p>2. WINDWARD/LEEWARD: When boats are on the same tack, i.e. booms on the same side, two rules apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ windward boat keep clear ◆ overtaking boat keep clear 	
<p>3. CHANGING TACK: While you are tacking or gybing, you must keep clear of other boats which are not doing so. If you acquire the right-of-way over a boat near-by with a tack or gybe, you must give that boat reasonable room and time to react.</p>	
<p>4. AVOIDING COLLISIONS: Even when you have the right of way, you must try hard to avoid any collision. In any case, hitting another boat is slow and maybe expensive!!</p>	
<p>5. BUOY ROOM: When rounding or passing a mark other than a starting mark, you must give room to round to any boat that has an inside overlap on you as you get near the mark.</p> <p>You should also avoid tacking within two boat lengths of a windward mark if any other boats are near you on the other tack.</p>	<p>Although the grey boat is to leeward and would usually have right of way, the overlapping white boat is entitled to enough room to make a seamanlike rounding of the mark.</p>

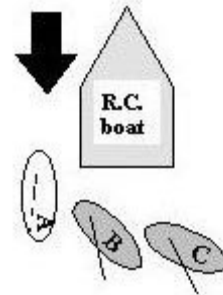
6. BARGING: "Buoy room" rule does not apply at the start line. **Do not barge** there by trying to squeeze between a boat to leeward of you and a mark. Note that a committee boat that marks an end of the start (or finish!) line is considered a mark.

A is entitled to sit as high as head to wind to prevent both B and C from going between her and the RC boat which is the start mark.

In the absence of A, boat B would be entitled to cut off boat C.

All must avoid a collision that could cause damage.

If A or B are forced to give room to avoid a collision, they should protest, and the infinging boat should do a 720.



7. OVER EARLY: If any part of your boat or equipment is across the start line when the start signal is made, you must re-start. While returning to the start line to re-start, you must keep clear of any boats that are not returning. Often the best approach in a crowd is to let your sails luff and slow down until you can return to the line without fouling anyone.

8. DEFENDING AGAINST OVERTAKING BOATS: If a boat tries to pass you to windward, you are entitled to defend your wind by luffing up but must do so in such a way as to give a windward boat **time and room** to keep clear (*see also item #4*).

If a near-by boat tries to pass you to leeward on a reach or run, you are not allowed to make life even tougher for that boat by sailing below the course to the next mark.

9. TOUCHING A MARK: If you touch a mark, you may continue to race only after getting out of the way of other boats and sailing one full circle. (I.E. one tack followed by one gybe or one gybe followed by one tack)

10. RULE INFRINGEMENT: You are officially racing (and therefore subject to penalty) from your Prep Signal (usually the 4-minute 'gun') until you have cleared the finish line. If you break a rule, the racing rules and good sportsmanship require that you do a two circle turn. As in item #9, you may continue to race only after getting out of the way of other boats and, in this case, sailing two consecutive circles in the same direction. If there is a foul, the rules (usually) require that there be a protest or penalty turns. *In TYC club racing, we have a "live and let live" attitude and minor fouls are often forgiven. For example, let's say a starboard boat has to bear off a couple of inches to avoid a port tacker crossing in front. Halfway up the beat, that may be no big deal and require nothing more than: "You owe us one!" Near the mark or the finish, however, such a foul looms much larger and the offending boat should do the turns without even having to be asked.*

If you are fouled and you intend to protest, you must immediately yell (*the actual word*) **"Protest!"** (Note: A boat 18 feet or longer must also display a red protest flag.)

If the offending party does immediate penalty turns, you can forget the matter. Otherwise, you inform the RC of your protest by following the procedure indicated in your Sailing Instructions. When you reach shore, you fill in a protest form and attend a hearing that will decide the protest.