

Introduction to the Racing Rules of Sailing



*Dartmouth
Yacht Club*

Introduction



Knowing just a few basic rules will take care of a lot of the situations on the race course.

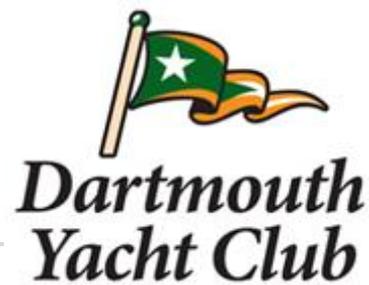
This presentation gives you those basics plus a little more.

Basic Terminology



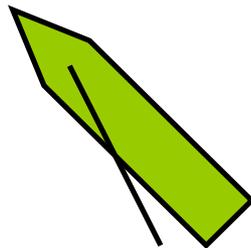
- Starboard: the **right** side of the boat
- Port: the **left** side of the boat
- Windward: closest to wind
- Leeward: farther away from the wind

Starboard Tack vs. Port Tack

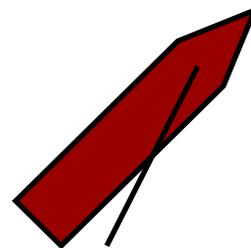


- A boat is on **starboard tack** when the crew (depends on the conditions) is sitting on the starboard side of the boat. The boat is on starboard tack, when the boom is on the opposite side, i.e port.
- A boat is on **port tack** when when the boom is on the starboard side.

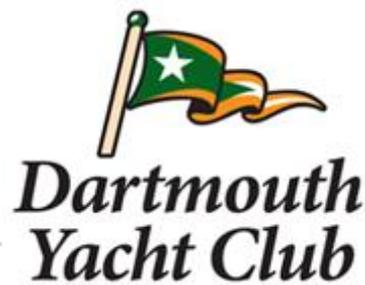
**Starboard
Tack**



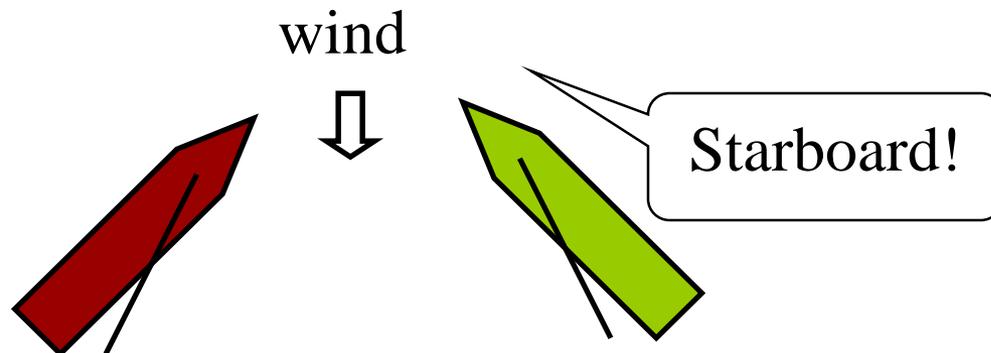
Port Tack



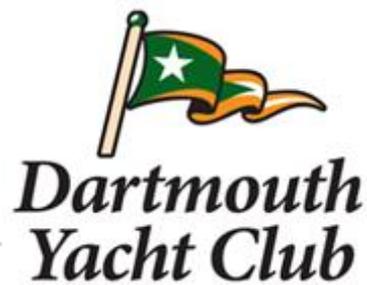
Port/Starboard



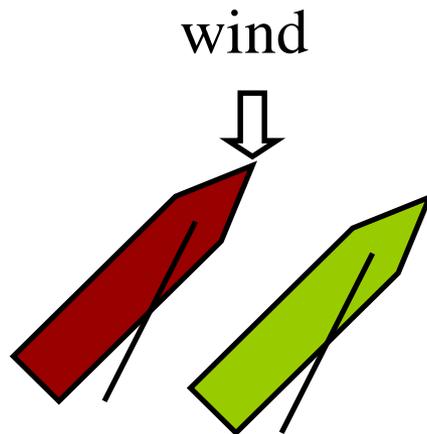
- A boat on starboard tack has right of way over a port tack boat. The port tack boat (red) must keep clear of the starboard tack boat without causing the starboard tack boat (green) to change course. The port boat has 3 options.
 - Try to cross the starboard boat (risky maneuver, must make sure there is room to cross without causing green to alter course to avoid a collision.)
 - Tack before she reaches the starboard boat
 - Duck behind the starboard boat



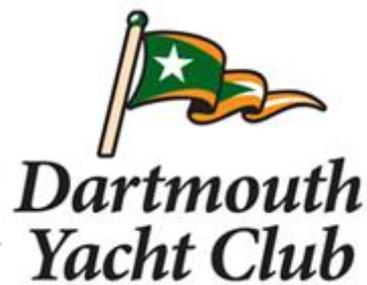
Windward/ Leeward



- A boat to leeward has right of way over a windward boat on the same tack
- Green is the leeward boat because she is farther away from the wind. Red is the windward boat because she is closer to the wind. Red must therefore keep clear of Green.
- Windward/Leeward only applies when boats are on the **same tack**. In this case, both are on port.

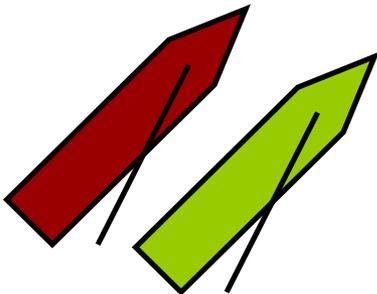


Tacking

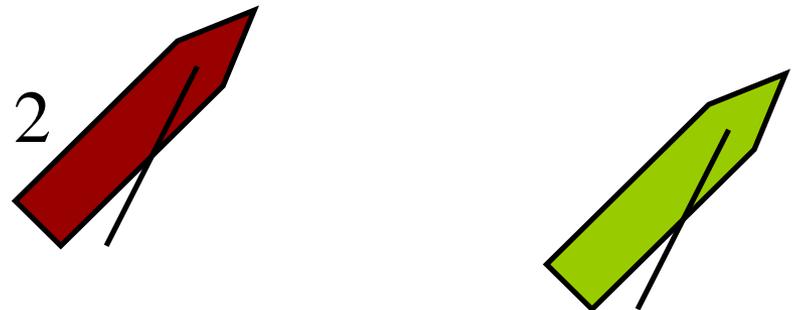


- While a boat is tacking, from the time she passes head to wind (irons) until she reaches a close hauled course, she shall keep clear of other boats who are not tacking
- Close hauled in this case refers to the direction the boat is pointing. The sails do not have to be full and the boat does not have to be moving at full speed. As long as the boat is pointing in a close hauled direction on the new tack, the tack is complete.
- The point of this rule is to prevent boats from tacking too close to each other.
- In the scenarios below, both Red and Green are on port tack. In scenario 1, Green wishes to tack. However, because they are so close, Green will not be able to complete her tack without hitting Red. In scenario 2, Green may tack because the boats are far enough apart where Green can complete her tack without coming into contact with Red. Once Green completes her tack, she will be on starboard and Red must therefore keep clear.

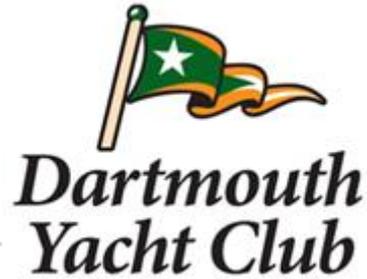
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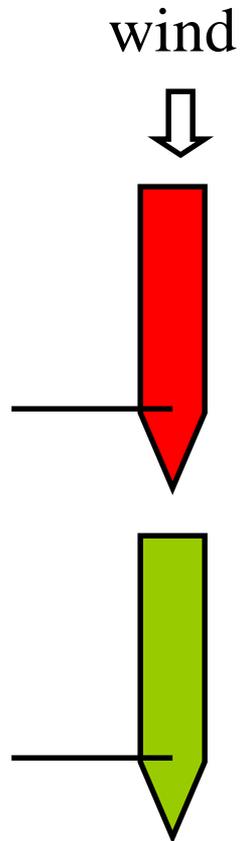


Clear Astern/ Clear Ahead

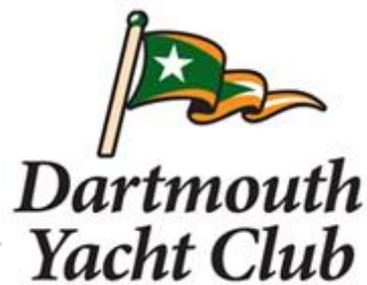


- A boat that is clear astern must keep clear of a boat clear ahead. This only applies when boats are on the same tack.

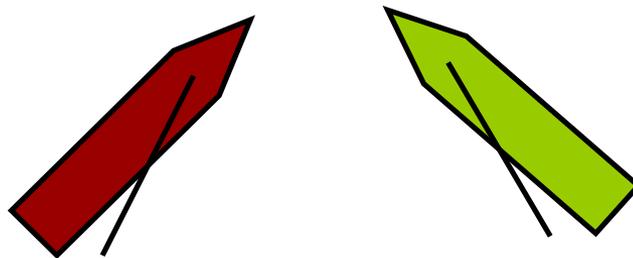
- In this situation, both boats are on port tack. Red is clear astern and must therefore keep clear of Green.



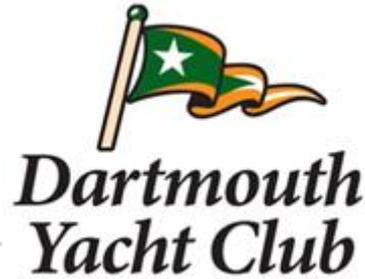
Changing Course



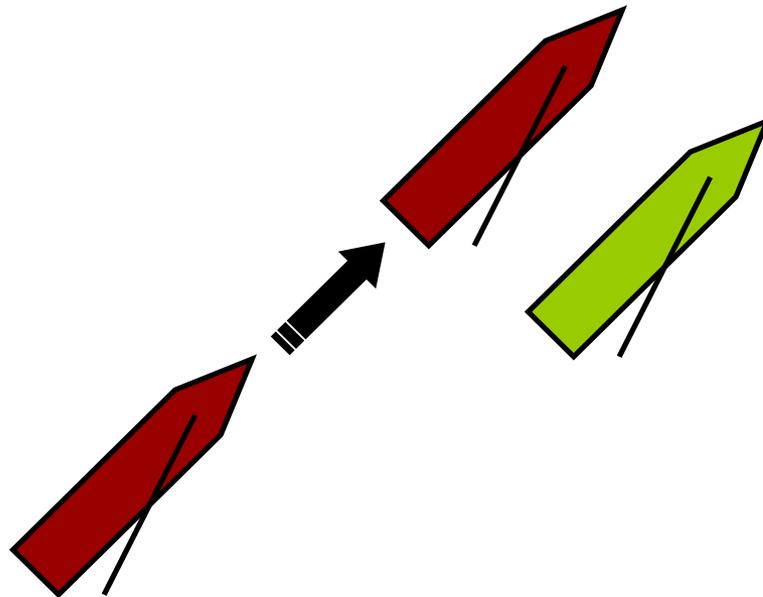
- When a right of way boat changes course, she must give the give way boat room and opportunity to keep clear.
- For example, below Green is on starboard and Red is on port. If Green changes course, she must give Red the opportunity to keep clear,
- i.e no hunting.



Proper Course/ Luffing Rights



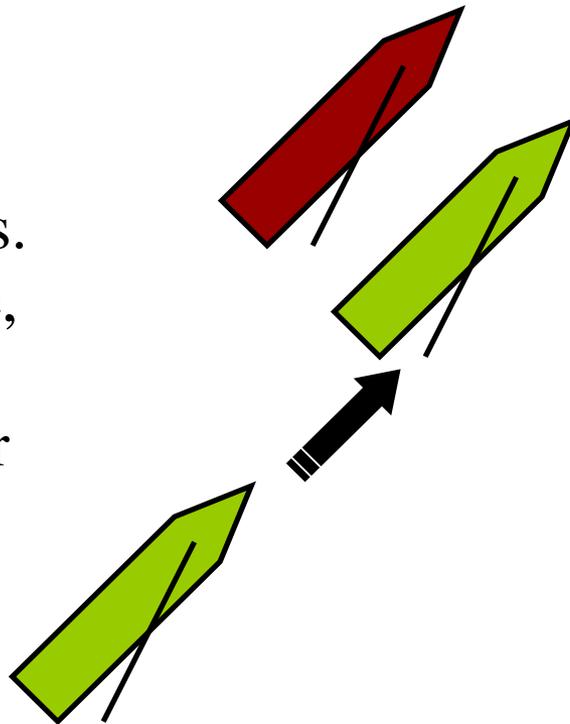
- If a boat has luffing rights, they can force a windward boat to sail above their proper course i.e above close-hauled.
- A boat overtaking to windward must keep clear of a leeward boat on the same tack. The leeward boat may force the windward boat above their proper course i.e. the leeward boat has luffing rights. Red is windward and Green is leeward in this situation.



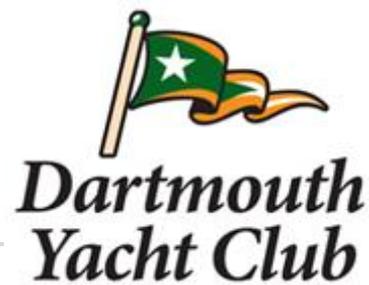
Proper Course/ Luffing Rights



- A boat overtaking to leeward on the same tack must not sail above her proper course. In this case, the leeward boat does **not** have luffing rights. Therefore, in this case, Green cannot force Red to sail above their proper course.

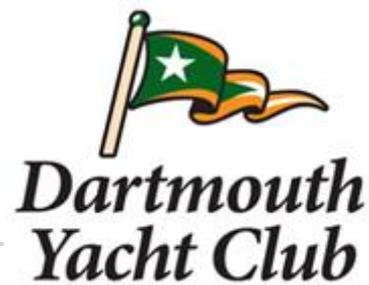


Proper Course

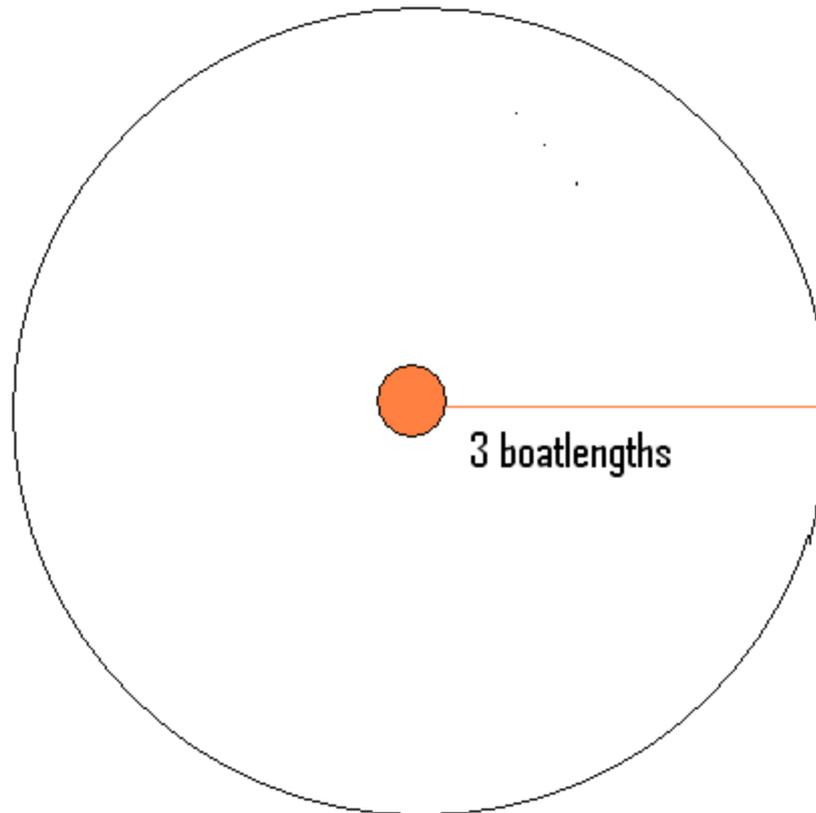


- Before the start, there is no proper course, so a boat passing to leeward may luff a windward boat up to head-to-wind
- Once the start gun sounds, a boat passing to leeward may not sail above her proper course (close hauled)

Mark Roundings/ Mark Room



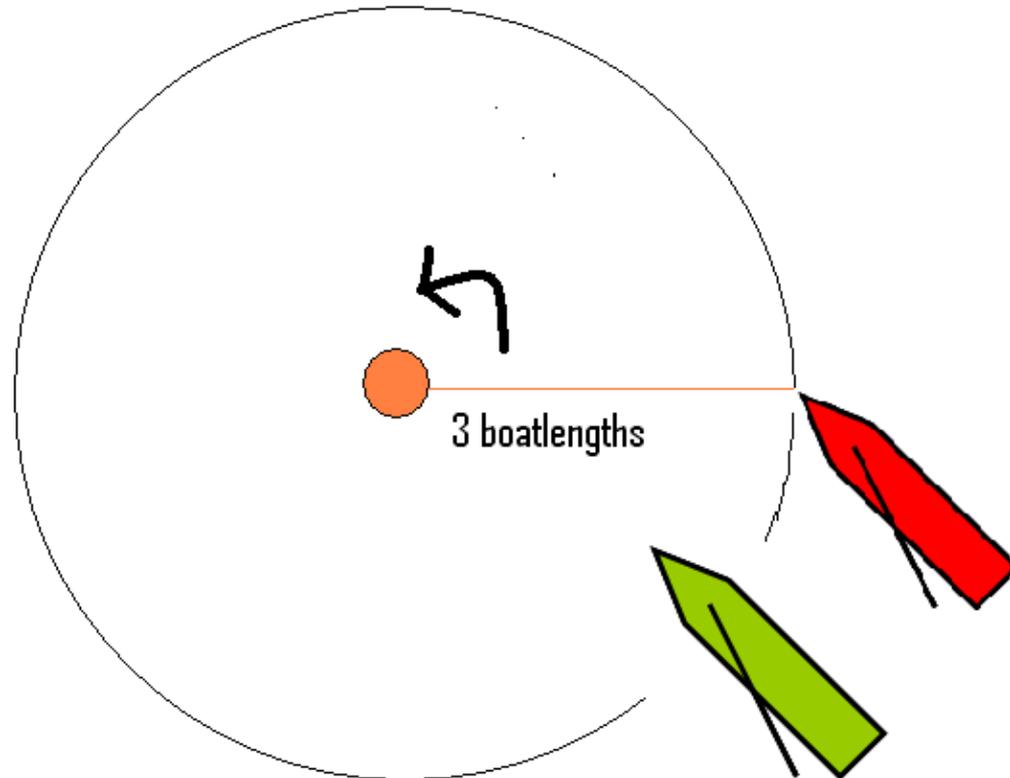
- There is an imaginary circle with a radius of 3 boat lengths around each mark known as the **zone**.



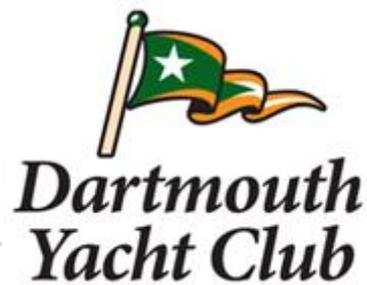
Mark Roundings/ Mark Room



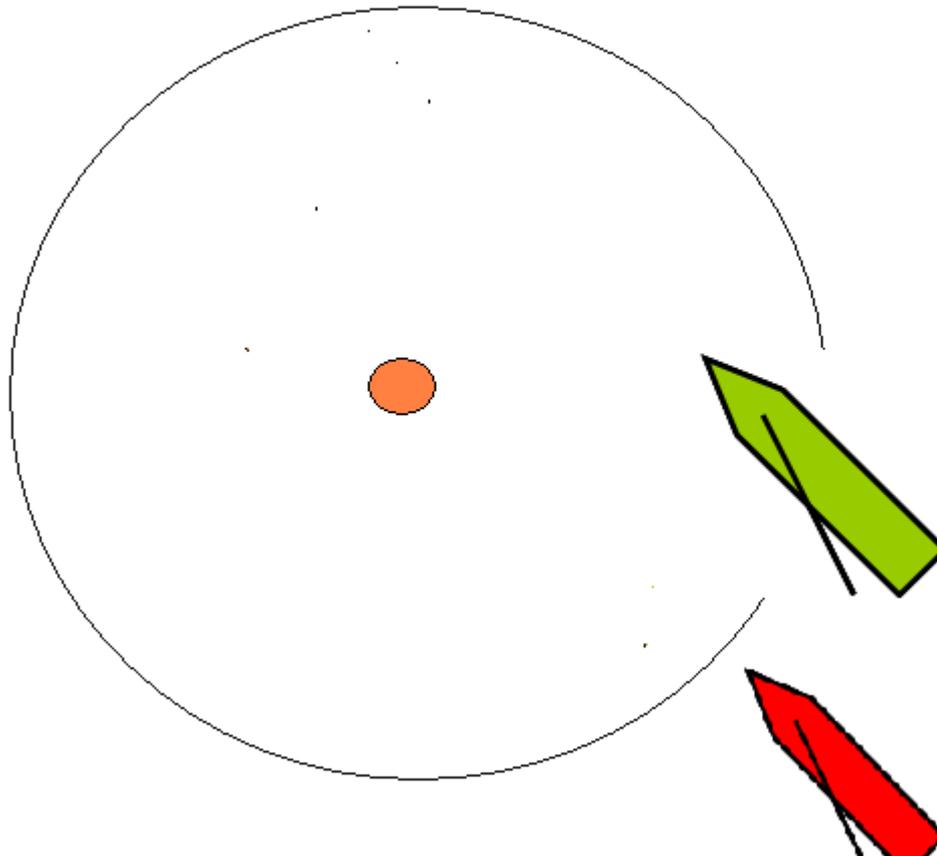
- If boats reach the zone overlapped on the same tack, the inside boat is entitled to mark room. In this case, Red must give Green room to round the mark



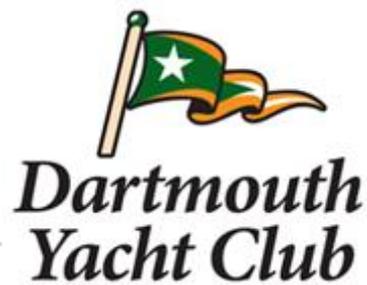
Mark Roundings/ Mark Room



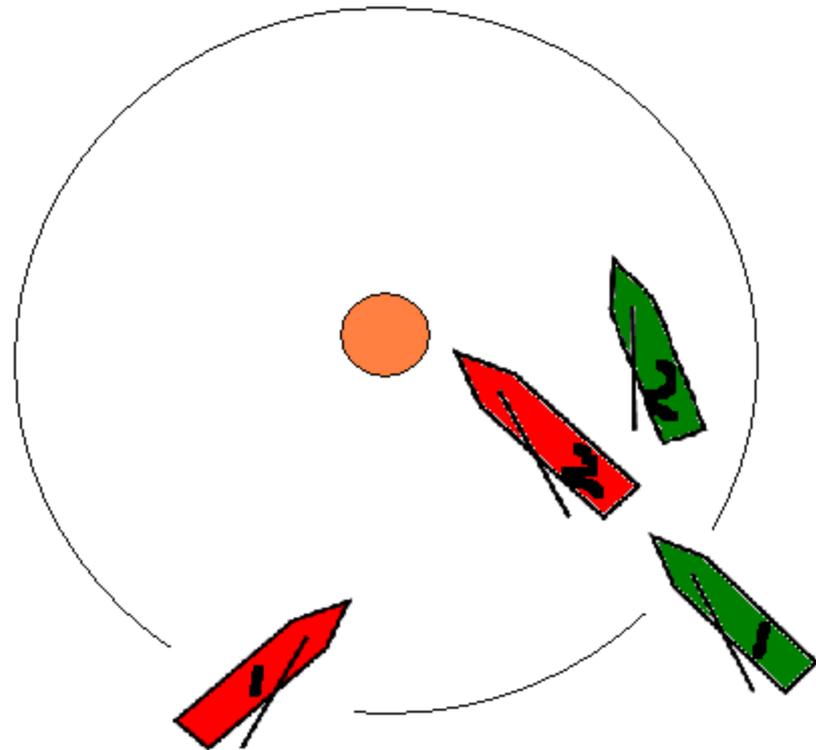
If boats on the same tack reach the zone at different times or are not overlapped, the inside boat is not entitled to room. In the scenario below, Green has reached the zone before Red. Red is therefore not entitled to room to round the mark.



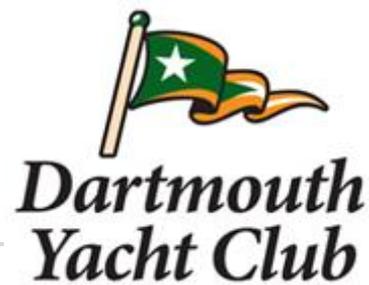
Mark Roundings/ Mark Room



- If 2 boats enter the zone on opposite tacks, and one must tack in order to round the mark, the boat on port (Red) must not force the boat on starboard (Green) to sail above close hauled. In this scenario, Red tries to sneak in and tack in front of Green (position 1). However, Green is forced above close hauled (position 2) to avoid Red.
- Red has therefore fouled Green.



Penalties



- If you hit a mark, the penalty is one turn (Tack/Gybe or Gybe /Tack)
- If you break any other rule, the penalty is two turns (Tack/Gybe/Tack/Gybe or Gybe/Tack/Gybe/Tack)
- You **must keep clear** of other boats when doing penalty turns

Starting Sequence



By far, the most common starting sequence you will see is the 5 minute Start. It consists of the following:

-3 long horns/whistles= Warning

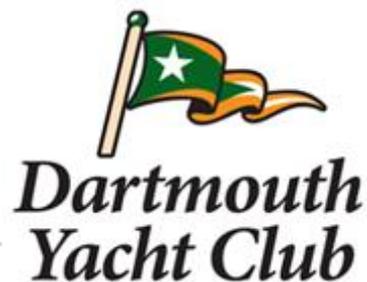
-Fleet Flag and horn whistle=5 minutes

-Blue Flag up with white square and horn/whistle=4 minutes

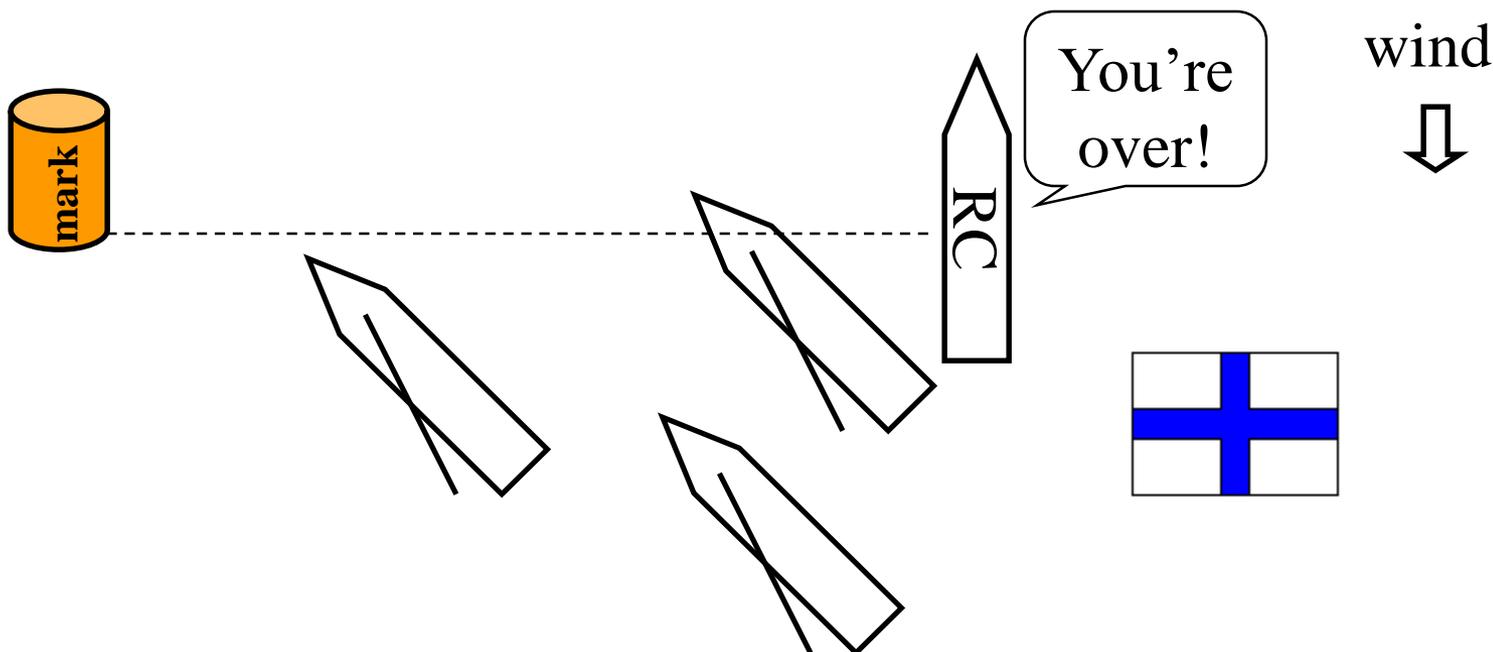
-Blue Flag down =1 minute

-Fleet Flag down and horn/whistle = Start

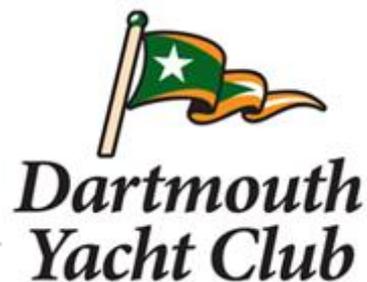
Individual Recall



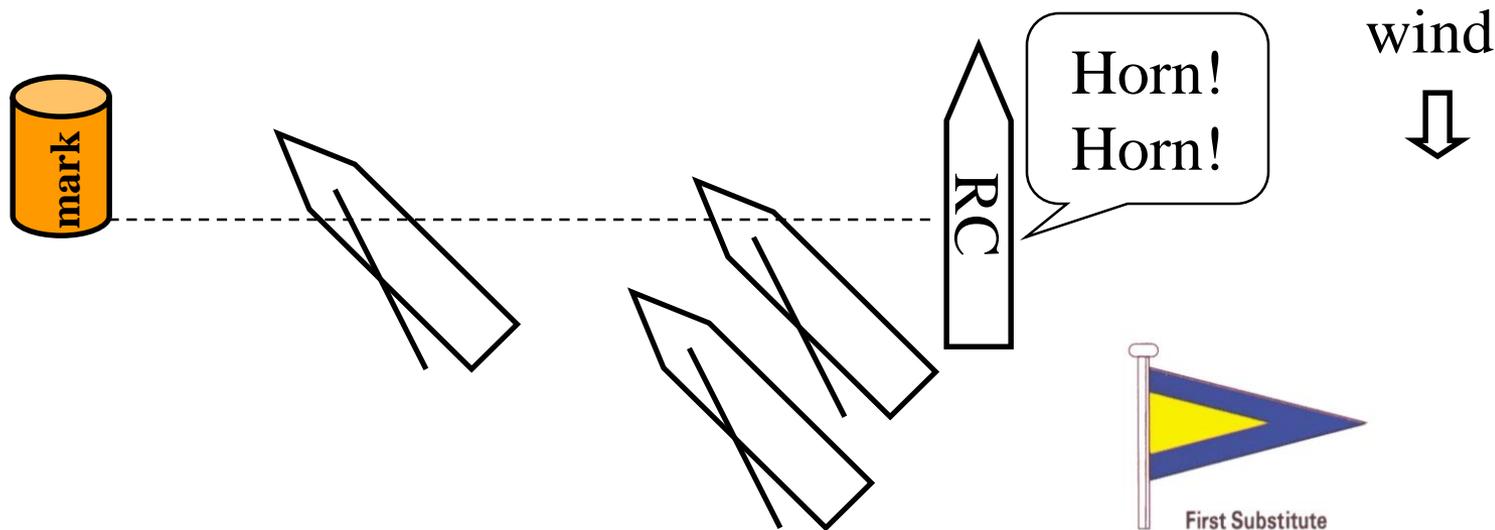
The RC will raise the X flag with 1 horn and attempt to call the sail # of a boat(s) over the line at the start. If you are over, you must dip back below the line to clear yourself.



General Recall



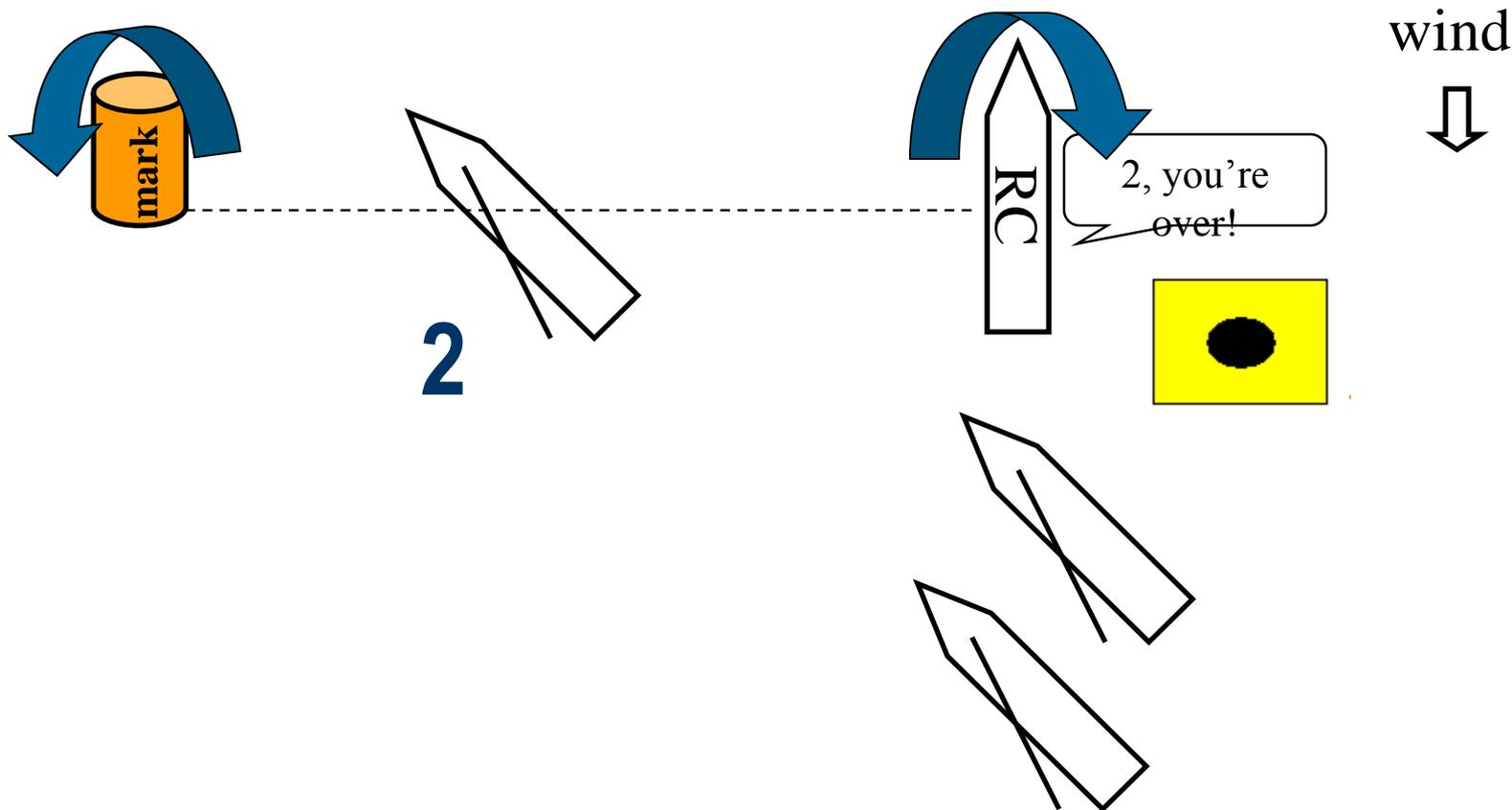
- The RC may signal a general recall by raising the first substitute flag with 2 horns if many boats are over the line at the start and the RC cannot identify all of them. The race will be re-started.



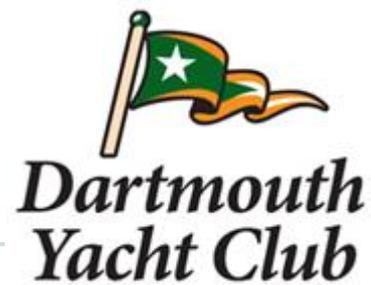
I Flag



- Usually after 1 general recall, the RC will raise the I flag (or verbally say it is up if they do not have a flag). This means that the 1 minute rule is in effect. If you are over the line at 1 minute or later, you must sail around an end (the pin or the boat) in order to clear yourself. You **cannot** dip below the line to clear yourself if the I flag is raised.



Things to Remember



- Starboard has right of way over port—this rule takes care of 90% of problem
- When in doubt, keep clear of other boats (you are never in the right if there is a major collision!)
- We all have to do penalty turns now and again, so if you know you are wrong, do your turns!
- **HAVE FUN!!!**