

PERIHELION

Newsletter 21



Comet Class Association

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIRMAN

ERROL EDWARDS	SECRETARY	60 Ridgeway Road, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 3EA, (0272 354494)
MARTIN PRESTON	TREASURER	6 Tangmere, Heywood Avenue, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 3JA (0628 826101)
JACKIE HUDSON		33 Warland Road, Plumstead, London SE18 2EX (081 854 2861)
HENRY JAGGERS		43 Haymill Road, Slough, Bucks SL1 6NE (06286 64237)
STUART LINES	NEWSLETTER EDITOR	1 Portobello Close, Chesham, Bucks HP5 2PL (0494 771430)
JOHN WINDIBANK		2 Dogwood Close, Northfleet, Kent DA11 8PJ (0474 325653)
DEREK COLEMAN	AUDITOR	5 Agars Place, Datchet, Berks SL3 9AH

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

This is the final edition of Perihelion for 1991 and on behalf of all the Association officers, I would like to send seasons greetings to all our readers, together with best wishes for a prosperous new year.

I would also like to thank the various people who have contributed to these pages over the past four editions. Without your help, the newsletter would cease to exist. Now comes my whinge of the year - where is everyone else? There are some race reports in this edition, but they have been taken from Yachts and Yachting. I would suggest that not all Comet sailors read this magazine regularly and it would have been useful if reports could also have been sent to me.

Make a resolution for 1992 to put pen to paper so we can continue to publish a regular, interesting newsletter.

Well, that is my grumble over and I feel better for it. Happy New Year to you all.

Stuart Lines

KINGSMEAD OPEN

The Comet Traveller Series concluded at Kingsmead on 20th October, with 28 boats entering from seven clubs. The event was run concurrently with an open meeting for Bytes. The competitors found sunshine tempered with a chilly wind which was gusty throughout the day, and varied at different times between dead calm and force 4. However, the race officer managed to provide courses that not only gave a tour of lakeside scenery but also managed to exercise all points of sailing.

The morning race was won by Henry Jagers, in the lightest wind of the day. Guy Wilkins won the first race in the afternoon in shifter conditions. The third race, on a new course, was extremely close at the front, with only two or three boat lengths separating the first five boats on the final beat. However, Mark Wilkins managed to cross the line first to win the race and the event.

Overall Results: 1st Mark Wilkins, Chipstead SC; 2nd Garry Bullock, Chipstead SC. First Lady: Judith Johnson, Aylesbury SC. First Veteran Len Dean, Kingsmead SC.

COMET CHAMPIONSHIP

The Comet Championship was held at Grafham Water on 18th and 19th May. The weather was overcast but pleasant, variable winds of force 1-3 prevailed over the entire weekend and provided some closely fought racing.

Following an interesting practice race, the fleet split into two groups immediately after the start of the first race. One group took the port tack parallel to the shoreline, the other headed off on starboard towards open water and supposedly the stronger breeze. With the exception of Keith Bullock, the port tack group soon lost its nerve, only to be rewarded by the sight of Bullock emerging with a clear lead at the windward mark. Bullock did very well indeed to hold this lead for the rest of the race, despite strong challenges from Mark Wilkins and Errol Edwards, who were both in close contention at the finish. They finished in that order, with Keith Lamdin in fourth place.

Sunday morning opened with patchy airs and there was a short delay on the water before a steady breeze filled in for the second race. The fleet stayed more together than on the previous day, demonstrating the closely matched performance of the boats and producing some close racing throughout the fleet. Charles Williams made best use of the shifts on the first beat and had pulled out an appreciable lead by the leeward mark. However, he had to take penalty turns at that mark following an incident with a boat from another fleet, and this let Henry Jagers through. Jagers, fearing a growing challenge from Wilkins and Edwards, failed to cover Williams who had regained the lead by the windward mark. At the end of the race, and less than five yards from the finishing line, Jagers was again neck and neck with Williams but a desperate attempt to win ended with Jagers doing penalty turns before crossing in second place. Edwards finished third, Wilkins fourth and Derek Coleman fifth.

At the start of the third and final race any one of seven helmsmen were in contention for the title. The fleet split with Lamdin, Bullock, Williams, M. Wilkins and brother Guy all being well clear of the rest by the windward mark, with Jagers placed about eighth. Jagers made full use of marginal planing to the wing mark and then sailed high to the leeward mark to pass two boats and make a considerable gain on the leading group. On the second and subsequent beats, close covering among the leaders allowed Jagers to concentrate on the wind shifts and sail through to second place, to finish just behind G. Wilkins. M. Wilkins assured Jagers of the title by pipping Williams to third place on the line.

Overall Results: 1st Henry Jagers, Kingsmead SC; 2nd Charles Williams; 3rd Mark Wilkins, Chipstead SC; 4th Keith Bullock, Kingsmead SC; 5th Errol Edwards, Chew Valley Lake SC; 6th Guy Wilkins, Chipstead SC. First Lady: Fiona Cauter, Chipstead SC. First Veteran: Keith Bullock.

COMET CLASS ASSOCIATION

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR FROM 1st JULY 1990 TO 30th JUNE 1991

RECEIPTS	1/7/90 - 30/6/91	1/7/89 - 30/6/90
Membership Sub	1555	976
A.M.S. Builders fees	560	465
Nat. Champ entry fees	781	0
Open Meetings proceeds	33	0
Handbooks	5	3
Commission on insurance	535	278
Commission on T-shirts	0	62
Car sticker funding	84	0
	-----	-----
	3553	1784
	-----	-----

PAYMENTS

Advertising	0	96
Newsletters	634	879
RYA affiliation fee	24	24
Stationery	0	0
Expenses	86	123
"Sailboat" costs	96	81
Prizes - Nationals	152	224
Prizes - Opens	0	57
Association Handbook	0	0
Association labels	0	22
Car stickers	0	126
Nat. Champ expenses	412	0
Draycote expenses	50	0
Misc.	52	10
	-----	-----
	1506	1642
	-----	-----
Surplus for period	2046	142
Balance at Bank at beginning of period	887	745
Balance at Bank at end of period	2934	887
	=====	=====

Audited and certified to be in accordance with the books of
the Association.

M. Preston
Hon. Treasurer

D. Coleman
Hon. Auditor

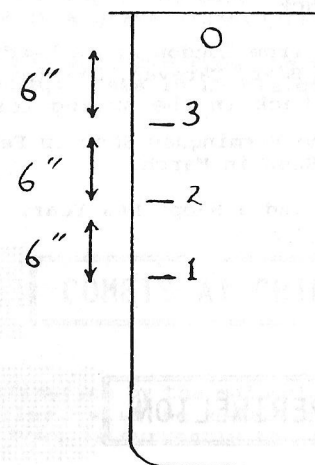
ERRATUM

My thanks to Alan Browning for pointing out an obvious error in the centreboard markings shown in figure 9 of "Sailing Your Comet - Part 1", Perihelion 8

The correct position of the marks is shown in the figure below and my apologies to any Comet sailor who may only have been able to view the marks from the bottom of a boat in the inverted position!

Seriously, if any of you read the articles (?) and see an error or have a query, please comment in the next newsletter - it may help the editor with copy! [Agreed - Ed.]

Keith Lamdin



BUILDER'S REPORT

At this time of year I always tend to look back briefly at the year drawing to a close but spend more time looking forward to the next.

Despite the recession, the Comet has continued to sell and create real interest at demos and boat shows. We were blessed with excellent weather at Southampton Boat Show, where there was plenty of interest in the Comet and Duo. This was followed by a successful demo day at Kingsmead S.C. on a Saturday, with the last Comet open meeting of the season on the Sunday. It was quite a surprise to see who we were sharing the course with, but I don't think the Comets disgraced themselves.

These last two months of the year are always hectic. We keep building Comets, there are always new moulds to make or old ones to refurbish and the London Boat Show to prepare for.

This year, the Show really does look the best ever, with all of Earls Court 2 open. We are fortunate to have exactly the same stand at the bottom of the right hand escalator. Although there are never that many sailing dinghies at the Show, if you have not been to the Boat Show for a few years, it really is a lot better than it was.

At London we will be launching a special 1992 limited edition Comet, the Comet Charisma! It includes an interesting colour scheme and a race rigging pack.

Just after I have recovered from London, I am heading up the road to Scotland, to the Scottish Boat, Caravan, Camping & Leisure Show. Like last year, I will go back in the spring for a demo weekend.

Dinghy Leisure will be at the Birmingham Show in February, then of course there is the Dinghy Show in March.

I wish you all a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year.

Andrew Simmons

PERIHELION

The Spring edition of Perihelion will be published in March. All contributions to me by the end of February, please.

Stuart Lines.

AN "APPEALING" BOOK?

The Royal Yachting Association has just published a completely new style of racing rules handbook, 'RYA Appeal Cases 1962-1991'.

Spanning nearly three decades of the most interesting and relevant decisions on appeal cases, it is described as being invaluable as a guide to those faced with a difficult interpretation of a rule, whether they are competitors, coaches, members of race and protest committees or anyone else involved in racing.

Although case studies have been available in book form before, this is the first time that specific rules have been related so carefully to individual and relevant cases. The case may range from something as simple as the definition of a word used in the rules, right through to the outcome of complex situations on the water.

Edited by Mary Pera, herself a renowned expert and author of many guides on the subject, the new book is divided into two halves; the first in rule order, giving the essences of applicable RYA cases over the years that relate to each rule and referring to the second half, which lists the cases in full and in chronological order.

RYA Racing manager, John Reed, believes the book will prove extremely useful. 'It is bound to become an essential publication at all protest hearings,' he said, 'and may even put people who do not have a copy at a grave disadvantage!'

This book will be available from the RYA stand at the London Boat Show, or RYA headquarters in Eastleigh, priced at £10.

COMETS AT CHIPSTEAD

Subject to ratification by the main club committee, it seems likely that a Comet class will be established at Chipstead S.C. next season. Ralph Rowe is currently the fleet captain elect.

There are already 28 Comets at Chipstead and more are on their way. The new class will have its own start for Sunday racing.

If you are interested in joining, contact Ralph on 081 777 8650.

COMET NATIONALS

Competitors in the Comet National Championship held at Hampton Pier Y.C. on 12th to 14th July were treated to a variety of conditions over the three days of racing. In the race on Friday many competitors were deceived by the strong south-westerly wind, and once afloat and out from shelter of the land, were met by sometimes violent gusts of wind, resulting in several boats returning to shore before reaching the start line.

Once underway, Guy Wilkins shot into an early lead, emulating his winning performance in the earlier practice race. He was followed closely by Garry Bullock and Chris Robinson. These three boats soon put a considerable distance between themselves and the rapidly depleting fleet.

Two boats enjoying some close racing were Steve Monks and Robert Howles as both vessels battled it out around the course, with each of them taking turns to thrill the spectators with some truly spectacular capsizes.

The conditions for the second day seemed to have deteriorated somewhat with the additional hazard of heavy rain, causing the occasional gusts of wind to approach gale force. With this in mind the majority of the fleet set to sea with sails heavily reefed. Local sailor Fred Kent was soon overpowered and was forced to retire early, and a similar fate befell Jackie Hudson. However, Tracey Davies from Gunfleet chose this race to put in her best performance as she fought hard to stay in contention with race leader Wilkins. The latter's brother, Mark Wilkins, was also going well; so too was John Windibanks from Chipstead S.C., until he hit the windward mark two rounds in succession, which blew his chances.

In the third race G. Wilkins led from the start once again, and this time it was the turn of Keith Bullock to join the chasing group along with Steve Kibble. G. Bullock put in his best effort and was never far from the leader.

There was a complete contrast in the weather on Sunday, with blue skies and a gentle north-westerly breeze. G. Wilkins was out to prove that he was master of all types of conditions as again he took an early lead, although he was challenged hard by Errol Edwards and Keith Lamdin. Len Dean also found the conditions more acceptable as he finished with the leaders.

In the final race the wind dropped to nothing and with an outgoing tidal stream the boats soon began to drift away, apart from Edwards who was leading the race at the time. He luckily managed to find a lobster pot marker to which he clung in a desperate effort to hang on to his moment of glory. It was all in vain as the race ran out of time and was abandoned.

Overall Results: 1st Guy Wilkins, Chipstead SC; 2nd Garry Bullock, Kingsmead SC; 3rd Steve Monks, Steeple Bay SC; 4th Chris Robinson, Aylesbury SC; 5th Mark Wilkins, Chipstead SC; 6th Robert Howles, Steeple Bay SC. First Lady: Tracey Davies, Gunfleet SC. First Veteran: Len Dean, Kingsmead SC. Capsize: Derek Coleman, Kingsmead SC.

KNOW THE RULES - PART 4

Having covered the principal right of way rules in section B of the Right of Way Rules, I will now move on to the rules which apply at marks and obstructions by acting as exceptions to the principal rules.

I am sometimes asked to show people the rule which states that a starboard tack yacht may have to give way to a port tack yacht at a mark in apparent contradiction of the principal rule which we all understand.

The answer is that there is no such rule at all! However, the fact remains that, in specific circumstances, a starboard tack yacht may indeed have to give way to a port tack yacht and the reason for this is embodied in the introductions to both section B and section C of Part 4 of the Right of Way Rules.

The introduction to section B says that the principal rules apply except when overridden by a rule in section C. This is confirmed by the introduction to section C, which says that when a rule in this section applies to the extent to which it explicitly provides rights and obligations, it overrides any conflicting principal rule except that relating to the limitations on altering course and preventing another yacht from keeping clear.

So, port tack may have rights over starboard tack and the windward yacht may have rights over the leeward yacht at certain points of exception to the principal rules.

Why? Well, whilst the operation of the principal rules between yachts in open water is straightforward enough, the possible situations which might occur when groups of yachts begin to converge on a mark or an obstruction such as land may make their operation untenable and potentially unsafe. The requirement to safely conduct a race both in terms of sailing a specified course with arbitrary turning points and to avoid natural hazards has led to the development of the rules of exception to the principal rules and, with safety in mind, they take precedence.

Because the rules of exception in Part C are attempting to cover an almost limitless combination of circumstances, they are quite complicated and so I will cover them in a logical sequence as might be encountered on the race course rather than directly in the sequence written in the rule book.

Therefore, I will cover them as follows:

1. Rounding the leeward mark
2. Room to pass an obstruction
3. Rounding the windward mark
4. Room to tack at an obstruction
5. Room to tack when the obstruction is a mark.

I will leave the specialised exceptions relating to starting and others for a final (I hope!) article in this series.

1. **ROUNDING THE LEEWARD MARKS:** In this area I am referring to all combinations of mark rounding when sailing off the wind and specifically not whilst rounding the windward mark of a leg of the course which has been a beat.

The combinations range from rounding, or passing a mark, on the same side from a run to a reach by tacking or gybing and any variations on that theme. To simplify the possibilities we can consider the position from the alternatives of the yachts concerned as being either overlapped or not overlapped.

It may be wise at this point to review the definition of being overlapped, which is that neither yacht is clear of the other or that an intervening yacht overlaps both of them. The point of being clear astern is defined as being behind an imaginary line projected abeam from the other yacht's hull and equipment in its normal position, such as the rudder head on the Comet.

a) **WHEN NOT OVERLAPPED:** In this, the simplest, situation of mark rounding, a yacht which is clear astern when a leading yacht comes within two of her overall lengths of the mark has no rights. The yacht clear astern shall keep clear in anticipation of and during the rounding or passing manoeuvre irrespective of whether the yacht ahead remains on the same tack or gybe.

The rounding manoeuvre is deemed to be completed when the leading yacht has cleared the mark with her aftermost point and thereafter the principal rules will apply again. However, even when the principal rules again apply, the leading yacht must be given reasonable room and opportunity to comply with any new obligations which may occur.

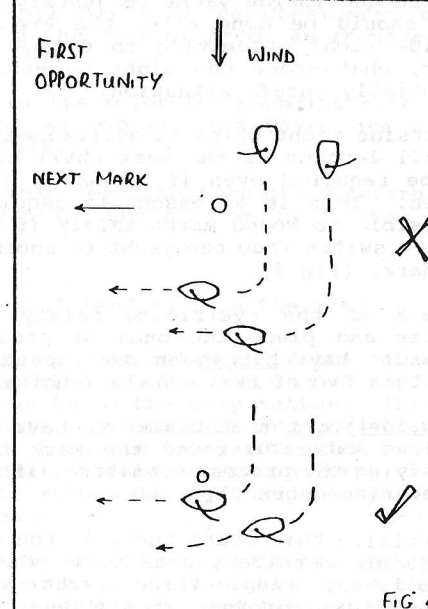
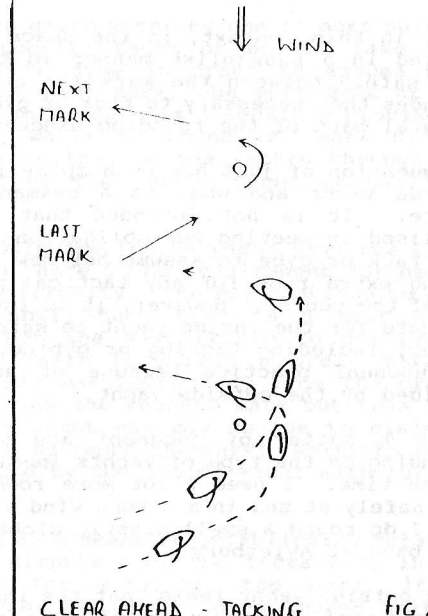
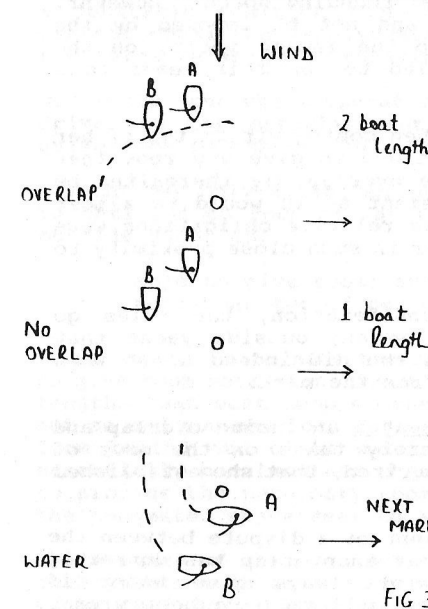
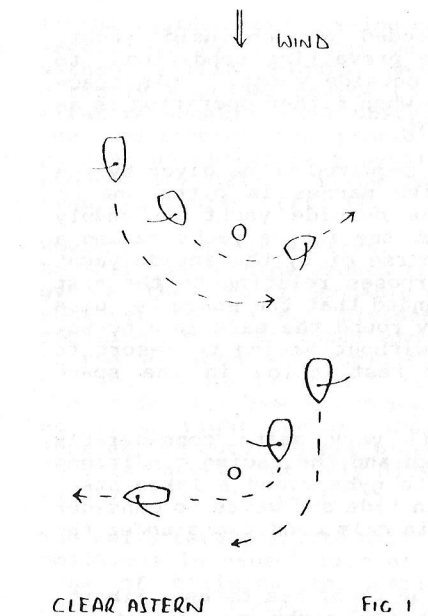
Simply, if you are behind, keep clear and leave the leading yacht in peace while it rounds or passes a mark to commence a new leg of the course, (fig 1). Incidentally, rounding or passing is purely a means of determining whether any alteration of course is necessary to comply with the sailing instructions and commence a new leg of the course. For all practical purposes they are the same and I will refer to rounding a mark for simplicity.

The yacht which is clear ahead has an obligation in one specific circumstance where, in order to assume her proper course to the next mark, a tack is required to round the mark. In this case the yacht is governed by the normal rule for changing tacks and may have to wait for the yacht astern to tack first rather than tacking in her water, (fig 2). This is slightly unusual in that off-wind courses rarely require a tack to assume the new course but it does occur and frequently catches people unaware!

The yacht which is clear ahead has no other obligations to a yacht which is clear astern before that yacht establishes an overlap.

b) **WHEN OVERLAPPED:** All our problems begin!

An outside yacht shall give each inside overlapping yacht room to round the mark, this being a mandatory requirement and the only way in which two or more yachts can safely manoeuvre round a mark when they are alongside each other.



Room, in this context, is the space needed by each inside yacht, handled in a seamanlike manner in the prevailing conditions, to pass safely between the mark and any outside yacht. This space includes that necessary to tack or gybe when either operation is an integral part of the rounding manoeuvre.

The question of just how much space is required to be given by the outside yacht and what is a seamanlike manner is often one of debate. It is not intended that the outside yacht be unduly penalised in meeting her obligations by the inside yacht making a poor tack or gybe to assume her new course or by the inside yacht taking extra room for any tactical purposes relating to the next leg of the course. However, it is intended that the space be quite adequate for the inside yacht to safely round the mark in a normal manner, including tacking or gybing, without having to resort to any unusual practice because of any restriction in the space provided by the outside yacht.

It is a matter of judgment and will vary quite considerably depending on the type of yachts involved and the racing conditions at the time. I need a lot more room to gybe round a large steel mark safely at sea in a strong wind with tide and waves to consider than I do round a small plastic globe in calm conditions under the high bank at Aylesbury.

If an outside yacht feels that the inside yacht has taken a liberty and required excessive space, she has the right to protest and require the inside yacht to justify her rounding space. However, this should be done after the event and not be imposed by the outside yacht attempting to define to the inside yacht, on the water, what space she might be entitled to, as this leads to a potentially unsafe situation.

An outside yacht which is overlapped when coming within two of her overall lengths of the mark shall continue to give any room that may be required even if, somehow, the overlap may thereafter be broken. This is a reasonable requirement as it would be almost impossible to round marks safely if the relative obligations were able to switch from one yacht to another in such close proximity to the mark, (fig 3).

Because of the overriding safety consideration, the rules go further and place the onus of proof on any outside yacht that claims to have broken an overlap that she did indeed do so when more than two of her overall lengths from the mark.

An inside yacht that claims to have created an inside overlap and requires water to round the mark thereby takes on the onus of satisfying the protest committee, if required, that she established the overlap correctly.

Essentially this means that, in the event of a dispute between the inside and outside yachts as to whether an overlap was correctly established, the outside yacht should always give water if requested and protest if she deems the call to have been wrong. This is the obvious response in the interests of safety and the outside yacht can never be wrong in giving water and then requiring the inside yacht to prove her position which, it should be noted, may be quite difficult to do in the absence of independent witnesses.

If the inside yacht, having been given water by one of more outside yachts and being either on opposite tacks or on the same tack without luffing rights, needs to gybe in order to assume most directly a proper course to the next mark, she must gybe at the first reasonable opportunity. This again is a sensible proviso to the requirement for providing water to round the mark by not placing an unnecessary penalty on the outside yachts through any unnecessary delay on the part of the inside yacht to sail the required course, (fig 4).

However, there is a catch! Should the inside yacht have the right to luff the outside yachts then there is no requirement for her to gybe at the first reasonable opportunity. She may continue to sail whatever course she pleases until such time as a mast abeam position is established and then she must return to her proper course as soon as possible. There is rarely a great deal of tactical sense in such a luffing manoeuvre away from the proper course for the new leg starting at the rounded mark but this is a matter of right for the inside yacht who may decide to claim it just as the outer yachts prepare to round the mark! Water to round in this case is entirely dictated by the inside yacht with luffing rights - beware! (fig 5).

The rules rarely invite hailing as a means to establishing relative positions in expectation of a dispute over the facts but, in the case of claiming an overlap for water at the mark, it is specifically stated that a yacht that hails does indeed help to support her claim. In the absence of independent witnesses and in a debatable position such a hail may well be considered by a protest committee as discharging the onus of proof as required by the rules relating to rounding marks.

Obviously, the whole operation of the rules for rounding marks are driven by the establishment of an overlap and there are clear guidelines to control this activity.

A yacht may only establish an inside overlap from clear astern and be entitled to room if, at the point the overlap is created, the outside yacht is:

able to give room; and is
more than two of her overall lengths from the mark.

It is important to note the sequence that makes the actual ability to give room more significant than the precise distance of two boat lengths that most people consider to be the only factor. This is not so and you may not, for example, come in late on a puff of wind from behind and claim water on a group of yachts that may be essentially becalmed and physically unable to move quickly enough to provide the necessary room to accommodate yet another yacht on the congested space near to a mark.

The essence of these guidelines is an attempt to be reasonable to both yachts such as to give essentially equal rights to an inside yacht that does obtain a clear overlap in good time and to the outside yacht which now has to make room but is under no obligation to do so, or even anticipate having to do so, before an overlap is actually established by the yacht which was clear astern, (fig 6).

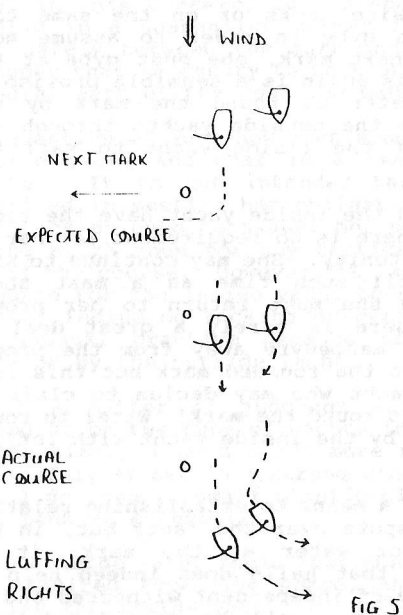


FIG 5

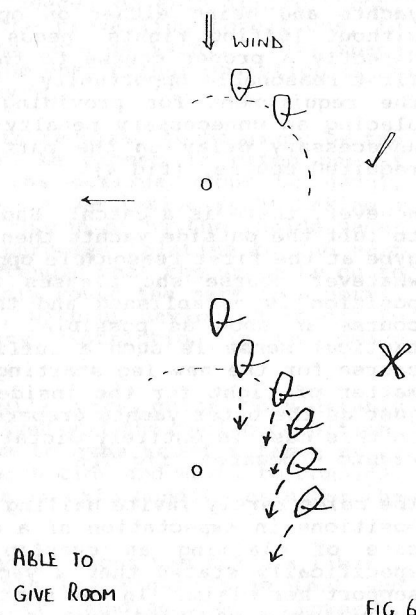


FIG 6

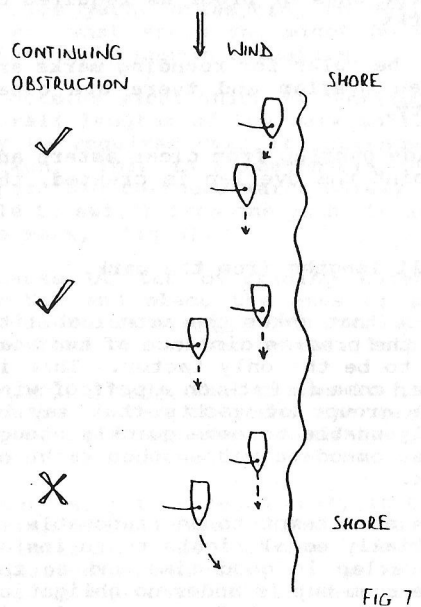


FIG 7

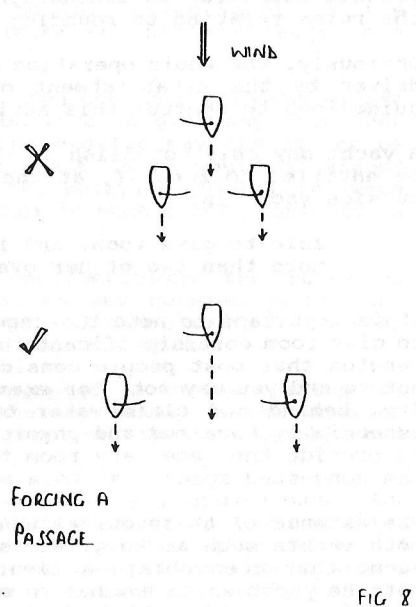


FIG 8

2. ROOM TO PASS AN OBSTRUCTION: It is necessary to consider the definition of an obstruction in order to see how this situation differs from the requirements of rounding a mark.

An obstruction is any object, including a vessel underway, large enough to require a substantial alteration of course to pass on one side or the other of the object. An obstruction is also an object that can be passed on one side only and the sailing instructions may also prescribe that certain areas rank as obstructions.

Obvious examples of obstructions are islands, seashores and river banks, shoals and weed banks. Obstructions may also be other yachts in the same, or other, races and these may be a transitory obstruction as they pass in different directions or a continuing obstruction if they sail a parallel course at a similar speed.

The purpose of the rules is to allow yachts to pass or round an obstruction in the same safe manner that is required in the rounding of a mark. Incidentally, the normal type of mark that is used in dinghy racing does not qualify as an obstruction because it does not require a substantial alteration of course to avoid it when further than one boat length from the mark.

The basic mechanism of overlapped outside yachts allowing space for the inside yacht to pass an obstruction and for non-overlapped yachts clear astern to keep clear of the yacht ahead applies in exactly the same way as for the rounding of marks and all the previous comments about space and the establishment of overlaps apply.

However, there is one crucial addition which relates to the passing of a continuous obstruction such as a shoal, the shores or another vessel. The word "vessel" in this context may be that of another yacht or some other ship which could potentially be much larger than the racing yachts which may be affected by it.

Such obstruction could be a factor in the yacht race for a long period of time and it is deemed unfair on the yacht originally clear astern if it is only able to obtain an overlap and subsequently room to pass the obstruction at the initial point of reaching the obstruction.

Therefore, the yacht clear astern is allowed to establish an overlap between a yacht ahead and a continuing obstruction at any time but only when there is room for her to pass between them safely. The use of the word safely, in this context, must be taken as meaning that the yacht ahead need not alter course at all to allow passage of the yacht astern. Equally, the yacht ahead may not alter course after such an overlap has been created in order to prevent passage of the yacht astern between herself and the obstruction, (fig 7).

In the context of our Comet racing, this is the restriction which prevents a Comet clear astern of two other Comets, which are acting as continuing obstructions with respect to each other, from poking her bow between them and forcing a passage by making one or other of these Comets ahead alter course to provide her with room to pass, (fig 8).

3. **ROUNDING THE WINDWARD MARK:** the rounding of a windward mark at the end of a beat is considered to be fundamentally different from the case of rounding a leeward mark. There are a number of reasons for this, including:

- yachts arrive from only two basic directions, the port and starboard laylines, rather than converging from almost any direction.
- numbers of yachts arriving at a windward mark are generally smaller than those at the end of an offwind leg due to the effect of bunching downwind.
- yachts are easier to manoeuvre in close company through tacking than when they are offwind with their booms well out from the yachts' centreline and possibly requiring to gybe in order to keep clear. This situation is aggravated by the fact that the yachts may also be flying spinnakers which further limit their responsiveness in close quarter manoeuvres.

In view of these considerations, it is usual to consider the situation at the windward mark effectively as if the mark was not present.

The normal principal rules apply between port and starboard yachts, windward and leeward yachts and when changing tacks.

If a yacht reaches the windward mark clear ahead of yachts astern, she may tack to round the mark as necessary and is only subject to the normal considerations of changing tack without affecting other yachts on a tack.

There is a restriction on any yacht that may be clear astern in this situation and that is such that she may not luff above a close-hauled course so as to prevent a yacht clear ahead from tacking quite legitimately to round the mark.

If yachts arrive at the windward mark in a overlapped position then quite simply the inside yacht has an unhindered right to either tack or bear away to round the mark whichever is appropriate to the course being sailed. Clearly it is much easier for all concerned if the course is a port hand course where yachts simply bear away at the windward mark but this is not always possible for the Race Officer to arrange, particularly on inland waters with fixed mark positions and limited space available.

The establishing of overlaps when approaching the windward mark is usually fairly obvious and, due to the relatively equal boat speed of yachts close together on the same tack, not something that is likely to change significantly on reaching the two boat length circle.

However, there are circumstances of yachts approaching the mark on different tacks where one will have to tack in order to reach the mark and overlaps can be established in a manner which is rather late.

For example, a port tack yacht may approach and tack to leeward of a starboard tack yacht, even within the two boat lengths circle and become entitled to round the mark including the need to luff head to wind if this is a requirement to shoot the mark by using the momentum of the yacht after the tack. The only restriction in this case is the normal one of completing the tack without in any way affecting the yachts which remained on a tack and subsequently became the windward yacht, (fig 9).

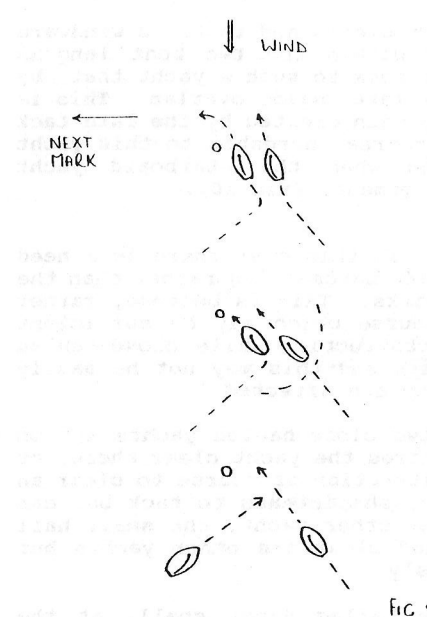


FIG 9

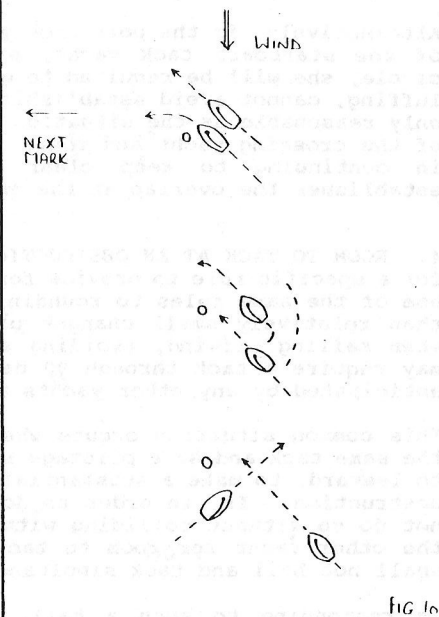


FIG 10

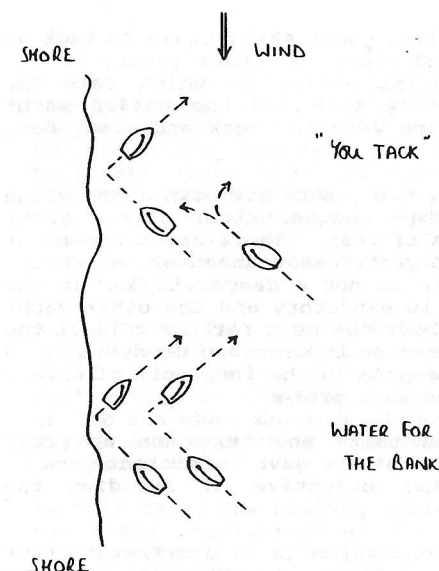


FIG 11

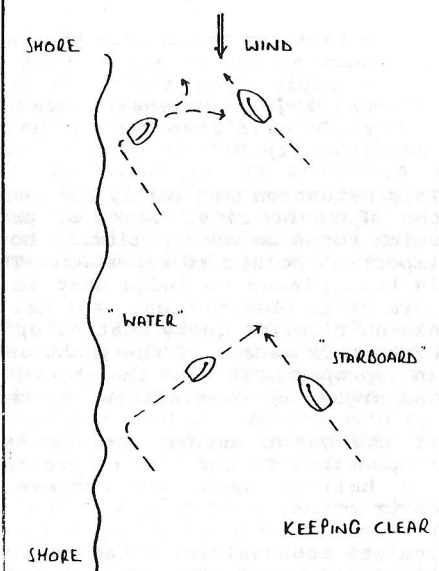


FIG 12

Alternatively, if the port tack yacht clears and tacks to windward of the starboard tack yacht, even within the two boat lengths circle, she will be required to give room to such a yacht that, by luffing, cannot avoid establishing a late inside overlap. This is only reasonable as the situation has been created by the late tack of the crossing yacht and there is no real hardship to this yacht in continuing to keep clear even when the starboard yacht establishes the overlap at the last moment, (fig 10).

4. ROOM TO TACK AT AN OBSTRUCTION: In this case there is a need for a specific rule to provide for safe manoeuvring rather than the use of the same rules to rounding marks. This is because, rather than relatively small changes of course which may be sufficient when sailing offwind, avoiding an obstruction while close-hauled may require a tack through 90 degrees and this may not be easily anticipated by any other yachts which are affected.

This common situation occurs when two close-hauled yachts are on the same tack and safe pilotage requires the yacht clear ahead, or to leeward, to make a substantial alteration of course to clear an obstruction. If, in order to do so, she intends to tack but can not do so without colliding with the other yacht, she shall hail the other yacht for room to tack and clear the other yachts but shall not hail and tack simultaneously.

In responding to such a hail, the hailed yacht shall, at the earliest possible moment:

- tack, in which case the hailing yacht shall begin to tack as soon as she is able to tack and clear the other yacht; or
- reply "you tack", or similar words, in which case the hailing yacht shall immediately tack and the hailed yacht shall give room for the hailing yacht to tack and clear her, (fig 11).

This situation is usually one where two yachts are both approaching the shore or river bank, or perhaps another right of way yacht which forms an obstruction to both of them. There are a number of important points to remember. The yacht clear ahead or to leeward is best placed to judge what is or is not a danger to her in the form of an obstruction. Any call is mandatory and the other yacht has no right of query whatsoever about the need for the call at the time it is made. If the yacht astern or to windward deems it to be an improper call then she should respond in the interests of safety and argue the case afterwards through a protest.

If the yacht astern replies "you tack" she takes on the full responsibility and onus of proving that she gave sufficient room to the hailing yacht to achieve her objective of avoiding the obstruction.

You may not call for water on a yacht which is on a different tack to your own and also may not call if there is sufficient room for you to either tack and bear away behind or tack again in front of the other yacht, (fig 12).

If, in clearing an obstruction such as an island or right of way yacht, you decide to bear away rather than tack, you must allow any other yacht inside you the room to also bear away and follow you if they decide so to do, (fig 13).

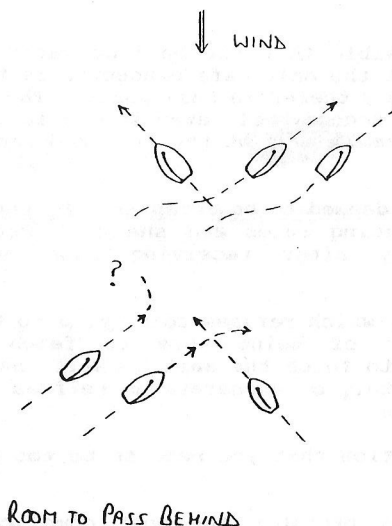


FIG 13

Some years ago at Aylesbury I followed a yacht round a mark on starboard and towards the bank with clear water between us. I pointed higher and when the leading yacht tacked off the bank on port she found that she could not clear me on starboard and promptly called for water! This is not the purpose of this rule and I refused because the other yacht had the safe options of either bearing away behind me or tacking to leeward and heading back towards the shore where she would ultimately have obtained her rights for water.

5. ROOM TO TACK WHEN THE OBSTRUCTION IS ALSO A MARK: This is a very specialised situation which rarely occurs in dinghy racing but relates to the case where a mark is large enough to form an obstruction in addition to being a rounding mark. This can happen on the sea when man-made structures are used as turning points, or may be a buoy with an attached observing boat which together form an obstruction.

In this case, the hailing yacht is not allowed to hail for water to clear the obstruction if the hailed yacht is able to fetch the obstruction and thereby round the mark without herself having to tack. The hailed yacht will reply to this effect and the hailing yacht should manoeuvre to avoid the obstruction in some other way, normally by bearing away, even if this causes her to pass the wrong side of the mark.

However, it is possible that the hailing yacht finds herself in such a position that the only safe manoeuvre is that of tacking to keep clear and she may therefore hail again. The hailed yacht must be governed by this second hail, even if she is still fetching the mark, and give the hailing yacht the required room at the earliest possible moment.

This second hail is deemed to be acceptance by the hailing yacht of contravening the racing rules and she must retire or exonerate herself immediately after receiving room and clearing the obstruction

If the hailed yacht, which refuses to respond to the first hail for room on the basis of being able to fetch the mark, then subsequently fails to fetch the mark herself, naturally she shall also retire immediately or exonerate herself as prescribed in the sailing instructions.

This is not a situation that you need to be too concerned about!

In summary, this is probably the most complicated area of the racing rules as befits the necessity of providing for safe and sensible navigation of the racing course and sailing area in the company of other yachts in close proximity.

Treat these rules in the spirit which is intended and do not try to get too clever or complicated in attempting to make any tactical advantage at critical points such as when rounding marks or approaching obstructions.

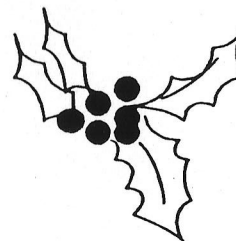
That is not to say that such tactical opportunities do not exist at these points where places may be gained perhaps more easily than through sheer boat speed elsewhere on the course. However, if you do attempt such exercises, just remember the onus of proof placed on yachts in these particular rules and the fact that the rules will always favour the yacht which meets its obligations from the point of reasonable manoeuvres with safety in mind.

If you want to push your luck at these critical points in the race, you must be prepared to take the penalty for interference. Preferably do not push your luck and we will all have a more sensible and safer race.

Keith Lamdin

*Dinghy
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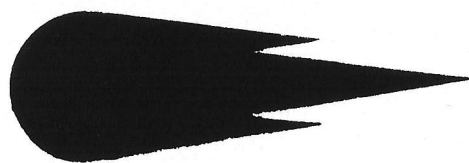
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