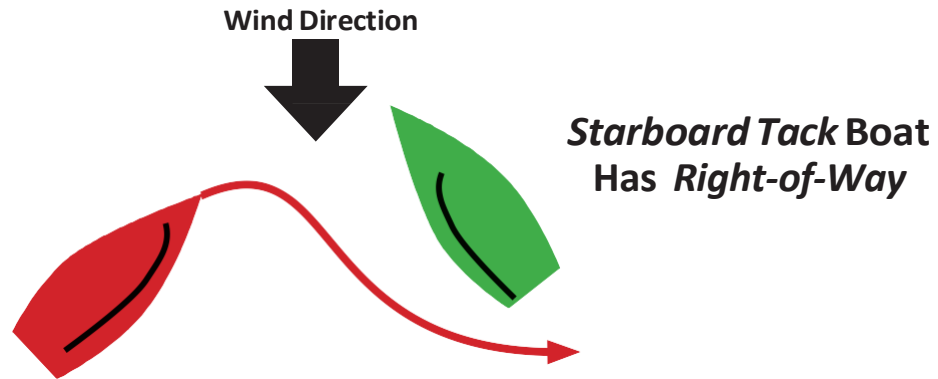


# ***THE BASIC SAILBOAT RACING RULES ALL RACERS SHOULD KNOW***

By Ken Quant

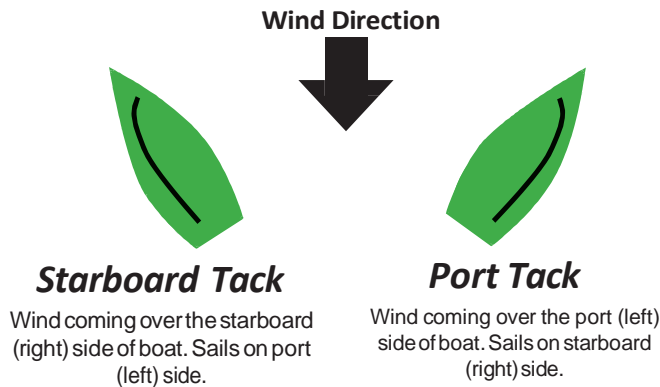


In sailboat racing there are no out-of-bounds lines on the floor or referees to call fouls. The rules are self enforced and administered within the fleet. A basic understanding of just a few important rules will help ensure that everyone has fun and gets home safe.

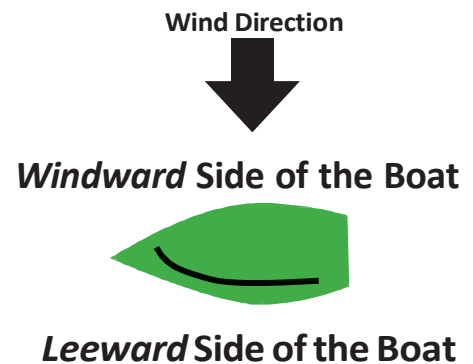
The specifics of the sailboat racing rules are mind-numbingly detailed and written to cover all potential incidents. **DON'T WORRY** - You do not need to know everything about the rules to go out and have fun and be safe. By reading and understanding the following rules and terms, you should be able to get around the course without fouling another boat or causing an accident.

# BASIC TERMS

## Starboard Tack vs Port Tack



## Windward vs Leeward



## Right-of-Way

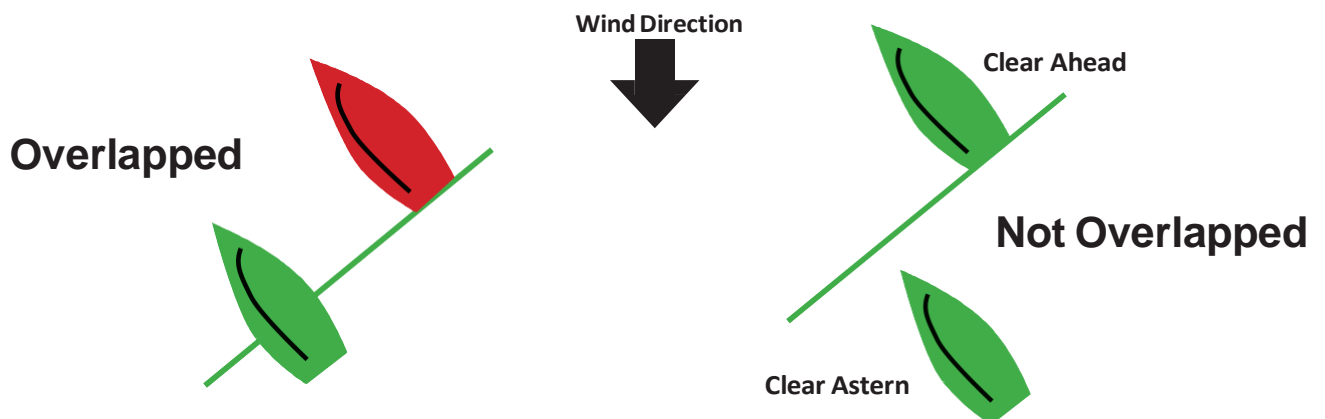
When one boat has the *Right-of-Way*, the other boats is required to *Keep Clear*.



**Avoiding Collisions - All boats are required by rule to avoid a collision if possible!**  
*Right-of-Way* is no excuse to cause a collision.

## Overlapped Boats

A boat *Overlapped* to *Leeward* has *Right-of-Way*. Overlaps are established from the transom.

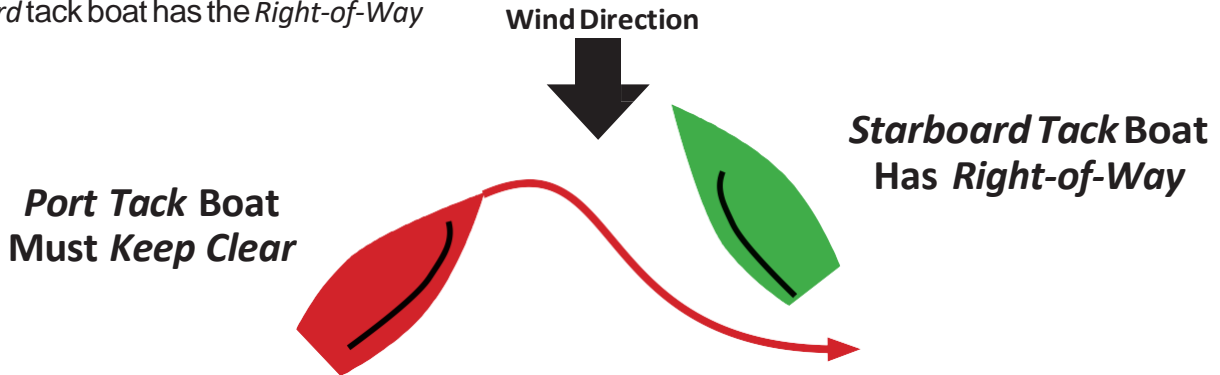


## Other Terms Used In This Discussion

- Close Hauled** A boat sailing as close to the wind direction as possible
- Head-to-Wind** A boat pointed straight into the wind. Sails will be luffing.
- Inside** A boat positioned between the mark and another boat
- Outside** A boat positioned with another boat between them and the mark
- Proper Course** The course a boat would sail to get to the next mark as quickly as possible
- Room** The space a boat needs to maneuver properly given conditions

# Two Boats Converging on Opposite Tacks

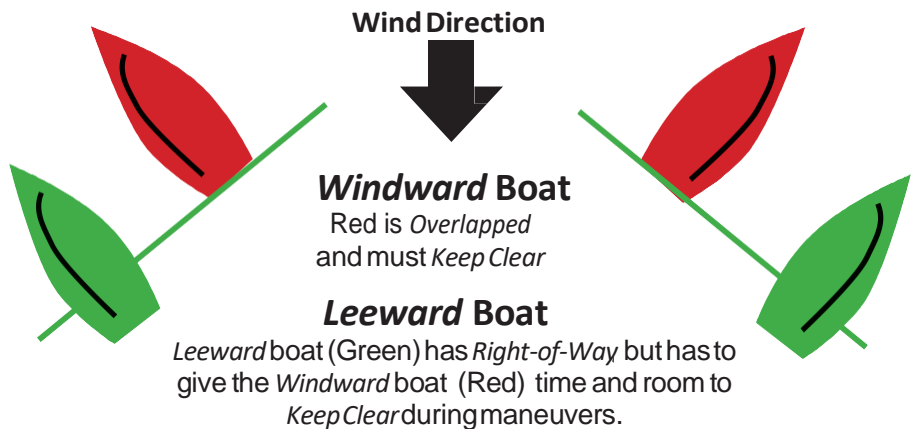
A Starboard tack boat has the *Right-of-Way*



# Two Boats Overlapped Sailing On the Same Tack

Leeward boat has the *Right-of-Way*

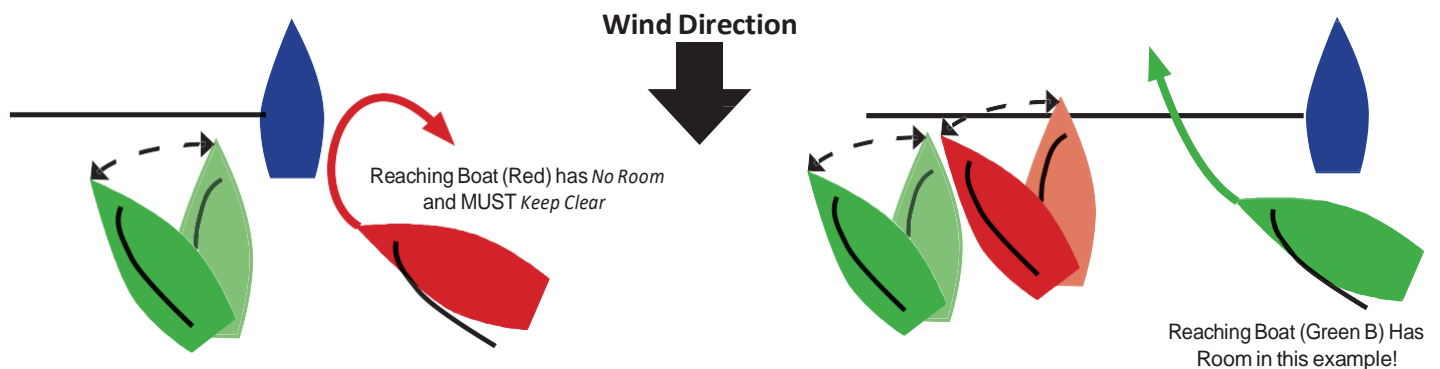
**NOTE:** This Rule applies for two boats near each other on the same tack. However, remember that any approaching Starboard Tack boat will have *Right-of-Way* over all Port Tack boats



# No Barging at Start

A Leeward boat has *Right-of-Way* at the start and is allowed to sail above her *Proper Course* to shut-out any boat heading into the start before the start signal. After the start signal, the Leeward boat must assume her proper course.

Basically, any boat to leeward that you can potentially hit should be considered a brick wall.



## REACHING BOAT (RED) IS BARGING

Before the start signal, Green has the right to go "head-to-wind" and force a Windward Overlapped boat (RED) over the start line or into a position that it must avoid the Committee Boat or Start Mark by turning away.

## LEEWARD BOAT (GREEN A) HAS RIGHT-OF-WAY RED MUST KEEP CLEAR OF GREEN A!

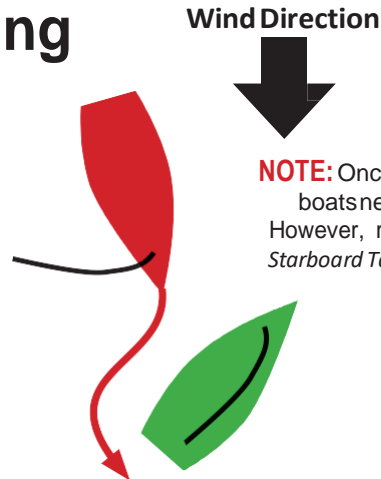
Green A has the right to go "head-to-wind" to force Red over the start line before the start signal. Green A is not close enough to committee boat to shut-out Green B.

# BASIC RIGHT-OF-WAY SITUATIONS

## Same Tack Boats Converging on Different Points-of-Sail

### Leeward Boat has Right-of-Way

In this example, both boats are on *Port Tack*. As they converge, the *windward* boat (Red), which is sailing downwind, has to *Keep Clear* of the *leeward* boat (Green).

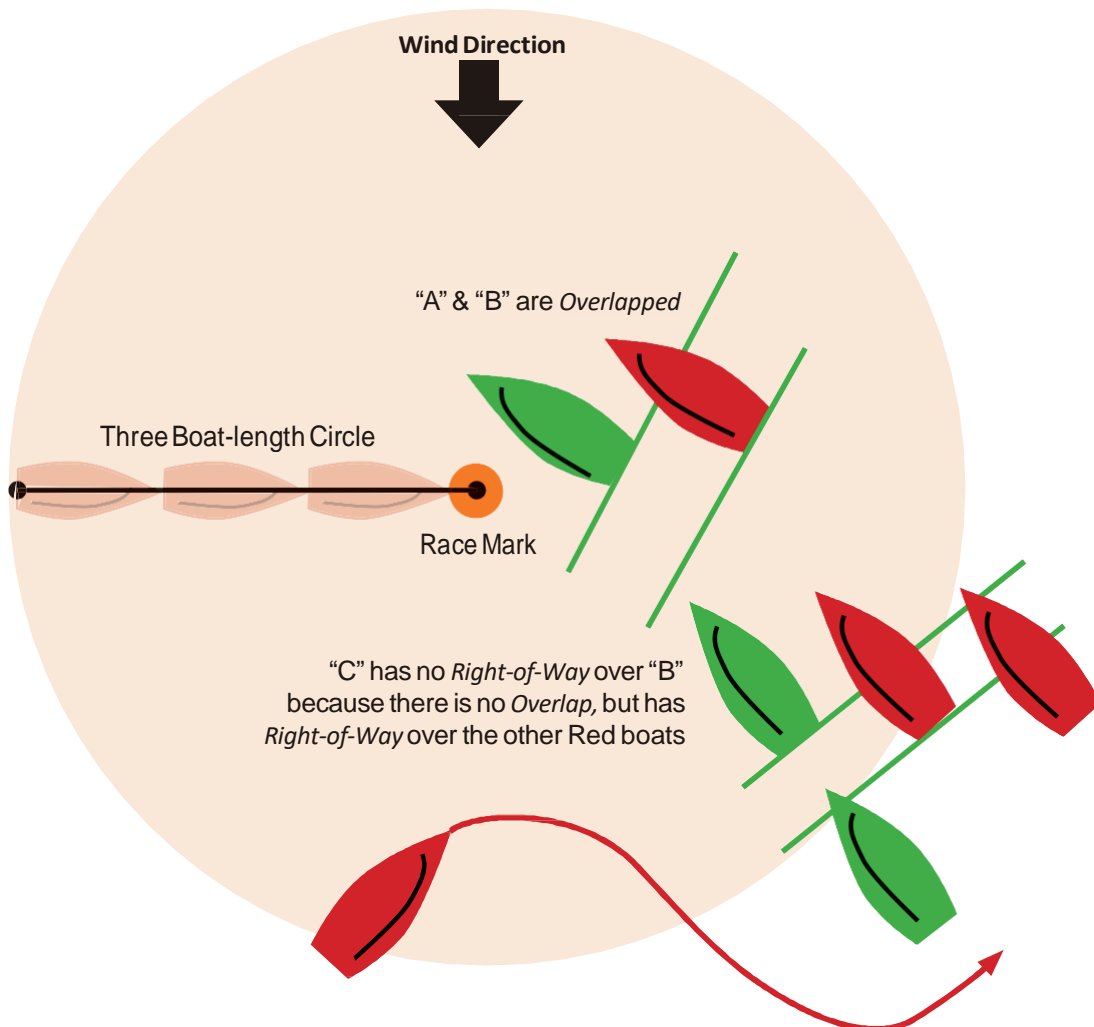


**NOTE:** Once again this rule applies for two boats near each other on the same tack. However, remember that any approaching *Starboard Tack* boat will have *Right-of-Way* over all *Port Tack* boats.

## Boats Converging at Mark

An *Inside* and *Overlapped* boat (Green A) within three boat-lengths of the mark has the *Right-of-Way*. In general, any *Overlapped* outside boat (Red B) must *Keep Clear* and give room to any boat between them and the mark.

A boat coming into the mark on *Port Tack* (Red D) must be able to complete its tack without obstructing the progress of an incoming *Starboard Tack* boat. If a *Starboard Tack* boat has to adjust course, you fouled them.



# ***WHAT TO DO IF A FOUL OCCURS***

If you foul another boat sail away from other boats and do a 360 degree turn.

Hitting a buoy does not convey any advantage so in our club there is no penalty.

If you jump the start line you must wait until you are clear of other boats before turning back to restart.

If you foul another boat while returning to the start line you will have to do a 360 AND restart. "