

## Top 10: Basic Racing Rules of Sailing

1. On *opposite tacks*, the **port tack** boat must keep clear of the **starboard tack** boat.
2. On the *same tack and overlapped*, the **windward** boat must keep clear of the **leeward** boat.
3. On the *same tack and not overlapped*, the boat **clear astern** must keep clear of the boat **clear ahead**.
4. When *changing tacks*, a boat **tacking** or **gybing** must keep clear of a boat on a tack.
5. When boats are *overlapped* going into a mark or obstruction, the **outside** boat must give the **inside** boat enough room to round, provided that the overlap was established before the lead boat came within **3 boat lengths** of the mark.  
*Exception:* this rule does not apply at a starting mark when boats are approaching to start (inside overlapped boat has no right to room!)
6. When boats are *approaching an obstruction* (i.e., the shoreline or another boat), a boat sailing close-hauled may hail another boat sailing to windward for **room to tack** if safety requires him to tack.
7. When you are the right-of-way boat, you must give the “keep clear” boat *room to keep clear*. You cannot “hunt” boats or force them into a foul.
8. Whether or not you are the right-of-way boat, you must always try to avoid contact.  
*Important: Do not hit other boats!*
9. You must round all marks in the specified direction, and must not touch a mark.
10. Most fouls can be exonerated by doing penalty turns: do two circles for fouling another boat, one circle for hitting a mark. *Important: when doing your circles, you must keep clear of all other boats!*

### notes:

- These rules were established a long time ago to promote safety on the water and prevent collisions between boats.
- These rules are self-policing. If you are fouled by another boat, be polite but direct and hail “protest.” If you foul someone, acknowledge it immediately, do your circles, and keep racing.