

Answer to Scenario 1 – Don't Go in There

Boat L is penalized under rules 14, Avoiding Contact, and 16.1, Changing Course. The preamble to Section C, At Marks and Obstructions, states that rule 18 does not apply "at a starting mark surrounded by navigable water or at its anchor line from the time the boats are approaching them to start..." Therefore, the situation is governed by the rules in Sections A and B. At the time W becomes overlapped to leeward of the race committee boat, she is keeping clear of L in compliance with rule 11, On the Same Tack, Overlapped. Rule 16 .1 requires L, as a right-of-way boat, to give W room to keep clear of her when she changes her course. When L luffs, there is not room (space) for W to comply with the Part 2 rules and rule 31, Touching a Mark, due to the physical presence of the race committee boat (see the definition Room). Therefore, L breaks rule 16.1. W breaks rules 11 and 31 but is exonerated under rule 21, Exoneration. L also breaks rule 14 for failing to avoid a collision, and is penalized under that rule because the contact results in damage to the race committee boat. However, from the time L begins to luff, it is not possible for W to avoid contact; therefore, W does not break rule 14.

Had L wanted to prevent W from passing between her and the committee boat, she should have luffed sooner while W was still able to respond to her luff.

(From Dave Perry's 100 Best Racing Rules Quizzes, Quiz 16. Used with permission.)