

## **Simplified racing rules for beginners – by John Ball**

Sail boats race under a set of rules called The Racing Rules of Sailing (the RRS).

The full set of rules is large, complex and can be daunting, however 99% of situations are covered by just a few rules that should be easy to learn, remember and master.

The most important rules are the called the Right of Way rules (R10 to R13) and they are designed to avoid collisions. They do this by saying which boat should keep clear. In addition, you should know what to do at mark roundings (R18).

But even those rules can be simplified, not in an official way, but in a practical, helpful way. Here is my 'simplified' version for beginners to yacht racing - let's call them guidelines.

### **Simple guidelines for beginners**

Sailboat racing should be fun and safe, and so when you decide to take part, you are agreeing to be bound by a spirit of sportsmanship, and to treat the other competitors in the way you would like them to treat you.

1. On opposite tacks, Port tack keeps clear of Starboard. (R10).
2. On the same tack, Windward keeps clear of Leeward. (R11).
3. On the same tack, Astern keeps clear of Ahead. (R12).
4. Stay clear while tacking. (R13).
5. Avoid collisions. (R14) – If you are not sure if you have ROW, then stay clear BUT ask afterwards, to learn.
6. If you change course, make sure the other boat has room to stay clear. (R16).
7. At a mark give room to any inside boats. (R18).
8. If you think you broke a rule, take a penalty turn (R44), and sail on to finish the race – BUT ask afterwards to confirm and understand what happened, and which rules apply.

For more on the basic rules and an explanation of some of the sailing terms read **Chapter 1 - the Definitions** on my web site

<https://sites.google.com/site/johnsrcsailingrulesandtactics/>

Feel free to print off this page and give it to a beginner



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