

RULE 19.1 — WHEN RULE 19 APPLIES

Rule 19 applies between two boats at an *obstruction* except when rule 18 applies between them and

- (a) the *obstruction* is the *mark*, or
- (b) the *obstruction* is another boat *overlapped* with each of them.

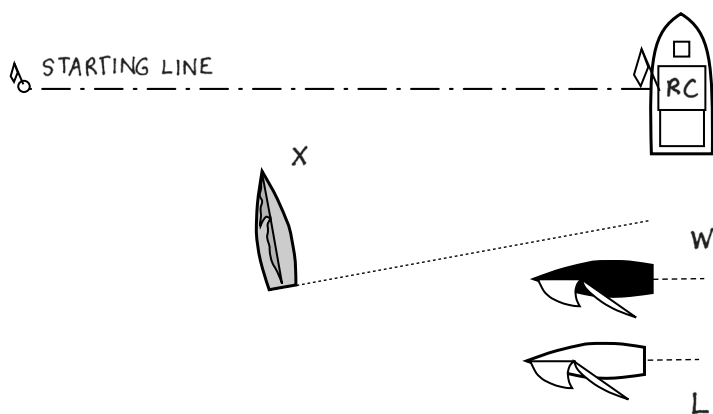
However, at a *continuing obstruction*, rule 19 always applies and rule 18 does not.



“What is the purpose of rule 19.1(b)?”

This closes a loophole that is scarcely known to most sailors. Between three boats, the one boat that has the right of way over the other two is an “*obstruction*” (see definition *Obstruction*). Consider three *overlapped* boats on *port tack* rounding a port-hand leeward *mark* (L being the outside-most *leeward* boat, M being the middle boat, and W being the inside-most *windward* boat). W is entitled to *mark-room* from L and M under rule 18.2(a)(1) (Giving Mark-Room). But without rule 19.1(b), M would be entitled to *room* under rule 19.2(b) to pass the *obstruction* (L) from W (the “outside boat” at the *obstruction*). This clearly would be a potential problem at tight leeward mark roundings. Rule 19.1(b) removes this issue.

Rule 19.1 is a clear statement of when rule 19 applies. Note it does not apply at *marks* that boats are required to leave on the same side unless the *mark* is a *continuing obstruction*. At all other marks rule 18 (Mark-Room) applies (see Chapter 8).



X is clear ahead of both *L* and *W*; therefore, as the right-of-way boat over both *L* and *W*, she is an *obstruction* to both. As *L* and *W* approach *X*, *L*, as the right-of-way boat over *W*, gets to choose on which side of *X* she will pass. If she chooses to pass to leeward of *X*, rule 19.2(b) requires her to give *W* room to do likewise if *W* also wants to pass to leeward of *X*.

“So when does rule 19 begin to apply; is there a ‘zone’ around obstructions as there is around marks?”



No, there is no “zone” around *obstructions*! Rule 19 applies when boats are “at” the *obstruction*. Case 150 says, “Boats are “at” an *obstruction* when they are near it and the *obstruction* is influencing the course of one or both of them.” In other words, boats are “at” an *obstruction* when one of them reaches the point where she must commit to passing on one side or the other of the *obstruction* and will need space from the other boat(s) to do so.