
Rules of the Road on Lake Nockamixon

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Nockamixon Sailing School



Rules of the Road

- Purpose - minimize risk of collision for two vessels which are underway. Rules do not apply if more than two vessels. Just use common sense to minimize risk of collision if more than two vessels.
 - Types
 - Rules of the Road or COLLREGS (Collision Regulations)- Cover high seas and most coastal waters.
 - Inland Rules- For use on bays, harbors, rivers, lakes bordering two states, and lakes with navigable water leading to the sea.
 - State Rules- State and Parks and Recreation Commission rules apply to Lake Nockamixon. States use Inland Rules with minor changes in each state.
- All vessels from smallest kayak to largest pontoon boat on Lake Nockamixon must obey the rules of the road.



When is a vessel under way according to the Rules?

- Underway, making way- If you are underway and moving through the water from the power of your vessels sails, motors, or oars then you are *underway making way*.
- Underway, not making way- If you are floating free without use of your motor, sails, or oars, and you are not anchored or tied to a dock, or run aground, then you are *underway, not making way*
- Not Underway- If anchored, tied to a tree, tied to a dock, or run aground, then you are *not underway*.



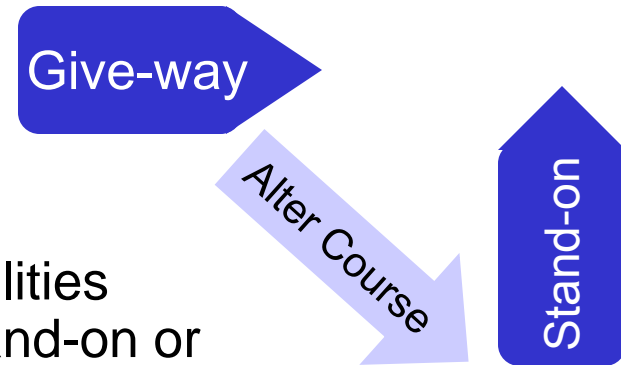
Other Considerations

- ✓ Maintain a proper lookout - Principal cause of collision is failure to maintain a proper lookout. Must have proper lookout at all times. Best place to put lookout is low and up front.
- ✓ Maintain a safe speed. All vessels must proceed at a safe speed so they can stop or take proper action to avoid collision. Rules do not say what speed is safe. They do say safe speed depends on visibility, traffic density, wind, maneuverability of your vessel, and other factors.
- ✓ When must you not follow the rules of the road? The rules say you must depart from the rules of the road to avoid immediate danger and risk of collision
- ✓ What to do if Rules don't cover a situation? If circumstances are not covered by the rules then rules of good seamanship apply to minimize risk of collision



Stand-on versus Give-way vessels

- No right of way exists on the water
 - Both vessels have different responsibilities depending on whether vessels are stand-on or give-way.
- Give-way vessel must:
 - take action to avoid collision
 - stop or pass behind the stern of stand-on vessel.
 - make large course change not small change.
 - not cross in front of other vessel.
- Stand-on vessel must maintain course and speed unless risk of collision exists



What is hierarchy of boats on Lake Nockamixon?

Stand-on vessel

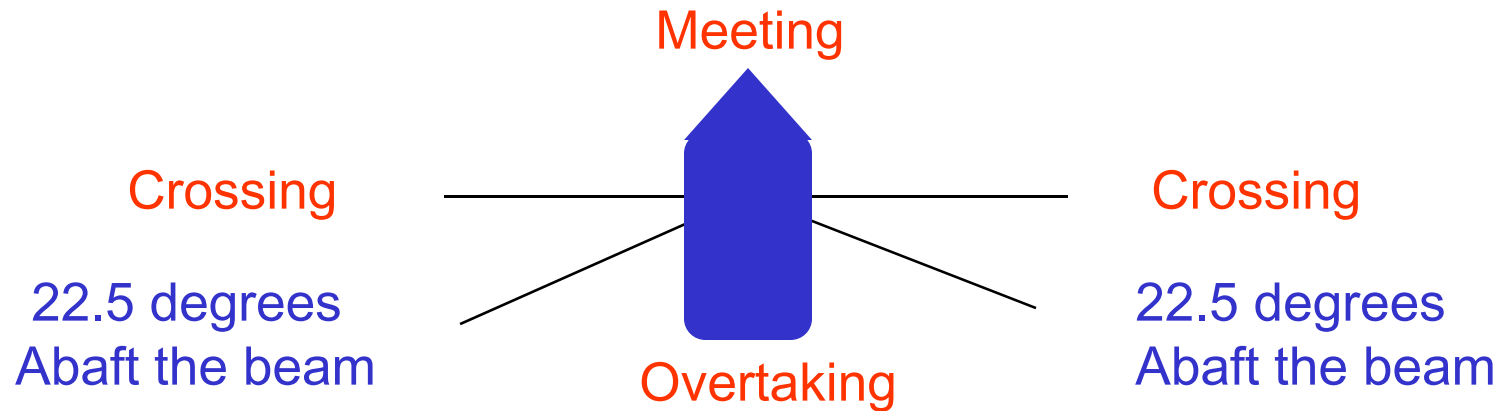


Give-way vessel

1. Fishing boats- (Commercial only and only if restricted in operation by fishing. None on Lake Nockamixon.)
2. Vessels under oars- Includes kayaks, canoes, rowboats under oars, and any other type of human propelled vessel with no motor in use.
3. Sailboats- With no motor in use. Includes sailboards.
4. Powerboats- Includes traditional powerboats, pontoon boats, law enforcement vessels, canoes under motor, rowboats under motor, and sailboats under motor.



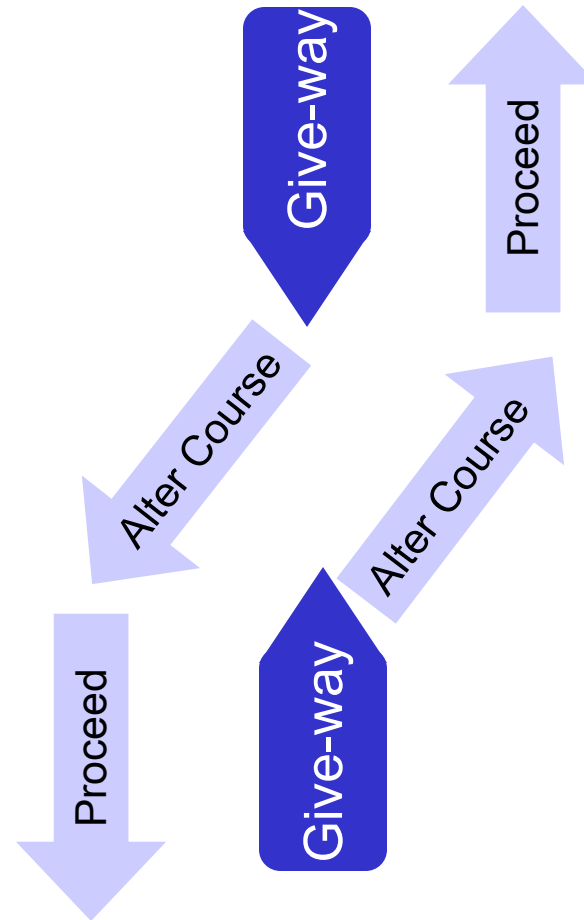
When are two vessels crossing, meeting, or overtaking?



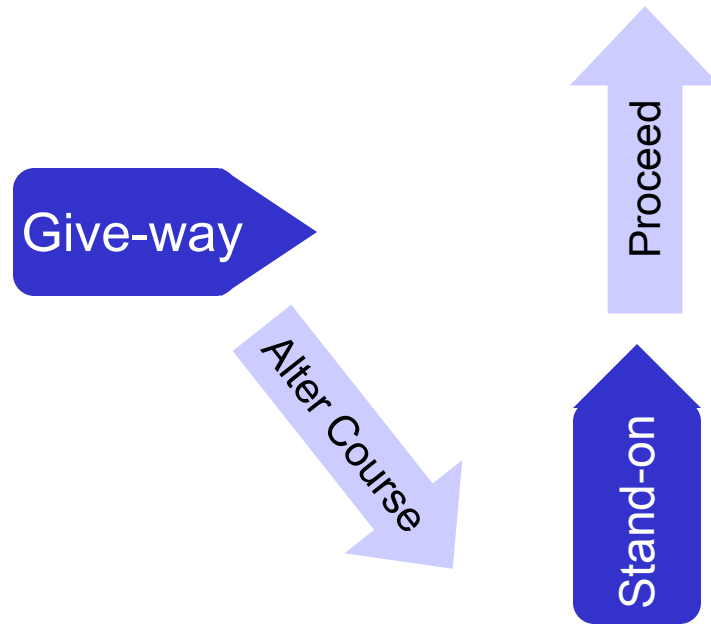
- Overtaking-If your vessel is 22.5 degrees abaft the beam of the other vessel then you are overtaking. When overtaking you remain overtaking until your vessel is free and clear of other vessel. Cannot turn overtaking situation into crossing situation.
- Meeting- If your vessel is directly in front of and heading in the direction of the other boat you are meeting.
- Crossing- If your boat is forward of 22.5 degrees abaft the beam but not meeting then you are crossing.
- If unsure you are meeting or crossing assume meeting and steer to right. If unsure if you are overtaking or crossing, assume you are overtaking and give-way.

Situation: Two powerboats *meeting*

- Both vessels are *give-way* vessels
- Both alter course to starboard and pass port-to-port.



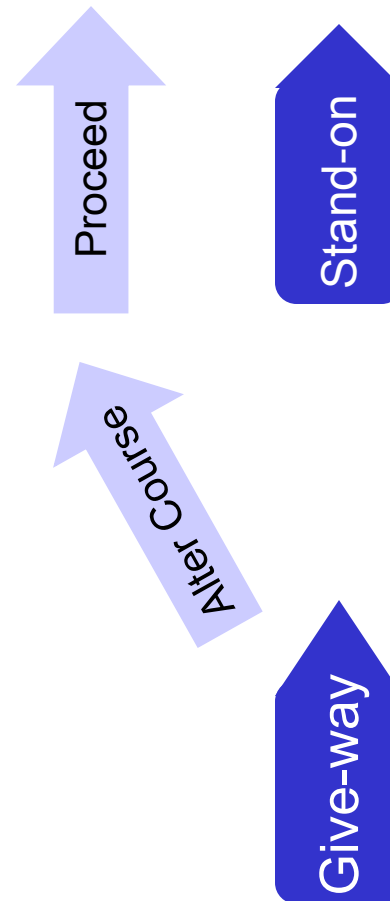
Situation: Two powerboats *crossing*



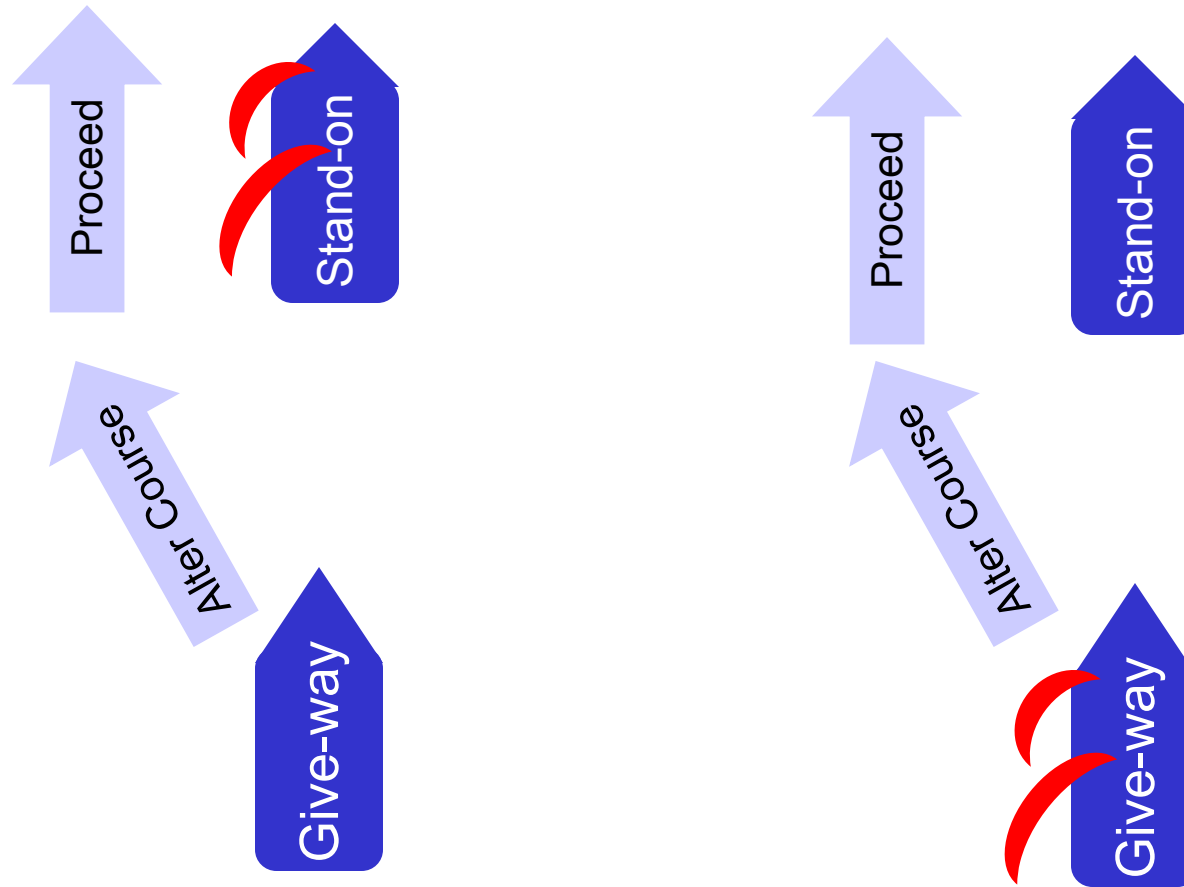
- Vessel to starboard is *stand-on* vessel
- Vessel to port is *give-way* vessel.
- Give-way vessel must turn and pass behind stand-on vessel or slow down and let stand-on vessel pass
- Stand-on vessel must maintain course and speed.

Situation: Powerboats in *overtaking* situation

- Overtaking vessel is *give-way* vessel
- Overtaken vessel is *stand-on* vessel
- Overtaking vessel can pass on either side
- If you can't tell if you are overtaking or crossing assume overtaking

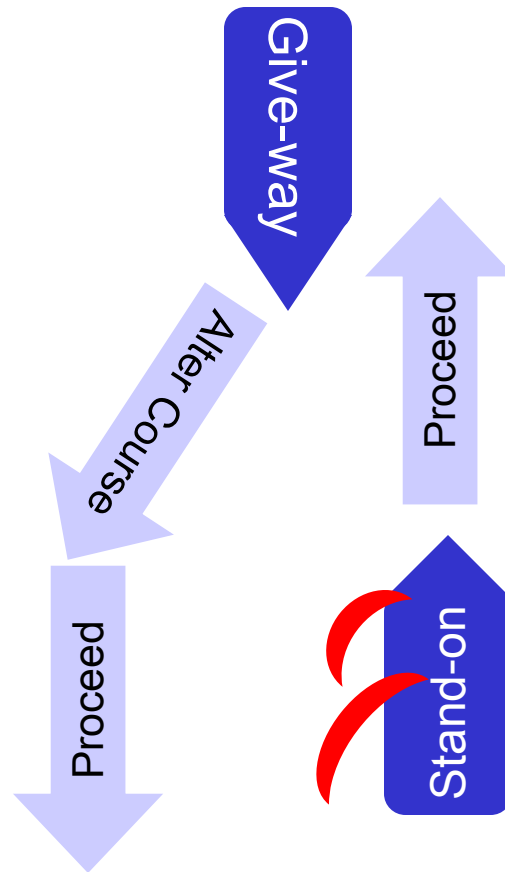


Situation: Powerboat/sailboat in *overtaking* situation



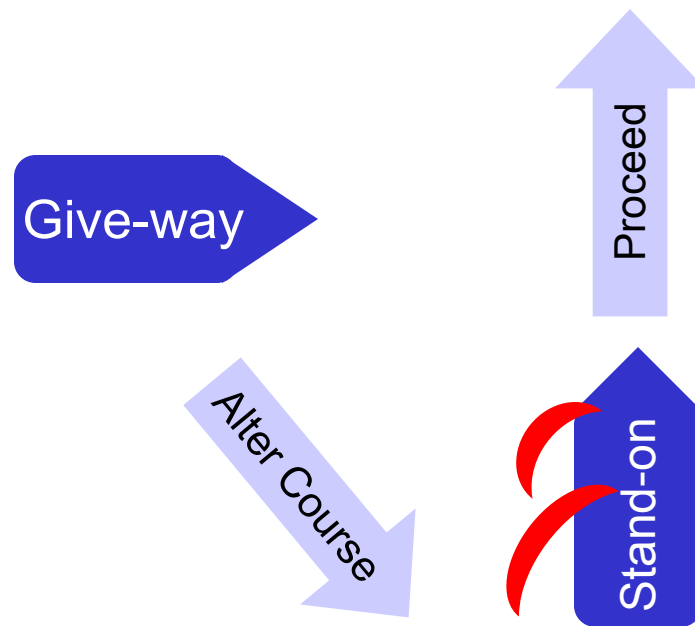
- Powerboats overtaking sailboats (or vessels under oars) are *give-way* and overtaken vessel is *stand-on*
- If sailboat is overtaking powerboat then powerboat is stand-on and sailboat is give-way.

Situation: Powerboat encounters sailboat in *meeting* situation



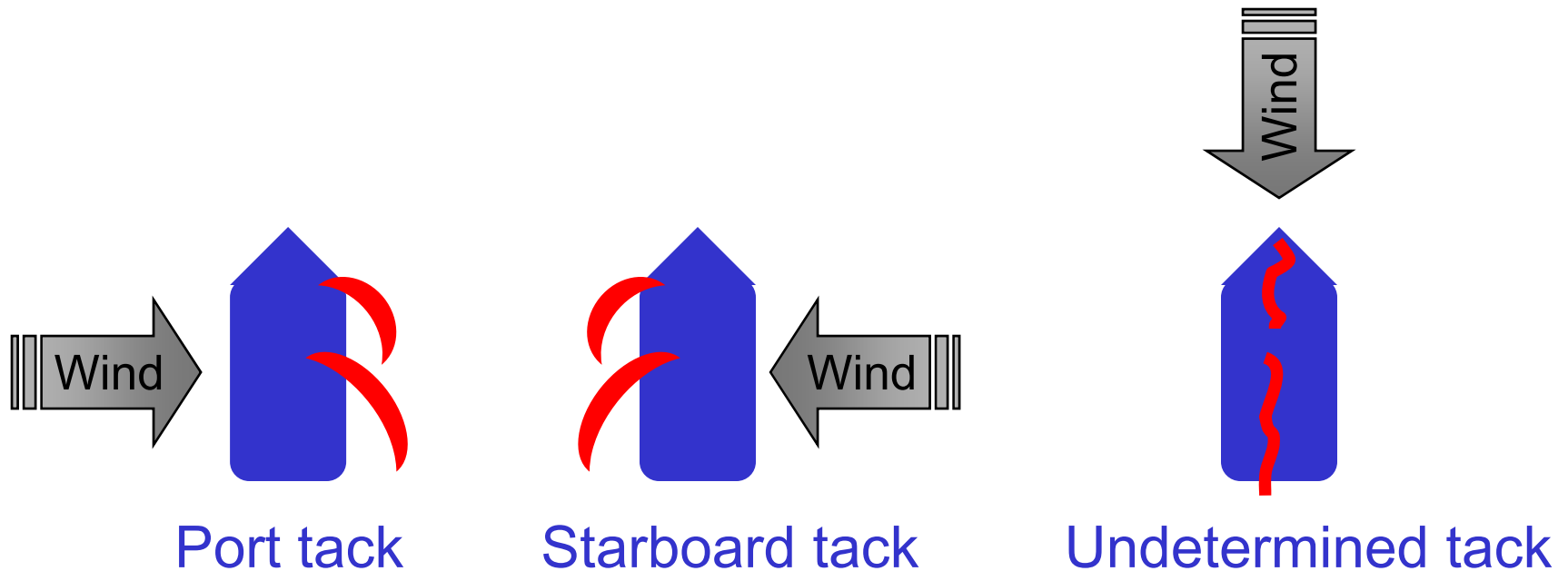
- Powerboats are always *give-way* in *meeting* situations with sailboats (or vessels under oars).

Situation: Powerboat encounters sailboat in *crossing* situation



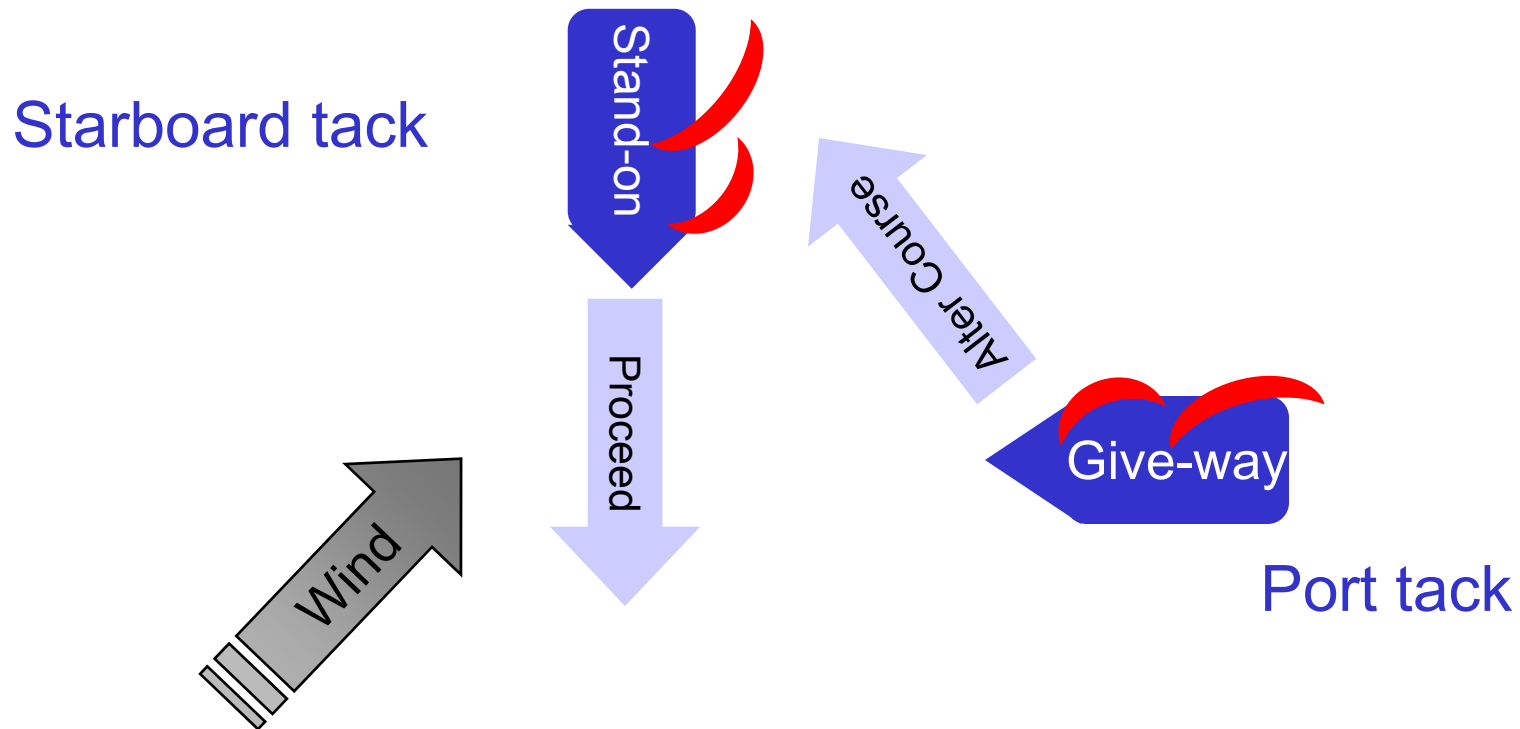
- Powerboats are always *give-way* vessels when *crossing* sailboats (or vessels under oars).

Sailboat on Port, Starboard, and Undetermined Tack?



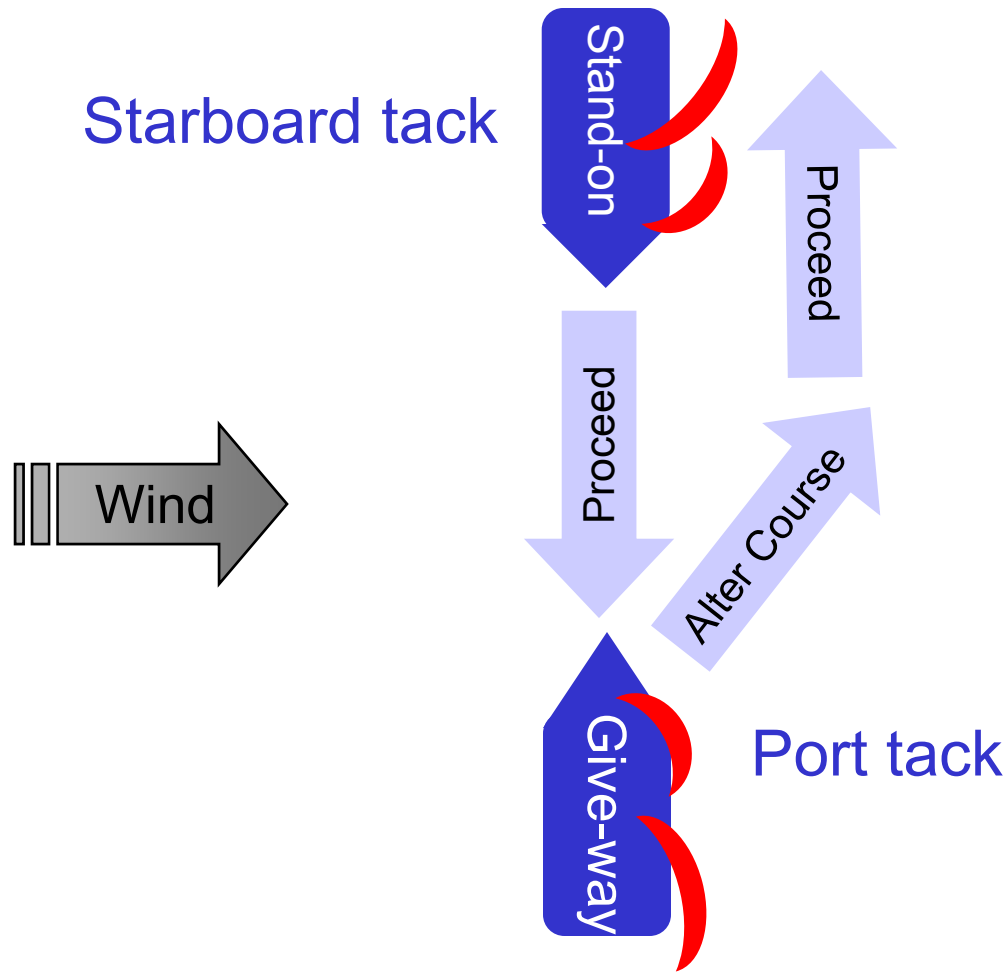
- Port tack - When wind comes from the left side of sailboat
- Starboard tack- When wind comes from the right side of sailboat
- Sails located on opposite side of wind
- Location of mainsail is final indicator of whether port or starboard
- If you can't tell which tack other vessel is on, assume starboard tack.

Situation: Two sailboats *crossing* on different tacks



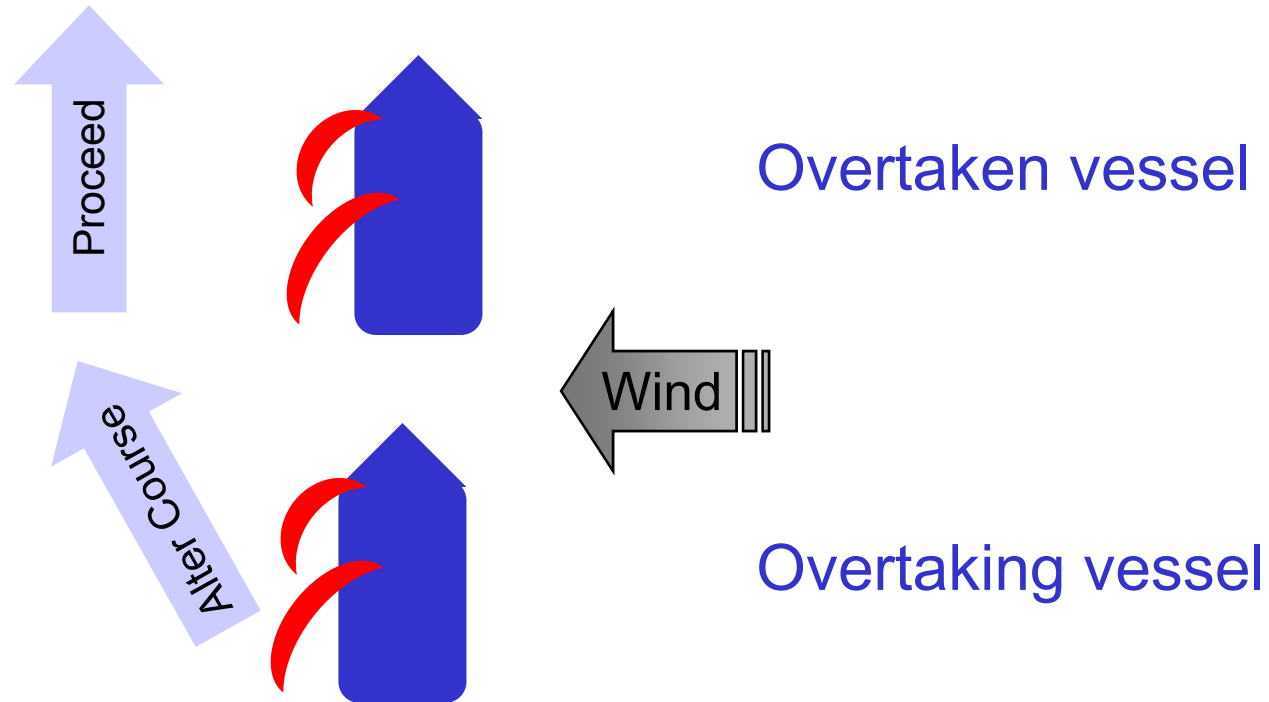
- Starboard tack sailboat is stand-on
- Port tack sailboat is give-way

Situation: Two sailboats *meeting* on different tack.



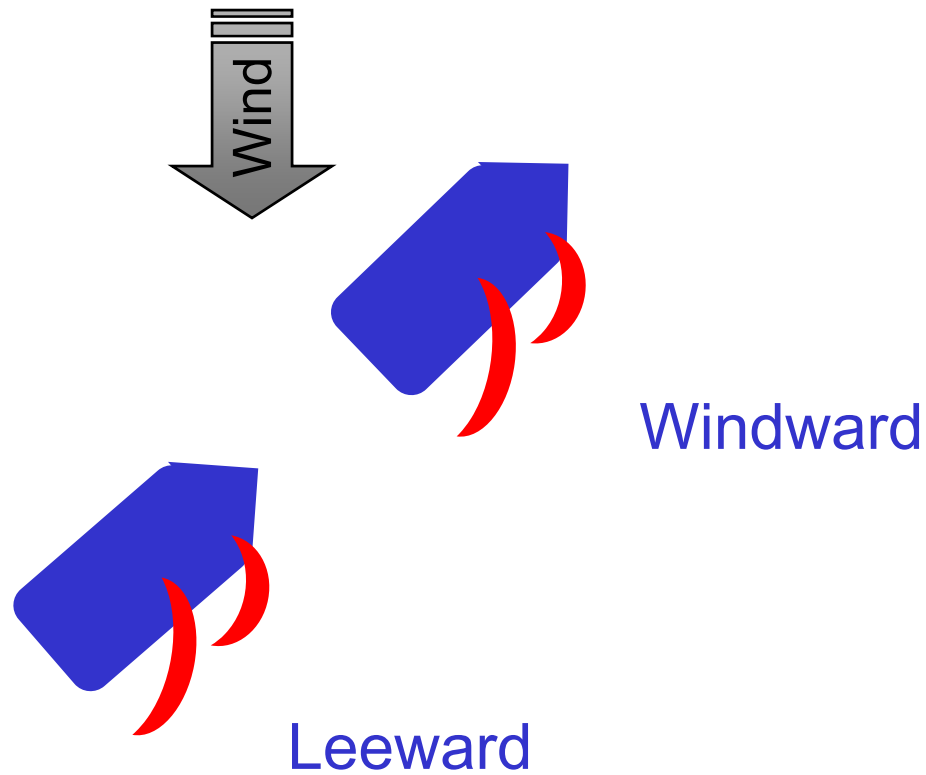
- If on different tack port tack sailboat is give-way
- Starboard tack vessel is stand-on.

Situation: Sailboat *overtaking* another sailboat.



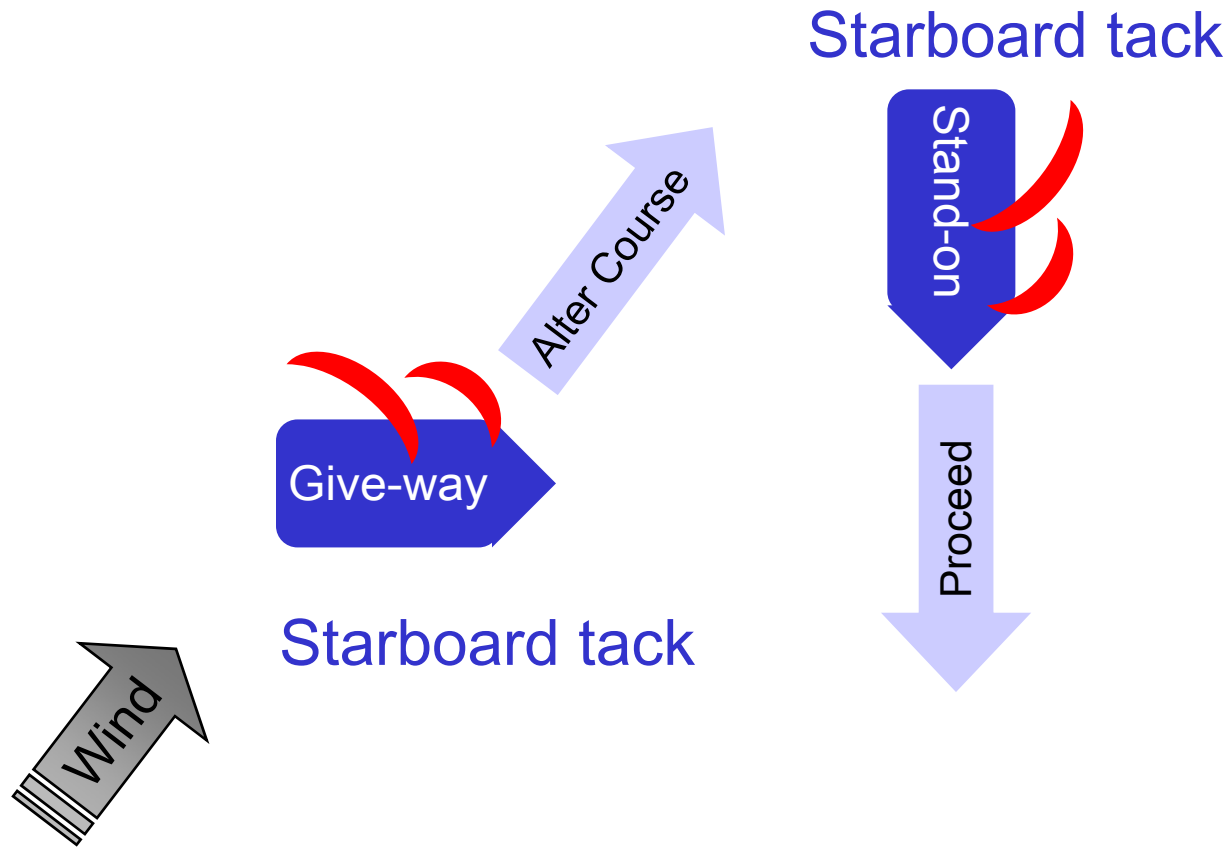
- Overtaking vessel is *give-way* vessel.
- Overtaken vessel is *stand-on* vessel
- Does not matter who is on port or starboard tack
- Does not matter which vessel is windward or leeward
- Overtaking vessel must stay clear of other vessel
- Overtaken vessel must maintain course and speed.

Windward and Leeward



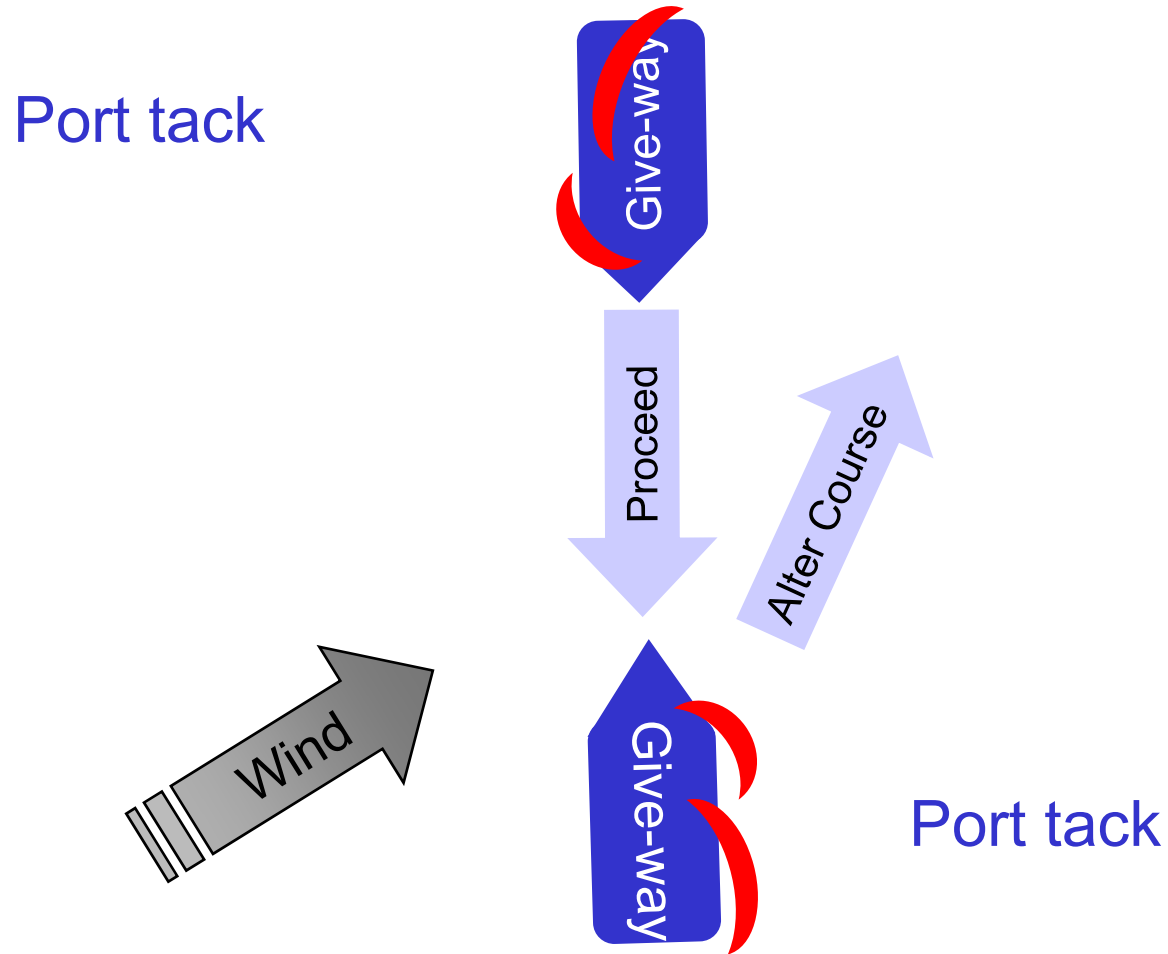
- Vessel closest to wind is windward vessel
- Vessel furthest from wind is leeward vessel
- Leeward pronounced “Loo ard”.

Situation: Two sailboats *crossing* on same tack.



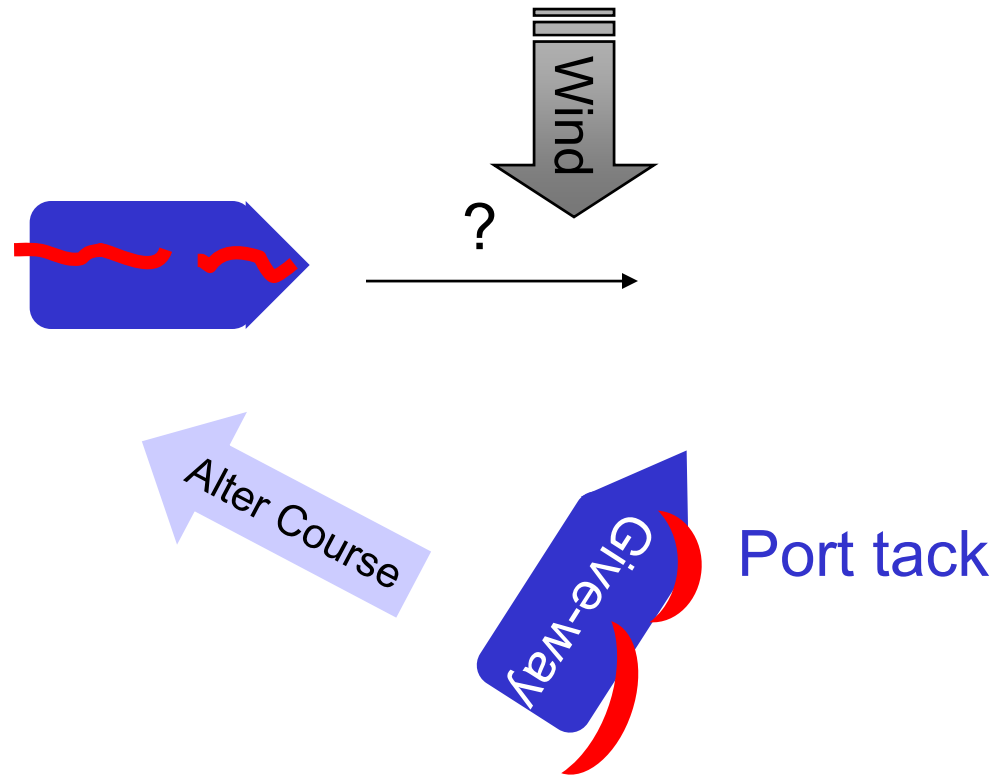
- Windward sailboat is give-way
- Leeward sailboat is stand-on.

Situation: Two sailboats *meeting* on same tack.



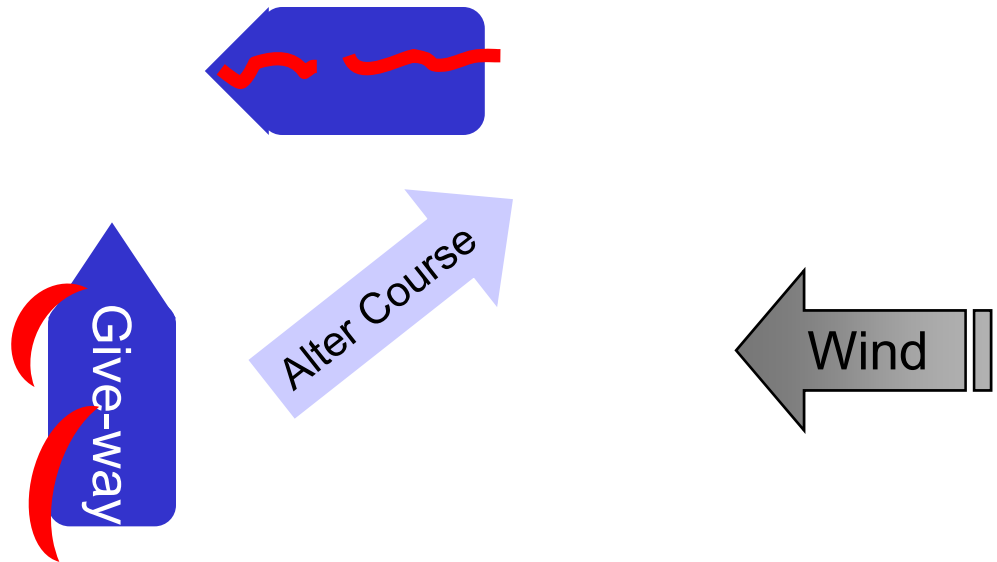
- If on same tack windward sailboat is give-way
- Leeward vessel is stand-on.

Two sailboats crossing and you can't tell what tack other vessel is on and you are on port tack



- If you can't tell which tack other vessel is on assume other vessel is on starboard tack and give-way to other vessel.

Situation: Two sailboats crossing and you can't tell what tack other vessel is on and you are on starboard tack



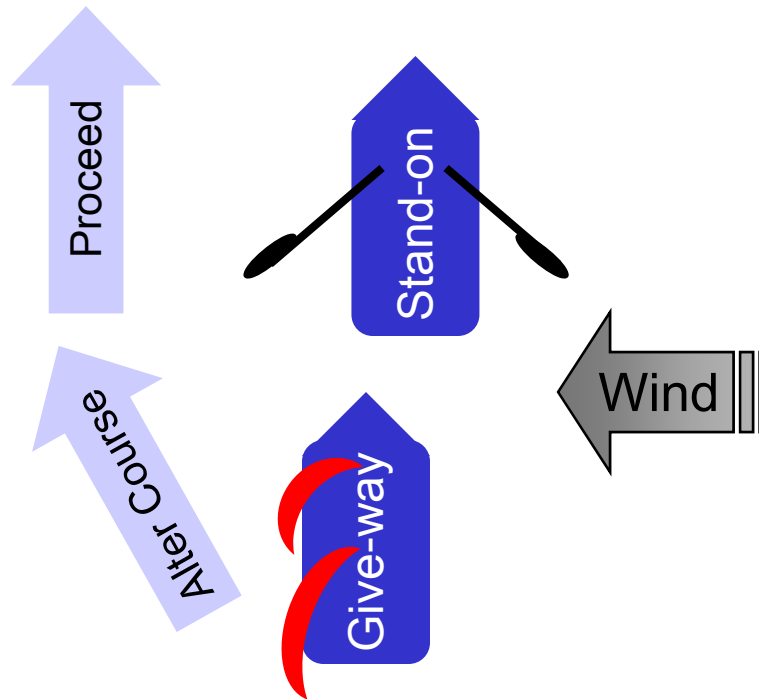
- Assume other vessel is on starboard tack
- Give-way if you are windward vessel
- Stand-on if other vessel is to windward.

Additional rules for sailboats encountering other sailboats

- A sailboat coming about (tacking) or jibing shall give way to a vessel on a steady heading
- If two sailboats are tacking or jibing at the same time then the one to port shall keep clear of the other.

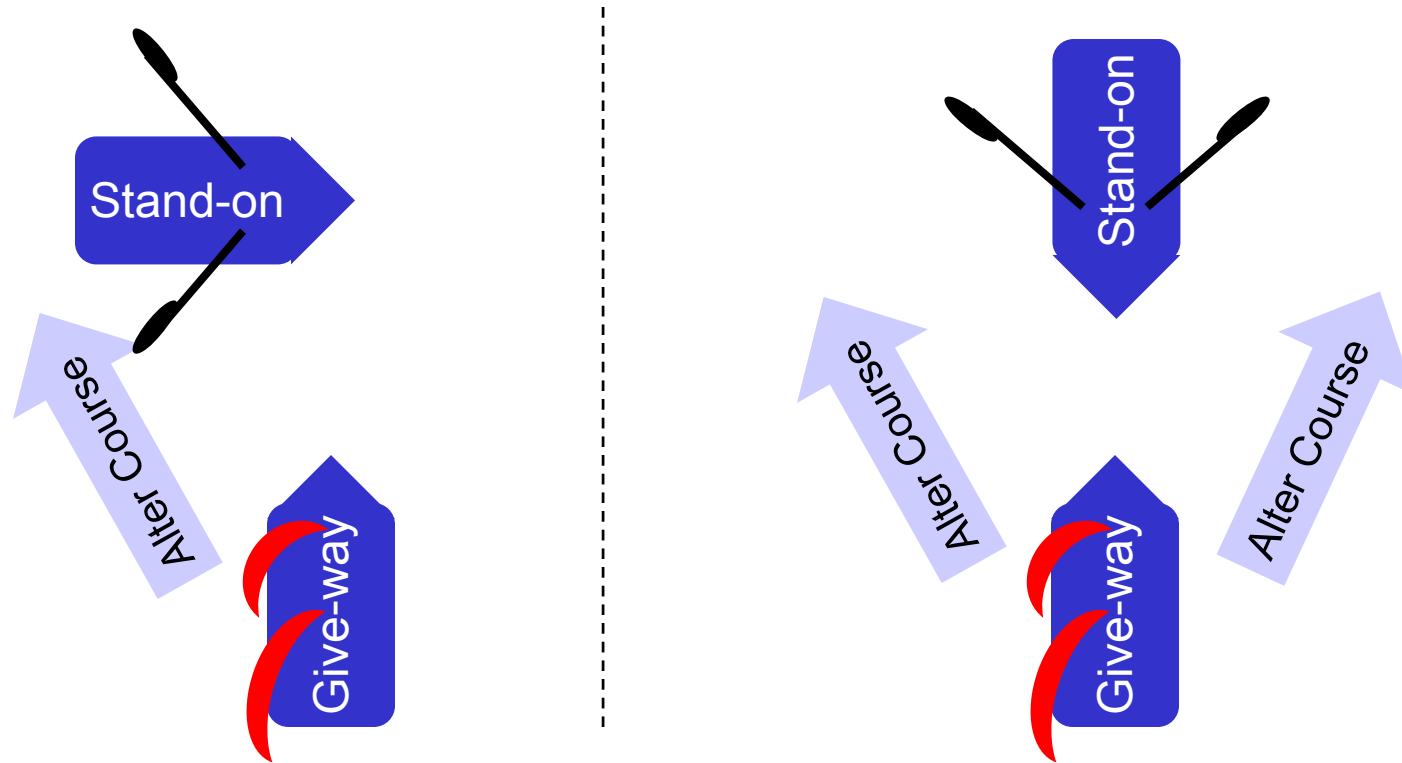


Situation: Sailboat *overtakes* vessel under oars?



- Sailboat is give-way vessel when overtaking any vessel
- Vessel under oars is stand-on vessel
- Sailboats must give way to all human propelled vessels

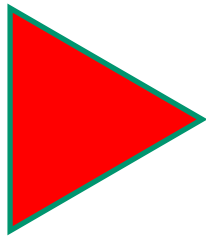
Situation: Sailboat crosses or meets a vessel under oars?



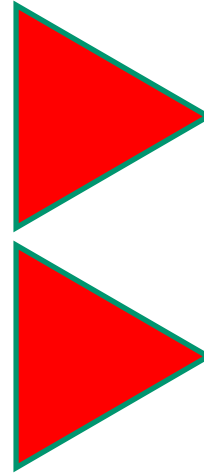
- Sailboats are give-way vessels when they cross or meet vessels under oars.

Weather Alerts on Lake Nockamixon

- Park displays one red pennant above park office if small craft advisory.



Small Craft Advisory



Gale. All vessels get off Lake

- Park displays two red pennants if gale warning.
- If pennants up then all craft should get off Lake
- If two pennants up then park will also sound an alarm directed from Park Office toward Dam to warn boaters to get off Lake. Park sounds three sets of 20 second blasts and 20 seconds off. This is repeated every 5 minutes
- There is no all clear sound.



Rules for sailboats at night on Lake Nockamixon

- Sailboats Underway- 23 feet* or more require:
 - red and green side lights
 - white stern light,
 - or can have a tricolor light (red, green, and white) at masthead,
 - or can have red and green side lights and a red over green all around light at masthead and a stern light at stern but stern light not allowed at masthead in this configuration.
 - If using motor must also have masthead light.
- * If less than 23 feet sailboats recommended to have side light and stern light but if not practical a flashlight available when needed to avoid risk of collision all that is required.

Sailboats at anchor- 23 feet or more require all around white anchor light located 1 meter above side lights.

If less than 23 feet and anchored, all around anchor light required if in water normally navigated by other vessels but not required if in water not normally navigated by other vessels.



Other Rules of the Road

- ✓ State requires all boats under motor to have some kind of signaling device on board. Can be hand, mouth, or battery operated. A coach's whistle is acceptable.
- ✓ It is illegal to operate a boat greater than slow no wake speed within 100 feet of the shore, or within 50 feet to the side or 100 feet from the stern of another vessel.
- ✓ Law enforcement vessels have blue lights.

