Getting Back

Mooring Pickup

There are two basic approaches to picking up a mooring: "Luffing on a close reach" and "shooting". Between them, they will cover any mooring situation you are likely to encounter.

Your object, regardless of the method you choose, is to bring your boat to a complete stopwatch the sails luffing and the bow within a comfortable arm's reach of the mooring pickup float.

Luffing On A Close Reach

NYSS recommends that you master this approach first, as it is also a fundamental part of the "Man Overboard" and "Docking" procedures.

1. As you sail toward the anchorage, locate your mooring ball.
2. Sight on a spot that is about two boatlengths directly downwind of your mooring ball.
3. Sail toward that spot on a beam reach.
4. When you are about 3 boatlengths away from the spot you've chosen, head up to a close reach and steer directly toward the mooring ball.
5. When approaching the mooring ball from this angle, let the sails out gradually until the boat slows to a stop with the bow at the pickup float, sails luffing completely.

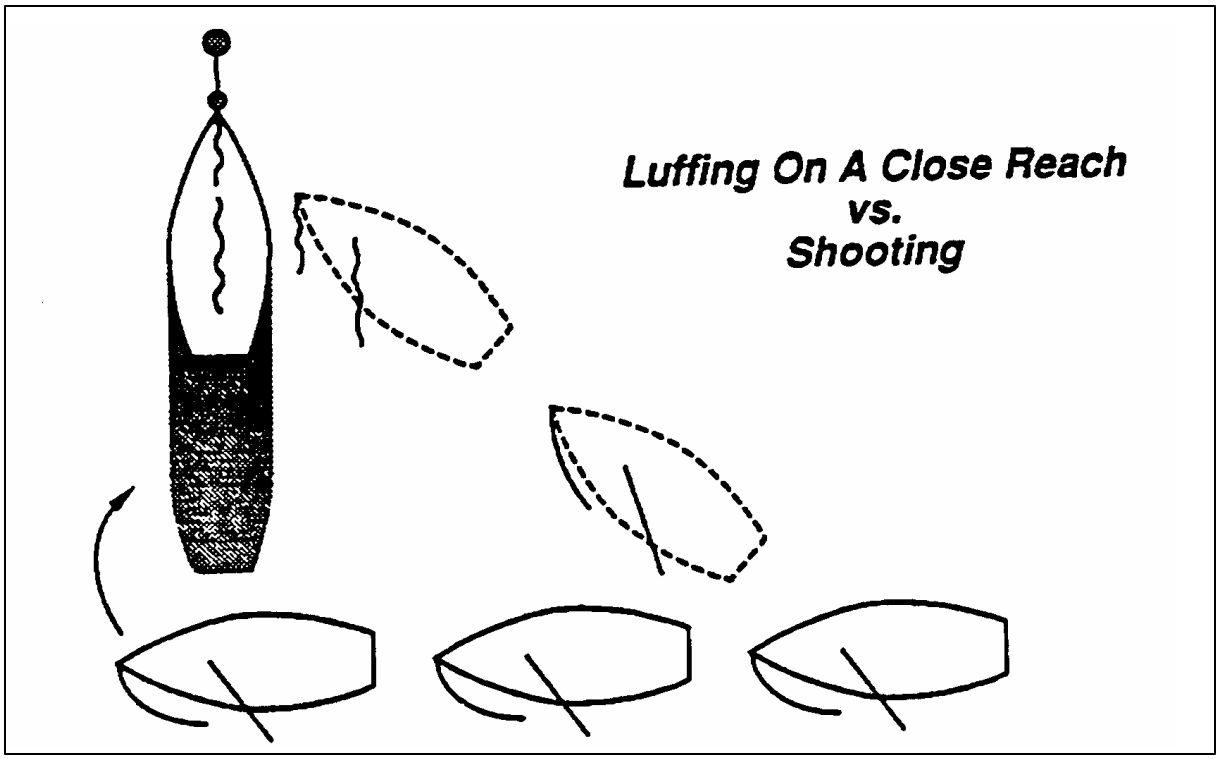
Note

It is important to approach the mooring on a close reach rather than close hauled so that you can head up a little, if necessary, without going into irons.

"Shooting" A Mooring

This method of picking up a mooring differs from "luffing on a close reach" in just two respects - the point at which you turn toward and the angle at which you approach the mooring

- As before, sail on a beam reach toward a point that is about two boatlengths directly downwind of the mooring ball.
- This time however, sail right up to that spot,
- Upon reaching it, turn the boat *sharply* into the wind, going into irons. The sails will luff and the boat will coast to a stop as the wind and waves brake the boat. If you estimate the shoot correctly, the boat will stop just as the bow reaches the mooring.



Success

When a crewmember at the bow can comfortably reach out and grasp the mooring pickup float, you have approached the mooring correctly.

Note Well

Do not lower your sails until the mooring bridle has been securely fastened to the bow cleat. If the mooring line were to slip loose by accident, you may find yourself suddenly adrift without sail power.

Failure

Picking up a mooring is like parking a car. A good skipper makes it look much easier than it really is. Therefore, do not be embarrassed to abort an approach that isn't working out.

Warning

If the boat is still moving forward when you grasp the mooring pickup float, drop the float back into the water immediately and try your approach again. You will **not** stop the momentum of a one-ton boat that easily.

If you insist on trying to hold on to the fiberglass wand of the pickup float, it may snap apart. If you try to hang on to the nylon bridle, you will very likely be pulled overboard. Even if you manage to hold on to the bridle by walking aft with it, the boat's center of gravity will be well forward of the mooring. The boat will

turn and the sails will catch wind causing the boat to circle around the mooring recklessly and uncontrollably until you cast off.

Things to consider when "Shooting"

The trick to this approach is to find the spot that is just the right distance downwind of the mooring. This varies depending upon the conditions of the moment and the type of boat you are sailing.

1. On a windy day, the boat will have less shoot, as greater wind and wave resistance will stop the boat quickly.
2. On a calm day, the boat will coast much further as there is less wind and wave resistance to slow it down.
3. A light, easily slowed dinghy might only shoot half a boat length whereas a heavy cruising boat may shoot six or eight boat lengths.

It is recommended that you use two (2) boat lengths as your initial estimated shooting distance in an NYSS sloop.

How do you know when you have reached the point at which you are supposed to turn into the wind (and toward the mooring)?

1. In most cases, the mooring pickup float will lie directly downwind of the mooring ball. Since you are sailing perpendicular to the wind, you should turn when the float lines up with the ball at about a right angle to the middle of the boat.
2. You can also sight on the position of other boats moored nearby. Since they will generally lie with their bows pointing into the wind, you should turn when your new course will be parallel to the other boats and in line with the mooring ball and float.

Once you have turned and are headed directly toward the mooring ball, bear the following in mind:

1. You will have to stand up while steering in order not to lose sight of your mooring.
2. Stand clear of the boom, as it will be swinging about the center of the cockpit.
3. If it turns out that your course is actually at a slight angle to the wind. the sails may still catch enough wind to keep the boat moving forward. Thus, it is a good idea to cast off the jibsheets altogether and to ease the mainsheet.
4. If it appears that you will overshoot your mooring, have a crewmember push the boom and mainsail out to leeward, against the wind, to "brake" the boat.
5. If it appears that you will fall short of your mooring, quickly trim the mainsail all the way to the centerline of the boat. The sail may catch enough wind to carry you forward that extra six or eight feet.

Securing the Boat

Upon reaching the mooring, it is time to put the boat to bed.

1. Secure the mooring bridle to the bow cleat.
2. Lower the jib immediately. This will help to keep the boat lying steady into the wind until the other chores are done. (Leave it on deck, attached to the forestay, until later.)
3. Lower the main soon after lowering the jib to avoid prolonged luffing of the sail.
   Note
   Prolonged luffing of sails dramatically reduces their life span. Please don't luff them needlessly.
4. Pull in three feet of mooring line and tie a cleat knot with half-hitch on the bow cleat.
5. Loosen the backstay to straighten the mast and put tension on the shrouds.
6. Place the boom in the boom scissors and tighten the mainsheet.
7. Detach the halyard shackles from the heads of the sails, then secure the shackles to an appropriate fitting on the mast. This will prevent the ends of the halyards from being carried aloft to the head of the mast.
8. Snug the halyards and cleat them. They need not be tight; just snug enough so that they won't fly around in the breeze.
9. Roll the mainsail and tie it to the boom (see details, below).
10. Remove the jib from the forestay, carry it to the cockpit, roll it, and stow it below deck. ***Do not fold any sail after it has been rolled.***
11. Tie the tiller amidships and neatly coil excess halyards and sheets.

Rolling Sails

NYSS encourages students to roll sails rather than fold them. Not only is rolling sails easier, but they last longer as well- (Sailcloth is "finished" or hardened with a resin that allows a sail to retain its tailored shape. Folding cracks the resin, thereby weakening the sail along the line of the fold. At best, the sail loses its shape and performs poorly. At worst, it reaches an untimely death by tearing.)

The following method is useful for rolling both the jib and the mainsail.

1. Using the boom as a workbench, drape the sail entirely on one side of the boom.
2. Stand on the opposite side of the boom.
3. Starting at the head, roll the sail around itself like a window shade, pulling the sail toward you, across the top of the boom.
4. Keep the even edge of the sail at the leech (aft edge) of the sail. This keeps the battens parallel to the roll so they won't bend or pierce the sail fabric.
5. Stretch and smooth the sail as you roll. Secure the rolled mainsail to the boom using three sail ties, then attach the boom cover over the roll.
6. Roll the jib in the same manner and insert it into its sail bag.

Review

1. Name the five items of required safety gear.

   a)
   b)
   c)
   d)
   e)

2. When getting under way, which sail is raised first? Why?

3 Name the four steps for leaving a mooring.

   a)
   b)
   c)
   d)

4. Name the three steps for properly trimming a sail.

   a)
   b)
   c)

5 . Describe the five steps of a coming about.
   a)
   b)
   c)
   d)
   e)

6. Describe the five steps of a gybe.
   a)
   b)
   c)
   d)
   e)

7. How do you know when a sail is over-trimmed? Stalled?

8. Describe the "Luffing On A Close Reach" maneuver for picking up a mooring.

9. Describe the "Shooting A Mooring" method.

10. Describe the procedure for rolling a sail.

11. Organize the following statements into the correct sequence for a Man Overboard rescue.

a) Retrieve victim at the windward side of the cockpit.
b) Throw a flotation device to the victim.
c) Gybe.
d) Sail away from the victim on a beam reach.
e) Assign a "spotter".
f) Fall off onto a run.
g) Sail toward the victim on a beam reach.

12. Describe the four steps for Heaving-To

a)

b)

c)

d)

13. Describe four steps for reefing the mainsail after you've left the mooring,

a)

b)

c)

d)

Navigation Rules

Ever play "dodge-'ems", the electrically-driven amusement park buggies where the object is to collide with, or nearly miss, other "dodge-'ems"? That's nearly the sailboating problem on Western Long Island Sound or any other heavily boat-populated waters on a sunny weekend.

In order to prevent collisions at sea, the ***Navigation Rules*** were written. The Coast Guard publishes an easy to read book, aptly titled ***Navigation Rules***. Own a copy!

Some of the rules may be most easily remembered, as you will see, by their analogous rules for driving a car. But, unlike the highway where the direction and speed of traffic are usually well marked and regulated, the seas are not so well defined.

Important Definitions

Stand-on vessel - (a.k.a. "privileged" vessel). The stand-on vessel has the right of way and must maintain course and speed so as not to confuse the ***give-way vessel***. The stand-on vessel must stay alert to be sure that the give-way vessel fulfills his obligation.

Give-way vessel - (a.k.a. "burdened" vessel). The give-way vessel must yield right of way in the safest possible manner. This could include stopping (luffing sails or putting engine in neutral), reversing, engine, slowing down, or altering course.

How It Works

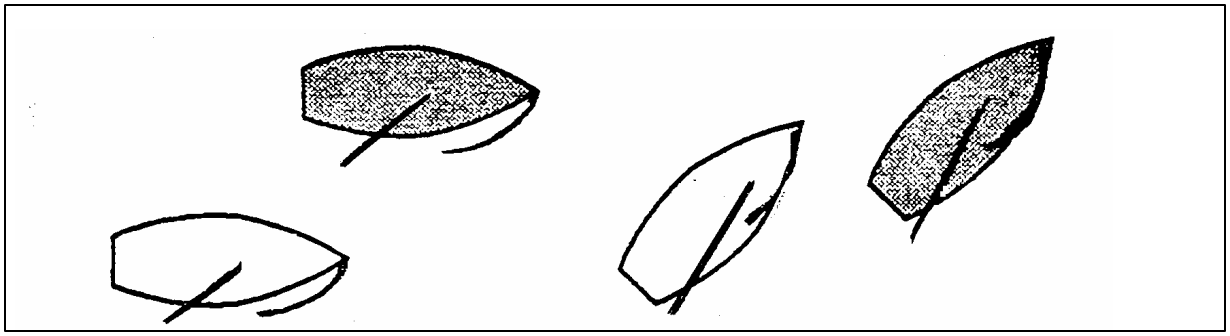
In any situation where there is a possibility of two vessels colliding, one vessel is always called stand-on and the other is always called give-way. If a collision occurs, it is always the fault of the give-way vessel and he is responsible for damages as long as the stand-on vessel fulfilled his obligation to maintain course and speed.

What is important in any situation is to recognize whether you are stand-on or give-way.

Apply the following rules in the same order every time. By process of elimination, you will quickly arrive at the one that pertains to your situation.

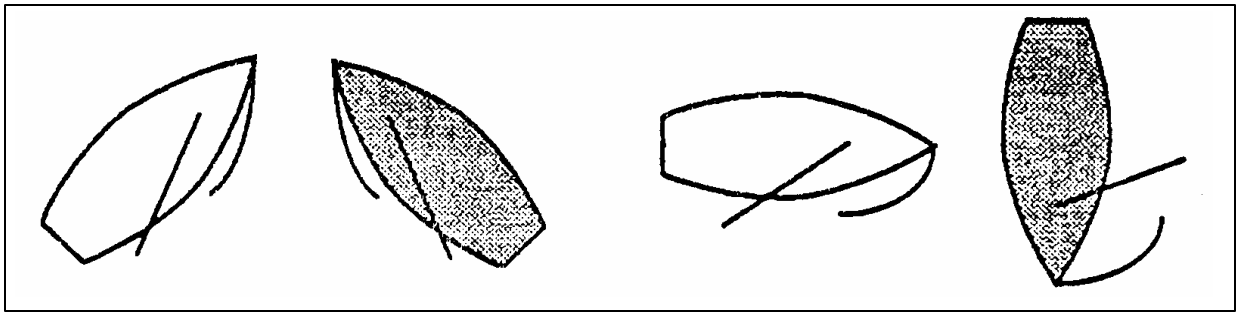
Sail Meeting Sail

Rule #1. Overtaking



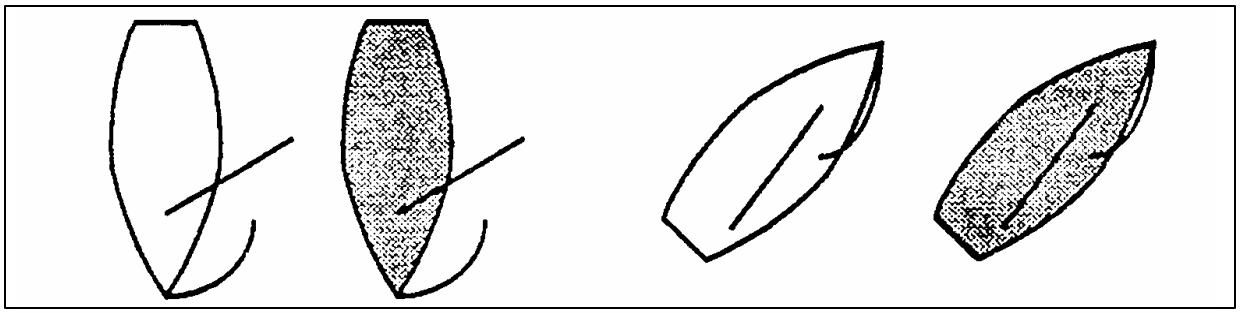
A Boat that is overtaken from astern is the stand-on vessel.

Rule #2. Starboard ("Opposite") Tack.



When boats are approaching one another on opposite tacks, the Boat that is on the starboard tack is the stand-on vessel.

Rule #3. Leeward.



When boats are on the same tack, the ***leeward boat*** is the stand-on vessel.

Power Meeting Power

When your sailboat is under power. it is considered a power boat and you must follow the rules set forth below. The fact that your sails may be raised does not change your status as a power boat as long as your motor is on.

Rule #1: Overtaking.

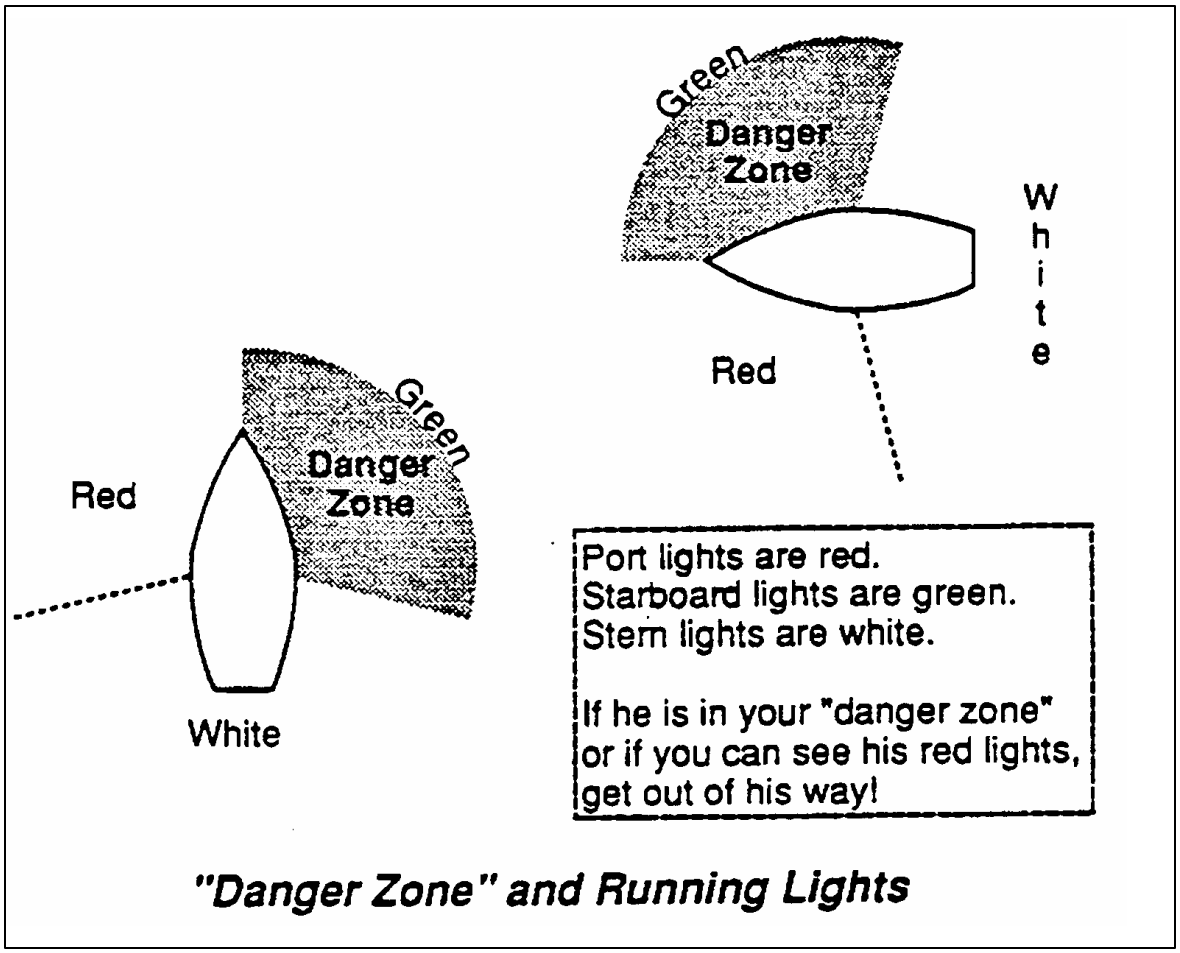
A boat that is being overtaken from astern is the stand-on vessel. (Same as with sailboats.)

Rule #2: Keep right.

Just as on the highway, stay to the right of oncoming traffic.

Rule #3: Danger Zone.

A boat approaching in the area from "dead ahead" to "2 points abaft the starboard beam" is the stand-on vessel. This area is called the "Danger Zone". In other words, anything that is approaching you from the starboard side that is not also overtaking you has the right of way. (Just as when you arrive at a highway intersection, the car entering to your right has the right of way.)



"Danger Zone" and Running Lights

Power Meeting Sail

Sailboats are always stand-on vessels ***except*** when:

- overtaking a power vessel
- restricting the movement of a commercial vessel
- encountering another vessel in a narrow channel

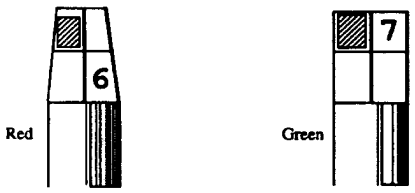
Avoiding Rules of the Road Confrontations

- ***Sail Defensively*** - If your sloop is stand-on and the skipper of the other boat shows no sign of avoiding an imminent collision, it is your responsibility to do so. The other skipper may be ignorant of the "Rules of the Road" or may be playing "nautical chicken".
- Never come about or gybe without first having assessed whether your maneuver may put you into Rules of the Road confrontation with another vessel. If it would put you into a sticky situation, delay coming about or gybing. In short, will a 90^0 turn put you or your vessel in jeopardy?
- Assume every other skipper is New York City's worst taxi driver in disguise - and sail accordingly!
- Talk. Informality is the key. If there is the slightest confusion on your part as to the Intentions of another boat - hail it.
- Signal your intentions (if beyond earshot), particularly in head-on, eyeball-to-eyeball passing situations, by steering a noticeable change of course. This will give the other boat a clue as to how to avoid you if he is give-way and will serve to acknowledge your responsibility if you are give-way,

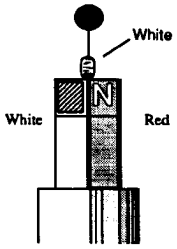
Navigational Aids

NYSS has a special handout to show in color the types of navigation aids that are in use. Below are some general issues regarding navigation.

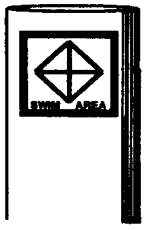
If you are passing between the buoys below you would be traveling along a channel towards open water.



If you see this buoy directly in front of your boat you are in the middle of the channel

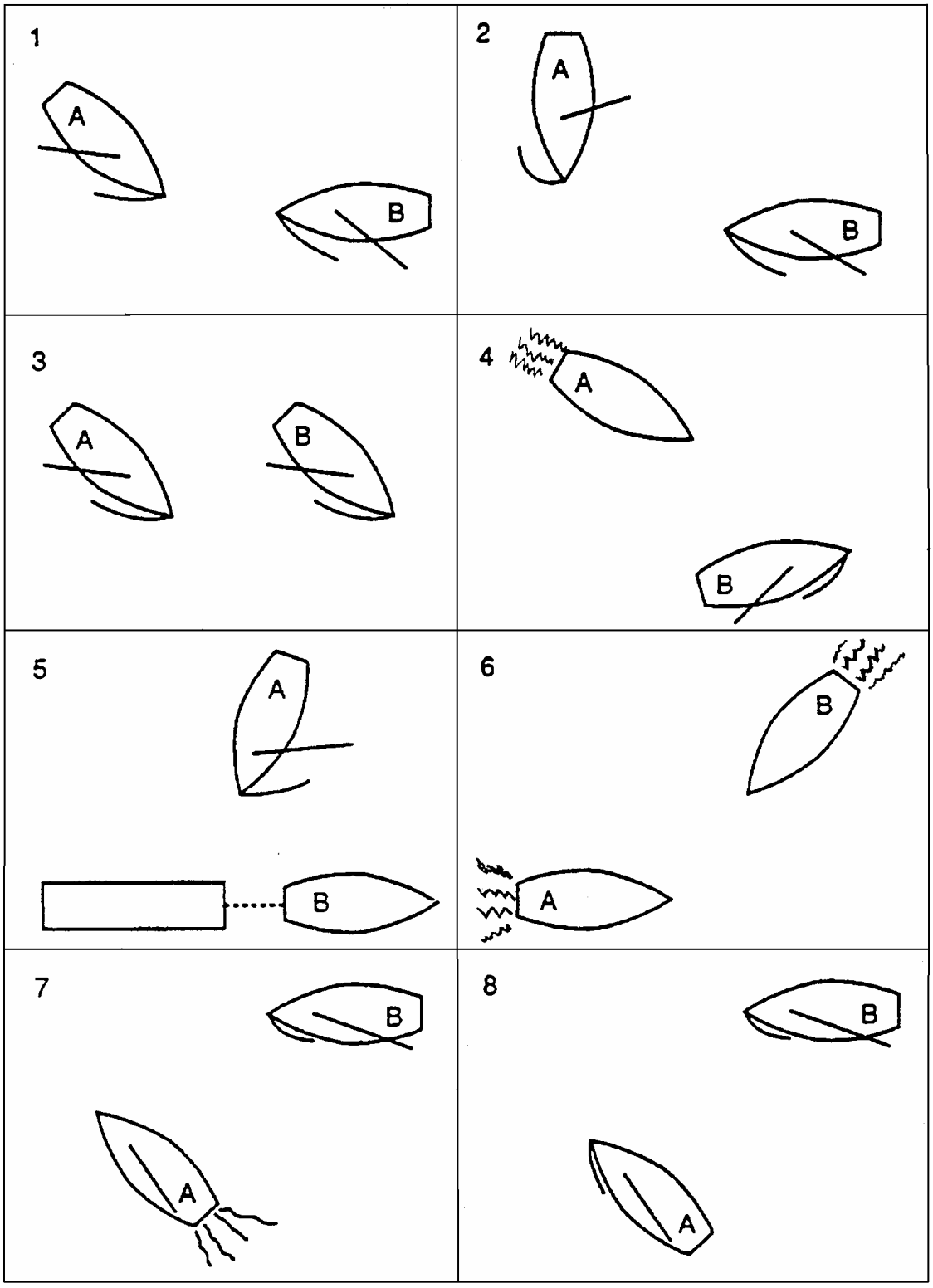


If you see this see this buoy directly in front of your boat you are approaching an area prohibited to boating.



Review Quiz

In each of the following diagrams, identify the "give-way" vessel and state the applicable Navigation Rule.

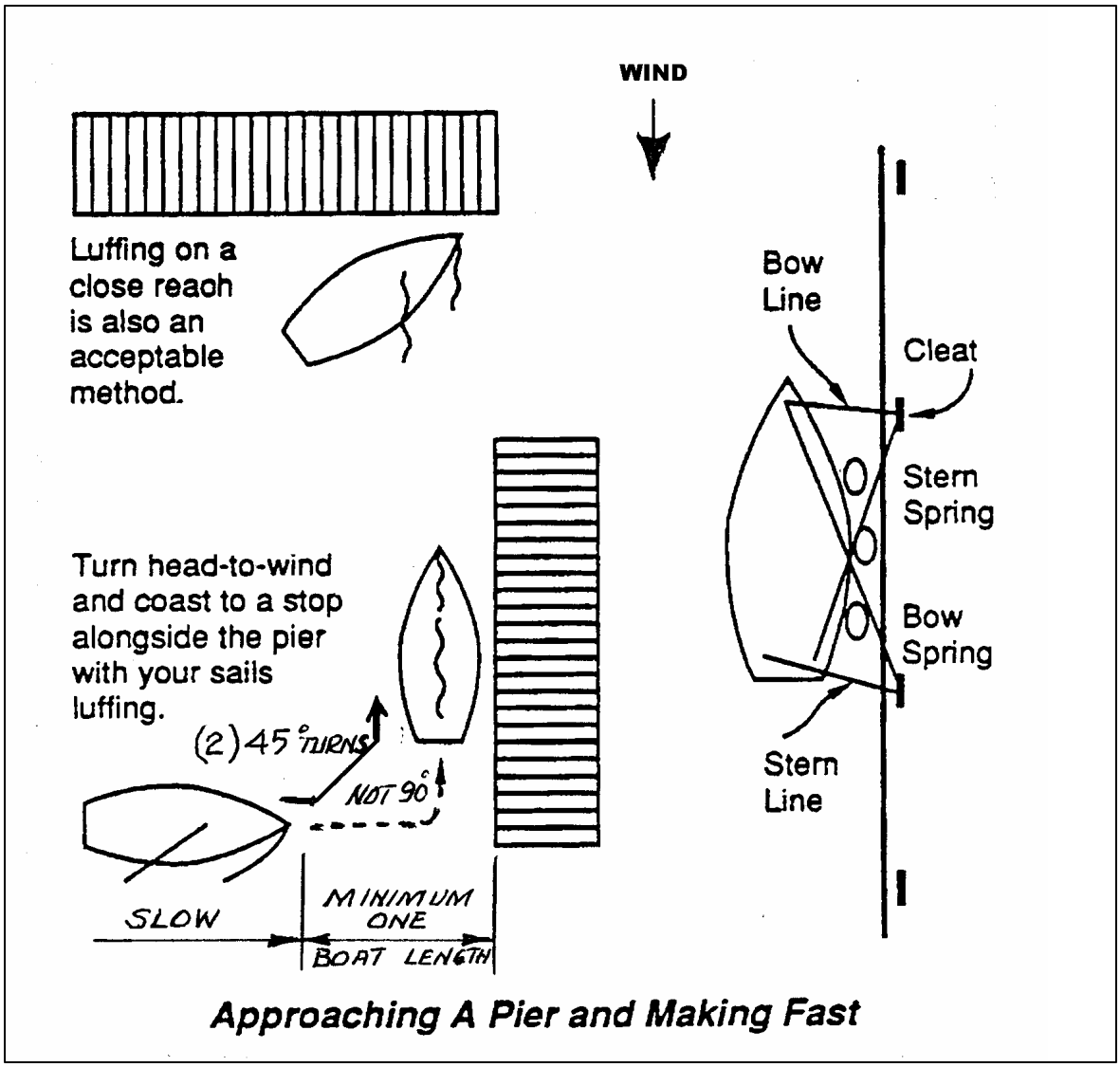


More Boat Handling Skills

Now it's time to learn how to "park" your boat. You approach a pier or anchorage in exactly the same manner that you would approach a mooring. All you have to do next is to tie up securely.

Docking

The cardinal rule for approaching a pier under sail is that you want the pier to lie to windward so that the wind will not drive the boat into it. Ideally, the pier will lie parallel to the prevailing wind, allowing you to coast right up alongside it. Nevertheless, a little practice is required to avoid a "fender-bender" with the pier.



Approaching A Pier and Making Fast