

RYA GUIDANCE

GATE MARKS

Gate marks, at the end of a run or downwind leg, have a number of advantages. They:

1. Reduce congestion at individual marks.
2. Give easier access to either side of the course.
3. Keep boats closer together on the same course.
4. Reduce the number of boats tacking through other boats on a downwind leg.

The two marks should each have distinct zones and should therefore be at least 7 lengths apart with a recommended distance of 8-10 lengths apart.

Marks should be laid so there is no advantage attached to either. This often means that they are square to the sailing wind, but other tactical factors should be taken into account. At a good gate there will be an equal split of boats using each mark.

A problem arises if a mark is missing and has not been replaced in a manner specified in RRS 34, which requires substitution with a similar mark or an object displaying flag "M". ISAF Question and Answer 2009-034 says that with only one mark remaining there is no gate and the remaining mark has no required side. The consequence of this is likely to be abandonment of the race. To avoid this problem, race committees are recommended to specify a required side when only one mark of a gate is present, so that there will still be a mark with a required side. Boats would then round the remaining mark as any other single rounding mark. The suggested SI to be inserted in the courses section is:

A gate may be replaced by a single mark to be left to port (*or starboard*).