

Hello All,

What a FANTASTIC day we had on Sunday!!

The morning session was very light, 3 – 5 knts, but we spent time on improving our roll tacks and sitting very still in the boat with a slight angle of heel to maintain the feel and the boatspeed. A noticeable improvement in general crew work was observed by the end of the session though there were still too many times when skippers weren't looking up and checking that their mainsail battens had popped to the correct side.

Therese Turner organised a fabulous sausage sizzle which was awaiting hungry kids as they stepped ashore at 12:15. Thank-you Therese! 😊

Then we all had a bit of “chill time” watching myself, ably assisted by supermodels Ross Bowles and Chris Darin, measure up and re-set up Hugo Darin's boat. In no particular order, we also checked:

- Mast rake (make a permanent mark 3.5m above the sheerline on front of mast then measure from this mark down to the fibreglass next to the bow fitting, the magic number is 3,795mm). We had to lengthen the chainplate by about 5 holes to achieve more rake. Approx 10mm more rake per hole.
- Rig tension - (should be somewhere between 18 and 28 on my gauge). Hugo's boat was “5”.
- Mainsheet bridle height – it needs to be low enough that you can really pull a lot of mainsheet tension on before it goes block-to-block. You will need to do this in about 10-12 knots of breeze upwind.
- Check whether the boom vang can be eased off enough for light winds, yet pulled on enough for strong winds (the underdeck lever-type vangs quickly run out of travel so this is very important).
- Jib block position – should be 860 – 870mm between the two blocks as measured from the inside of the jib sheet. This is called the load bearing points of the jib sheets. Sorry if this is confusing but I can't think of how to describe it in simpler terms. Then check that the jib sheet angle follows the black text mark drawn on the jib. If it doesn't then you need to adjust your jib block ropes until it does. Only do this measurement after you have got your mast rake correct as mast rake greatly affects jib sheet angle.
- Spinnaker pole height – with mast set up properly, pull the spinnaker right up then measure a hands-width (say 200mm) up the luff of the spinnaker. This point on the spinnaker should be able to be just pulled down firm to the end of the pole. Adjust your pole up or down as necessary to achieve this. Once pole height is set correctly, adjust the pole kicker knot to prevent the pole from lifting above this point.

Come and ask any of your coaches if you're not sure how we measured or adjusted any of the above. Or call me.

At that point, about 2:00, we had a lovely 10-12 knots so we went out and did 7 short races, some one lap and some two laps. This was excellent for starting practice, upwind speed sailing (crew weight together, mainsail pulled on really tight, boat sailed flat), windward mark roundings, spinnaker hoists/gybes/drops then the leeward mark roundings. We definitely saw great improvement during this session also. It was good to see boats like Bad Dog and India/Cindy put in some excellent races. Well done kids!

The take out's Angus and I noted from this final session were (in order of priority):

- Mainsails not on tight enough and always easing out (i.e. slipping through skippers fingers). In this wind range, mainsheet needs to be in tight 100% of the time; if boat heels in gust, then crew must hike out hard to keep boat level. This is the fastest way to sail a Flying 11 upwind in 10-12 knots)
- Jibs off too far – similar to above. This kills speed and pointing ability. Generally the foot of the jib should either just be “kissing” the inside of the gunwhale, or a little tighter. Some kids may want to put a wool or a marker in their jib sheets so they know how tight to pull it.
- Boats heeled too far with crews not even hiking out. In this condition, you need to sail the boat very flat.
- Skipper using too much tiller, too much steering in these steady conditions.
- Overlaying the windward mark – some did this on the Port layline, most did it on the Starboard layline. I would encourage you to tack earlier than you think during these training sessions, just to see if you can lay the mark from what you might consider to be an “under-laid” position. You might be pleasantly surprised!
- Overlaying the leeward mark – boats needed to be gybing almost immediately to lay the leeward mark in all the races. Those that didn't gybe till halfway down overlaid the mark very significantly and allowed those who gybed early to overtake them and get inside them for buoy room at the mark.
- For square runs (wind directly behind you) no-one had their poles far enough aft. The pole should be in-line with the boom: when the boom is right out, the pole should be right back.

Many thanks to Bruce Turner for ensuring everyone was welcome and looked after at Belmont. It's always a pleasure to sail from your awesome facility. I really enjoyed myself and I'm sure Angus did too.

I expect you will see a lot more of Angus in coming weeks and Felix will be back too. A big “Thank-You” to Dave O’Connor for coaching you for the first two weekends. Hopefully we’ll see Dave again, but he’s off coaching 49er FX’s for a while.

We look forward to seeing all of you at Manly the Sunday after next. Manly will put on a sausage sizzle too.

Happy Sailing!!!

John Dransfield