

# 18' Skiff Handling Notes

F = Forward hand   S = Mainsheet hand   H = Helmsman



## Overall Notes

- > top skiffs stay upright and at near peak speed at all times. Especially in the lulls they keep the skiff powered up and keep as much speed as possible until the next pressure
- > skiffs are high performance craft in a straight line so we should consider them to be a strategic boat where we plan our course and only execute a few tacks per work (unlike such as a laser which can be roll tacked out of a bad tactical situation)
- > fast boatspeed gives more windspeed which gives more boat speed!
- > keep the skiff moving as best as possible at all times so as to build the momentum! The forces of drag always slow, and mass resists acceleration, which makes building speed difficult. Cherish the speed built and urge the skiff forwards
- > the mast, sails, fins and skiff are springs which to capture nature's energy
- > when underpowered keep the skiff heeled to leeward to fill the sails and give a bit of weather helm
- > when the gusts come hike hard, pull the main downhauls and trim the sails flatter
- > heel to windward to bear away
- > keep the sails powerful for the lulls
- > visualise all maneuvers > log > test > develop
- > practice boathandling, use harbor & mooring buoys to do turns around
- > practice spinnaker raising & lowering for speed, confidence & efficiency

## Rigging / Pre- Race

- > All – have shackle key & roll of tape in pocket
- > set watches to match those of the starter
- > position and rig starboard side down
- > Briefing – H – attends & determines courses & timing. Packs a set of instructions into in boom or spinnaker bag pocket
- > H – cleans hull, blades & masts
- > S – fills & ties on water bottle (bring ½ frozen from home)
- > F – spinnaker on the correct side
- > All – tape all sharp edges with tab for easy removal after

## Launch & Pre- start

- > Launch before Ferry arrives
- > All – set trim of sails
- > F – note upwind and downwind settings for vang and main downhauls
- > S – set spinnaker sheet block position
- > All – determine best overall strategies, pick which main and contingency plans for the weather
- > All - warmup spinnaker hoist, set, 3 gybes & drop
- > All - confirm course on committee boat

# 18' Skiff Handling Notes

F = Forward hand   S = Mainsheet hand   H = Helmsman

## Start

- > H – assess line & fleet, integrate with strategy, communicate
- > H – controls skiff, calls for more or less power
- > S, H – get countdown watches running from signals
- > F – ensure outhaul, vang, main downhauls & jib travellers are set correctly
- > F – balance, constant jib trim, traffic watch
- > S – counts down time in 30 s, then 10 s from 1 minute
- > S – backs main as required to slow or assist backwards steering

## Sailing to Windward

- > All – lots of communication of trim, wind & strategy
- > F – balance, adjustments to jib sheets, main downhaul & vang. If he goes in off the wire he eases the downhaul to power up the main leech and get him out again.
- > F – looks around and calls upcoming pressure, weather across the course, traffic & opposition watch
- > F – goes out to windward in front of perp & S, steps in and on to perp, steps in and on to deck in front of shrouds
- > F – walks then hangs onto handle then hooks on, jib sheet in hand or ready to grab at an instant
- > S – trapezing and trimming main, calls upcoming pressure and waves
- > S – calls F for balance, calls “Blocked” so F knows when mainsheet is fully on so as to move inboard for loss of pressure
- > S – moves in front of perp when F is in, thereafter keeps forward leg at perp, a bit fore or aft depending on the pressure
- > H – drives the skiff for speed & height, calls mode of sailing (pinching, gathering speed etc.) and fine tune for all controls
- > In more pressure:
  - > S – out first, then H then F
  - > All – sail flat or heeling a bit to windward once all 3 are trapezing
  - > All – be comfortable hanging low and skimming the water
- > In less pressure:
  - > S – out first, then H
  - > F – first in, last out, as forward as possible, goes in ahead of shrouds
  - > All - Heel to leeward 5- 10°
  - > F - don't allow skiff to roll to windward, this requires over-correction and loses pace

## Tacking

- > Planning – All – communicate strategic placement and timing for tacks

# 18' Skiff Handling Notes

F = Forward hand   S = Mainsheet hand   H = Helmsman

- > Planning – H – checks traffic over shoulder
- > H – Prepares by saying “Ready About”
- > All – keep trimmed for sailing at max speed
- > F – grabs jib sheet
- > H – ultimate call on tack. Looks over his shoulder to visualise where the skiff should be pointing (as well as a final check for traffic) then says “Tacking... Now!”
- > F – eases jib sheet 4 inches
- > All – heel to leeward a bit to help the boat turn
- > H – steers turnstarting easy then harder
- > S – trims on main extra hard to pressure up the stern
- > All – try to roll tack to the extent that the wings and conditions allow
- > H & F – first in and straight across
- > F – stays as far forward as possible going across, when light may go forward of mast, when going out on the wing goes in front of S who has forward foot at perp
- > S – follows F, straight on to trapeze with front foot on perp
- > H – completes turn and straight on to trapeze
- > S – pulls mainsheet on only once skiff is fully turned to the new course (not before to so as not to send the skiff into irons), leaves off a little until the skiff gets up to speed
- > F – if the pressure is light comes in to balance the weight of S & H
- > F – pulls jib back on when it is up to full speed
- > H – drives the skiff for speed then pointing, calls sail trim to S & F

## Bear-Away & Spinnaker Hoist

- > Well before – H – determines the best bear away course (high or deep or gybe); plan for traffic that is hard to see later, communicates
- > Just before – F – eases main downhaul right off, vang to mark
- > Just before – All – build top speed, shift weight aft and heel a bit to windward
- > Bearing away – F – keeps weight out and eases jib fast as course changes, moves in fast
- > Bearing away – S – keeps weight out and eases main as course changes, passes sheet to H, runs in fast when skiff is on course
- > Bearing away – H – Stays out off wing with foot in strap or moves in to rear wing strut area
- > H – calls hoist, watches hoist to see that it goes up and out smoothly to masthead & bowsprit, steers the skiff flat to allow crew to set spinnaker
- > F – opens bag, pulls up spinnaker fast, grab sheet and straight onto trapeze
- > S – pulls tack out fast from windward side, checks jib trim, onto wire or perp, takes mainsheet, pulls tail and checks that halyard is clear
- > F – release jib traveller

## Spinnaker Tight Reaching

- > F – ahead of S so he can run in if necessary
- > S – trapezing in line with the rear perp, leg overlocked with Helmsman. Keep weight out of skiff. Calls the crew to move fore and aft to minimise drag from the stern as it gets light

# 18' Skiff Handling Notes

F = Forward hand   S = Mainsheet hand   H = Helmsman

- > H – trapezing back foot near the rear of wing when it gets windy
- > F – as much roll in the leading edge as possible so as to open leech and minimise lee helm
- > F – pre-emptive trimming is easier than having to over-correct too late
- > S – emergency balance for difficult conditions and erroneous spinnaker trim
- > All – be comfortable hanging low and skimming the water when breezy

## Spinnaker Deep Reaching

- > F – trapezing, lots of roll in spinnaker
- > S – trapezing or on perp by shrouds, traffic watch, emergency balance for difficult conditions and erroneous spinnaker trim
- > H – trapezing or on wing aft

## Spinnaker Gybing

- > H – alerts crew that gybe is soon, checks that the path is clear and visualises where the skiff will be heading at the conclusion of gybe
- > F – pulls in slack on new spinnaker sheet to take across, coils sheet tail in hand
- > All – keep in position for maximum speed until the call for Gybe
- > S – eases main, moves in to centre, double check for traffic, loops mainsheet over shoulder, tightens new spinnaker sheet and grabs old, calls “Ready”
- > H – calls with suitable punch “Gybe Now!”, steers skiff in to turn
- > F – throws sheet neatly into centre of boat, runs fast across in front of S on to new trapeze with sheets in hand
- > S – release old sheet and pulls spinnaker around to snap and fill it quickly
- > H – steers and just before the main fills gives a windward pump on the tiller to soften the jolt of the main filling and tensing, ensures old sheet goes out smoothly, fast on to trapeze
- > F – gathers new sheet from S, eases when filled
- > S – grabs mainsheet and pulls on most of the way, checks that jib is correctly set, on to wing and trapeze as quickly as possible
- > H – stays out on wire, sail high to build speed with 3 strings, look and sail for pressure

## Spinnaker Drop / Leeward Mark Rounding

- > Before – H – looks around to visualise where the skiff will be heading on the upwind course and check for obstacles
- > Before – S – looks to ensure tack and halyard will run freely, makes sure jib is eased
- > Before – F – psyches himself for a fast and neat drop, coils sheet for passing cleanly to S

# 18' Skiff Handling Notes

F = Forward hand   S = Mainsheet hand   H = Helmsman

- > S – passes mainsheet to H on trapeze
- > H – calls “Drop”
- > F – passes spinnaker sheet to S, runs in to windward side of deck, kneels just behind bag, grabs windward spinnaker sheet under D1. Never a leeward drop!
- > S – releases spinnaker sheet and throws neatly into centre of skiff, grabs tack line and halyard, stays on windward side as much as possible
- > F – big pull to get clew around, calls “Tack Line” asap when ready
- > S – releases tack line, ensures it runs smoothly
- > F – gathers all foot, calls “Halyard” asap when ready
- > S – releases the halyard, ensures it runs smoothly, stays on windward side as much as possible, jib sheet in hand
- > F – pack spinnaker, close bag
- > H – plays mainsheet, steers skiff under the rig on to the upwind course
- > S – onto trapeze, trim jib to about 6 inches from all on, take mainsheet
- > F – pulls in all the spinnaker sheet between the blocks and tuck securely into bag, eases halyard and tack lines and tucks corners into bag if necessary
- > F – out on the wing as fast as possible, jib traveller back on

## Spinnaker Gybe Drop / Leeward Mark Rounding

- > Like a normal drop except:
- > F – coils sheet and hangs on to drop cleanly in the centre of the skiff
- > S – holds on to mainsheet
- > H – calls “Gybe Drop”
- > F – runs in to new windward side of deck, kneels just behind bag, grabs windward spinnaker sheet under D1
- > S – runs through to new wing, throws boom across if necessary, passes mainsheet to H, grabs and release tack line, ensures it runs smoothly
- > S – grabs halyard, stays on windward side as much as possible
- > H – steers through gybe, grabs mainsheet and on to new trapeze

## Flagging The spinnaker

- > Needs to be done sometimes to avoid an obstruction or gain some space to windward when there is too much pressure or a knocking windshift
- > F – tries to stay out on wire, keeps spinnaker in control
- > S – move weight fast to balance, ensures mainsheet is on to avoid breaking mast
- > H – in if necessary, calls when to pull the spinnaker back on

# 18' Skiff Handling Notes

F = Forward hand   S = Mainsheet hand   H = Helmsman

## Two Sail Reaching

- > F – ease vang lots & main downhaul to suit
- > F – holds jib sheets in hand and trims constantly, moves in/out to balance, calls wind pressure
- > S – trapezes off wing and trims main constantly
- > H – calls skiff trim with sheet and weight feedback to crew, determines best course strategy
- > All – when breezy be comfortable hanging low and skimming the water a bit – it is safer than heeling to leeward

## Two Sail Gybing

- > F - looks for traffic to ensure path is clear
- > All – visualise where the skiff will be heading when it comes out of the gybe
- > H – brings the skiff up to maximum speed, turns so as to keep the skiff under the rig
- > F – runs through fast and throws the main (by grabbing the vang on the way through), straight out to wing, grabs on to trapeze handle and goes out as required
- > S – runs through fast, directly on to trapeze
- > H – steers & runs through
- > H – just before the main fills gives a windward pump on the tiller to soften the jolt of the main filling and tensing, fast on to trapeze
- > F – jib sheets in hand and balancing

## Packing The Skiff

- > wipe foils and clean hull bottom
- > All – note repairs & improvements
- > cleanup around grounds and trailer

## After Sailing Social

- > All – get the refreshment, food & keep smiling!