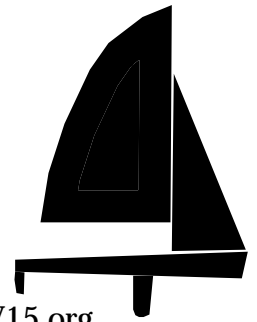


BOWDOWN



The Official Newsletter of the Vanguard 15 Class Association, www.V15.org

Sailing a winning light-air downwind leg

When I first got in the V15, I tried to pool my resources of friends and experts to take the fast track to high performance. I was an avid Laser sailor at the time, and enjoyed hearing that V15 sailing was just like sailing a big Laser. Since then I've learned that yeah, there is a bow and stern, and a tiller, and a mainsheet, but I can't really say that many of the techniques I use and coach in the Laser are effective in the V15. My toughest learning challenge was getting the light-air downwind thing together.

The following explains the theory and techniques to get down a run in 3 to 6 knots. Believe it or not, it's actually quite a fun condition. The boat is spunky when set up right, and the tactical decisions demand heads-up attentiveness and immediate action.

Okay, here's the deal. You have to sail hot angles—forget about where the mark is. I pretend I'm sailing a skiff or other asymmetrical-spinnaker boat and am fearless about sailing up for speed. As you do this, you'll quickly find yourself speeding along almost on a beam reach, and the apparent wind shifts forward, allowing you to flatten and bear off. If you didn't hear that last sentence, go read it again. The transition to increased apparent wind and milking it down is critical for performance. Those who have it, have more wind, boatspeed, and sail a lower angle than those who don't.

Setting up the boat for gaining this speed is critical. Since the wind is so light, you need to help the jib get out over the water and establish flow. The excellent crews all of us sail with extend their bodies over the leeward side to widen the slot and set the perfect lead position. But skippers also need to contribute to the jib's shape by inducing leeward heel. Your ass has to be inside the tank or maybe just leaning on the rail. It's also critical that your foot is placed on the leeward rail to create extra leeward heel when needed.

Occasionally, you may need to sit up on the windward tank to flatten if you sail too hot or get a header puff, but generally you are transitioning weight from your lower back to your leeward foot.

On jib trim, I'm pretty convinced for any given condition there is a "sweet spot," and I'm careful to give my crew feedback on where that is. Its pretty eased out; to do a good job steering these hot angles you need a jib and telltale set that is active and lively. Just like in any boat, the crew's feedback on

pressure is essential. There are a million different ways to say it, some use numbers, some say "better than before," some just say "not so good." It doesn't matter, just settle on a dialogue and keep it happy and flowing.

I usually start the leg with a nice ease and rounding, and know immediately if I'm gybing or going straight. The priority for me to is build apparent wind right away and to get the two of us positioned for the long-haul boatspeed. You can get really caught up in the boat-to-boat combat early in the leg, but I don't worry too much about trailing boats diving low of me. I know if I generate apparent early and work it down, I'll be fine.

Once you get going and comfortable, the tactical game is the focus. You are focusing on two things: what the boats directly ahead of you are experiencing, and what the boats 5 to 15 boatlengths back are doing. You are also being incredibly attentive to your jib telltales and your crew's jib-pressure info. If the boats ahead start to sail higher than you, expect your telltales to droop (indicating less velocity or a lift). This combination is a clear signal to gybe out. You will experience a good angle on the new tack; your telltales just told you so.

When I'm sailing in the starboard parade and see boats 10 boatlengths back gaining in puff, and sailing lower, I'm actually viewing that as an opportunity to gybe out of the line up. After I gybe, I'll get the puff before the leaders and lead them into it (they will gybe too), generating my apparent wind earlier and sailing down and hopefully over them.

Making the first move on the first puff is critical for confidence and staying in phase with the shifts. Remember, you are being fairly fearless about sailing hot angles, so sailing a shift backwards can turn into a huge loss. You don't want to get caught off guard, watching the fleet gybe away in a puff shift while you have to hold on for a clean lane.

Once that first explosion of gybes commences, you are a little more on your own to establish a good read on angle sailed and reading the wind direction on the jib. Sometimes I get so amped up I want to keep gybing on super-small shifts, but have to tell myself to show restraint and let the boat perform. When I get nervous I just keep listening to that sweet voice "pressure's good." I want to hear that all day.

Continued on page 4



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Notes from the president

The 2003 sailing season is just about in the books. What a great year it's been for the V15 Class. We have had over 280 boats racing in 15 grand-prix events. And, there are still a few more left on the schedule. The Northeast still seems to be drawing the most boats to their events. However, The West Coast, Chicago, and Midatlantic regions are showing a huge surge in new class memberships. I credit the local fleet captains for spreading the word and growing the class.

Congratulations to Mike Funsch and Terence McAndrews for their closely contested victory at the National Championships. Jay Lurie and his team did a stellar job with the entire event. Seven races for 51 boats can't be easy. Nevertheless, CPYC made it happen. Even in the aftermath of Hurricane Isabelle. I have had a few bids from Yacht Clubs around the country to host the Nationals in 2004. The board should be meeting about this very soon, and we'll let you know.

By the time this newsletter finds you, the grand-prix schedule will be complete and we will have a new points champi-

on. The top ten sailors have really earned their positions by spanning the nation and sailing as many events as possible. Great Job, Guys!

As we get deeper into the fall and winter approaches, the sailing only gets better. So grab a buddy and get out sailing. See you at the Midwinters!

—Bill Wiggins, Vanguard 15 Class President, Sail # 1299

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Remote repair of a sprung cockpit grabrail

I have been sailing with one semisprung grabrail fastener since I acquired my boat two Hinmans ago. I have had a good long time to think about how to repair it. When it and a second, forward fastener finally gave way, I could no longer put off the repair.

The first fastener to fail was nearest to where the hiking strap bungees tie in, so it had been grinding on the fiberglass pretty well. There was nothing left for the nylon backer to grip anymore. I decided to install a mahogany backing block, but I did not want to cut the access plates that others have suggested. I wanted a seamless repair that did not violate the integrity of the cockpit seat.

I chose the laparotomy route, working from a tiny incision in the transom and using the existing aft-deck inspection plate. Here's how:

Materials and tools required:

- Latex gloves, Long-sleeve shirt, sections of newspaper or dropcloth
- 1½" square blocks of ¾" mahogany or teak (one for each fastener repair)
- Thin nylon twine
- A cigarette lighter
- 3" of coathanger wire or a finishing nail
- A good strong magnet, smaller than a golfball
- 8' piece of ½" quarter-round molding
- A ¾" speed drill bit—new and sharp—the kind with tiplets that cut the perimeter first
- A ⅛" drill bit
- A power or hand drill, screwdriver, and pliers
- Masking tape, preferably 2" blue
- Plastic electrical tape
- 24" of ½" fiber-reinforced packaging tape
- West System epoxy, not much, some of those little pouch packs will do
- Epoxy thickening agent: glass fiber or a lock of your hair, chopped fine
- 4 pieces of fiberglass cloth, about 2" square

1. The process is to feed a separate length of twine through each grabrail screw hole and fish it back to the aft deck inspection plate where the wood blocks can be tied on and pulled forward to the repair sites.

2. Drill a ⅛-inch hole through the center of each wood block. Lay the molding (the probe) along the seat with one end even with the first repair site. Mark the probe at the transom with the blue tape. Repeat with the probe end even with the next repair site. These bold marks will help you later when fishing for the twine.

3. Remove all of the grabrail screws, not just the ones that are to be refastened. Tape them to the deck nearby for reuse.

4. Remove and discard the offending nylon backers, but leave the good ones in place.

5. Clean the seat and the grabrail.

6. Drill a ¾-inch-diameter access hole in the transom, 2" inside and above the turn of the bilge on the side of the boat to be repaired.

7. Insert the probe through the transom incision, and, while holding the end in the center of the aft-deck inspection port, mark the probe with more tape right at the transom incision.

8. Securely attach the magnet to the end of the probe, inside the aft deck, using fiber-reinforced packaging tape. Use plenty—you don't want the magnet to fall off deep in the boat. Set the probe down, clear of the inspection port.

9. Put tension on the nylon line with both hands, and (using your third hand) burn through it a couple of inches from the bitter end. Discard the short bit. Do not cut the twine first, just burn through it. You want a long, tapered, stiff end on the twine.

10. Tape the bit of coat hanger wire securely but trimly to the end of the twine, leaving much of the steel exposed. Feed both through the aft-most repair site first, and, using the magnet probe with the handy measured mark, fish the wire and twine aft to the inspection port. Pull the twine out two feet or more and tape it securely to the deck near the port, leaving two feet of loose end.

11. Keep track of which twine is which, where they come out at the aft deck. The twines are held in tension and kept track of so that pulling one block forward does not tangle up the other twines.

12. Remove the wire from the twine.

13. Go back to the twine entry point, put tension on it, and tape it securely to the seat.

14. Burn through the twine again 4 feet from where it is taped down.

15. Repeat attaching and fishing the wire and twine for each repair, progressing from the aft-most repair forward.

16. Feed the tapered and stiff aft end of each length of twine through a wooden block and tie a massive stopper knot.

17. Now prepare the epoxy and thickener.

18. Generously butter the contact surface of the forward-most block with prepared epoxy. Also lightly butter the end grain of the wood block. Did I mention the dropcloth? Carefully place the block butter-side-up inside the hull, so you can pretend that none of the epoxy will scrape off on its journey forward.

19. Pull the block forward to the repair site and tightly tie off the twine to the hiking straps to keep the block in place.

20. Repeat with the next twine.

21. When finished, remove the magnet from the probe and remove the probe.

22. Prepregnate two squares of fiberglass cloth, layer them at 45-degree angles, and place them over the inside of the transom incision.

23. When the epoxy is cured, snip off and discard all the twine.

24. If the caulking sealant is beat up, remove it and put a little square of electrical tape over each hole to seal it.

25. Reattach the grabrail, using the original screws.

26. Dress the incision hole and place your favorite rock-band sticker over it.

If you are happy with the results, repeat on the other side of boat.



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Sailing a winning light-air downwind leg, continued from page 1

But at the same time, trust your instinct when the telltales droop. At last year's Midwinters, I lacked confidence downwind, and kept telling Meg stuff like "I'm thinking we should gybe but I'm not sure." She got tired of it and just said "I'm down here trimming the jib, and you've been right every time. Just start doing it." Hey, you can always gybe back if you were wrong.

The other difficult transition is when you come out of a gybe either too low or too hot and have to make a smooth but smart transition into VMG mode. I'm especially guilty of sometimes coming out too hot, and getting a little overcooked on boatspeed. You have to know when apparent is achieved, and slide the bow down with a smooth flatten. Realize that all that tasty pressure is going to disappear, so be ready to shift

into proper trim mode as it's happening.

Gybing efficiently is essential, and is worthy of a separate story. I will say it's necessary to have the board down all the way for gybing when it's this light.

Running in 3 to 6 knots is not that much fun in most boats. But if you harness the extra apparent wind that the V15 creates and knit together a few sweet gybes on puffs and shifts, you'll be handsomely rewarded. There is nothing like going twice as fast and low as your competitors!

Practice your gybing, generate apparent wind, listen to feedback on pressure, watch your telltales, and analyze your competition's angles ahead and behind. Beat the fleet on anticipation, and have confidence in what you see.

—Luther Carpenter



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Regatta Results

Full results from all events are at www.v15.org

New England Championships

Entries: 43
Races: 10
Boats sank: 1
Inches of rain on Saturday: suffice it to say, it's a good thing we all had boats

Those who came to the 2003 New England Champs were treated to a first-class event, featuring excellent racing in a variety of conditions, a civilized start time, top-notch race committee work, tons of food and beer, and even a band. Saturday's racing featured four races in a dying strong easterly, with big waves early on and torrential downpours in the afternoon. Sunday started out moderate but swiftly developed a wailing northerly, providing full-on planning conditions upwind, and some extremely hairy downwind legs.

Colin Merrick & Amanda Callahan held off a late charge by Sean Doyle & Susan Bonney to take the title. —*Ted Ferrarone*

Buzzards Bay Regatta

The V15 fleet at BBR was one again large and talented. We ran 14 races (actually 23 if you count the 9 split-fleet double starts as 2 each, but each boat scored 14 races with one drop). Dave Siegal and Meghan Boardman sailed a great series to win with 47 points. Chris Ashley and Allison Berenback were second with 72. Sixty-four boats sailed the event. Weather was all over the map, with breeze ranging from 6 to 15 knots, from generally the same direction but with significant shifts rolling through regularly. We had fog, rain, just plain grey, and some sunshine.

The first 9 races were run using a round-robin split-fleet format and line starts. This allowed the RC to keep the legs well under a half mile, with tight action the whole way around the course. The remaining 5 races were run with gate starts and the full fleet. Generous use of the black flag kept line-start mayhem to a minimum.

National Championships

Mike Funsch and Terence McAndrews won the 2003 V15 Nationals hosted by Cedar Point Yacht Club in Westport, CT. After leaving his stern plug out on Sunday morning, Mike Funsch made ample use of an early on-the-water postponement to bail out his Vanguard. At times using his shirt as a sponge, he had the boat dry enough just as the wind filled in. Perhaps this little diversion kept him from worrying about preserving his slim lead. And slim it was, after seven races with one throwout Funsch/McAndrews were tied with Anthony Kotoun and Rich Bell. Funsch narrowly won the tie-breaker with both teams posting remarkably consistent finishes. Just one point back was Chris Ashley sailing with Allison Berenback. Fourth place went to Colin Merrick and Amanda Callahan, while fifth place and top master went to Pedro Lorson, sailing with his sister Mimi Berry. Pedro also won the raffle for the V15 bottom cover donated by North Sails. Top junior and top Cedar Point finisher in eleventh place were Ian and Madeline Gill. The top women's team was class officer Gaelen Phylfe and Emily Kalkstein. Funsch joins his brother Kevin (a two-time National Champion) at the top of the heap.

Results and many photos are posted on the CPYC Web site: www.cedarpointyc.org. —*Jay Lurie, Event Chair*

I would like to thank the following people for their efforts in providing excellent RC help throughout the weekend: Henry Siegal, Joe Naumann, Chris and Jen Petron, Charlie Siegal, Robin Rheume, Bill and Linda Kirkpatrick (my parents), Katie Hewson, Amy Larkin and Bob Kimball. Scott Lindblom, Rich Higgins and Peter Hughes from the BBR committee all helped to make running the event a relatively manageable task. These people all did whatever was asked and more all weekend and without them there would have been no racing.

Results are at www.buzzardsbayregatta.com

—*Dave Kirkpatrick*

2003 Grand-prix standings as of 10/1/03

1	Chris Ashley	478	25	Larry Ehrhardt	166	48	Roger Mays	108	74	Marthew Sessions	87
2	Brian Zimmerman	446	26	Bill Wiggins	162	49	Peter Bernhardt	104	75	Stu McNay	85
3	Mel Levy	380	27	Brian Bissell	161	50	Bobby Storck	103	76	Bryan Prior	85
4	Peter Horsch	366	27	Ben Marden	159	51	Craig Beardsley	103	77	Chris Palmieri	84
5	John Stork	335	28	Chad Wilson	159	52	Dave Siegal	100	78	Andy Buckingham	84
6	Colin Merrick	291	29	Carl Horrocks	155	53	Nick Adamson	100	79	Greg Tew	83
7	Augi Hernandez	271	30	Ian Burman	153	54	Brad Funk	100	80	Danny Markham	83
8	Eric Hanson	250	31	Wulf Focke	151	55	Kenny Wolfe	100	81	Scott Sellers	83
9	Sean Doyle	243	32	Jay Rhame	149	56	Mike Funsch	100	82	Bill Ward	83
10	John Pearce	237	33	David McBrier	143	57	Andy Carmada	100	83	John Baxter	82
11	Tom Kent	229	34	Charlie Enright	139	58	Anthony Kotoun	98	84	Sara Buckley	81
12	Dan Lawrence	219	35	Stephen Katz	139	59	Adam Lowry	96	85	Kryisia Pohl	81
13	Colin Robertson	218	36	Jason Carroll	138	60	Peter Levesque	95	86	Joel Hanneman	80
14	Jim Walker	200	37	Ian Gill	136	61	John Mollicone	95	87	Brent Creelman	80
15	Matt Allen	188	38	Brian Kazcor	135	62	RJ Wolney	94	88	Ken Ward	80
16	John Kolius	182	39	Pete Madison	125	63	Ryan Costello	93	89	Henry Maxwell	79
17	Mike Buckley	182	40	Edward DuMoulin	124	64	Pedro Lorson	92	90	Ed Lalanne	78
18	Luther Carpenter	181	41	Shawn Bennett	123	65	Ryan Glaze	92	91	Ken Turnbull	78
19	Brent Marsden	176	42	Jeff Bonanni	121	66	Will Graves	91	92	Polly Gibbons-Neff	78
20	Peter Deming	174	43	Mark Atkinson	117	67	Patrick Donegan	91	93	Sam Rogers	76
21	Brendan Shattuck	173	44	Brian Hutchenson	117	68	Ted Ferrarone	91	94	Matt Shirilla	75
22	Martin Johnsson	173	45	Nate Titcomb	116	69	Michael Kalin	91	95	Ben Gest	75
23	Alon Finkelstein	171	46	Gaelen Phylfe	112	70	Douglas Lynn	90	96	Paul Taylor	74
24	Jesse Willis	168	47	Ed Norton	111	71	Geoff Becker	90	97	Tom Purdy	74
						72	Patrick Dietz	89	98	Thomas Allison	74
						73	Alex Ascencious	88	99	Andrew Buttner	73

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