

Competitive X-99 Boathandling

Chalk Talk Notes:

Introduction to Team Responsibilities

The Driver

- Helm
- Focuses on boat speed related issues
- Eases the mainsheet on set
- Communicate needs for weight-trim and sailtrim

A note on styles:

It's the driver's job to guide the boat through the race, but it's not enough to simply hold the tiller or wheel and push it back and forth. The driver has to be good at communicating what he or she needs from the crew to accomplish what is necessary in the helm. Open and honest dialogue is the only way to excel here. Many people can hold the tiller, but few can truly engage the crew to assist in the process of driving the boat.

The Main Trimmer

- Main sheet
- Traveler
- Running backstays
- Assists with the spinnaker halyard on set

A note on styles:

Many prefer to place the tactician in the Main Trimming role because of the proximity to the driver. That way the two can communicate easily. This team member has to develop a feel for the boat's speed and ability to point so that he or she can make judgments that compliment or stay a step ahead of the driver in terms of understanding when the boat should be in acceleration, fine-tune or point mode on the racecourse.

The Headsail Trimmers

- Jib/genoa sheets
- Spinnaker sheets
- Assists with running-backs and
- Check-stays
- Twing lines for spinnaker sheets
- Calls out wind, waves and overall fleet info

A note on styles:

Some prefer to place the tactician in the Secondary Trimmer role because of the freedom this role has to look around off the boat on the upwind leg. These trimmers often have to understand what the boat feels like to drive in helping the driver sail the optimal downwind course with communication about pressure on the sheet. Our demonstrations use a primary/secondary trimmer arrangement while some teams dedicate trimmers to respective sides. The choice of how to separate the roles is often based in juggling the best attributes of those resources. For instance, one team may use the most experienced member as the secondary trimmer so that he can coach the other trimmers and driver while monitoring fleet situations tactically. Another team may choose the Primary trimmer as the most experienced trimmer to bring the secondary up to speed as a new crewmember. This would require the Main trimmer to be the tactician, though, because the primary trimmer would be very occupied.

The Pit (Piano man)

- Adjusts halyards
- Boom vang (kicking strap)
- Outhaul
- Topping lift
- Foreguy
- Helps the spinnaker out of the bag on the set

- **Gathers the spinnaker on the douse**
- **Aggressively balances the boat**
- **Organizes lines whenever possible**

A note on styles:

The Pit often contributes heavily to the organization of the team by eyeing and fixing problems before they happen. Teams without a figure in this role who has a strong feeling for prevention often find themselves with knotted halyards or sheets and the critical problems that result from that. Frequently the difference between the winning losing boats is depth of knowledge and prevention into roles such as this rather than only the helmsman and tactician.

The Bowman

- **Aggressively balances the boat**
- **Cunningham**
- **Spinnaker pole**
- **Jumping the spinnaker halyard**
- **Keeps an eye on the check-stays**
- **Helps call out wind and waves**

A note on styles:

This role requires rigid discipline in manipulating the spinnaker pole, and he or she has to have a strong eye for organization and a specific methodology to maintain consistency and organization. In addition, he or she has to have a strong fundamental grasp of boathandling from a driver's perspective to assist in gear shifting and anticipating the snags that can develop at mark roundings. Most exceptional bowmen have a "not on my shift" attitude about problems motivating them to push the team to make crucial decisions when they see necessary for maintaining top performance.