

Competitive X-99 Boathandling

Chalk Talk Notes: Tacking Techniques

The Driver

The best drivers execute the turn in three phases that account for the boat's priorities at each stage. The guideline most often used to describe the turn is "slow-fast-slow". This allows for the boat to retain as much speed as possible into the tack and accelerate well out of the tack.

Procedure:

1. Drives, keeping his or her body stable
2. Shifts weight with the crew

A note on styles:

Mads Christensen has a special technique for standing during the tack so that he can get a good view over the crew during the tack. He executes this style well because he has a good feel for the balance of the boat and the way that he can use the helm to keep the boat balanced when moving, but even Mads finds it difficult to stand in some conditions.

The Main Trimmer

Procedure:

1. Trims the main in to help turn the boat
2. Trims the traveler across to the new side
3. Eases the old running backstay
4. Trims the new running backstay on
5. Shifts weight with the crew
6. Eases main to accelerate on the new tack

A note on styles:

The Main Trimmer has to have a strong grasp of boat speed and the feel of the boat to understand when shifting gears between accelerate, fine-tune and point modes is necessary to allow the driver to focus more on driving.

The Headsail Trimmers

Procedure:

- 1. Primary trimmer steps into the boat before the turn to ready the winch**
- 2. Primary hands sheet off to the Secondary to release**
- 3. Primary readies the new winch**
- 4. Cueing off the turn of the boat and the break of the sail, the secondary trimmer releases**
- 5. Primary trimmer trims the new sheet on while Secondary releases**
- 6. Both trimmers adjust weight for speed**
- 7. Primary trimmer reloads the leeward running back to prepare for the next tack**

A note on styles:

The Headsail Trimmers can get away with very little winching with good technique and an eye for when to release the sail. This also means methodically pulling the slack out of the lazy sheet before the tack and taking extra wraps off the working winch. To perfect this routine, the team of trimmers need to develop the release of the genoa to suit the conditions. Light air may require the entire genoa to “backwind” to aid in turning the bow through the wind while heavy air may damage the genoa if the spreader pokes into it too hard so very little backwind is desired before the release.

The Pit

Procedure:

- 1. Focuses on balancing the boat**
- 2. Keeping an eye on fleet situations while the Tactician is occupied**
- 3. Helps the genoa around**
- 4. Sprints for the new rail across the cabin-top**

A note on styles:

Sometimes they say it takes an entire team to tack the genoa properly on a boat, and this is certainly the case on the X-99. The Pit can aid in trimming the new genoa sheet in when sailing in light air or give a good overhaul to the released sheet when crossing the cabin top in breezier conditions to be sure the sail speeds around the rig clean.

The Bowman

Procedure:

- 1. Also focuses on balancing the boat**
- 2. Watches for any problems inside the boat that can be fixed in the sprint to the new rail**
- 3. Crosses under the boom**
- 4. May need to “duck-dive” the genoa crossing in front of the mast when racing with a 7-person team**

A note on styles:

The Bowman is in a crucial position to spot problems inside the boat, and a tack may be the only opportunity off the rail to quickly fix them. His or her attention to the organization of lines in the boat can prevent serious mistakes at the corners. Further, the Bowman may need to remain flexible to crossing in front of the mast when racing with seven and under the boom when racing with six.