

## ADULT SAILING CLASS

### INTRODUCTION TO SAILING/OVERVIEW\*

**WHAT MAKES A SAILBOAT GO?** It's all about pressure. The sail can be considered the motor, and the pressure on the sail from the wind can be considered the fuel. The amount of pressure is controlled by controlling the angle of the sail to the wind. The angle is controlled either by a line attached to the sail or by turning the boat. Too little pressure on the sail (luffing) and the boat doesn't go. Too much pressure (when sailing across the wind) and the boat doesn't go as fast, and may even capsize. The "right" pressure depends on the wind quadrant you are sailing in.

**CROSSWIND QUADRANTS:** Most of the time, you are sailing across the wind in a straight line to a destination you can reach (Reaching), using the PULL principle. PULL pressure is obtained by keeping the sail on the verge of luffing, using the sheet (the line attached to the sail - adjust the sail toward the same side as the turbulent telltale).

**UPWIND QUADRANT:** When you are trying to go upwind, you are doing a special close reach (Close Hauled) again using the PULL principle. The sail should stay hauled in as close as you can get it, and only let out if necessary to keep the boat from capsizing. Keep the sail on the verge of luffing (PULL pressure), but using the tiller to control the pressure instead of the mainsheet (tiller toward turbulent telltale). To get to an upwind destination, sail on one edge of the quadrant until the other edge of the quadrant points to your destination (90 degree turns, through the quadrant).

**DOWNWIND QUADRANT:** When going in the same direction as the wind (Running), using PUSH pressure. You want maximum pressure on the sail -- let the sail out so that it is square to the wind.

**STEERING:** Sailboats slow down when turned. Catamarans slow down a lot when turned. Turning also changes the pressure on the sail – steer the boat in a straight line (most of the time).

#### **USEFUL MAXIMS**

When in Doubt, Let it Out (the sail, until it luffs, then trim back in just enough to stop it from luffing). Or, going Close-Hauled: When in Doubt, Make it Luff (steer closer to the wind until the sail luffs, then back just enough to eliminate the luff).

Tiller Toward Trouble - move the tiller toward the danger (an approaching boat, piling, or the water) in order to turn the boat away from such trouble.

Tiller Toward Turbulence (Close Hauled) - if the near (windward) side tell-tale is turbulent, pull the tiller to that side of the boat (windward) to change the angle of the boat (and thus the sail) so the wind flows smoothly across that side. If the far side tell-tale is turbulent, push the tiller to that side.

Sail Toward Turbulence (Reaching) - if the near (windward) side tell-tale is turbulent, trim the sail in tighter. If the far side tell-tale is turbulent, let the sail out, until the turbulence goes away.

**KNOTS:** There are only two knots you have to know to rig our Hobies: 1) Cleat Hitch (vertical or halyard) and 2) Double Overhand (stopper knot). But there are several others that all sailors should know: 3) Bowline, 4) Rolling Hitch (tautline hitch), 5) Clove Hitch, 6) Square Knot, and 7) Slip Knot. [www.animated-knots.com](http://www.animated-knots.com) is a great resource for learning these and many others knots.

\* Introduction by Steve Collins. Most of the handout material is from North American Hobie Class Association (NAHCA) and "Start Sailing Right", a US Sailing publication. Glossary is from NAHCA, modified by Steve Collins.