

Adaptive Sports Connection Sailing Program

05.2019

ADAPTIVE SPORTS CONNECTION GLOSSARY OF COMMON SAILING TERMS

Underlined words or terms are ones you are likely to use or hear most frequently.

A

ASC: An acronym used for expediency for the Adaptive Sports Connection.

Abeam: Off to the side of a vessel at right angles to the boat's centerline (mast-abeam, right angle to the centerline of the boat at the mast). Abeam can affect right-of way rules.

Aboard: On or in the boat.

Anchor: A device used to hold a boat to the sea bottom.

Aft: At, near, or towards the stern.

Apparent Wind: The wind that flows over a moving boat, which is a result of the "true wind" and the movement of the boat.

Astern: Behind the boat.

B

Backstay: Aft support of mast, usually a wire leading from the mast to the stern, part of the standing rigging.

Backwind: Pushing out a sail so that the wind fills it from the opposite side. Sometimes used to slow a boat (or even back up) or turn the bow away from the wind when in irons.

Bailer: A device used to remove water from the boat (anything from a simple hand scoop to built-in self/auto bailers)

Barber haulers: Sheet leads set closer to the beam of the hull than normal sheet leads.

Barrel knot: A knot that is used as a stopper knot with several twists/loops for size and grip ability.

Batten: Thin slats usually fiberglass or wood that are inserted at the leech of the sail for added support of the roach (along the leech) on a sail.

Beam: Maximum width of a boat; beam reach – sailing at approximately 90 degrees to the wind with the wind coming from abeam and the sails eased about half way.

Beat: Advance to windward on alternate tacks; beating – to sail to windward, close-hauled, tacking to make way to windward.

Bight/Bight Knot: A knot that is formed in slack/curved section of a line/sheet/rope (bight) without access to the ends.

Bilge: The lowest part of a boat where the bottom/sides meet at the keel.

Block: A pulley/sheave that is encased in its own housing. A block can help to improve mechanical advantage when pulling on a line. It is important to match the line size to the block.

Bolt rope: Sewn around luff and foot of sails to give added strength to sail where it attaches to mast or boom.

Boom: Horizontal spar that supports the foot (bottom) of the sail. Named for the sound it makes when it hits someone's head.

Boom Vang: A line or device that runs from the boom to the mast. The vang helps keep the boom down and tighten the leech of the sail.

Bow: The forward part/front end of a boat.

Bow Line: Also known as a "Painter". The bow line is used to tie the bow/front boat to the dock or other object.

Bowline (knot): May be the most important knot in sailing. A non-slip knot that is easy to undo even after fully loaded.

Broad Reach: Sailing with the wind coming over the rear side corner/quarter of the boat (when the bow is approximately 120-160 degrees from the source of the wind).

By-the-lee: Running with the wind on the same side as the boom (increases the possibility of an accidental jibe).

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C

Camber: The bulge/pocket in a sail's shape to help the aerodynamics of the sail.

Capsize: A boat turned over on its side. Note, when completely upside down it is called "turtled" (can follow a capsize).

Cast off: To untie a line and let it go, or remove a line from a cleat and let it go.

Catamaran: A boat with two parallel hulls.

Centerboard: A thin, wide blade going down through the bottom of the hull in the center of the boat. This blade helps to keep the boat from going sideways in the water. It serves the same purpose as a leeboard or a dagger board.

Center of Effort: Center of sail area that is the focal point of the forces generated by the sail area.

Center of Resistance (Center of Lateral Resistance): Center of resistance of the underwater hull profile.

Cleat: A fitting where a line can be secured. Note, there are many styles of cleats (cam, clam, etc.)

Clew: The aft lower corner of the sail is the clew. It is where the foot and the leech of the sail meet.

Close-hauled: Sailing as close to the source of the wind as possible.

Close reach: Sailing with the wind forward of the beam (with the bow approximately 60 degrees from the wind).

Clave Hitch: Similar to two half hitch knots with line crossing over on top (sometimes called a Double Hitch).

Come about: An order or action to turn the sailboat through the source of the wind (tack) to change which side the wind is coming over.

Course: The direction a boat is steered to reach a destination; or the compass heading; or the angle a boat is sailing relative to the wind.

Crew: The people who participate in helping the helmsperson/skipper sail a boat.

Cockpit: Open part of boat.

Cuddy: A small enclosed area/cabin, usually in the forward part of the boat.

Cunningham: A control line used to tension the forward edge (luff) of a sail (similar to a downhaul).

D

Dagger Board: A foil raised and lowered vertically used to reduce leeway (sideways slippage), different from centerboard which is pivoted instead of raised straight up and down.

Diamonds: Lateral supports for the mast using wires and rigid members but not attached to the shrouds.

Dinghy: An open boat, or one partially decked over without a cabin.

Dolly: A lightweight trailer that is used to move boats about (often by hand and is not road-worthy).

Downhaul: A line used to pull the boom down (or other sail control line/sheet/spar).

E

Ease/Ease-Off: To ease/slack a line or sail, i.e. To "sheet" out/ease a sheet out. Or, to turn/bear away slightly from the source of the wind (fall-off but very slightly).

Eye of the Wind: The source direction of the wind. Sometimes may point/head the boat into the eye of the wind for various reasons.

F

Fall off: Turn the bow away from the source of the wind.

Fairlead: Block or fitting used to change the direction of a running line such a jib sheet.

Feather/Feathering: Sailing upwind so close to the wind that the forward edge of the sail is stalling or luffing, slightly thus reducing the power generated by the sail and the angle of heel without stalling completely (also pinching).

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Fenders: Cushions to reduce the chafe between a boat and the dock or other boats

Fiberglass: Many boats are made of fiberglass. It is a woven material impregnated with a liquid resin that is very stiff when the resin hardens.

Figure 8 knot: A knot in the shape of an "8". Sometimes used near the end of a line to prevent it from passing through a fairlead, eye, or block.

Flake a sail: Lay a sail in gentle back and forth folds so as to not crease or deteriorate a sail.

Fleet: For racing purposes, sailors are grouped in fleets according to sailboat class (model) or experience.

Foot: The bottom edge of the sail between the tack (front corner) and the clew (back corner).

Fore: Front, or in front of. A foresail is the front sail. The foredeck is the front deck.

Forestay: Forward support of mast, usually wire lead from bow to mast, part of the standing rigging.

Furl: Roll or fold up and secure neatly. For example, "Furl the mainsail" would be to lay it gently in back and forth folds over the boom then secure it so it will both be out of the way and also not get damaged.

G

Give Way: The boat which must alter course to avoid another boat (the burdened boat under right-of-way rules).

Gooseneck: A hinged fitting that connects the boom to the mast (that type of fitting can sometimes be found elsewhere)

Grommet: A metal ring in a sail that allows lines to be connected through or to the sail. Both the clew and the tack have grommets (sometimes used for reefing points).

Gudgeon: A "U" shaped fitting with a hole/pocket on the back of a boat used to connect the rudder to the hull.

Gunwale: The upper edge of a boat's side, where it meets the deck.

Gust: A sudden, brief increase in speed of the wind when the peak wind speed reaches at least 16 knots and the variation in wind speed between the peaks and lulls is at least 9 knots. The duration of a gust is usually less than 20 seconds (parameters according to the US weather service). See "Puffs" for less significant changes in wind speed.

Guy: A guy is a line attached to and intended to control the end of a spar on a sailboat. On sailboats with a symmetric spinnaker, the spinnaker pole is the spar most commonly controlled by one or more guys.

H

Halyard(s): Lines attached to the head of a sail and used to hoist sails up the mast (jib halyard, mainsail halyard, etc.).

Head: The top of the sail (also a term for a toilet on a boat equipped with one).

Headboard: The fitting at the head of a sail with a hole in to receive the halyard.

Header: A wind direction change/shift that brings the source direction of the wind closer to the bow. Often called a "Knock" when sailing close-hauled where one then has to change direction (fall off) to maintain the same angle to the relative wind.

Heading: The direction the boat is travelling at any given moment.

Headstay: the foremost stay on a sailboat. A jib is set on the headstay. Also called a forestay.

Head Up: Turn the bow of the boat toward the wind.

Heel: To lean/tilt a boat over, generally away from the wind. An angle where the boat is not level/flat side to side.

Helm: 1) the tiller; 2) the tendency of a boat to turn toward the wind (weather helm/windward helm) or away from the wind (lee helm/leeward helm)

Helmsperson: The person who steers a boat (usually the skipper)

High Side: The side of the boat where the wind is coming from. When asked to move to the high side one should move to the side of the boat where the wind is coming from regardless if that side is physical higher or lower.

Hike/Hiking Out: The action of leaning/hanging over the side of the boat in order to stabilize/keep the boat more level.

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Hiking Strap(s): A strap, usually stiff, sometimes padded for comfort, attached to the bottom of the cockpit under which a sailor places their feet in order to hold the sailor in the boat while hiking out.

Hull: The actual body of the boat.

I

In irons: A boat pointed into the eye of the wind with sails luffing and no maneuverability.

Inspection Port: A hole in the hull of the boat that allows reaching inside the hull to sponge out water or make repairs.

J

Jib: The front sail on boats with two or more sails. It is small and triangular in shape.

Jib Sheet: The line(s) used to control the trim of the jib.

Jibe (Gybe): Turning the boat away from the wind so the stern passes through the wind and the sail(s) switches sides.

K

Knee: A brace/structural member (usually strengthening two surfaces at an angle to each other).

Knock: A change of wind direction that forces the boat to fall of the previous course in order to maintain the same angle to the wind (most affected when sailing close hauled)

L

Layline: A layline is the imaginary line extending from the upwind objective at the highest possible angle that the boat can sail to just clear a windward mark/objective (as in "Lay the mark").

Lee: The area sheltered from the wind, downwind; leeward (pronounced loo-ward) – the direction away from the wind, the side of the boat opposite the windward side.

Leech (sometimes spelled Leach): The aft edge of the sail. The leech connects the head and the clew of the sail.

Life jacket: A device that provides flotation when sailors are in the water. A Coast Guard approved Life Jacket/Personal Flotation Device (PFD) must be worn at all times when on or near the water at the Adaptive Sports Connection.

Lift: 1) A (usually brief) change in the wind direction that allows one to turn higher than the direction one was sailing just before a lift. 2) The force that drives a sail.

Line(s): The general term for rope on a boat. "Lines", "sheets", and other names are used to differentiate use/function.

Low Side: The side of the boat away from where the wind is coming from. When asked to move to the low side one should move to the side of the boat away from where the wind is coming from regardless if that side is physical higher or lower.

Luff: The forward edge of the sail between the tack and the head of the sail (nearest the mast for a mainsail).

Luffing: 1) when a sail is waving back and forth as the sail is "eased" out too much or the boat is heading into the wind, the sail is said to be luffing, like a flag flying in the breeze. 2) when the boat turns its bow toward the wind the boat is said to be luffing when its sails are luffing/fluttering.

Lull: A brief (not sustained) lessening or deadening of wind speed/strength.

M

Mainsheet: The line attached to the boom that controls the Mainsail in and out.

Mast: The vertical spar that supports the sail.

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Mast step: The fitting or place where the base of the mast attaches to the boat.

Mono hull: A boat with one hull (as opposed to a catamaran or trimaran)

O

One-design: Any class of boat that has specific requirements for size and shape of hulls, sails and equipment to keep them equal (i.e. Oday DaySailer, Interlake, Laser, Thistle, Lido 14)

Outhaul: A line attached to the clew of the mainsail and used to stretch the foot of the sail out along the boom. The outhaul helps to control the "depth" (pocket) of the sail.

P

Paddle: A device used to move the boat in case of emergency or lack of wind.

Pinch: Sailing higher to the wind than the sails can do efficiently. Sometimes with the sails luffing as a result.

Pintle(s): The pins on a removable rudder that are inserted into gudgeons (which has a hole to receive the pintle(s) on the transom of the boat to connect the rudder to the hull and allow the rudder to swing.

Planing: When a boat accelerates enough to break loose from its bow wave and ride on top of the water.

Port: Refers to the left side of the boat when facing the bow as well as to which tack a boat is on. If a boat is on "port tack" the wind is coming from over the left side of the boat.

Puff: A noticeable but short-term increase in wind speed/strength ("Puffs" are for increases that do not qualify for, and are less significant than, "Gusts" (see definition of gust).

R

Rake: The fore to aft angle of the mast

Ratchet Block: These are special blocks that rotate in only one direction. They grip the line passing through the ratchet block, relieving some of the "pull" on that line.

Reach: Sail with the wind over the side. i.e. A Beam reach is the wind approx. 90 degrees from the bow, broad reach 130-170 degrees from the bow, or close reach with the wind 55-80 from the bow.

Ready about: A command for the crew to prepare for an imminent "Tack" or "Come About" command/maneuver.

Reef/Reefing: Decreasing the height/size/power of a sail (usually the mainsail) often using reefing points/provisions built into a sail or rigging.

Rigging: All of the lines, wires, cables, sheets, and ropes that support, adjust, and control the mast, spars, and sails.

Right of Way: The rules of the road/water as to which boat has right-of-way (stand-on) and which does not (give way).

Roach: The roach is the area of the sail aft of a line between the head and the clew. It provides an increase in sail area. The roach area is supported by battens.

Rudder: The movable, underwater blade on the transom of the boat used for steering.

Run: Sail downwind with the wind aft (over the stern of the boat). A Dead Run is sailing 180 degrees away from the eye/direction of the wind.

S

Sail: The part of the boat's equipment which is usually made from cloth and which is attached to the mast. It is a sailboat's primary means of propulsion.

Sea breeze: Wind from the ocean towards land caused by warm air rising over the land and the cool ocean wind replacing it (On-shore breeze as opposed to an Off-shore breeze).

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Scull/sculling: Using an oar/paddle over the stern of the boat in a back and forth waving motion to propel the boat forward. The term is often used on a sailboat when the rudder is used to propel the boat forward.

Shackle: A U-shaped metal ring with a pin to close the "U". It is used to connect objects together, such as connecting the jib halyard to the head (top) of the jib.

Sheave: A wheel with a groove for a rope to run on (usually found within a block).

Sheet(s): Lines (ropes) on a boat which are used to control the in and out motion of sail (the trim of a sail).

Shrouds: Wires that hold the mast to the sides of the boat and support the power of the sails. Part of the standing rigging. Sometimes referred to as side stays.

Sloop: A one-masted vessel with two or more sails.

Skipper: The person in charge of the boat, usually the person steering the boat.

Spar: A mast, boom, etc.

Spreaders: Rigid members attached to the mast using the shrouds to give lateral strength/support to the mast.

Stand on: To hold course, the privileged boat under right-of-way rules.

Starboard: Refers to the right side of the boat when facing the bow. A boat is on a "starboard tack" when the wind is on its starboard side (coming over the right side of the boat).

Stern: Aft (back) end of a boat.

Stopper knot: A knot near the end of a line to prevent it from passing through a block (often a Figure 8 or barrel knot).

T

Tabernacle: A fitting that allows a mast to more easily be raised (stepped) or lowered by pivoting at the mast base.

Tack: 1) If a boat's bow passes through the eye of the wind, then it is said to be tacking. 2) The direction the boat is sailing (see starboard and port). 3) The lower front corner of the sail where the luff and the foot of the sail meet.

Telltails: Small lengths of lightweight material attached to the sail near the luff or batten pockets of main sail to indicate the airflow over the sail and/or the shrouds to help indicate wind direction.

Thwart: A side-to-side structural member/board at or near the center of a boat perpendicular to the fore to aft centerline of the boat. Sometimes may be part of, or called, a thwart seat.

Tiller: The long piece of wood/material connected at or near the top of the rudder to control the rudder's movement. It changes the boat's direction when moved from side to side.

Tiller Extension: A hinged extension attached to the tiller that allows the skipper to steer the boat while sitting forward or hiking out (when out of reach of the tiller).

Topping lift: To hold a boom or spar up. I.e. used to control the height of a spinnaker pole or to hold the boom up when the mainsail has been dropped.

Transom: The very back edge/surface of the boat is called the transom (usually vertical or near vertical).

Trapeze: A wire attached to the mast that supports the skipper and/or crew when fully outside of the boat (usually feet are on the rails). Note, most boat classes do not allow, or have, trapezes.

Trapeze harness: A harness worn to support the body when hooked into a trapeze.

Trunk: A centerboard housing.

Traveler: A line or track that controls sideways movement of the boom and mainsail.

Trim: 1) Pulling in or "sheeting" in a sail. 2) Fore and aft balance of a boat or 3) Can be used to refer to the adjustment of sails to take the best advantage of the wind.

Trimaran: A boat with three parallel hulls.

True wind: The speed and direction of the wind felt by a stationary object (as opposed to apparent wind).

Turnbuckle: A device used to adjust tension on rigging.

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Turtle, turn turtle: When a vessel is capsized and completely upside down so that its hull is above the water and its mast is submerged.

W

Weather: The wind conditions or towards the wind when saying towards the weather.

Windward: The side/general direction the wind is coming from.

Windward Helm/Weather Helm: The tendency of the boat to want to turn/weathervane towards the wind.

Wing the sails: Running with the wind with the main sail and jib on opposite sides of the boat.

Whisker pole: A pole used to hold a jib type sail out opposite the main to catch more wind on a run.