

ADAPTIVE SPORTS CONNECTION GLOSSARY OF SAILING TERMS FOR SKIPPERS AND CREW

Underlined words and terms are ones that you will likely hear or use most often.

A

ASC: An acronym 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 may 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 combination of the "true wind" and the movement of the boat.

Astern: Behind/beyond the stern of 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 the normal sheet leads.

Barrel knot: A knot that is used as a stopper knot with several twists/loops for size and grip ability so lines don't accidentally pull out of blocks or fairleads.

Battens: Thin slats usually fiberglass or wood that are inserted at the leech of the sail for added stiffness and support of the leech of the sail.

Beam Reach: The point/direction of sailing across the wind about 90 degrees from the wind, with the sails approximately halfway out.

Beat: Advance to windward on alternate tacks; beating – sailing to windward close-hauled on alternating tacks.

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.

Bolt rope: Sewn into/around luff and foot of sails to give added strength to sail where it attaches to mast or boom or holds the sail when fed into a slot in the spar.

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 underside of the boom to the mast. The vang helps keep the boom down and tighten the leech of the sail. Make sure the boom vang is loose before raising the sail, otherwise the sail may not go fully up.

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).

Buoy: A floating device. Usually anchored in place but may be drifting. Usually for navigation/information/mooring.

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

C

Camber: The bulge/pocket in a sails' 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 capsized).

Catamaran: A boat with two hulls.

Centerboard: A thin, wide blade going down through the bottom of the hull in the center of the boat in a **Centerboard Trunk**. This blade helps to keep the boat from going sideways in the water. A centerboard can pivot up and down whereas a daggerboard serves the same purpose but slides up or down in a pocket (does not pivot).

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

Cleat Hitch: The method of securing a line to a horn cleat by taking a turn around the cleat and then passing the line in a figure-eight pattern around the horn of the cleat, with the last loop being an underhand loop.

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).

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

Come About: A command or action to tack (turn the sailboat through the source of the wind) to change which side of the boat the wind is coming over. This is the preferred command at ASC when tacking.

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. Also refers to a prescribed layout to be sailed for a race.

Crew: The person or persons in the boat who trim the jib (and possibly other sails), balance the boat people, keep a lookout for things the helmsperson may not see, and help the helmsperson/skipper.

Cockpit: Open part of boat.

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

Cunningham: A line or mechanism used to tension the luff (forward edge) of a sail. Usually through an eye (called a cringle) along the luff above the tack (see "Tack"). It is different from a downhaul in that a downhaul holds/pulls down a boom (or other spar) and not the sail directly (a downhaul may indirectly pull on a sail).

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 and/or launch/retrieve boats (often by hand and is not road-worthy).

Downhaul: A line used to pull/hold the boom down (or other spar). At ASC, when a boom is able to slide up and down where it attaches to the mast (with a fitting called a gooseneck, see "gooseneck"), the downhaul is sometimes used in place of, and to serve the function of, a cunningham (to tension the luff of the sail). Be sure the downhaul is loose before raising the sail, otherwise a sail may not go up all the way.

E

Ease/Ease Out: To let out a sheet slowly and smoothly to find the optimum setting/trim for a sail.

Eye of the Wind: The source direction of the wind. Sometimes one may point/head the boat into the eye of the wind for various reasons including losing headway or determining the direction of the true wind.

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).

Fenders: Cushions/bumpers used 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 (a stop/stopper knot).

Flake a sail: Lay a sail in gentle back and forth folds so as to not crease/damage a sail, keep it neat and out of the way, and to make it easier to raise the sail at the appropriate time.

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).

Forestay: Forward support of mast that helps to hold the mast upright in the fore and aft direction, usually a wire leading from the bow to the mast (part of the standing rigging).

Furl: Roll or fold up a sail and secure neatly.

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 also 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 (about 18.4 mph) and the variation in wind speed between the peaks and lulls is at least 9 knots (about 10.4 mph). The duration of a gust is usually less than 20 seconds (parameters according to the US weather service). See "Puffs" for smaller changes in wind speed.

Guy: A guy is a line attached to and intended to control the end of a spar on a sailboat (often there is a foreguy and an after-guy on larger sailboats). On sailboats with a symmetric spinnaker, the spinnaker pole is the spar most commonly controlled by one or more guys.

Guy hook: A hook/metal fitting to hold the guy in place. A guy hook is designed to allow the guy to be easily released.

H

Halyard(s): Line/wire attached to the head of a sail used to hoist sails up (jib halyard, main/mainsail halyard, etc.).

"Hard-to-Lee": The helmsman's warning when putting the helm down to tack through the wind. Note: this is not the preferred warning for a tack at ASC but you should be aware of what it means in case you hear it.

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.

Heave To: Heaving to/to heave to/to be hove to) is a way of slowing a sailboat's forward progress, as well as fixing the helm and sail positions so that the boat does not have to be steered. On a sloop, the jib is brought to windward, the mainsail is slightly eased, and the rudder is fixed in an attempt to turn into the wind. Alternatively, tack without freeing the jibsheet. The mainsail should self-tack onto the other side, but the jib is held aback. Finally, the rudder is put the other way, as if trying to tack back again (but unable to do so because the jib is backwinded). Allows a pause/break in sailing.

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 in a small sailboat, and also trims the mainsail)

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 balance the boat.

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

Hull: The body of a boat.

I

In irons: A boat pointed into the eye of the wind (the no-go zone) 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 Hank(s): The fitting(s) along the luff of the jib used to attach the jib to the forestay. (A hank-on jib versus a furling jib)

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

Keel: The bottom-most longitudinal structural element (centerline) on a vessel. On some sailboats, it may have a hydrodynamic and counterbalancing purpose, as well.

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: The back edge of the sail. The leech runs between the head and the clew of the sail.

Leeward: The side or direction away from the wind.

Leeward helm: The tendency of the boat to want to turn away from the source of the wind.

Life jacket: A device that provides flotation for people 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 change in the wind direction (usually brief) that allows one to steer higher (with respect to the wind) than the direction one was sailing just before a lift (most helpful when close-hauled). 2. A force that drives a sail.

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

Low Side: The side of the boat away from where the wind is coming from. Regardless if that side is physically higher/lower

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

Luffing: The fluttering of a sail that is a result of a boat turned too far into the wind and/or a sail let too far out from a trimmed position/setting.

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.

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)

N

No-Go Zone: Roughly a 90-degree area (about 45 degrees either way from the source of the wind) that is too close to the source of the wind to sail in effectively.

O

One-design: Any class of boat that has/meets 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/rigging attached to the clew of the mainsail and used to pull/stretch the foot of the sail out along the boom.

P

Paddle: A device with a handle and blade used to move the boat through water.

PFD: A Personal Flotation Device. A Type IV (throwable) PFD is the common example versus a wearable Life Jacket

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 is fast enough to break loose from its bow wave/displacement 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/port side of the boat.

Puff: A noticeable but short-term increase in wind speed/strength ("Puffs" are for increases in wind speed 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 with the wind approximately 90 degrees from the bow, broad reach 115-150 degrees from the bow, or close reach with the wind 55-75 from the bow.

Ready about: A command for the crew to prepare for an imminent “Come About”, “Tack”, or “Jibe” 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: Rigging is divided into two groups. Standing rigging is wire used to keep the mast standing upright. Running rigging is line used for adjusting the sails (halyards, sheets, cunningham, boom vang, etc.).

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 used for steering the boat (usually at the transom of the boat).

Run: Sailing downwind with the source of 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(s): Sails use the wind to propel the boat. Most sails are triangular.

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).

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 a rudder is used to propel the boat forward.

Shackle: A U-shaped piece of metal with a pin to close the open end of the “U”. It is used to connect objects together, such as connecting a halyard to the head (top) of a sail.

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

Sheet(s): A control line for a sail used to trim a sail in or out to adjust the angle of the sail relative to the wind.

Shrouds: Pieces of standing rigging that holds the mast from falling sideways.

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

Skipper: The person in charge of the boat, usually the person steering the boat (helmsperson) on a small sailboat.

Spar(s): Poles that support the sail(s). Spars include masts (vertical spars), booms (horizontal spars), and other spars such as whisker poles and spinnaker poles.

Spinnaker: A large triangular sail set forward of the mast on a long pole and used when running before/across the wind.

Spinnaker pole: A long pole to hold the tack of the spinnaker to windward. It is controlled by a topping lift and guy(s).

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).

Stays: Pieces of standing rigging that hold the mast from moving forward or backward. The **Forestay** runs from the mast to the bow/front of the boat.

Stern: Back/aft end of a boat/hull.

Stopper knot: A knot usually near the end of a line to prevent it from passing through a block or fairlead (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 when a sailboat changes direction/course, then it is said to be tacking. 2) The direction the boat is sailing relative to the wind (starboard tack/port tack). 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 to indicate the airflow over the sail and/or to the shrouds to help indicate wind direction. There can also be masthead telltales.

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.

Traveler: The mainsheet traveler is a device/system that allows for changing the position where parts of the mainsheet connect to the boat. On a small sailboat, the traveler is typically mounted either in the cockpit or near the stern of the boat. It is often a track/bar with a sliding/rolling car that runs perpendicular to the centerline of the boat. Sometimes it is just made up of lines.

Trunk: The centerboard housing.

Trim: The adjustment of the sails in or out to find the optimum setting in relation to the wind direction and strength.

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.

Turtle, Turn Turtle: When a vessel is capsized and completely upside down so that its mast is submerged. ASC generally has mast floats on the top of sailboat masts to minimize the chance of a boat turning turtle in the event of a capsize.

W

Weather: The wind conditions or towards the wind when talking about helm or direction.

Windward: The side/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 the 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.