

Race Day and Race Training Day Guide

Advise us beforehand

Which nights you plan to stay on-board when the boat is in dock.

If you are joining any dinner arrangements.

What you want to get from the event, your expectations and suggestions.

Any health issues we need to be aware of.

Arrival and meeting

Know the meet time which is different for different days and events - it is imperative that you are not late on a race day as we have no control over the start time of a race! Do ensure that you let us know if you experience an unavoidable delay.

On arrival at Port Hamble, go to the Marina Office and inform them that you are with Pure Latitude and give the relevant boat name, and ask for a temporary car park pass for both days and the toilet codes. You can park in any pay and display area.

What to bring

For racing please don't bring any unnecessary gear or bags. We keep weight to a minimum when racing so no bags on a day race - simply arrive on the boat wearing your kit:

Wet weather sailing gear and appropriate layers for the conditions (always better to be too warm)

Sailing gloves (plus spare if you have them)

Sunglasses, strap, sunhat and sun cream if appropriate.

Use a training day to work out the minimum kit you need for racing.

Catering

When training, we will stop briefly for lunch so bring some food, snacks and drinks. When inshore racing there may be a gap between races so bring something but there is no guarantee that you will have time to manage more than some water before we finish! Pure Latitude will provide onboard food and drinks for offshore racing. Shoreside meals and drinks are at your cost. Please advise us of any dietary requirements.

Prepping the boat for racing

This is always an important part of yacht racing - preparation is key to know that everything is working properly and all items are in place. This will include prepping the race main, racing jibs, inserting/checking battens and checking the spinnakers. We will also attach all spinnaker sheets and guys. Depending on what has happened the previous day, we may need to remove cruising kit and sails and bend on race sails.

Safety brief

Safety check list to include – Fire – Flood – MOB/Lifejackets and policy – Accidental jibe – Winches and the loads when racing compared to cruising.

How to winch properly and hoisting sails – both to look after your back and use your body weight.

Training day brief

Plan for the day

Determine crew positions and ensure roles are clear.

Race formats to cover pre-start, start, each leg and finish.

Starting and controlling speed with Jib and Main for race starts.

Upwind performance: Main and jib trim, height vs speed, Tacking, Communication.

Downwind performance: Running deep – Pole Angle – Trimming – Gybing – Deciding what side to drop and why.

Basic sailing rules including: Windward boat – Starboard - Room – Overlap – (rules before and after start)

On the water training

Outline the training exercises for the day, essentially putting all the elements above into practice, learning and refining.

Racing day additional briefing

It's always good to look at the sailing instructions for the event in advance!

Start time and number of races scheduled.

Rough course area, weather forecast and implications, expectations.

On the water race

Locate start.

Make sail choice depending on the weather – Jib #1/#2 or #4 and spinnaker - Blue (Big) or Pink (Small/Heavy).

Get transits and sail the beat in advance, pop kite and run a few gybes.

Post-race

Once the race (or training) is finished we head back to base, packing up as much on the way as we can.

Once at the dock we clean up boat and swap race sails back to cruising –understanding the importance of looking after sails and why, flake the sails properly, checking battens, checking and re-packing kites etc.

Debrief

A run through what worked well and what could work better, lessons learnt, questions, etc.

Offshore Race – Additional Information

What to bring in addition to race days

1 spare underwear/base layer (technical base layers are much better than cotton which gets damp)

Knife or multitool

Red headtorch and spare batteries

White torch for lighting up sails at night – small hand torch tends to be better than head torch as the beam is more focused

Watch

Toothbrush

Deodorant

Dry bag (lightweight)
Your own lifejacket and PLB if you have one
Personal medication
Sea sickness medication/wristbands/patches

Don't bring

Sun cream, toothpaste and wipes are provided to prevent duplication
Bedding for the race – duvets are on board
Unnecessary gear and bags - we keep weight to a minimum when racing

Prepping the boat for racing

There is an extensive list of everything that needs to be done and checked prior to an offshore race, including a thorough boat inspection. We need to allow time prior to the race to work through everything.

Safety brief

Will cover more than a day race including - Liferaft – EPIRB – VHF Radio/Mayday – Sailing at night – Night vision – Heavy weather – Watch system

Prior to the race

You may receive a joining email from the race officials which will need to be completed.
A percentage of the crew may need to have completed a first aid, sea survival or ISAF offshore safety course.
If using an EPIRB type PLB, remember to register it to the race boat beforehand.

Watch system and Domestic

The watch system will be sorted out in advance and posted in the boat.
Food and drink is provided on board during the race (and for any return trip). Everyone is expected to share in preparing meals and drinks, and clearing up.
The seacocks in the heads must be kept shut except whilst pumping the toilet.
There is limited water in the tanks so the water pumps to the sink should be turned off at the control panel except when being used.
Ensure that you rest during your off watch, unless needed on deck, and look after yourself. Think about staying warm; protecting yourself from sunburn; cleanliness and hygiene; taking medication if needed, and eating and drinking enough.

Post-race

The race may finish away from the Hamble, and the boat then need to be sailed back afterwards.
Please let us know about any personal timing issues.

Racing Crew Positions

Bow - At the bow of the boat, and organises the front sails (jib & spinnaker) to go up and come down. Must keep foredeck organised and check that halyards and sheets are led properly and not twisted. Also does the outboard end of the spinnaker pole on gybes.

Mast – Backs up the Bow, helps with organising sails forward, acts as engine ('bounces') to get sails up and does the inboard end of the spinnaker pole on gybes.

Pit – Boat end of all the halyards, up & down hauls, etc, and is in control when sails hoist/drop and of spinnaker pole height. Needs to keep his/her area tidy.

Cockpit Team – Controls sail setting, sheets and guys, both upwind and downwind.

Upwind roles

Jib Trim – Plays jib sheet for correct position.

Jib Tail - Pulls sheet in fast on tacks.

Release – Releases old sheet during tacks.

Downwind roles

Kite Trim – Plays kite sheet for correct position.

Guy Trim – Adjusts pole position (in conjunction with Pit).

Grinder – Winches for the kite trimmer.

Mainsheet – In charge of trimming the main.

Helm – Steers the boat.

Tactician – Must know the course. Makes the decisions about where to go, when to tack or gybe based on the tide, wind, other boats, etc. Must let rest of crew know what's happening.

Float/Sewer – Helps everywhere when there is a problem, helps get the kite down from below, packs the sails.

Racing Language

Boat Parts

Sheet – The rope attached to the spinnaker on the end flying freely (Leeward side)

Guy – The rope attached to the spinnaker on the pole end (Windward side)

Barber Hauler – Line used to pull the spinnaker sheet down towards the boat

Pole Downhaul – Line attached to the underside of the pole to pull it downwards

Uphaul/Topping Lift/Topper – The line that pulls the pole upwards on the outboard end

Inboard End – The pole end closest to the mast

Beak – The outboard end of the pole where you attach the guy

Foil – The track the Jib goes up

Kite – Spinnaker

Kicker/Vang – controls twist and therefore power from the main downwind

Actions/Calls to crew

‘Ease’ – Letting a line out slowly

‘Burn’ – Release a rope quickly (by opening the clutch – not using scissors!)

‘Dump’ – Release the mainsheet to depower the mainsail or releasing the spinnaker sheet to depower the kite

Hoist – Pulling up the main, Jib or kite

Drop – Normally the kite

‘Made’ – The call given when a sail being hoisted reaches the top, or when the spinnaker sheets and guys are correctly inserted into the end of the spinnaker pole on a gybe.

‘Bum Cleat’ – When someone is unknowingly sat on a rope that someone else is frantically trying to pull.

‘Bear away’ – The call to turn away from the wind, just as you are rounding the windward mark. Usually followed by call to ‘hoist’ the spinnaker Taking height /pointing – sailing as close to the wind as possible to reduce distance travelled to the upwind mark.

Calls to other boats

‘Water!’ – Not simply stating the obvious, but a call made by one boat to another at a mark rounding demanding they are given them room to manoeuvre (whether you do or not depends on the rules in play at the time)

‘Starboard!’ – A call made by a boat on starboard tack to a boat on port tack if it looks like the port tack boat haven’t seen them and a collision is imminent unless a course change is made.

‘Protest’ – What you shout at another boat when they have done something illegal. This then sets in play the protest process, resulting in either a time penalty being accepted by the offender or a court-room-drama style hearing back at the yacht club after racing to see who really was at fault.

Other

Polars – A scale indicating the speed you should be able to achieve at different wind strengths upwind or downwind, assuming you’re sailing beating and running (not reaching).

Hiking – Hanging over the edge of the boat by leaning out between the guard rails. This helps balance the boat increasing your speed through the water. Hiking hard means getting your bum up off the deck and really reaching forward to project your weight.

Spinnaker Preparation, Hoist and Drop:

Rigging Running Lines - generally done on the dock.

Bow Checks halyards, sheets and guys aren't twisted and are run clear of everything else. The sheet is attached to the spinnaker and the guy is attached to sheet. Cockpit Run sheets outside everything to blocks at the back of boat and run the guys to blocks at the middle, ensuring that nothing is twisted.

Attaching the Spinnaker

Attach the spinnaker bag just before hoisting.

Bow Attach the bag to the leeward rail near the bow. Then attach halyard, sheet and guy, making certain that nothing is twisted.

Cockpit/Float Makes certain that lines are loose so that kite can be attached.

If racing only one person should do this and everybody else should remain on the rail.

The Hoist

Pre hoist:

Pole up - Bow & Pit - Organise pole up. Inboard end goes up first then outboard end.

Cockpit/Float - Ensure sheets and guys are loose enough to hoist pole. Tighten guy to pull the spinnaker tack out to the end of the pole.

Bow - Feed the tack of the spinnaker underneath the hoisted jib and out to pole.

Pit - Ensure pole downhaul is free to let pole come back.

Cockpit - Grind the guy back to the pole and bring pole back half a metre off the forestay.

Ensure there are sufficient turns on the guy winch as this carries lots of load when the spinnaker is up.

Hoist Spinnaker:

Helm - Steer boat on to a broad reach/run and calls the hoist when ready.

Bow - Feed kite out underneath jib.

Mast - Bounce halyard to help get spinnaker up. Pit - Tail the halyard.

Cockpit - Grind the pole back to correct position (at right-angles to the wind).

Cockpit - Sheet the spinnaker in, so it fills.

Do not sheet the spinnaker until it is fully hoisted. Once it fills it is very hard to hoist. Once the kite is hoisted, drop the jib.

Gybe – in 3 stages

Preparation

A gybe should be attempted from one run to another run.

Bow - Make sure the lazy (unused) sheet is sitting on top of pole. Collect the new guy loose in hand.
Mast Raise the inboard end of pole up high enough so the outboard end can pass underneath forestay.

Pit - Ensure pole uphaul is ready to drop.

Cockpit - Load new sheet on to spare winch and take up slack so that when guy is released spinnaker will continue to fly.

Cockpit - Ensure new guy is loose so Bow has enough slack to put it in pole.

Also need to ensure new guy winch is clear.

Gybe 1st Half:

Helm - Call the gybe and steer to follow spinnaker.

Mast - Trip the outboard end of pole so the spinnaker is unattached from the pole.

Pit - Ease the pole uphaul to allow the pole to pass under forestay.

Bow - Swings the pole into the boat and under the forestay.

Cockpit - Remove the old guy from the winch.

Cockpit - Play the spinnaker on both sheets and try to keep it flying.

Main - Gybe the mainsail. (Alternatively, this could be done before or after gybing the spinnaker.
Centring the main whilst gybing the spinnaker encourages a reluctant spinnaker to remain filled.

Gybe 2nd Half:

Bow - Attach the new guy and push the pole out.

Mast - Help Pit to re-hoist pole.

Pit - Re-hoist the pole.

Cockpit - Take up on new guy as pole goes up, so that the new spinnaker tack comes back to the pole.

Ensure you have sufficient turns on the guy winch.

Cockpit - Release the old sheet once the pole has reached the spinnaker.

Spinnaker Drop Preparation

Re-hoist jib - Bow ensures the jib is the correct side, and nothing is twisted - This is particularly important if there have been any gybes or other manoeuvres since hoisting.

Pit - Ensure the spinnaker halyard is ready to run so the sail can come all the way down without snagging.

Float - Go down below ready to receive sail.

Drop (basic leeward drop) Helm Steer on a broad reach/run.

Bow & Mast - Pull spinnaker down under jib on leeward side using spare guy and feed the sail down the forehatch. OR Pull spinnaker down under the boom on leeward side using spare guy and feed the sail down the companionway.

Pit - Lower the halyard halfway very fast to take the pressure out of the spinnaker, then drop the rest at the speed at which the spinnaker is being gathered in.

Cockpit - Ease the pole to the forestay to take pressure out of the spinnaker, then ease rest of the guy at the speed the Bow is gathering. (If the pole is eased to the forestay at the start of the drop it depowers the sail, easing the drop)

Cockpit - Ease sheet to Bow.

Float - Gather spinnaker from below, then repacks it.

Pit & Bow - Drop pole to foredeck.

After dropping, if the spinnaker was dropped down the forehatch it can be re-hoisted from the forehatch.

Listed Below are a selection links on racing best practice from North Sails

Sail Power: Depowering & Powering-up

<https://www.northsails.com/sailing/en/2019/02/techniques-for-de-powering-in-heavy-air-and-powering-up-in-light-air>

Puff Response upwind in heavy air

<https://www.northsails.com/sailing/en/2019/01/puff-response-upwind-in-heavy-air>

Sail power: Full power & mix of power

<https://www.northsails.com/sailing/en/2019/01/north-u-bill-gladstone-full-power-mix-of-power>

Puff response upwind

<https://www.northsails.com/sailing/en/2018/11/puff-response-upwind-northu-bill-gladstone>

Upwind sail power

<https://www.northsails.com/sailing/en/2018/08/upwind-sail-power-by-bill-gladstone>

Not steering downwind <https://www.northsails.com/sailing/en/2016/09/not-steering-downwind>

Helming downwind <https://www.northsails.com/sailing/en/2016/09/helming-downwind>

Setting the spinnaker <https://www.northsails.com/sailing/en/2016/09/setting-the-spinnaker>

Perfect Spinnaker jibes <https://www.northsails.com/sailing/en/2016/09/perfect-spinnaker-jibes>