



Decided to make this a more presentable and maybe easier to read production than we have been used to. Might even include the odd photograph!

Reminder: Don't forget the Commodore's Trophy race to be held on Friday 28th (This Friday evening) Yachts with ladies on board are the only ones eligible for a prize.

The new Rule Books have been published and those really interested can view them on the Web on www.sailing.org/rrs. They don't come into force until the 1st of January 2009 and the changes are not huge, mainly by way of clarification especially in those dealing with right of way etc. If you explore the website you will note that the actual changes are highlighted so that you can find them quickly. As far as I can see, they do not alter the right of way rules as we know them but are certainly easier to understand.

As noted last week, we won't be stocking them ourselves but they will be readily available from the usual suppliers, probably by the end of this month.

The new burglar alarm will be operational by the end of the month so if you have a key to the front door and intend using it in December it may be an idea to contact one of the committee to learn the combination. We will not be liable for heart attacks if you mistakenly set it off!

FLAT is FAST!

Ever wondered why those big ocean racers make their long suffering crew sit along the side with their legs outside the lifelines? It is to make the yacht sit up as straight as possible!

When I was sailing Mirror Dinghies many years ago, there was one bloke, Alan Chicero who was in the Navy in Canberra, who was so much faster than any of us that we set about working out what it was that he did that made him tick and enabled him to win the Australian Championship.

It was simply that he sailed his boat as flat as possible on all points of sailing. Both he and his crew were as far out on the gunnel as they could go. Especially when reaching.

We have made the decision to sail our Etchells four up this season, purely to add weight on the gunnel upwind and on spinnaker reaches and the improvement has been quite surprising. The helm feels better when beating to windward and the improvement in our off wind speed has been remarkable. The chap who won the Worlds last year sailed four up!

Lets face it, when your boat is heeling, especially with a transom hung rudder, the blade of the rudder is lifted partly out of the water and to have much effect, the tiller has to be pulled quite a bit to windward. Not only is this inefficient, it is the same as putting the brake on! Excessive heeling also can upset the balance of the boat to some degree.

That said, once you have established an angle of heel upwind where your yacht feels really "in the groove" keep it that way by luffing slightly in the puffs. You will sail higher into the wind and not skid sideways when puffs hit you.

I once had a blind girl on board who, once she cottoned on to the right angle of heel and pressure on the tiller, could sail our boat as well as I could. Once this becomes second nature, you can free your mind to worry about other things!



Sailing a yacht to windward from the leeward side of the cockpit, is not efficient. Once you have set the leach of the jib to your satisfaction and alerted your crew to the correct sheet tension, move to the windward side and look for wind shifts, puffs, tide runs, other yachts and, above all, your jib luff tell tales. Your weight will be in the right place and your "feel" of your vessel will be that much better.

Naturally, when off the wind you have to adjust the headsail quite frequently and, in many cases, this means putting someone on the winch down to leeward. Try sheeting the jib with a half turn around the leeward winch and then bringing the sheet across the cockpit to the windward one so that the crew can sit on the windward rail and adjust it from there. Every pound of moveable ballast (crew weight) that you can keep to windward will make you go faster.

On a broad reach, the flatter you can sail your yacht the faster you will go. If you get a puff that overwhelms you, ease the mainsail and jib and pull away, head up to regain the lost ground in the lulls. You may catch a wave that way. Makes the mainsheet hand earn his keep too!

End of rant!