

# The Topper Dinghy

*With acknowledgements to Docklands Water and Sailing Centre website.*



## TOPPER SAILBOAT SPECS.

Length.....11.15'

Beam.....47.24"

Sail Area.....56 Sq. Ft.

Hull Weight.....94.6 lbs.

Moulded from tough polypropylene

Skill Level: Starter/Advanced

## Features:

Over 44,000 sold! Injection moulded from polypropylene - the same material used for automobile bumpers. Tough and light. Five year hull warranty.

John Driscoll (the Royal Yachting Association's Sailing Coach writes: "The Topper dinghy has a unique place in the world of sailing instruction. It has made a greater contribution to the development of teaching techniques than any other boat in the last ten years, and its role is never likely to be challenged by any other type of dinghy."

The Topper can be rigged, sailed, and righted by a child and is an IYRU registered class boat for single handed racing. It can accommodate two persons but is designed to be sailed as a single hander. Portsmouth number 1288. The Topper is fully equipped with a 2 pc. powder coated aluminium mast, aluminium boom, dacron sail, kick-up rudder, toe-straps and comes ready to sail.

# Tuning Guide

## Sail Luff Tension

In light weather, ease the tack line so that the sail becomes as full as possible. In strong winds tension the tack line to pull the sail hard down to increase the luff tension and flatten the sail.

## Sail Foot Tension

**Outhaul:** In light winds the tension on the foot of the sail should be less than in strong winds, but never slack. For windward sailing the sail should never be baggy. In moderate winds, tension the foot of the sail so that it is just pulled into horizontal creases at the foot. In light winds ease the Outhaul so that the creases just disappear.

**Footline:** For sails with a Footline, with the Outhaul pulled tight slightly tension the Footline so that the edge of the sail just curls.

## Rope Horse

This controls the position the boom takes up relative to the boat when the sheet is pulled hard in. In light winds going to windward, the boom should be nearly over the centreline of the hull. This is achieved by letting out the horse so that the mainsheet does not travel so far across the boat. In stronger winds going to windward, the boom should be further out towards the corner of the stern. This is achieved by tightening up the horse so that the mainsheet slides across easily from one side to the other. The position of the boom is of course also controlled by the mainsheet itself, but the tension of this is constantly under adjustment, whereas the horse is only occasionally adjusted to suit the general prevailing conditions.

## Kicking Strap

This is a most important piece of equipment as it not only improves performance by controlling the shape of the sail, it also helps to prevent uncontrollable gybes. Its function is to hold down the boom and control the tension in the leech (aft edge) of the sail and reduce inefficient twist. A tighter kicking strap is required in strong winds. Push down on the boom with one hand and haul in on the kicking strap with the other and jam it. In light winds the kicking strap should be just tight when the sail is hauled in when going to windward. It will then be just about right for running and reaching. For the best performance use sufficient tension to significantly pre-bend the mast so the sail takes up an even curve close to the mast.

## Daggerboard

This should be fully down when going to windward in light airs, but may be raised slightly for windward sailing in strong winds. It can be raised about half way when reaching and nearly all the way when running. Take care when the board is raised, not to gybe and hit it with the kicking strap or it may cause a capsized.

## Rudder

The rudder blade should generally be fully down except in very light airs when running when it may be raised almost horizontal. In very light airs, beating to windward, it may help to push the boat round from one tack to the other if the blade is raised 2 notches. The strains on the rudder assembly are considerably increased

when the rudder blade is partially raised, so do not sail with it partly up in strong winds at full power - i.e. only use in the partially raised position in strong winds when negotiating shallows at reduced power.

### **Self Bailer**

This clears the water from the cockpit by suction under the hull. It pays to have the self-bailer operating and the boat kept free of water and as light as possible, but the bailer in the operating position does cause drag, so it is best to have it open only if it is really needed.

### **Adjusting the sail**

Use the simple setting instructions given below to obtain optimum performance from your Topper sail throughout the wind range.

#### **Force 0 - 1**

Outhaul - tight but not so tight as to form a fold along the foot.

Luff - very slack (ideally small horizontal wrinkles should be visible all the way up the luff).

Traveller - 9" above transom when amidships.

Kicking Strap - sufficient tension to bring mainsheet block to block with no tension on mainsheet.

#### **Force 1 - 2**

Outhaul - 1/2" inboard from Force 0 - 1 setting.

Luff - slack (just a hint of horizontal creasing when sailing).

Traveller - 9" above transom when amidships.

Kicking Strap - As Force 0 - 1 setting.

#### **Force 2 - 4**

Outhaul - 3/4 inboard from Force 0 - 1 setting.

Luff - just sufficient tension to remove horizontal creases when sailing.

Traveller - 8" above transom when amidships.

Kicking Strap - As Force 0 - 1.

#### **Force 4 +**

Outhaul - tight, as Force 0 - 1.

Luff - sufficient tension to remove all horizontal creases when sailing with mast fully bent.

Traveller - 7" above transom when amidships.

Kicking Strap - As tight as possible!

### **The main points to remember are:**

- The Outhaul has to be set fairly tight at all times even in very light winds - this helps to move fullness back from the luff into the middle of the sail.
- The kicker needs tension even in light winds although this eliminates twist, it also pulls fullness back in the sail by bending the mast a small amount