



# Teaching Boat Control

**These days, one big issue after Level 2 is controlling the power. Fast in light airs, the new boats are very powerful in a breeze. Here are some teaching tips.**

## Setting up the rig

The most common mistake is sailing with too much power in the rig. Modern boats don't reef, they rake. Lean the rig back before sending the boats out in strong winds and get your sailors to flatten the sails to lose unwanted power. The difference between a bad and good setup can be extraordinary. The class website should give you a better and more detailed picture. Get a rig tension gauge of the type specified on the website and a long tape measure. When you have got it right, make a note of which pin holes are used on the shroud plates and the position of the jib halyard on the mast. Keep this for future use.

## Sail shape

To start with your sailors will have the best fun in medium airs. Get them to ease the outhaul and sheet the jib in a gentle curve. A bit of kicker will power up the sail by increasing both curvature and reducing twist, but use no downhaul (cunningham) until they're unable to keep the boat flat. In strong winds be prepared for some

fun and swims. Masthead floatation may be a good idea. Pull all the mainsail controls on to the maximum, except in waves, when a bit of curve should be left in the foot of the sail with less outhaul tension. The top of the rig will really knock boats over - aim for flat top sections, using kicker and cunningham to achieve this. Move the jib cars right aft to flatten the jib and open the leech. Rake centreboards aft and concentrate on teaching steering, rather than pumping the mainsheet in and out - they'll get tired otherwise.

## Boat handling

Downwind, teach the sailors to bear away in the gusts so that the boat stays level, but luff up as the gust passes to keep the boat flat by increasing the sideways force on the rig. To teach this, sail them downwind on a broad reach, hiked out but with crews standing up by the mast. Allow neither to move, but encourage smooth but large steering adjustments to keep the boat absolutely level. Only introduce the spinnaker when the steering has been learned.

Remember: the number one mistake is having too much power in the rig, so get your sailors to rake, flatten, and steer to maintain control.