



18ft Skiff Sailing Techniques – Light winds

For use in winds up to 8 knots or when all 3 crew can be trapezing

Text has been kindly donated and amended from the German 18' Skiff Association. These methods are up for debate and crews will have their own slight variation!

1 STARTING

- 1.1 Forward hand calling time and distance. kneeling on spinn. bag and trimming jib. Keep an eye on other boats to leeward. Pull any vang needed at 20 seconds to go. Sheet hand communicates strategy and trims main. Often trim main by physically pulling or pushing boom to maintain down speed steerage. Helmsmen communicates down speed steerage issues and comfort level with other nearby boats. Helmsmen usually kneel on wing and clips in early. Helmsmen should trapeze first, followed by sheet hand and then forward hand.

2 TACKING

- 2.1 Upwind, the forward hand tends to be in the boat or on the foredeck in extremely light conditions. Forward hand gets on his feet if required. Keep jib sheeted as tight as it can be and still make it across the front of the mast. The sheet hand and helmsmen stand up as the wing unloads and allow the boat to roll. Sheet hand keeps the main in tight. Forward hand moves out to new wing grabbing the jib sheet with one hand and trapeze handle with other. Forward hand and helmsman get to the new wing smoothly as the boat flattens. A tug on the forward hand trapeze wire can help pop the main battens. Forward hand eases jib to allow the boat to accelerate. Sheet hand eases main accordingly out of tack. Sheet hand and forward hand smoothly trade places on the new wing. Jib and main come back in as the boat accelerates.

3 GYBING

- 3.1 Sheet hand takes the spinnaker sheets and moves as far forward as possible in the boat. Forward hand takes the mainsheet. Forward hand and helmsmen both stand up as the wing unloads. Forward hand moves quickly to the middle of the boat. Forward hand pauses in the middle or close to the new side to allow the boat to roll. Careful not to stand on the spinn. sheets. during the gybe. The sheet hand passes the spinn. sheet back out to the forward hand after the jibe and then quickly grabs the boom to pop the main battens.

4 SPINNAKER SET

- 4.1 Let all controls all the way off before top mark. Forward hand usually does not need to trapeze for the bear away. Helmsmen communicates when the turn is starting. Keep the boat flat through the entire maneuver. Move forward after the sheet hand goes in. Back the jib. Forward hand comes in, pulls jib sheet in after bear away, opens bag pulls up halyard and grabs spinn. sheet on the way back out to trapeze. Sheet hand passes off main to helmsman after bear away comes in and pulls tack line out. Sheet hand usually stays in the middle of the boat in this condition, moving forward after the forward hand moves outboard. Ease jib to a downwind setting. Look for pressure/laylines. Get the boat speed up and look for boats to defend against.

5 SPINNAKER TAKE DOWN

Straight drop:

- 5.1 Pull required vang on for upwind. Helmsman has mainsheet. Forward hand pulls tension on the lazy sheet under D1 and lets the tackline go with inboard hand. Forward hand continues to pull foot of spinn.



around headstay until it's under control and then lets halyard go. The sheet hand has the main by now and should be trimming in and using weight to round the mark while the forward hand is tending to the jib sheet.

Jibe drop:

- 5.2 Sheet hand takes working spinn. sheet from forward hand. Sheet hand moves to new wing and backs spinn. hard. Helmsman commences the turn for the gybe and runs through to new side. Forward hand blows tackline through gybe, grabs foot of the spinn. and then lets the spinn. halyard go. Main and jib come in. Vang on. (A faster variation exists for helmsmen tending the mainsheet).
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