BREWIN SAILS

ULTRABONDED A CLASS SAILS with no seam slip

Tuning, sail care and rigging

SPREADERS

What is the best spreader angle for my boat is a common question. There is no simple answer as all masts, sails and sailor’s body weights vary.

Generally it is best to get a starting setting from your sail designer. Standard Brewin starting points are:

* Fibrefoam - 40mm
* Saarberg - 20mm to 40mm
* DNA - 40mm
* Bimm - 50mm

From there, if you move your spreaders back it will put more pre-bend in the bottom off the mast and start the bending lower down the mast. This will flatten the lower part of the sail and move the twist of the sail down lower.

Moving the spreaders forward will reduce the pre-bend in the mast and will tighten the lower leech; this will force the sail to twist up higher, earlier.

Normally if I have height upwind but want more speed, it is time to rake the spreaders back.

If you are low and fast then you will gain height by moving the spreaders forward.

The other important part of the equation is the tension of the diamonds. My personal favourite on the A class is 29 on the Loose gauge (the black spring model).

BATTENS

Selecting the correct top 4 battens can give you an edge, however I have won races in world titles and many major regattas with the wrong battens. It is more important to practice sailing your boat and work out how to make it go fast on each leg of the course. If you get your batten selection wrong at a major regatta, IGNORE IT AND CONCENTRATE ON THE JOB AT HAND (sailing smart!). If your tactics are correct and you are concentrating on the job at hand, then batten selection shouldn’t be on your mind.

There are options to buy stiff battens for the top 4 and this is recommended if you really want to get the most out of your sail. Normally I run the standard battens up to 12 knots , I then change the top 1 at 13 knots, top 2 at around 15knots, top 3 at 17knots and all in by 19knots . This is a basic guide that works for me. Use it as a starting point to determine what works best for you and your boat.

Also of late, if we have a real light regatta (below 8 knots consistently), I may use a light set of battens. This doesn’t happen much in Australia, more at overseas majors.

Tying battens; battens should be tied in with a reef knot; feed the 2 strings through the batten, then push the two strings from outside to inside of the eyelet at the edge of the batten pocket, pulling each string tail onto the outside of the strings leading into the eyelet. Tie the two strings together with an overhand knot, on top of the strings that were leading into the eyelet,

Tightening time; you put your two thumbs on the end of the batten holding the strings in your fingers and push with your thumbs while pulling the strings with your fingers. This allows you to control the tightness as the string will grip with the overhand knot. Once you have it tight enough, do another overhand knot on the first to lock it. This should form a reef knot.



First time using a sail, the battens should be super tight, as the strings will stretch. I always find that I need to do a second tighten after the first sail with all the battens.

If you over tighten the top (angle) batten in light winds, it will make the top of the sail hard to gybe. If this happens, give the sail a good flick as you gybe through. If the top few battens don’t go over, don’t panic, just steer the boat onto your normal sailing angle, then give the Cunningham (downhaul) a pull down. This will flick the top of the sail the correct way. Remember to let the Cunningham off and re-cleat, otherwise you may miss it again next gybe, then it’s a pain.

MAST CARE

 It is important to check and clean your mast regularly, particularly when new, before first use. At the Denmark worlds, I discovered that my mast was 1mm narrower at the top of the track than the bottom, due to having the track cut when the mast was still a little green. This took more than an hour of filing the top third of the track to get the width constant.

To clean my mast track, I get a soaking white rag and completely fill the mast track with it, while leaving part of the rag hanging out of the track (like a sail). Then I drag the rag up and down the mast; it can take a good ten times until you get a clean rag out. You must not stop until the rag is still white when it comes out of the mast.

Older masts sometimes need a fresh sand and clean. To do this I create a bolt rope with sandpaper (about 100 grade) and a round pencil. Sand up and down and from side to side, bending the sandpaper over the outside of each side of the track.

You will feel the sandpaper grip when you start and you will know you have done enough when the sandpaper glides up and down easily.

IMPORTANT - NOW GO THROUGH THE MAST CLEANING PROCESS AGAIN.

Normally sails go up better the second time as the head patch wears in a bit.

Silicone lubricants in the track can help get sails up, but I have only used them on very rare occasions as it can make the sail dirty after a while, especially if you don’t clean the mast track regularly.

HOOKING ON THE SAIL

In the past I always looked for a 12mm gap between the ring and the mast, but found it could fail to hook up if the ring didn’t remain stiffly upright. To overcome this we had re whip the ring every now and then.

I now have a better way of hooking the sail and it never fails. I twist the ring forward on the right side of the mast (sail feed side), so that the centre of the ring is past the edge of the track (the ring is parallel to the side of the mast with about a 5 mm gap from the mast). Push the sail up, give the back of the mast a quick flick towards your right and the ring will flick around and be over the top off the hook, ready to pull down and grab. This works even better when the ring loosens in the webbing a bit.

The boat must of course be head to wind while you are doing this.

OUTHAUL TENSION

It is important not to over tighten the outhaul as it can cause the sail to pull out of the mast track. I try to keep at least 100 mm gap from the centre of the boom to the centre of the foot. Having the foot tighter than this can cause the sail to come out of the mast track, mainly because as the Cunningham is pulled on, it tightens the foot of the sail.

On an F18 with a strong mast, this could cause the sail to rip. The best way to prevent this is to have a stop knot that prevents you over tightening the outhaul.

On masts with soft tracks, I sometimes tie a rope around the front of the mast from the Cunningham eyelet to stop the sail coming out off the track.

SUN AND UV DAMAGE

Unless you really like buying new sails, it is important to keep your sails out of the sun, the UV eats your sails really fast, KEVLAR is the worst and I see it a lot when comparing new cloth to used.

Don’t leave sails in the sun, they should be in their bag until race time and put in their bag or under the tramp when coming in for lunch.

SALT AND WET SAILS

Salt doesn’t damage your sails but it can corrode the eyelets. It is recommended to wash the salt off every now and then.

Packing away wet sails is not good for the cloth

DECKSWEEPER

For decksweeper ,if you need to cut your mast track below gooseneck ,do not cut the last 10 mm ,it helps stop the mast from spreading open in the track ,you also must tie shockcord tight from the sail eyelets around the front of the mast to keep the sail from coming out of the track as well

Mast Settings for decksweeper are the same

THE SECRET WEAPON

The secret weapon is The bottom foot eyelet at the back of the foot on the sail , shall connect to the tramp through a shockcord , this holds the foot in to its correct position for the sail shape , It is 1200mm behind the mast post in the middle of the tramp ,this shockcord should have 2.5 kilos of weight on it ,with a fish scale once it starts to move , I have it at a two to one shockcord, going under boat to a pulley on the inner gunnel and across to the other opposite inside gunnel to tie of ,and of course the end pokes out the tramp eyelet ready for attachment , just like another trapeze shockcord ,coming out of an eyelet that is 1200 mm behind the mast post in the middle of the boat , ready to attach to the sail,with 5mm shockcord

Before getting to the beach coming into beach make sure you pull out your bottom angle batten and tie it on to boat before getting of the boat , also disconnect the secret weapon ,that way u can drop your sail easier

GOOD SAILING,

STEVIE BREWIN