

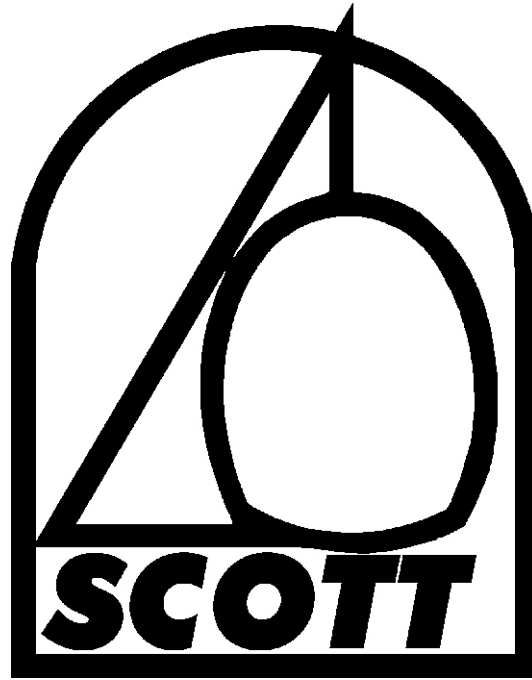
Troubleshooting:

Problem: When sailing in heavy air I ease the sheet to help the boat not heel as much but then the entire main luffs.

Solution: Keep the sheet tension tight but ease the traveler all the way to leeward. This will allow the leech of the sail to stay full and the luff to backwind.

Problem: When sailing downwind the leech always seems to lose and I can not tell how tight it should be.

Solution: Before easing the sail out if your boat is equipped with a boom vang it should be set to be just slack going upwind when the main is trimmed with correct leech tension. This will set the leech with a little more twist for downwind.



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Performance
Trim
Cruising
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Main



Mixed Up?

We

can
help
make
things

fall
into
place

The Mainsail is the only sail on your boat that is used all the time. From winds of zero to thirty plus knots the main must be trimmed correctly to get maximum performance.

Let's first observe the many roles your main plays on the boat. Upwind, the main has two roles. First it acts as a steering device and can be set to either increase or reduce the helm. Secondly, the main has to be set up with the proper shape in order to have the wind flow over the surface efficiently. The ideal shape in a main is a sail that has a flat entry with the maximum draft forty percent aft, with a flat exit and a nice twist. The camber in the sail should be set at about thirteen to fourteen percent for light air and as flat as eight percent for heavy air. Aligning the top batten parallel to the boom can set up the initial twist.

To achieve the desired shape there are many items that can be adjusted. Each control line adjusts a different part of the sail and needs to be tweaked in order to get a well shaped main. Trimming controls available to most boats include the mainsheet, the halyard, outhaul tension and the position of the traveler on the track. The proper use of these controls will set your main to give you the maximum performance over a wide range of wind conditions.

The outhaul, which tightens the foot of the sail, will control the camber of the

sail. A loose outhaul will produce a fuller sail for light upwind sailing or for reaching and running. As the wind increases, you can flatten the sail by tightening the outhaul. If your boat is equipped with a backstay adjuster this can also help control the camber in the main by bending the mast.

The halyard tension controls the position of the camber in the main fore and aft. By tightening the halyard the maximum draft point will move forward in the sail. Remember the optimum draft point should be maintained at about forty percent. A quick and easy way to set your halyard tension is to tighten it until the wrinkles come out of the luff. This typically will set the maximum draft in the correct position.

The main sheet controls the tension on the leech or the amount of twist in the sail. Remember that the starting point is to tension the leech until the top batten is parallel to the boom. This should produce the proper twist in the main. Observing the telltales on the leech of the main to see whether they are streaming can check the twist. If the telltales aren't streaming then ease the sheet until they stream.