

Boathandling Tactics

Sort out your Objectives

- Trying to win?
- Trying to have a fast seamanlike passage?
- Trying to have a nice seamanlike passage in company?

Winning sometimes involves some dicey (character-building) situations that are demanding of seamanship, but are not necessarily seamanlike.

Time Allocation

Steering/trimming/sailhandling/jibing
Daytime/Nighttime
Get psyched to work hard on the hard parts

Do Not drink coffee, coke, or any caffeine. If you feel sleepy, sleep.
(automatic adrenaline dosage is nearly optimum)

Sleep before you're tired
Eat before you're hungry
Dress-up before you're cold

Rigging

Objective: no worries about rig

- Chicken stays
- Centerline vang (ideally solid)
- If possible, no preventer and no runners (alert...religious issue)

Objective: flog-proof, failure-proof, fool-proof spinnaker rigging

- No snatch blocks, no blocks on snapshackles, no spring pin cars
- Use screw pin cars with permanently attached and closed blocks
- Sparcraft spin pole end fitting
- Sparcraft style snap shackles (taped)
- External spinnaker halyard, top and bottom
- Finger full of waterpump grease on halyard bail, day before start
- Dacron spinnaker halyard (if clean external lead)
- No lazy guys/sheets, no twin pole jibes, keep it simple, keep it up

Spinnaker Handling

ATN socks

Sock jibes

Mark pole "set" position and use it for all sets, douses, jibes

Use spinnaker net (if concerned, hide it before finish)

Set up your kite so that you are certain you can douse gracefully in a hurricane.

Afterguy connects to pole (not through pole to spin) (no chafe)

Spinnaker tack ring in pole end.

Pole trip line down companionway.

Douse by tripping away kite tack from pole end.

Two block sheet, pulling leech tight behind mainsail.

Pull sock down at your leisure (behind main)

Leave sock behind main, and leave pole in place

After squall, put pole in "set" position.

Take sock forward and attach tack to pole again.

You're off and running

Net, if you know you can douse in anything, you will have the guts to never douse, instead you will spend your efforts trimming instead of fretting.

Practice this douse occasionally at St. Francis downwind finishes.

Rig an Outgrabber

Rig your sheet through a block amidships (approximately under main boom when it is out all the way) (generally same as guy location)

Rig a flying side-opening block on the end of an adjustable line that comes from your mainsheet bail.

Run your spinnaker sheet through the flying block, after the toerail block and before the clew.

When it is windy, pull the flying block all the way out to your mainsheet bail

You will have to ease the spinnaker sheet so that you are not over-trimmed.

This approach flattens the lower part of the kite so that it acts like a sheer panel and prevents the upper kite from oscillating.

This approach opens the leech of the kite so that when you head up, the kite doesn't generate as much heeling force.

Sort out and practice your de-power/stabilize spinnaker trim procedure in advance.

**Pull out outgrabber.
Ease topping lift.
Pull in foreguy.
Repeat until stable.**

Don't drop pole inner end, don't tighten spin sheet, don't ease afterguy, just follow the procedure.

Spinnaker ends up looking like a tortured asymmetric: Open leech, stable, center seam in front of headstay. (skipper becomes less tortured)

Easy to "open throttle" again, just ease foreguy

Sort out and practice your roundup recovery procedure in advance (controversial but effective).

**Ease topping lift.
Grind foreguy, pull pole end down into pulpit (generally this will do it)
Ease boomvang ONLY if necessary
DO NOT ease spinnaker sheet or guy (almost never necessary)**

When boat comes up, just ease foreguy and you are perfectly trimmed and away.

Pre-plan your "Banana Surprise" (round-down jibe-broach) recovery

If rigged with no preventer and no runner, just jibe back

**If "face planted" by runners or preventer, the absolutely safest strategy is to do nothing and just wait (ideally down below).
(This strategy is notably ineffective off Pt Conception)**

Weather Tactics

(see article at West Marine Pacific Cup website)

Overall Influence of High VG

light years

more wind south (some cases +1 knot TWS, 10 miles S, 12 miles/day gain)
weak high, E-W orientation, "zonal" UL flow, sharp ridge, quick veer at 130
boats north trapped in light air, cannot jibe out except on awful angle

windy years

good breeze everywhere, N track shorter, sometimes more wind N
high round, pronounced UL ridge/wave, slow veer at ridge
reachy for lots of race
boats south can not "cash in" investment in southing

call made first night

fn of high location, strength, movement, shape, UL pattern, systems to West,
also strong fn of displacement of boat

Three sections of Race (ignoring start and finish)

windy reach to the ridge

mostly sail straight to waypoint on ridge, sagging rarely works here

slotcars through middle of race

mostly sail downwind polars
sometimes sail VMC, above downwind polars if sure will not spin up VG

run begins when jibes are even

wind generally shifts right, favor stbd pole VG
do jibe on shifts, but return to stbd pole between shifts
hit the right corner but don't overstand
watch for inverted troughs from tropicals

Start to System Breeze (1/2 way to Farallones)

Remember course to Kaneohe passes over Farallones!

race like Farallones race, not like Windjammer.
immediate tack after start out into favorable current
slow tacks across axis of current, center bridge, align Alcatraz with S tower
go towards Bonita to tack on layline for ship channel (avoid Montara hole)
short tack ship channel (outside if ships)
when you get the lift, and smell the marine breeze, start racing to waypoint

Approach to Finish

**Check spinnaker halyard and sock several miles upwind of finish.
Make final approach on port pole, avoid coming in directly UW of the Island.
Douse promptly, then jibe to stbd.
If problems, jibe to stbd immediately and reach out from reef, flagging kite.
Conservative approach might be to douse before finish, but doesn't lend itself to great photos and good psych.**

Squalls VG

**mostly right shifts
most boats, sail through squalls on port pole, jibe well after squall
if line of squalls, wind often toes in at front of each squall
sleds, jibe back and forth to stay in squall, (eating the headers)
normal boats, jibe to port before squall, jibe back well after squall
exit on port pole avoids light air behind squalls
expect subsequent squalls on a night to be similar to predecessor
expect squalls to get windier throughout the night
absolutely avoid being near a squall at sunrise
clear spots are never as far away as they seem (just jibe!)**

Cloud Lines

**happens half of the races
when poles are near even, take port pole over to near edge of cloud line
sail along edge of clouds (or just under) on starboard
do not sail all afternoon in clear sky, if cloud lines are visible
if clouds are puffy and scattered, then just hit shifts
cloud lines are never as far away as they seem (just jibe!)**

Weather Info

**Try to get a programmable fax (Furuno) or schedulable sw.
If programmable, copy lots of faxes.
Ignore old progs!
Upper level progs best source on strong/weak high forecast
Watch for jetstream doing upside down U over ridge, 300 mi W of
surface H, indicates strong surface H
Straight E-W jetstream (zonal flow) indicates weak surface H.**

Watch for transiting L's over H. UL chart can indicate probable effect
Go to college library, page through Surface and UL charts for July
Try to get a barograph. Traditional style best, Vetus second, Oregon
Scientific 3rd (but cheap)

Rules of Thumb

Never, ever, believe in rules of thumb.
Sail tangent to the 1020 mb line
Sail tangent to whatever mb line is at a pressure that is 8mb below High
Strong High 1034mb, 40 deg N
 Light boats cross 130 Lon at 34
 Heavy boats cross 130 Lon at 34-35
Light High 1024mb, 35 deg N
 Light boats cross 130 Lon at 31-32
 Heavy boats cross 130 Lon at 32-33
Downwind in a heavy boat, never sail faster than $1.2 \cdot \sqrt{\text{waterline}}$, if you
 can bear off instead
In a heavy boat, sail rhumbline, unless it is very very light.
Expect 50 jibes if you are very serious about winning.
Crowd a tropical if in front of it.
Avoid a tropical if behind it.
If you get rain before wind as a squall approaches, watch your wallet
If the butter melts, you're too far south.

Conclusion

Pick your ridge crossing very carefully, and after crossing the ridge while on
a broad reach, do not give away what southing you have carelessly. When
breeze veers to a dead run, jibe aggressively on the shifts, but favor stbd pole
when the wind is even. Do not overstand. Jibe in from the North corner to a
point that is 60 miles upwind of the finish. Douse quickly after finish. Drink
hard, but don't try to match General Roper or Morris in the bar. Don't
sleep on the beach (ask Morris).