Dinghy Sailing
Training Notes

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Welcome

The content of this document is intended for use as course notes and post-training reminders for those attending one or more of the dinghy sailing courses offered at the RYA Training Centre, East Lancashire Sailing Club, here in Rishton.

Dinghy sailing, without professional training, is potentially unsafe and should be avoided. These notes are not a DIY guide to dinghy sailing and cannot replace the learning provided by a qualified instructor and the subsequent achievement of your own practical experience.

If you would like to learn how to sail please contact robintomlinson@btinternet.com, our Chief Instructor. Robin will be able to advise you on the best courses to meet your ambitions and inform you of the dates and availability of any forthcoming events. This way you can be confident that the course you choose will be just right for you and will provide you with a great experience in a safe and secure environment.

Now, while we would be more than happy to meet you and train you here at Rishton, if Lancashire is too far for you to travel, then we would encourage you to enrol with any other recognised RYA Training Centre, perhaps nearer your location, to be sure of staying safe and secure on the water.

Good luck with your future sailing.

Course Notes and Reminders

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Parts of the Sails
Main and Jib or Genoa

The Main Sail
- Head
- Leech
- Foot
- Clew
- Battens

The Jib or Genoa
- Head
- Leech
- Luff
- Tack
- Clew
Parts of a Sailing Dinghy
Standing Rigging, Boom and Rudder

- Spreader
- Shroud
- Forestay
- Mast
- Tiller Extension
- Boom
- Gooseneck
- Foredeck
- Hull
- Centreboard
- Rudder

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Points of Sailing

Wind Direction

"No - Go Zone"

Close Hauled (Beating)

Close Reach

Beam Reach

Reaching

Running

Broad Reach

Training Run

Dead Run

Training Run

Close Hauled (Beating)
The Five Essentials:
1) Balance

Balance - Port and Starboard weight distribution
Balance is achieved by the Crew (and the Helm) moving their body weight between the port and starboard sides of the dinghy to keep it flat on the water and the mast (mostly) vertical.

Keeping the dinghy flat may require you to sit on opposite sides or perhaps both sit together or even both leaning out across the water. Good communication between Helm and Crew is essential to get this right.

When Balance is not achieved the mast will not be vertical and the dinghy “Heels”. This is inefficient as it slows the dinghy down and becomes difficult to hold a course.

If the heel becomes excessive, the dinghy will fill with water and capsize!
The Five Essentials:
2) Trim

Close Hauled (Beating):
Keep the weight towards the mast on the windward side of the boat

Beam Reach:
Keep the weight towards the middle on the windward side of the boat

Broad Reach:
Keep the weight towards the stern to lift the bow out of the water. Less drag

Running:
Keep the weight well forward on opposite sides of the boat to lift the stern out of the water. Less drag

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The Five Essentials:
3) Sail Setting and 4) Centreboard

Close Hauled
(Beatng)
- Sailing close to the wind i.e. 45°
- Sails: Fully in
- Centreboard: Fully down

Beam Reach
- Sailing at 90° to the wind
- Sails: 1/2 way out
- Centreboard: 1/2 way up

Broad Reach
- Sailing at 135° away from the wind
- Sails: 3/4 way out
- Centreboard: 3/4 way up

Running
- Sailing with the wind directly behind
- Sails: Fully out
- Centreboard: Almost fully up
The Five Essentials: 5) Course Made Good

**No-Go Zone**
With the wind head on a dinghy can not take the shortest course and must make alternate tacks to reach mark B. In this example the wind causes leeway but as each tack is made the impact of the leeway will be less obvious than the next example.

**Leeway**
In this example the wind allows the dinghy to take a beam reach directly to mark B but the helm has to take into consideration the leeway and correct the heading or the dinghy will be off course by the end of this leg.

**Wind Shift**
Wind direction and strength change and must be taken into account to sail the most efficient course. In this example we see the planned course (dotted line) based on the initial wind direction and the resultant course corrections due to wind shifts.
Right of Way: Some Basic Rules

THE GOLDEN RULE:
Avoid hitting anything even if you have the right of way - you can argue about it afterwards

Understanding Port and Starboard tacks
A boat is on a ‘PORT TACK’ when the wind is coming over the PORT (left) side of the boat
A boat is on a ‘STARBOARD TACK’ when the wind is coming over the STARBOARD (right) side of the boat

Two boats approaching on opposite tacks

RULE: If you are on a PORT tack you must “Give Way” (Keep Clear) of boats on a STARBOARD tack. The boat on a STARBOARD tack should shout “Starboard!”

Two boats approaching on the same tack

RULE: The boat nearer the wind (Windward) must keep clear. This also applies to two boats on PORT tacks

Overtaking

RULE: If on the same tack the overtaking boat must keep clear.

If on opposite tacks the boat on PORT must keep clear even when they are the boat in front

Note: When the wind is not coming over the STARBOARD or PORT side of the boat the position of the main sail is used to identify which tack boats are on.
Knots, bends and hitches

Figure of eight knot

Bowline (knot)

Reef knot

Sheet bend

Rolling hitch

Round turn and two half hitches

Clove hitch

Technical terms

A knot is generally made in one end of one rope.
A bend joins two different ropes together whether they are of equal or unequal diameter.
A hitch secures a rope to another object e.g. Spar, ring or post.

Securing ropes to a (horn) cleat

When securing a rope to a horn cleat, first take a complete turn around the cleat before making two or three criss-cross turns over the horns of the cleat.

If the rope is going to be cleated for some time, and not let go in a hurry, it can be finished off with a half hitch.

Knots, hitches and bends courtesy: Lucasbosch (Own work)  
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