

A useful guide for anyone interested in Inshore or Offshore yacht racing

## Symmetric Spinnaker

The spinnaker is a sail made from very thin nylon cloth and used when the wind is aft of the beam. We carry two types of spinnakers on board, a light weight spinnaker used in very light airs, and a heavy weight spinnaker used in moderate winds.

Because the sail is symmetrical there are 2 leeches and 2 clews

Leech – Trailing edge of the sail

Foot - Bottom of the sail

Head – Where the halyard is attached

Clew – Where the sheets or guys are attached

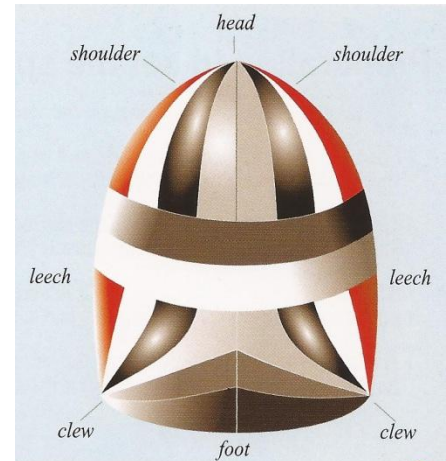
Spinnaker pole – used to hold the sail out to windward

Sheet – used to fly the spinnaker

Guy – Used to control the spinnaker pole fore and aft

Pole up – Used to raise the spinnaker pole

Pole down – used to stabilise the spinnaker pole



We use 2 sets of sheets and guys, so there is always a lazy set that allows us to gybe the spinnaker more easily. The sheet attaches to the clew of the spinnaker and the guy attaches to the sheet. The method of gybing described in this worksheet is dip pole which is common on boats over 36ft.

## Hoisting a Spinnaker

### Bear away set

Before hoisting a spinnaker you must ensure that the sheets and guys are rigged correctly and the spinnaker halyard is not twisted. The spinnaker bag should be secured to the leeward rail with the sheets and guys attached to the clews and the halyard secured to the head. As the spinnaker is hoisted behind the jib when racing we prepare the spinnaker while on the opposite tack to make it easier.

### Pole up

The windward sheet and guy are secured into the jaws of the spinnaker pole (known as double beaking), the inboard and outboard ends are raised to a pre-determined height.

### Sneaking the guy

The windward guy is pulled until the clew reaches the spinnaker pole, this helps the spinnaker fill more easily after it has been hoisted.

### The hoist

The helm will bear away until the wind is aft of the beam then call for the spinnaker to be hoisted. When the spinnaker is fully hoisted the person sweating the halyard will call **MADE**. The spinnaker

guy can now be trimmed until 90 degrees to the wind and the spinnaker sheet can now sheeted in to fill the spinnaker. The genoa/jib is lowered to the foredeck and secured.

### Gybe set

The main difference between a gybe set and a bear away set is, a bear away set is quicker as the pole can be raised before the mark and the spinnaker is hoisted going around the mark.

A gybe set requires the boat to gybe under white sail then hoist the spinnaker. Setting up for a gybe hoist is the same as a bear away set, but ensure the spinnaker is setup on what will become the leeward side of the boat after the gybe.

The sheet and guy can be double beaked into the spinnaker pole, but the pole cannot be raised until the boat has gybed under white sail. Everything happens very quickly.

### Pole up

Once the genoa/jib has gybed, the pole can be raised as quickly as possible to the predetermined height.

### Sneaking the guy

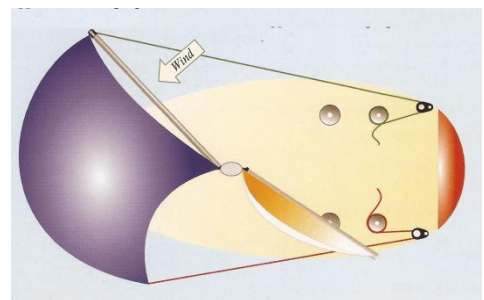
The guy trimmer needs to sneak the guy as the pole is being raised into position.

### The hoist

The helm will call for the spinnaker to be hoisted. When the spinnaker is fully hoisted the person sweating the halyard will call **MADE**. The spinnaker guy can now be trimmed until 90 degrees to the wind and the spinnaker sheet can now sheeted in to fill the spinnaker. The genoa/jib is lowered to the foredeck and secured.

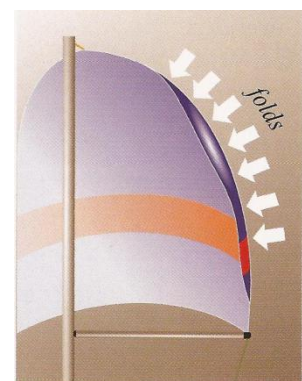
## Setting the pole

The spinnaker pole should be set to 90 degrees to the apparent wind at all times when the wind is aft of the beam. This allows the spinnaker to provide the maximum drive. The pole height should be set so both clews are level.



## Flying the Spinnaker

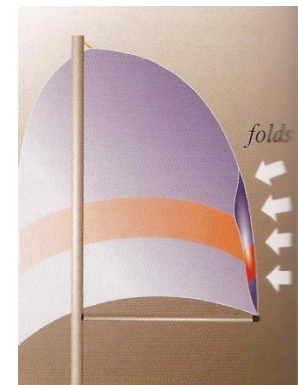
Once the pole is set the spinnaker sheet can be used to fly the spinnaker. The sheet should be eased until the windward leech begins to fold, when the spinnaker is on the verge of collapsing it is at its most efficient. The spinnaker sheet should be "played" continuously to ensure the spinnaker is on the verge of collapsing.



If the top of the spinnaker folds first then the pole is too low and should be raised



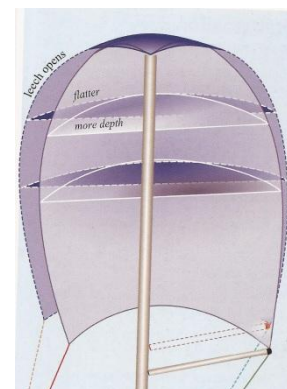
If the bottom of the spinnaker fold first then the pole is too high and should be lowered



### Spinnaker depth

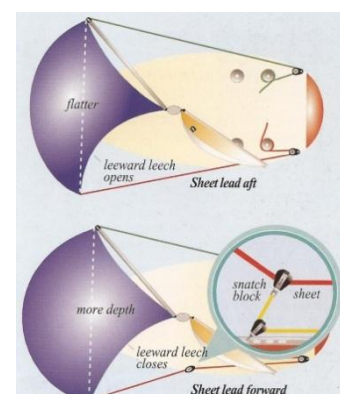
The spinnaker pole controls the depth of the upper parts of the spinnaker. By raising the pole it decreases the depth becoming flatter and less powerful.

By lowering the pole it increases the depth becoming deeper and more powerful.



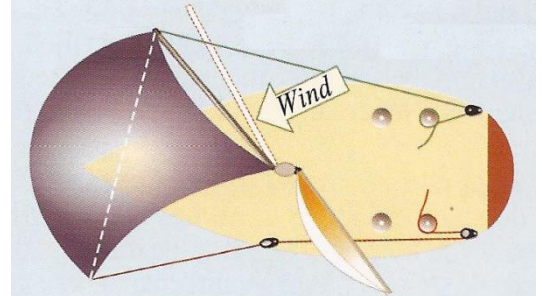
The depths of the lower parts of the spinnaker are controlled by the position of the spinnaker sheet. With the sheet lead to its normal position the leech will open and flatten the spinnaker.

If the sheet position is led forward then the leech closes



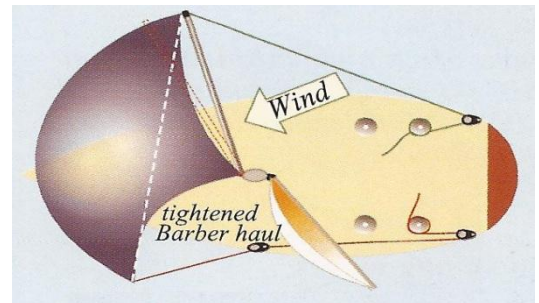
## Light Airs

In light winds or choppy water the spinnaker has a greater tendency to collapse. To help keep the spinnaker filled the pole can be under trimmed (moved forward) to help keep it flying, and the pole lowered to keep the clews level. A Barber hauler can be used to stabilise the spinnaker if it is choppy.



## Strong Winds

In stronger winds the pole can be set lower than normal to reduce the risk of rolling, and over trimmed (moved back) to stabilise the windward leech. A barber hauler can be used to keep the clews level.



## Dip Pole Gybe

Before the gybe the helm will bear away on to a dead run, once the boat and spinnaker have stabilised the pole is ready to be tripped.

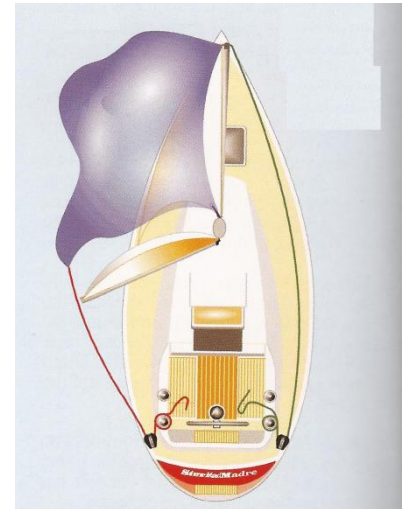
### Tripping the pole

When the spinnaker pole is tripped the guy can be eased so the spinnaker is being flown on the 2 sheets and the lazy guy can be prepared. The jaws of the spinnaker pole are tripped (open), and the pole up is eased to allow the pole to fall, the inboard end may need to be raised to allow the pole to fit between the mast and forestay. As the pole goes through the boat the lazy guy is secured into the jaws and **MADE** is called. The spinnaker pole is raised again and the guy (was the lazy guy) can be sheeted in until the pole is 90 degrees to the wind again.

## Spinnaker drop

When the decision to drop the spinnaker is made the genoa/jib should be hoisted to allow us to blanket the spinnaker before the drop is made.

The guy should be eased to allow the spinnaker pole to go forward until just off the forestay, this will allow the sheet to be tripped more easily. The lazy guy can now be brought into the companionway hatch ready to be hauled in.



## Tripping the sheet

The sheet will be tripped (A) allowing the spinnaker to stream out and as the halyard is lowered the spinnaker can be feed into the companion way.

This method can be used to drop the spinnaker on any heading and by feeding the spinnaker through the slot between the mainsail and the boom we can do what is known as a letterbox drop which is useful in stronger winds.

