

Competitive 420 Boathandling

Chalk Talk Notes:

Tacking Technique

Three Phases of a Tack

First Phase

1. Maintain airflow as long as possible
2. Use weight and some sailtrim to initiate the turn
3. Boat turns slowly to maintain as much speed as possible

Second Phase

1. Sails no longer have airflow
2. Bow must cross head-to-wind quickly
3. More tiller is used at this point along with aggressive weight movement

Third Phase

1. Boat is on its new close-hauled course
2. Re-establish airflow across sails
3. Re-accelerate the boat

The Driver

First Phase

1. Slides into the boat using weight to initiate the turn
2. Tucks his/her feet beneath him into a solid braced position

Second Phase

1. Pushes the tiller beyond the cockpit if necessary
2. Rolls shoulders outboard to rock the boat
3. Recoils to a crouched position poised for the re-acceleration in phase 3

Third Phase

1. With the tiller on centerline, the driver then springs to the new rail

2. Switches tiller and sheet hand in the process
3. Hikes the boat flat

A note on styles:

Remember that the determining factor for an illegal tack is whether the boat exits the tack faster than it entered. This is a tough rule to enforce, but people frequently key off “excessive roll” in the tack as an indication that the rules are being pushed. So, over-rolling the boat may make you stand out as a potential infringement.

The Crew

First phase

1. Moves weight into the boat to influence the turn
2. Centers his or her feet beneath them to maintain balance through the tack

Second phase

1. Lunges body outboard
2. Briefly backwinds the jib to help push the boat through head-to-wind

Third phase

1. Crew stands up lunging toward the new rail
2. Releases the old sheet
3. Trims the new sheet on
4. Hikes the boat flat

A note on styles:

Good crews “make” the boat go around the course. Their efforts consider the steering and speed so much that they almost drag the driver along for the ride. In order to consider the boat’s direction and speed, the crew has to keep eyes forward with the same attention the driver has. This can only be done after enough practice to “get your head out of the boat.”

