



SETTINGS FOR THE NEW 5.3 SAIL

Having watched the racing fleet all summer it is clear that the new sail is different. This should not be a surprise because the rationale behind it meant the shape had to be different. Using it correctly requires an understanding of this rationale:

The differences:

- The new sail has a more even depth throughout its height to give the leech better support. The effect is that it 'stands up' better than the old one which minimises fluttering in a breeze (a little flutter is ok but lots of the old sails fluttered so much that the whole sail shook which was not ok)
- The deepest part of the sail is a little further forward in the new sail to stop the boat screwing up into the wind and getting stuck in irons when it really blows. The downside of this is that in lighter winds we need to flatten the front of the sail (see kicker below) if we are going to point when going upwind.
- The leech is cut with more of a hollow (take a look up the leech from clew to head), again to minimize flutter, but this does seem to allow us to adjust the leech-line without the awful curl we used to get with the old sail. You were always told never to use the leech-line in the old sail because it couldn't then be let off but this is no longer a problem. Play with the line - right off in light winds and just enough in a breeze to control the flutter.
- The new sail has an extra piece of cloth to form the leech seam rather than just folding over the panel cloth. The advantage is that the seam cloth's strength operates in just the right direction which again supports the leech.
- Each seam has an extra overlap as it approaches the leech to act a bit like battens. This is intended to keep the back of the sail a little flatter when the wind picks up.
- The sailcloth is much more modern with a lot more stiffness built into it. Again this allows the best sail shape to be maintained over a wider wind range because it is not easily pushed around by the wind. The downside of this is that it will show imperfections as more prominent creases and being a more resin rich cloth it will be better not to let it flog between races. You will probably also find that the sail takes a little longer to wear in and get to its best so start using it well before big events.

OK, so apart from costing you nearly half as much as the old one, the most important change is that lots was done to support the leech and to put the centre of effort further forward. This is great in a breeze but needs to be allowed for in lighter winds where a flatter front and an open leech is required. Topper sailors have never had a choice of sails like the other Junior Classes so we are not used to looking at our rigs. *We must start looking at sail shape rather than just putting on controls the way you have always done it*

Try these:

- Use kicker tension with the new sail in lighter winds, when sailing upwind. This will bend the mast and take out the fullness in the front of the sail thus improve pointing. (It's much the same in the Laser Radial by the way)
- Make sure the leech-line is loosened right off in light winds but put a little back on as the wind increases. The way to loosen it is to pull the leech of the sail tight using mainsheet or kicker tension and then release the line from the cleat. Reapply a little tension in stronger winds - having makings on the line might well be useful.
- Pull more outhaul on than before to flatten the sail especially in light winds.
- In addition fiddling with the foot-line helps if you find it flaps.