

The Run and Bearaway Set

Jamie Lea · BDA Magazine 2005 Annual, p. 26

Summary. The run is a leg on which places can be gained, so planning should start on the approach to the windward mark: decide which gybe takes you closer to the leeward mark and make a clear call to the crew before the spreader mark. The bear-away set is the usual call, because gybing at the spreader mark puts you in the lee of every boat sailing down the spreader leg, which is poor in light winds. Straight after rounding, the crew member at the mast should look back and tell the helm whether you are in clear air or being covered, and judge whether to go high with the fleet or sail low and give up a few places to keep a clear lane.

The run is not a time to switch off, relax and get your energy ready for the next beat. It is another leg of the course where there is opportunity to overtake the boats that are in front of you.

You need to be thinking about the run on the approach to the windward mark. Look at which gybe will take you closer to the leeward marks and make a clear call to the crew as to what the plan is as you round the spreader mark.

The bear away set is the most common call, mainly because if you gybe at the spreader mark, you will be sailing in the lee of all the boats sailing across the spreader leg – in light winds this is not a good move.

If the bear away call is made, you need a pair of eyes looking back asap after rounding, to call to the helmsperson if you are in clear air, and what to do about it if you are being covered.

In the moment after rounding the spreader mark there will be much jostling for position. It is here that you can suddenly be engulfed by boats taking your wind – before you know it you could have lost four or five places.

Therefore you need to be most alert at keeping a clear lane. The person looking back, normally the front man/woman, sitting or standing at the mast, needs to evaluate whether to go high with the fleet in order to keep clear air, or to sail low and sacrifice a few places to keep clear air.

— *Jamie Lea*

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