

Heavy Weather

Eric Williams · BDA Magazine 2005 Annual, p. 24

Summary. A checklist for racing a Dragon in heavy weather, in three parts. Preparation: check shackles, runners and blocks, clear the bilges, and carry a good towline as well as the anchor warp, plus lifejackets. Settings: set the boat up to be easy and fast, treat heavy weather helm as a sign of being overpowered, and de-power by flattening the main with the mast ram, raising the genoa barber and opening the main leech with the backstay. Techniques: ease the main before tacking and use the waves upwind; downwind, run slightly by the lee, gybe at maximum speed with the kicker eased, and flatten the spinnaker to stop rolling.

1. Prepare your boat

Check:

- shackles, runners and blocks
- bilges are clear of debris
- you have a good towline in addition to anchor warp
- lifejackets

2. Settings

Set to be easy and fast.

Heavy weather helm shows the boat is overpowered and slow.

- depower the rig by flattening the mainsail with the mast ram
- raise genoa barber
- use the backstay to open mainsail leech

3. Techniques

Upwind

- ease the main before tacking
- use the waves to help pull the bow round in the tack
- allow extra at the lay lines to avoid tacks and to ease off for greater speed

Downwind

- running slightly by the lee is fast and allows you to use the waves... but take care and practise first!
- gybe when speed is maxed
- ease the kicker before the gybe, in flat water
- flatten spinnaker by sheeting in and pulling in barber to stop rolling

— *Eric Williams*

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