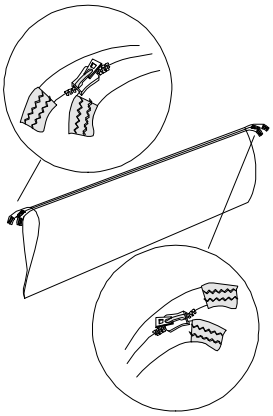
Sail Handling and Neil Pryde Custom Fittings

The following are some of the special Neil Pryde fittings which every boat owner should be familiar with.

Genoa Sausage Bags

Neil Pryde Race and Premier Series sails are supplied with genoa sausage bags as standard. These bags make repacking easier and quicker. The bags have 2 full-length zips on top of the bag which run forward and aft from the clew to the tack. Before you attempt to put the sail in the bag make sure both sliders are at one end of the bag. Then pack the sail inside and slide one zip from one end to the other. Do not take it off the end of the bag. You can then throw the bag around quite freely and it will not come undone. When you wish to hoist, place the bag on the foredeck and run the zipper off at the front. The whole zip will then break open freely and the sail will be in position on the foredeck ready for use. (figure 11)

Figure 11



To close bag, start with zipper car on one track at either end of bag. Connect tracks into zipper and run it to the other end of the bag, leaving it about 70mm from the end of the bag.

To open the bag, run the car the final 70mm to the end of the bag, letting the tracks come undone, opening the bag.

Dousing Sock

The dousing sock can be used with either a asymmetric spinnaker or a regular spinnaker. To hoist the sail, attach the halyard to the head ring on the sail and attach the tack downhaul line to the tack ring. It should then be passed through a turning block on the deck near the bow, and then to a cleat or winch somewhere near the cockpit. The tack will initially fly approximately five feet above the deck, so allow this amount of slack in the line.

Before hoisting, bear away onto a square run, then pull up the spinnaker in its dousing sock behind the mainsail. In this position it is not being subjected to much wind, and is easy to keep under control during hoisting. Don't forget to attach the sheet before you do so. You will now be sailing on a dead run with the spinnaker nicely under control inside the dousing sock. You then hoist the sock to the mast head using the continuous line system provided. This exposes the sail to the wind so it fills gently with wind.

To drop the spinnaker, bear away onto a run again so the sail is blanketed from the wind, behind the mainsail. Then pull the sock's continuous line system in the opposite direction to pull the sock down form the mast head and over the sail, completely enclosing it. The whole sausage is then lowered by dropping the halyard. Leave the spinnaker in the sock when not in use so it is ready for the next time you want to hoist it.

Parrel Beads

Neil Pryde provides this system for the cruising sailor who wishes to use a cruising asymmetric spinnaker with their genoa in it's furled state.

The Nylon balls are threaded onto a wire strop and the entire system is then wrapped around the furled genoa to form a controlling collar.

The snap shackle at the tack of the spanker is fastened through the eyes at the end of the strop. The whole procedure allows the spinaker to be attached around the forestay for maximum control while still allowing the tack height to be adjusted. (figure 12 on following page)

Tips of the Trade

Over a few years, certain amendments to the basic procedures prove their worth time and again. Below, for you convenience, we've listed a few of our favorites.

Get the jib fairlead right

The tell tales are a good guide for ensuring you have the jib fairlead in the correct position. Sailing upwind in a moderate breeze, sheet the jib on until the leech is 2" from the spreader ends. Gently luff into the eye of the wind and check where on the luff the telltales are breaking first. If the telltales up high stall out firs, then move the lead forward a little; if the telltales at the bottom of the genoa stall first, move the lead back a little. Once you have established this medium position, move the fairlead back a couple of holes in heavy winds and forward a couple in light winds, as previously discussed. (figure 13)

Avoiding broaching

Make sure the spinnaker sheet is always eased as much as possible. When a gust strikes, dumping the spinnaker sheet two feet in a repeated jerking motion will tend to free up the rudder and give the helmsman a few critical seconds of control. At this stage, completely ease the vang allowing the boom to rise and the leech to twist off. This will completely de-power the mainsail and make the boat much easier to sail.

Reefing the mainsail

Jiffy reefing remains the most popular system of shortening sails in strong winds. It is a very reliable system if used properly. Just follow this procedure:

Begin by tightening the topping lift (if you have one; if not, be very careful because the next procedure, if executed incorrectly, can result in the boom falling into the cockpit). Next, drop the main halyard while a crewmember stands by the mast to attach the tack of the sail to the reef point. It is vital that the luff is secured and the halyard pretensioned before you make any attempt to tighten the clew line. Once you have tightened the main halyard and secured it, you can move on to the clew line, pulling it in tight. When this is done, re-tighten the mainsheet so the sail fills. When you have settled down, have a crewmember tie in the reef across the points, especially if you are passage-making or expecting stronger winds.

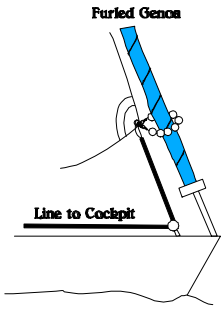
On a racing boat you can leave the loose fold of cloth free if you think you will be taking the reef out shortly. If you do use individual points, don't tighten them up too much. Remember they are only there to tidy things up, not to take any load. AND IMPORTANTLY, remember to untie them when you take the reef out.

Using the telltales

The mainsail has telltales down the leech. They are a good indicator of the amount of twist you have. If you have the correct amount of twist in most conditions, then the top two telltales will fly cleanly backwards approximately half the time. If they are flowing more than half the time then you probably have too much twist. If they are always stalled out, and hidden behind the leeward side of the sail then you haven't got enough twist.

The telltales on the front of the genoa are indicators of your heading relative to sail trim. If you are sailing upwind in moderate winds and the genoa is approximately three inches off the spreader, you can sail by the telltales. If the windward telltale starts to flutter then you are sailing too close to the wind; if the leeward side starts to flutter you are sailing too far off the wind. With correct sheet trim—i.e., approximately three inches off the spreader ends—both sets of telltales will stream aft when your heading is correct.

Figure 12



Parrel beads connect the tack of a free-flying sail to a forestay with a furled genoa on it. Plastic balls roll harmlessly over furled genoa, avoiding chafe and friction.

Sail Care

A sail's worst enemies are chafe and sunlight. You should take every precaution to allay these factors. Sunlight is particularly damaging to Kevlar and mylar sails. Sails should always be covered or stowed below, preferably dry, when not in use.

Chafe should be avoided by taping all pins, be they on the mast or the shrouds. Stanchions and pulpits should also be carefully checked to ensure there are no points of wear. Mylar genoas should be fitted with spreader patches where the leeches hit the spreader ends. In many cases they require similar patches at each stanchion the sail will come in contact with as well. This is absolutely vital, and even on woven cruising sails a sail patch or extensive padding on the spreader end will lead to significantly increase life in you sails.

The sail's other enemies are salt and flogging. Flogging is particularly detrimental to racing sails and can lead to delamination of laminated materials or the destruction of the finish on very hard racing cloth. Do whatever is possible to reduce flogging, although obviously in the minutes leading up to the start of a race some flogging is unavoidable.

Salt accumulation must be dealt with as often as possible. On a dinghy or small daysailor, it should be possible to wash the sails in clean, fresh water at least monthly, while a large cruising sail should be overhauled and washed at the end of each season. Although it can be expensive, it really will add dramatically to your sail's lifespan.

Washing sails

It is important to wash sails very carefully. Warm water and detergent will get off the majority of dirt marks (apart from rust and blood) and a good final rinse down with cold, fresh water is vital. Never use any strong chemicals or bleach.

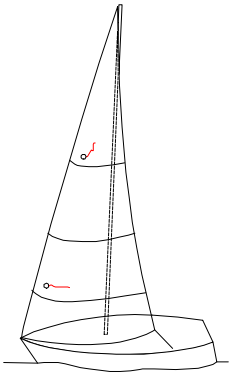
Storing sails

Very firm finished racing fabric should be rolled wherever possible, as folding will lead to creases which will not come out. Laminated sails of Kevlar or mylar can be left stowed in their sausage bags. Cruising sails should always be folded, or at least stowed on the boom (in which case they must always be covered).

While sails can be left wet, it is preferable to dry them whenever possible. This applies particularly to spinnakers. Do not, however, try to dry sails by either letting them hang from the mast, which will cause irreparable damage from flogging, or leave them exposed to bright sunlight, which will ten to make the cloth very brittle. Spinnakers are particularly sensitive to sunshine.

All sails can be subject to mildew if the right conditions exsist. These include, moisture, lack of light and a food source. A dry sail is your best bet against the possibility of mold and mildew.

Figure 13



If top telltale stalls first, fairlead is too far back. If bottom telltale stalls first, fairlead is too far forward.