

Sunday conditions: 3-6 knots, chop

Upwind sailing: Key was to have slight leeward heel and flow in the top leach tell-tails almost 100% of the time. Picking the right spots to flatten the boat out and translate power into speed was difficult, but could be a strong tool in the right scenarios. The 'right spots' are flat areas of water and increase in pressure. Transitioning back from this 'fast-forward' mode to normal mode is critical. Weight placement fore and aft was also very important. Being able to have the crew in front of the shrouds and shifting weight back to avoid waves from coming over the bow proved to be fast. Tacking in front of the mast was also much quicker. The stern on the 29er is big, so keeping it from dragging is key.

Downwind sailing: In light air, the crew effectively drives the boat. The goal is to keep pressure in the kite, so we need constant communication from the crew about this. Small weight adjustments in and out is also important. If crew says "losing pressure", skipper knows to head up and both crew and skipper should bring their shoulders in to help the boat turn. If crew says "good pressure to drive down", skipper knows to head down and both crew and skipper should lean their shoulders back.

As for gybes, the biggest takeaway is to know when the kill on the old spin sheet is needed. In Sunday's conditions the kill was slow. One of the uses of the kill is to unload the kite through the gybe. In breeze this is key because it unloads the boat and the helm, making it easy for the skipper to turn the boat well. In light breeze we want to keep the kite loaded. A common issue with this style of gybe is that the clew floats out, causing the kite to fold on itself on the new side. To prevent this, we keep the old sheet in our hand when we start pulling on the new sheet. As we trim the new sheet, the old one will be pulled out of our hand. Another note on the gybe is whether to have the crew in front or behind the mast. Frankly, I don't have a strong opinion on this, but it's something we should talk about. I imagine that a well-executed crew in front gybe is faster than crew behind.

Set-up: Both boats were set up very similarly. I would have been at 18 tension and middle on jib track, which is what both boats were at. The jib clew-board is a little bit less straight forward. The general thinking is that in light air you go top hole. However, in the chop that we had on Sunday, going middle hole was not out of the question. My thought process here is simple: unlike in light air and FLAT water, where we are looking to stall the top leach tell-tails on the main 20% of the time and go strictly for height, in light air and CHOP the main is slightly more twisty (100% flow), so to match up the jib and main leach profiles, middle on clew-board could be the correct set-up. This is something to experiment with. Batten tension – make sure that they will not be an issue to pop!