

Starling Controls

What controls do you have?

The first three obvious ones are vang (kicker), cunningham and outhaul. Unlike the opti, but like every other boat in the world, you have easy access to change any one of these three controls at any time. Other 'controls' that are sometimes missed include your mainsheet, tack ties and traveller.

What do they do?

Firstly it is a good idea to know what the controls actually do to your sail, before you start making adjustments randomly. There should be a reason as to why you make certain adjustments.

Setting up your controls

MAX OFF:

This may not be a term everyone one is familiar with. It basically means that if you were to let off either the vang, cunningham and outhaul and for some reason it did not clear then the controls do not go out so far to cause instability and other issues.

Cunningham: The cunningham cannot 'run out' but a good idea is to set the pulley up high enough so that you can get enough on. If you are smaller/weaker, then put extra purchases in.

This meant that when I pulled on the cunningham, the bottom eye also came down with it smoothing out the tack area of the sail. And vice versa when I let the cunningham off, the bottom eye was able to slide back up to gain maximum height needed in the light winds. A smooth tack tie, and bungy if you have a baby stay saddle can help the tack tie, and cunningham to loosen off. Otherwise, it is a case of reaching forward and pushing it up manually.

Outhaul: The outhaul is fairly basic. There is a maximum you will ever let off your outhaul (I suggest the maximum to be when small creases start going vertically up the sail from the boom as below):

At this point have the pulley at the front of the boom right up to the boom. This allows you to pull on lots when needed. A pulley at the clew may also work, if you are weaker. Or a 2:1 system inside the boom. Experiment with the ratios, but in all cases make sure it only ever reaches your maximum off you want, and you can get enough on when needed. Older sails will be harder to find the balance as they will be stretched. Often you would not need to ease the outhaul as much as a new sail to gain the same benefit.

Vang: The vang is important! Getting this right can make you win or lose a race.

BLOCK POSITIONS:

Here I am talking about the mainsheet blocks. The positioning would depend on your traveller and whether you are using a stiffener in the mast or not. In all cases, I suggest the front mainsheet block on the boom to be directly above your ratchet block.

This is because that way you are sheeting on the leech tension, which is what the mainsheet control does! If it is slightly aft, you are doing two things: 1) You are putting force into the bottom of the mast when you may not be wanting it 2) It reduces your space within the cockpit to be able to get as far forward as possible in the tacks and gybes when necessary.

TRAVELLERS:

TACK TIE:

The tack tie position can be quite important. The sails are cut so that the bottom eye is positioned further aft than the cunningham eye. Therefore, you do not want to tie the tack right up against the mast, however, you do not want it too loose as it will disturb the shape in the tack. I used one thumb width from the back of the mast to the edge of the sail. It worked well for me.

As mentioned before a slippery rope would be best. I personally prefer to use a thinner type of rope (whether it is dynema, dynema core, spectra) say 2-4mm thick and go round the mast 2 or 3 times. That is my personal preference, you could use what ever you like. Experiment as to which combination slides best up and down the mast. I would NOT suggest tying down to the gooseneck/boom. This prevents the luff from lifting up in the light winds when you are searching for the power.