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HARBOR 20 NEWS



Spinnaker Sailing the Harbor 20

Written by Leslie & Scott Deardorff
Harbor 20 #159 'Fling'
Photos courtesy of Sharon Green

October 18, 2011

Santa Barbara, California – Because there is no large sheltered sailing basin in Santa Barbara, we race our Harbor 20s in the “open ocean” of the Santa Barbara Channel, sometimes alongside boats as large as 65 feet. The courses that are typically set by the yacht club have long windward/ leeward legs, so to make the long downwind legs more interesting, Harbor 20 Fleet #4 decided to sail with spinnakers.

Adding spinnakers to the Harbor 20 created quite a stir at first, but the idea spread like wildfire; and now everyone in the harbor affectionately refers to our Harbor 20s as the “Ocean 20s.”

**We have 16 Harbor 20s in Fleet 4, and we race them
in nearly every yacht club event.**

The Harbor 20 was designed for comfort and ease of sailing, while still providing a competitive one-design racing platform.

Adding a spinnaker to the racing equation doesn't change this premise, but it does change the dynamics of downwind sailing – both physically and tactically.

With the addition of the spinnaker, most of us sail with three people, which makes launching and retrieving the spinnaker easier at tight mark roundings. But we still stay in the cockpit at all times – no running forward to set the chute – and we adhere to fleet rules that keep us safe and compliant with the one-design spirit of the Harbor 20 class.

Onboard 'Fling', we use the spinnaker on every downwind leg up to about 18-19 knots. If it's blowing much more than that, the seas are usually too high and you can find the Santa Barbara H20 fleet in the bar.

Flying the spinnaker on a Harbor 20 follows the same principle as on any asymmetrically rigged sailboat.



Although the pole launcher is installed on the starboard side, it is possible to launch the 'chute' from either side – either a jibe-set or a bear-away set.

Unless it is a triangle course, we always do a jibe-set, launching the spinnaker between the mast and the lower shroud. This allows the tack to be pre-fed to the end of the pole before the launch.

Another reason we do this is to prevent the common problem of 'shrimping' the spinnaker. The low freeboard on the H20 makes keeping the spinnaker out of the water a challenge. Hoisting from the high side lowers your chances of dumping the spinnaker in the water.

The pole launcher is deployed at about 4-5 boat lengths from the weather mark. The tack should be pre-fed to within about 2 feet from the tip of the pole, more if possible. The hoist is done by the third crew, or the skipper if there are just two of us, at the mark. The clew should be sheeted as soon as possible and the jib furled.





The biggest difference in sailing with a spinnaker comes into play as soon as you head downwind. In order to keep the spinnaker full, the deepest that you can sail in light breeze downwind is between abeam and a broad reach. Making it to the leeward mark may involve a few jibes before rounding.





In moderate winds above 10 knots, we ease the tack about 10-12 inches and keep our weight on the weather side to allow the spinnaker to rotate to weather with the sheet as eased as possible. This allows us to sail deep and improve our VMG to the leeward mark.

Jibing the spinnaker is all about timing.

With a relatively short pole, the release, trim and turn have to be timed just right to prevent the spinnaker from wrapping. The helmsperson should call for the release at the start of the turn. The trimmer then immediately releases the sheet, and the new sheet is brought in as quickly as possible while the boat is turning. The turn is completed a little higher than the final course to get the spinnaker to blow through the small space between the forestay and the luff. The new sheet should be slightly over-trimmed until the spinnaker fills. Then it should be eased quickly.

With practice and good communication, the jibes will become fluid, and the spinnaker will 'pop' on the new jibe, and the boat will accelerate.

At the leeward mark we set up for the take down at about 5-6 boat lengths from the mark by pulling the jib out and presetting the sheet a foot or two looser than final upwind trim.

We usually take the spinnaker down on the starboard side, with one crew member pulling the clew to the same slot the spinnaker was hoisted through, while the sheet is released. Once the clew is in hand, we release the tack line and gather the foot before the halyard is carefully let down to allow for a fast takedown without the spinnaker falling in the water. The spinnaker is gathered into the laundry basket that we use as a 'turtle' and is ready for the next set.



Leeward take-down



Weather take-down

Spinnaker gear and rigging

Many of the boats in Fleet #4 were purchased from previous owners who had not sailed with spinnakers, so the spinnaker gear and rigging had to be added.

Almost all of the boats use the pole launcher developed by the factory, and a few of the owners also decided to use the internal running rigging system provided with the W. D. Schock Corp. spinnaker package.

Several of the other owners have installed the running rigging on deck, to the exterior of the cockpit coaming. This method has more parts on deck, and it requires the running gear to be rigged and unrigged each racing day, but is a bit more forgiving in the event of a rigging or hoisting error.



On Harbor 20s equipped with the factory-designed spinnaker package, the tack line is led under deck to a cam cleat on the sail control console, the sheets are lead to a ratchet block & cam cleat that are installed in recessed pockets in the cockpit, and the spinnaker sheet lead blocks are installed aft in the cockpit coaming. The deck-mounted bow pole is included.



Installing an above-deck system to a boat that was not originally equipped with spinnaker equipment requires installing the bow pole and adding a spinnaker tack line to the console, two sets of turning blocks, and cam cleats.

The Santa Barbara fleet decided on certain guidelines to conform as closely as possible to the factory-issued equipment and to maintain equality among the boats. The minimum cloth weight is specified, the dimensions of the sail are clearly defined, and the spinnaker tack and spinnaker sheet leads must be uniformly placed.

**Santa Barbara Harbor 20 Fleet
Asso Spinnaker Rules**

| | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| Minimum Cloth Weight | 43 grams |
| Minimum Luff Length | 29.30' |
| Minimum Mid-Girth (ASMW) | 13.90' |
| SLU | 30.3' |
| SLE | 25.8' |
| ASMW | 14.9' |
| SF | 14.5' |

Asso spinnaker tack point must be no more than 19 1/2" from bow stem

Asso spinnaker sheet lead must be at least 26" forward of transom corner

Asso spinnaker sheet lead must be either internal or attached to the outside edge of the cockpit coaming

The most helpful device we've found to launch and retrieve the spinnaker into is a laundry basket from Target. The laundry baskets come in an assortment of colors and fit perfectly in the companion way. This is the key to keeping the spinnaker from going up in an hourglass and the halyard and sheets from getting all tangled up.



An organized cockpit – notice the spinnaker neatly stored in the laundry basket.



With the spinnaker stuffed below and the lines all tangled, a perfect set will be hard to pull off.

Harbor 20 spinnaker sailing in Santa Barbara is easy, exciting, and fun. We each learn something new every time we meet on the racecourse.



HARBOR 20 ASSO SPINNAKER TIPS & TRICKS



by Ken Kieding, The Chandlery Yacht Sales

October 18, 2011

Ocean Spinnaker Sets When the Breeze is Up

- Always set between the mast & lower shrouds
- Jibe set if possible when the wind is up & the waves are big (if setting the chute to leeward in these conditions, you are sure to shrimp due to the low freeboard & the heel of the boat)
- For a jibe set, pull the sprit out & then tack the spinnaker onto the foredeck before the jibe
- In the middle of the jibe, start pulling up the halyard
- Furl the jib as soon as possible to fill the spinnaker

Ocean Bear-Away Spinnaker Sets in Light Wind

- Use the bear-away set only in light winds
- Pull the sprit out
- Set the spinnaker between the mast & lower shrouds from the forward end of the cockpit
- Pull the spinnaker tack half way to the bow while being careful not to let the spinnaker go into the water
- Have the crew feed the spinnaker out of the cockpit while the the third crew or the skipper pulls up the halyard
- When the spinnaker is two-blocked, pull the tack out rest of the way and furl the jib to fill the spinnaker

Ocean Sailing Downwind with the Asso Spinnaker in Light Wind

- Always have the spinnaker tack pulled all the way out
- Trim the spinnaker as far out as possible (this separates the spinnaker from the main & is very fast)
- Move the skipper & crew forward to lift stern & reduce drag
- Keep the boat moving

Ocean Sailing Downwind with the Asso Spinnaker In Heavier Wind

- Move the skipper & crew aft in the cockpit to keep the bow up
- Ease the spinnaker tack out 12" to help sail rotate the sail to weather away from the main sail
- Heel the boat to weather with all crew sitting on the windward side of the boat (but not on the deck – it's against the class rules)
- Ease the spinnaker sheet out as far as possible for more rotation of the spinnaker away from the main

Other Tips While Sailing Downwind

- Ease the back stay off to let mast fall forward
- Cleat off the jib furling line
- Tighten the jib sheet, bringing the Hoyt boom to centerline
- Tighten the jib outhaul while the jib is furled to hold the mast forward to prevent rocking fore & aft
- While jibing in medium to light wind, jibe the spinnaker & slightly delay jibing the main sail
- While jibing when the breeze is on, jibe the main in unison with the spinnaker
- Some crews use a plastic laundry basket as a spinnaker turtle (my feeling is that the basket gets in the way – I just push the spinnaker under the cuddy with no turtle)

Spinnaker Take-Downs

- Anticipate what the next spinnaker set will be and pull it down on the side that will be best for the next set
- Ease the jib sheet
- Pull on the backstay (if the backstay is loose, you may have trouble unfurling the jib because the headstay will also be a loose)
- Pull out the jib
- Have the crew gather the spinnaker foot from between the lower shroud & the mast
- Blow the tack line
- Gather the spinnaker while the crew or skipper drops the halyard (depending on whether there are two or three crew)
- Pull in the sprit