CONNECTING AND OPERATING THE POP TOP

To proceed in more comfort, let's raise the pop top now. Your mast has two "sliders", the boom slider and the pop top slider. The boom slider connects the boom to the mast plus controls the desired sailing height of the IMF main sail. It has a spring loaded pin and at this juncture should be locked into its highest position on the mast. The pop top slider also has a spring loaded pin and should be found locked into its highest position on the mast just below the boom slider. Pull back on the ring on the starboard side of the pop top slider and the slider unit will lower to the base of the mast. (You do not have to hold the pin out once you have cleared its locking hole in the mast.)

There is a fitting on the front of the pop top that connects with the fitting on the pop top slider There is enough play in the pop top assembly to allow the aligning of the holes in the pop top's front hardware with the holes in the bracket on the pop top slider so you can insert the supplied bolt and lock nut. The lock nut should only be hand tightened so that the nut will not fall off but can readily be removed without the use of tools, because of this cardinal rule: THE POP TOP MUST BE DISCONNECTED FROM THE POP TOP SLIDER BEFORE A MAST IS RAISED OR LOWERED. Confucius says you cannot pivot around two points simultaneously. If you forget, you will damage the pop top or the mast or both; not beyond repair of the boat but probably beyond repair of the captain's esteem. And not covered by any guarantee since we told you not to do this. And further:

An owner let an expert break his pop top. The expert insisted the top goes up by raising the mast end first. Read my words. The Rhodes pop top is easier to raise than other designs since only half the weight is lifted at a time. But it must be done in the proper sequence: Slide the sliding hatch as far forward as it can go. Stand in the cabin on the entrance step facing the bow. If you have a late model Rhodes place both hands on the stainless steel bar in front of you (the inverted U shaped tubing that is the upper section of the aft pop top arms assembly) and raise this bar until you hear a click. (The ends of this inverted U bar ride in two lower tubes and automatically locks in place when the top is lifted to its full height). If you hear one click you get an A since you raised the top evenly and both locking pins engaged in their respective lower legs holes simultaneously. If you hear two clicks with a fraction of a second delay between them, you get a B plus. The point is you do not want to raise the top lopsidedly and put a bend in the arms. You can test to see if you have fully locked the aft end of the pop top by pulling down on the cross bar. The pop top is now at an angle leaning forward. Step further into the cabin and put both hands under the edge of the pop top and raise it up the mast until the pop top slider clicks into its mast locking hole. To verify mission accomplished, visually check to see that the pull ring on the end of the pop top slider pin is now all the way up against the plastic slider or pull down on the pop top to insure that it is indeed locked in its upper position.

If you have an older model Rhodes, life is a bit more complicated. After sliding the sliding hatch all the way forward, place only one hand on the cross bar and use the other hand to pull out the pin on one of the lower pop top arm legs and raise that side of the pop top up just slightly so the locking pin does not re-engage. . Then put the other hand on the cross bar and use the newly freed hand to pull out the locking pin on the opposite lower pop top arm. The rest is as above.

Note: Rhodes owners are very creative so, without changing the spirit of the above instructions, feel free to develop your own pop top raising style that better suits your own physical attributes.

Lowering the pop top must also be done in the proper sequence:

Slide the sliding hatch as far forward as it can go. Step down into the cabin so that you are in a comfortable position to support the front end of the pop top with one hand and use the other hand to pull the pop top slider pin. Until you are at home with this step look at the pins to make sure you are pulling the correct one. Releasing the pop top slider from its mast locking hole suddenly increases the weight on your hand so add your second hand to help gently lower the front end of the pop top assembly back to the cabin top. Move back to the cabin entrance step and, facing forward, place one hand on the pop top cross bar and use the free hand to pull a pin on one of the pop top lower legs. Allow this side of the pop top to lower just slightly so that the pin will not re-engage and reverse the job of your hands so you can release the locking pin on the opposite lower pop top arm. This will suddenly increase the weight on your hand that is supporting the cross bar so have the free hand join in to lower the aft end of the pop top assembly gently to it lowered position.

If you are closing up for the day, insert the cabin door into its cabin tracks and bring the sliding hatch back over the top of the door as far as the sliding hatch will travel. If you want to lock up at this point, push down on the lock on the starboard side of the sliding hatch until it clicks locked. (Your key is not used to lock this lock.) This will make it impossible to slide the hatch forward which in turn will make it impossible to lift the cabin door out of its track. If someone is really motivated (like yourself if you lost your key) to get into your boat, they could figure out that by lifting the aft end of the pop top assembly they will be able to fold down the top half of the cabin door and then lift it out of its track and squeeze into the cabin. If you keep your boat in a high crime neighborhood or amongst boat owners who can't be trusted, there is a cleat on the front edge of the cb cowling that supports the entrance step, that will allow you to secure a line to the pop top cross bar (that you have been using to raise and lower the pop top). With this cross bar secured so it can not rise, the aft end of the pop top assembly cannot be raised and therefore the door cannot be taken out and therefore the culprits will have a much more difficult time getting into your boat – as you will also, if no key.

GENOA AND IMF (Sally Main Sail) FURLING LINES

Pre-rigged boats come with the Sally Mainsail furling line already installed through its boom path to its cleats. The jib furling line needs your one time attention (unless you are a trailer sailor). It most likely already has one end attached to the jibe furling drum. Undo any packing and feed the free end through the deck block a short distance aft of the drum then up to the fairlead on the starboard front side of the cabin trunk, then through the one or two additional fair leads that guide it outside the cabin top hand rails and inside the lower shrouds on its way to its small cam cleat on the starboard aft side of the cabin trunk where you will take up all line slack.

SETTING THE JIB SHEETS

A no brainer: Take the 65' X 3/8" line from the parts drawer, hold its two ends side by side and locate the line's midpoint. Insert the folded midpoint of the line through the large genoa grommet so that it forms a loop on the other side of the grommet. Feed and pull the two ends of the line through this loop so that you end up with two equal legs. Run one leg outside all the starboard stays and the other leg outside all the port stay with each then going through its respective genoa car and then once clockwise around their respective winch and then locked into their respective clam cleat.

SETTING THE MAIN SHEET

Just in case your boat did not come with its main sheet assembly ready to go: Attach the single block (it has a becket on its bottom and you now know what a becket is) to the aft tang at the end of the boom. Attach the fiddle block (it has a cam cleat on its bow facing side) to the car that is on the traveler bar. Take the second 3/8" line (it is 35' long) from your supplies and begin its journey with a bowline knot connection to the becket on the boom block. Then run it down to the upper sheave of the fiddle block entering from the aft side. (Tip: hold the fiddle block up vertically from its limp position on the traveler bar car so you can see things more clearly.) The main sheet then heads back up to the boom block, passing through its sheave entering from the bow side, then back down to the fiddle block's lower large sheave, entering from the aft side and exiting through the cam cleat. Take up the slack and you should have three parallel lines between the boom block and the fiddle block with the boom pulled in and at rest over the center of the cockpit.

TESTING THE SAILS

JIB SAIL:

Note wind direction and decide which one of the two jib sheets will keep the sail clear of the three mast shrouds when you make your test. Free the other jib sheet from its coaming compartment (where you may have stored its end since neatness counts), from its cam cleat, from all turns on its winch and from any crew feet or bottoms. The point is that you do not want any drag whatsoever from this not-in-play sheet as you unfurl the genoa. With the in-play sheet in one hand, use the other hand to release the black furling line from its cam cleat and hold onto it so that you can maintain a minimum pressure to insure that this furling line will more neatly warp on its furling drum. Start your test by pulling on the in-play jib sheet. The jib sail will begin unfurling, the furling line will begin furling and, if you are on a trailer, the trailer may begin rolling. Hopefully it is calm enough to allow you to take out the entire sail because part of the purpose of this test is to see if you run out of furling line. If you do, pull on the furling line until the sail is fully furled and then check to see if there are turns of furling line still left on the drum. If there are, figure out how to take out these excess turns and test again to see if you now have enough furling line so that it does not leave its cleat when the sail is fully deployed. It this does not solve the shortage, you were short changed and we will have to send you a longer line. A second purpose of the test is to see that the genoa does not stop short of fully wrapping up on its furling tube. If the test shows this problem, there were not enough initial wraps of the furling line on its drum. The easier way to fix this is, with the sail furled as far as it can, pull the two jib sheets from their genoa cars, coil them and wrap them and the sail around the furling tube until the sail is fully wrapped; reset the jib sheets and test again. The third part of this test is to see that the system works easily. If it does not, make sure that the sail has been allowed to pivot into the wind so that you are not pulling against wind pressure and that neither sheet is offering friction by being tucked in a coaming compartment or in its clam cleat or has any wraps on a winch, before calling for help.

More on genoa handling later. However, at the risk of sounding grouchy, my experience with flustered skippers handling the jib makes me emphasize that: a) The furling line is not used for coming about. It is only used to set the size of the genoa wanted. In most cases, once set, it is never touched again until it is time to put the sail away. b) You cannot have both jib sheets in play at the same time. One must be completely free of any sort of drag. c) Easy furling, of any size genoa, is best done with the sheet released and the sail allowed to orient itself completely in line with the wind.

THE SALLY SAIL MAIN

These days most Rhodes come with IMF so if you have a conventional main sail, we are going to let you figure it out on your own. If your boat has the IMF system you may be wondering where Sally Sail came from. We are not sure about Genoa. We think it had something to do with Genoa, Italy. But we do know where "Sally" came from. We made it up. Webster's says: "bursting forth, witty, imaginative, off the beaten (sail) track". All appropriate.

Three lines and three hardware elements control this sail. The outhaul line (generally blue) is attached to the sail (via a car that rides on the boom) and comes back to the top end of the boom where it turns down through a hole in the boom and comes out the bottom side of the boom where is passes through a vertical cam cleat attached to the boom bottom. This provides continuous locking in of sail size so that should you lose control during this act, the line will not get away from you. You can keep the space between the sail and boom to a minimum if you push up on the boom while pulling down on the outhaul line. The second line (generally black) lets you furl the sail back into the mast. The third hardware element is a series of small cleats on the underside of the boom that lets you store the slack of either the blue outhaul line or the black furling line so they are not in your way.

While genoa and main sail furling mechanisms are essentially the same (one line pulls the sail out while the other wraps around its sail's furling tube - then the one around the tube pulls the sail in when the other is released), the technique in handling the lines is different. When unfurling the genoa it is best to keep a light pressure on the black furling line so it wraps neatly on its drum and when furling the genoa its is best to keep a light pressure on the genoa sheet so it wraps neatly on its furling tube. However, when unfurling the man sail we find it best to just toss the black furling line away and pull the outhaul line. And when furling the main, to toss the blue line aside and pull the furling line. Tip: Pull the black furling line back (parallel to the boom), **not** down at a right angle to the boom.

The third line, integral to the IMF system, is the topping lift. The topping lift, as you know from rigging the boat, supports the boom at its aft end. If you furled the main sail and had no topping lift, the boom would fall on your head. However, if you left the topping lift supporting the boom while under sail, the main sheet would not control the sail since it would be pulling against the topping lift. Therefore, once the main sail is deployed, the topping lift should be released from its port cabin top cleat and allowed considerable slack before you re-cleat it. But wait. There is more. At some point a partially furled main sail will not sufficiently support the boom. So, when and whether you use the topping lift or slacken it completely, depends: Full main, slacken it. Partially reefed main, set the topping lift for the shape wanted. Putting away main, use the topping lift to support the boom so you don't get a headache. But wait, there's even more. There are times you can use the topping lift, with the main sail fully out, for sail shape you could get no other way.

A few closing Tips: a) The IMF main sail is designed to wrap around a specially extruded tube in only one direction. This direction favors it coming out of the mast slot when the boom is slightly starboard of the boat's center. Just as a conventional sail is raised and lowered with the boat into the wind, your Sally main, while it will work in any direction to the wind, goes in and out of the mast with the least effort when pointed into the wind with the boom angled to the starboard side of the cockpit. b) The black furling line must be off all boom storing cleats when unfurling. The blue outhaul line must be out of its boom cam cleat before you can furl to shorten sail or furl completely for the day. c) It must work easily or one of the following is the likely problem: One of the lines is still in its cleat. It is a windy day and you are not into the wind. Lift up your foot – you are standing on the line. It cannot be the spring because there are no springs so, if it is not one of the above, call the plant.