

## Drew's Guide to the Perfect Gybe.

I'm so sick of seeing us mess up gybes that I have decided to write a step-by-step guide to how to successfully pull one off. Ideally, the core members of the crew should be familiar with how to do each aspect of the gybe so that they can either carry out the task themselves, or talk whoever is carrying out the task through exactly what they need to do.

As we have seen, a good gybe is the difference between places and valuable minutes – how many times have we worked our backsides off to get in front of Eddy in a decent breeze only to watch it snatched away by a (usually massive) mistake on the Hawk and blow our chances for that race.

When the gybe is called there are four main personnel needed to carry out their role without a hitch to ensure the spinnaker is gybed properly, and a further two people who ensure the gybe goes through smoothly without a round up when the main comes across and to ensure we keep the rig in the boat. Below are the steps that **MUST** be carried out to ensure success.

1. When a gybe is being discussed, allocated crewmembers must go to their allotted stations ready for action. Also during the earliest discussions the traveler should be centred so excessive loads are not placed on the traveler as the main goes through. The helmsman should also steer down 5 or so degrees so that the pole can be braced further back in readiness to float the kite. The bowman will walk the lazy brace forward ready to be clipped up, so until the bowman is right forward, the new brace should not be put on a winch at all.
2. Once we are set to go, the pole should be ground further aft, the helmsman should steer at about 175 degrees to the wind, and when settled the bowman will fire the old brace. At this point both the new sheet (which has substituted the load of the old brace) and the old sheet should be wound on a metre at least so the kite "floats". A spinnaker, when trimmed and steered to correctly, does not require a pole up until about 150 degrees to the breeze. However, it is much easier to float at the 170-175 degree range.
3. The topper is then released by the strings person, and the butt is hoisted up by the mastman high enough for the pole to swing aft of the forestay. The bowman will clip the new brace into the beak and call "Made!", at which point the slack in the new brace will be taken up, the topper will be brought back up and the butt lowered to the appropriate position. **DURING** the time the bowman blows the old brace, the main should be centred (perhaps with two people to make the process faster) and the leeward runner should be brought up with the main ensuring the runner is to **LEEWARD** of the boom. Once the main is nearly centred the runner should be locked off in the self tailer, and ground just prior to the main passing to the other side. This ensures the runner is ground on as the main passes through and there is no fussing around getting the runner into the self tailer after the important moment as the load generated by the main wants to throw the rig forwards. The helmsman then varies their course by the required 10 degrees to be on 175 degrees on the opposite gybe. The old runner should only be released as the main passes through centre and the new runner is being ground on. This ensures at no time there is no runner on which is potentially disastrous, but in saying that, the old runner must be released quickly enough to ensure the main can run freely after the main has passed centre so the boat does not round up on the new gybe.
4. With the new brace taken up the old sheet can be released and the gybe is complete.

See, that wasn't that hard was it?? Most importantly, we must all be confident in our roles, so read through this plenty of times so when it comes to the crunch we all know what we have to do. It is imperative the helmsperson concentrates solely on keeping the kite full, the trimmers do the same, and the runner people nail the runner transition. So in short:

1. Centre traveler, helmsman down to around 175 degrees, grind brace aft half a metre.
2. Bowman walks new brace forward, fires old brace, grind new sheet another half a metre aft (which has now substituted the old brace). Trim spinnaker as required to "float" it. Start bringing main in towards the centre, with runner shadowing it.
3. Topper down, butt up, clip in new brace. Centre main. Take up slack in new brace. Topper up, butt down. Steer down 10 degrees to force the gybe. Gybe main, pull on runner as it comes.
4. Release old sheet to allow the new brace to take up the slack. Trim to desired course.

The required crew and roles are:

- 1x Bowman to fire old brace, bring pole through, clip up new brace.
- 1x Mastman to pull the butt up and down.
- 1x Strings person to bring the topper down and up
- 1x Trimmer to man the coach house winches and "float" the kite
- 1x Main trimmer & 1x Grinder to gybe the main over
- 1x Helmsperson
- 2x Runner people, one to shadow the main and grind on, and one to release where appropriate.

Which makes 8 reliable, switched on people ideally to pull off a gybe! Which could be 5 or 6 in lighter easier conditions. Basically any less than 8 in heavy or difficult conditions ends up being dangerous and knowing our limitations, seamanship must prevail. Breakages, arguments and dangerous situations occur as a result of gung-ho attitudes to gybing, so all precautions must be taken.

Lets see if we can improve our gibing in the back half of this season ok guys?

Drew.