



SAILING HINTS

The Norfolk is an easy boat to sail but a difficult boat to sail well. Some people master it quickly but most take several years to get to grips with making the boat tick.

Although the class is one design, each boat is different from either the bend of the spars, hull shape & weight, spar weight, sheeting angle etc., hence setting up and tuning a boat is a highly individual process.

However, at the end of the day if your boat is going fast but you point it in the wrong direction you will still not win races! On the types of water upon which the NOD is sailed it is the helm and crew who make most of the difference as the sailing is tactical and not down to pure boat speed.

Below we have listed a few pointers to help you sail your boat faster, in the right direction and to hopefully move up the fleet and win.

1. YOUR MIND

Sailing is like an active chess game and requires great mental agility. You may find yourself sailing as fast as other boats at the start but as your concentration wavers then you slowly (or quickly) drop back. You have to want to win and you have to keep your mind on the task even when things seem to be going against you.

If you have a couple of bad races it is easy to psyche yourself out and blame the boat, but when things go well it is amazing how that same boat and its gear is the greatest on the water even though nothing has changed.

If the races were analysed you would probably find certain factors which caused the difference, e.g. a better start, no hangover from the previous night or just generally sailed better tactically.

The key is to be positive and seek logical answers for poor performance.

Other crews are probably not pointing higher or sailing faster but they are concentrating on sailing their boat and not everybody else's.

2. PRE RACE

- Get the boat ready in plenty of time so you are fresh at the start.
- Check over shackles, ropes etc. to ensure you will not get gear failure during the race.
- Review the course and make sure you know where you are going.
- Try and find a vantage point so you can see the wind patterns on the water. So often there is one right way to go due to a wind bend or funnel and you need to get it right first time.
- View a previous race to help spot course trends etc.

3. THE START

- Make sure you get the time correctly.
- Practice start off the line.
- Check the line for bias to find the favoured end.
- Make a decision on where you want to start and stick to it.
- Try and keep in clear wind

- If there is a large fleet and there is only one favoured spot to start leave it to the 90% of the fleet who will go for that spot as only a couple will come out OK. Sail down the line a bit and go for speed and clear wind.

4. THE FIRST BEAT

- Try and sail as far as you can without tacking in order to keep up momentum and hopefully gain some distance on the other boats.
- Approach the mark on starboard if possible.
- If you make a bad start try and tack off and just go for clear air and get the boat moving. You should get up to at least half way through the fleet who will be following each other like sheep and pinning each other down.

5. OFFWIND

- Again try and keep in clear air.
- Head up in the lulls and bear away in the gusts to keep boat speed up.
- Don't just follow the boat in front unless you are sure it is the correct way to go.
- Think ahead and position yourself to gain an inside berth at the mark, slowing up if necessary to avoid being on the outside of a raft.
- Watch your wind indicator and constantly play your sails. THE RUN IS NOT A REST!

6. THE REST OF THE RACE

- If ahead cover the fleet unless you are sure you can make gains from sailing your own course.
- If behind keep positive, keep the boat moving plan your attack to overtake the next boat and don't just follow the fleet. ALWAYS GO FOR CLEAR AIR!
- Always keep an eye on the other boats to help you plan your tactics.

7. THE FINISH

- Make sure you know which the nearest end of the line is.
- Take the shortest route.
- Cover boats behind.
- Don't panic!

8. SAILING THE BOAT FAST

- Allow the boat to get moving before luffing or pinching
- Tack as few times as possible. You lose two boat lengths (at least) every tack.
- Round marks smoothly with a gentle tiller action
- Don't over-sheet your sails. It is all too easy in the excitement to pull everything in tight and flatten the sails.
- Learn to sail through small/false headers rather than tacking.
- Sail in as clear air as possible.

The above is a very small list of ideas and hints to help you but it is important to get the basics right and to build from there. Sailing is intellectually a very challenging sport and one in which you are always learning. THAT IS WHY IT IS FUN!