



Etchells Fleet 27

Spirited Sailboat Racing on Beautiful Casco Bay... for Over 20 Years.

PEARLS OF WISDOM

(Submitted by Anonymous Etchells Addict)

This will be the most rewarding and competitive sailing I have ever done.

- Bar NONE
- Best sailors on the planet
- If I wanted to compete against middling competition, I would go sail something else

Don't go crazy on rig tuning (shrouds, forestay and butt), just get in the ballpark and go sailing. One world champ brags about how never touched his butt and barely moved his forestay. That said, the controls you will use more than you expect are...

Mast blocks/ram

- Every time a crew moves in/out of the boat, we move mast blocks/ram one setting
- Move the mast forward in the partners in lulls: more jib power and pre-bend in mast so main can look good when we ease it for power
- Move the mast aft in the partners in puffs: firms up headstay and allows for more main trim

Mainsheet fine trim

- We are constantly playing it. As much as we did in small dinghies.
- Ease / hike / trim. Rarely locked in for long.
- If the skipper has more than a few pounds of helm, play it more.
- If it is puffy, it never gets cleated. We are trying to maintain a constant angle of heel and ease going into the puff.

The sailmaker's tuning guides are really good / helpful. Read all of them, even the ones for sailmakers you aren't using. But there are some tricks:

- The loos gauge numbers are more useful on the dock than on the water.
- So while you can set tuning based on a loos gauge on the dock if the conditions are predictable, the better way is to set a "base" and do everything based on turnbuckle turns from base
- Most teams use a 2:1 ratio (turns on lowers, turns on uppers)
- Some teams go with 3:2 ratio (turns on lowers, turns on uppers)
- I've heard a former NA champion say "2:1 is too fine for us, if there is enough of a change in conditions to change our shrouds we go 3:2"

Mast step position, forestay length and backstay tension will impact loos gauge numbers a lot. Before you measure

uppers or lowers with a loos gauge:

- Make sure your butt is where you want it
- Make sure your forestay length is where you want it
- Set a baseline by putting the loos gauge on your forestay and then pulling on backstay until you get to a certain loos gauge number on the forestay (we use 10 to be consistent)

The numerous variables on rig tune can be simplified into general principles (yes, these are broad generalities ...but they help me):

- Mast blocks/ram (and mast butt) control mast pre-bend and jib sag (mast forward in partners = more pre-bend and jib sag)
- Forestay controls helm (longer = more helm)
- Yes, it does impact jib sag too
- Keel position and mast stiffness drives the proper length for your boat.... every boat is a little different
- Uppers and lowers control power (tighter = de-power)
- If you are even close to spinning out from helm upwind in puffs, add turns (upper and lower) until there is no side-side sag in the mast