



Etchells Fleet 27

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

FORESTAY ADJUSTMENT

The forestay length controls mast rake, which in turn controls your weather helm. It is extremely important to avoid too much weather helm because the rudder adds drag and slows you down (plus makes it harder to bear away). The class rules forbid you from adjusting the forestay length while racing, but before and between races, it is beneficial to be able to adjust the length for the conditions.

The turnbuckle to adjust the forestay length is under the foredeck. The turnbuckle is required to be below deck by one-design class rule C.9.7(b)(3). However, you do not need to climb into the bow tank to adjust the forestay length, assuming your forestay is "normal." The forestay should have an aircraft-type clevis joint about 1 foot above the deck (if it does not, you must have a very hard time stepping the rig). If you disconnect that clevis, you can spin the lower wire (the wire that passes through the deck) to screw the upper stud into/out of the turnbuckle barrel. Of course, be especially careful to not drop the clevis pin overboard!

The under deck turnbuckle should be pinned (cotter pin or split ring ding) at the lower stud (only) so the barrel of the turnbuckle does not rotate on the lower stud when turning the forestay wire that passes through the deck. The upper threaded stud is left with no cotter pins, so it is free to turn in/out of the turnbuckle barrel when spinning the wire from above deck. You may need to climb into the bow tank once (when the mast is stepped) to get the barrel of the turnbuckle positioned at the right position on the threads of the lower stud. The correct position will result in at least ± 1.0 or ± 1.5 inches of length adjustment in the forestay (centered around your base setting – say 48.0 inches) when adjusting from above deck. You will probably want to insure you leave many extra threads still inserted through the barrel when the stud is at full outward extension (max forestay length) to minimize the odds of unthreading the stud all the way out of the turnbuckle (which would ruin your day).



Ronstan RF78B

An even better solution is to install a swivel in the forestay above deck at the aircraft clevis so you do not need to pull out the clevis pin when adjusting the forestay length at sea. Professional sailor and past



Etchells World Champion Andrew Palfrey (www.sailing.dog) sells a custom made swivel specifically made for this purpose. It is a work of art. Other commercial swivels that you might try are made by Ronstan, Harken, and probably other companies. Review their specifications for size and load carrying capacity before installing any of these. The Ronstan fitting, for example, adds less than 2 inches to the forestay length, and usually there is enough throw on the turnbuckle under the deck to suck that up without needing a new or shortened wire.