IMPORTANT POINTS RELATING TO THE RIGGING, TUNING & THE PERFORMANCE OF THE FARR 7500 TRAILER YACHT

Trailer yachting is a fast growing element of competitive sailing and combines the close boat to boat tussles of one design and class racing as well as the boat handling of high performance dinghy and skiff sailing and the seamanship of big boat sailing.

The sailors who race trailer yachts come from a variety of backgrounds. Many are from performance type racing dinghies who because of family reasons require a boat that can provide family participation and many are new to sailing and have started sailing with a trailer yacht as their first boat.

With the higher element of competition in trailer yachting events it is essential that the FARR 7500 must be well prepared if you wish to do well against other 7500's and other types of yachts. It must be remembered that the FARR 7500 is not designed as an out and out racing yacht but as a good compromise of cruising accommodation etc. and reasonable performance. However, we have found that a well-prepared and well crewed FARR 7500 can be very competitive against similar sized boats. To assist you we detail below some of our observations, which will assist you in extracting maximum potential from your FARR 7500.

EQUIPMENT AND BOAT PREPARATION

The FARR 7500 comes very well equipped straight from the factory but there are a few improvements that can be made yet are still within the class restrictions. The first change is to ensure that the surface of the keel is good. When the boat comes from the factory the cast iron keel is surfaced with anti corrosive paint but is not brought to a high finish, which is desirable for maximum performance

It is imperative that the rudder blade is locked right down and it pays to check this after you have been sailing for a while. If you are experiencing excessive helm check that your rudder blade is right down.

Spinnaker Barberhaulers - this addition is most important and allows control of the angle of the spinnaker sheet and guy, which makes the control of the spinnaker a lot easier. The Barberhaulers comprise a deadeye on the edge of the deck amidships through which a line with a small block (large enough for the spinnaker sheets to run through) on the outer end runs to a cam cleat on the forward edge of the cockpit coaming. We also use this line to control the sheeting angle of the spinnaker sheet when we use it on the genoa for outboard sheeting when reaching. This is very important and makes a big difference when reaching.

Another addition is the trim reef which allows reduction of the mainsail area by a smaller amount than the first reef and does give more versatility with mainsail size. To put a trim reef in we ease the main halyard enough to allow the main cunningham to be pulled down close to the top of the boom and then the trim reef line is pulled tight.

CORRECT SETTING UP OF THE MAST AND STANDING RIGGING

This exercise is quite simple and once done needs only periodic checking. Firstly the mast must be centred (set vertical athwartships) from side to side by measuring with the main halyard to the side stay chain plates. When the mast is centred the correct for and aft rake is obtained by following the procedure described below.

1. MAST RAKE

a. Before raising the mast measure up the mast 6.550 metres from the deck level at the mast step and firmly fasten a measuring tape at this point to the track on the mast.
b. Raise the mast with no tension on the lower stays and with the sidestays adjusted with approximately 25mm of thread showing on the top end of the rigging screws and connect the forestay to the stemhead fitting.
c. Tighten the forestay to a reasonable tension and then tighten the lower stays until the mast is straight (ie there is no bend).
d. Check the rake by aft measurement - measure from 6.550 metres up the mast to the aft edge of the aft deck on the centreline above the gudgeons and fender strip. This should measure 8.330 metres.

Adjust the stays until the correct measurement is achieved and this will be the correct mast rake. Lower stays should be set up quite tight to hold the middle of the mast bending too much.

Remember to tighten the locking nuts on the rigging screws with a small spanner to prevent the rigging screws from working loose.

2. RIGGING

The mast stays and halyards can all be left in operating positions once the mast is set up.

Before raising the mast attach the jib halyard to the stemhead fitting. Stand on the top of the pop top and lift the mast to an upright position then take up the tension on the jib halyard by using the halyard winch on the starboard cabin top. It is best to unwind the forestay rigging screws before attaching to the stemhead fitting rather than try to reach the stemhead fitting with the rigging screw in a done up position as too much tension on the jib halyard may result in damage. Final tensioning of the forestay can be achieved by tightening the rigging screw when it is shackled to the stemhead fitting. Similarly when derigging, attach the jib halyard to the stemhead fitting and tension on the halyard winch until firm then partially loosen off the rigging screw before taking further strain on the jib halyard.

SAIL TRIM

In light air and lumpy water we set the rig up for maximum power. The genoa leads are set for an even luff break with the sail leach about 3" or 75mm off the spreaders. Don't pull the halyard up too tight and generate as much power in the genoa without losing pointing ability. In these conditions no backstay should be used and the traveller should be pulled approx 6" or 150mm to windward of the centreline and mainsheet should not be pulled on too hard.

As the wind increases halyard tensions increased, traveller dropped, outhaul tension increased and mainsheet tension increased. The genoa leads should be moved aft as the wind increases above 12 knots and we recommend that the jib should be carried if wind increases above 18 knots (true) when sailing on the wind.

As the wind increases above 18 knots and you have changed to the jib we have found that the boom vang tension should be on reasonably hard, mainsheet tension firm and the traveller should be worked in the puffs. We have found that the mast bends adequately without using too much backstay tension and the

mainsheet tension when carrying a full main keeps the forestay tight enough. As the wind increases above 25 knots we reef and then use backstay tension to bend the mast and flatten the main.

In winds above 30 knots on the wind we feel the storm jib is adequate with one or two reefs in the main. If there is a big lumpy sea we suggest that jib should not be over sheeted and mainsheet should be eased a little to obtain maximum boat speed through the seas. It is important to get the boat moving in these conditions so that the boat can be feathered into the gusts and maximum control over and through the seas can be obtained. Traveller should be right down in these conditions.

CREW

For serious racing four people are necessary. The weight of the crew is not critical although in heavy breezes every ounce on the windward rail is an advantage and we have found that five in heavy conditions is advantageous for on the windsailing. The crew should be kept as close together as possible and centred in the boat. The skipper should be as far forward as possible with mainsheet hand immediately forward of him so he can work the traveller and mainsheet. The other two crew should be as far out to windward and as close as possible together next to mainsheet hand. In light air we move one crew inside so he can get his weight further forward and quickly move to leeward if required. For reaching we still keep the crew close to the centre of the boat and try to keep boat as flat as possible. In running conditions in light weather we move crew weight well forward to keep stern out of the water. In fresh conditions we move progressively further aft. When setting spinnakers in fresh conditions remember to counter the forward hands weight when on he is on the foredeck. Crew weight forward (up to side stays) may help the boat through the 'short' sea by reducing bow movement.

SAILING DOWNWIND

When jib or genoa reaching it is very important to sheet the sail as far outboard as possible, to achieve this we clip the spinnaker sheet to the sail and adjust sheeting angles with the spinnaker barberhauler. In all conditions the spinnaker halyard should be eased about 8" or 200mm. The backstay should be eased right off in lighter conditions and pulled on just tight as the breeze freshens. When carrying spinnaker on a tight run in fresh conditions we get the crew as far to windward and aft as possible, have one man working the mainsheet and the other on the spinnaker sheet.

The helmsman should be steering the boat down in the puffs and up in the lulls and the crew should be co-ordinating with him. Good team work in these conditions can have remarkable results.

When running the spinnaker should be trimmed square to the wind with the clews of the sail level. Keep the pole as far aft as possible, in heavy winds the halyard should be pulled right up and the sheets should be pulled hard down with the Barberhaulers. When steering downwind the goal is to maintain the speed necessary to catch the waves. As on the reaches work down in the puffs and up in the lulls.

From a self righting point of view the keel is obviously most effective in the full down position and we recommend it be kept in this position. However, in light breezes running it can be pulled up for improved performance. The FARR 7500 surfs very easily and every effort should be made to catch each wave.

TACKING

We find it easier to have one person tack the headsail. This leaves the other two crew free to concentrate on getting weight across at the right time.

In conditions heavy enough to have everybody on the rail one person should prepare the headsail sheet and just prior to the helmsman dropping the helm he moves into the cockpit with one hand on old sheet and one on new sheet which has only two turns on the winch. He also has to make sure that the old sheet is ready to run free. As soon as jib starts to luff the jib man throws off the old sheet and trims the new one with arms length pull, which can normally trim all but the last two inches, for the final trim he sits on the high side of the cockpit and braces his feet on the leeward side of the cockpit and uses his legs and lower back to pull. If the headsail needs to be trimmed any further the winch can be used giving the boat a little to accelerate before being brought hard on the wind. Most of the time the winch is only used to make fine adjustments. We don' t cross sheets because we have found it too messy. We sometimes bring tail of jib sheet up to windward winch if conditions require constant trimming on a long leg.

SPINNAKER SETS

We set from the main hatch and set up the sheets and halyard on the right side before the start if possible. We clip the snap shackles together in a way which enables you to only snap one onto the lifelines before attaching to the sail and also enable you to progressively attach each one to the sail without needing three hands, ie. attach sheet shackles to head of halyard snap shackle.

We prefer to carry the spinnaker pole on the main boom so the boom topping lift and downhaul can be permanently attached. As you approach the mark the forward hand sets the pole after placing the guy in the parrots beak - as he does this the topping lift is pulled up to a premarked position and when the pole is attached to the mast the downhaul is pulled on tight. Once you are abeam of the mark and bearing off one crew stands up and pulls the halyard while the other crew member makes sure the spinnaker is thrown clear of the hatchway. The skipper pulls the guy in quickly whilst the forward hand ensures the pole does not come aft.

The most common mistake is not to pull the guy around a little before the halyard goes up which causes the kite to twist and hang up under the headsail when it is eased. Keep the headsail sheeted until the spinnaker is pulled around.

SPINNAKER TAKEDOWN

Before takedowns make sure you are ready for the next leg of the course. This will probably be an on the wind leg so wind the keel down, have all sails adjusted for on the wind - halyards up, cunningham on, outhaul on. When approximately two boat lengths from the mark we let the halyard go making sure it is free to run. This lets the spinnaker blow away from boat and not drag against the headsail. At the same time ease the after guy right off. Someone already has the other sheet and begins gathering sail into the hatchway the moment the other guy is released. When done properly the sail should stay clear of the headsail leads and sheets so the headsail can be trimmed as soon as the mark is rounded. For close racing the headsail sheet should be running over the top of the pole in front of the topping lift so that when the topping lift is let off and the outboard end drops you can immediately tack even with the spinnaker pole still on the mast.

GYBING

When gybing “end for end" the pole. The most important things to remember are to square the pole as you bear off and to ease the old sheet slightly as soon as the inboard end of the pole is taken off the mast. As the bow swings through the wind the new guy should come to the forward hand and be attached to pole pushed out and attach to the mast in one quick motion.

While the forward hand is gybing the pole the helmsman looks after the main grabbing all the sheet in one handful and throwing the boom over as the pole is attached to the mast. The two other crew attend to the guy and sheet with one easing the new/old sheet and the other trimming the new sheet.

KEEL

On the wind in a lumpy sea we have found that two turns of the wire on the winch is best as it eliminates any for and aft movement of the keel and in fresh conditions is better fore windward performances.

If the boat is to be used in open water conditions, as a boat of this type will tend to be, it is essential that the keel should be in its down position and locked at all times. The practice of raising keels when sailing down wind whilst being acceptable when racing in reasonable conditions with an experienced crew is not a concept that should be encouraged in family sailing or with less experienced crews; and is done at the owners risk.