

## Roll gybing

*What are we trying to achieve when roll gybing?*

Well, this depends upon our course. If we are gybing reach to reach, we wish to maintain our speed whilst changing direction as quickly as possible, perhaps turning around a buoy.

However, if we are gybing run to run, then our aim is most likely to be to make ground downwind, and one of the main reasons for roll gybing is to mitigate the amount of turn required to gybe and therefore reduce additional distance sailed by gybing.

### Basic Technique

The exact actions depend upon the class of boat, the strength of the wind and the angle of the turn. For example the tasks involved in roll gybing a Laser are very different from those in roll gybing a 49er, but the fundamentals are the same:

1. Ensure that the boat is at full speed and the crew is ready for the manoeuvre.
2. Heeling the boat to windward to initiate the turn, whilst using minimum tiller movement.
3. With the boat rolling to windward, sheet in slightly with the crew crossing the centreline of the boat as the boom does.
4. As the sails fill on the new leeward side, hit the new windward side and bring the boat flat, thus driving the boat forward.
5. The boat should now be at full pace and you should not be able to tell you have just gybed.

### Specifics

From a coaching perspective it helps to concentrate on the actions of the hands and the feet

### Examples

#### A centre main sheet hiking boat

With the boat at full speed, start to heel the boat to windward, place the back leg over the toe strap and using this, pull the boat 'on top of you'. As the boat is now heeled to windward you can simply stand up in the gap between the hull and the boom, and the back leg (which is now the front leg) is under the toestraps.

Boat at full speed  
Prior to gybing

#### A trapeze boat

With the boat at full speed take the foot out of the toe loop and unclip from the trapeze, hanging on a straight arm. As the boat bears away, pull on the trapeze line, rolling the boat to windward, with the crew going through the boat as the main crosses, and hitting the wire as the power comes on. Clip on to the trapeze ASAP.

#### Notes

- Before going for the gybe, ensure that the kicker is off, so that the leach is 'floppy'. This will enable the boat to bear away easily and prevent a broach at the end of the gybe.
- As the power comes on, it is vital that the tiller is in the middle of the boat, and the boat completely upright, so all the kinetic energy is converted into pushing the boat forward.
- Do not worry about returning the tiller extension to the normal position until the boat is at full speed (it is OK steer with the tiller behind your back for several boat lengths)
- If the boat appears to be stalling, slowing down, rig loading up and possibly a plume of water coming out of your rudder - bale out! You can waste a lot of time going for a swim... Get the boat up to speed, then 'GO FOR IT!'
- Remember, a few swims is sometimes the best way to learn, and certainly nothing to be ashamed of... It just shows people are trying hard!

Jon Emmett  
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Coach

Boat at full speed  
post-gybe.

WIND

Boat heeled to  
windward to  
initiate gybe.

Crew crossing  
the boat as the  
boom comes  
across.

Boat is brought  
flat as tiller is  
centred.