

SAILING TIPS BY CHRIS KITCHEN

The following series of articles are aimed at improving Weta sailing throughout the fleet. Whether you are out there to win your nationals or to enjoy a sunny Sunday afternoon, it is always nice to know that you are sailing your boat to its full potential. Hopefully there is something here for everyone. These articles will be published on the Weta Marine website. To finish off the series, we hope to answer any questions that you may have on info@wetamarine.com. All of these articles will be available in PDF format - so that you can print them off and take them down to the boat park.

Series 1 – Rigging Your Weta Right

Tuning your boat should be simple! A large part of the Weta design was to make the boats as fair as possible with minimal tuning required so the racing is left up to the sailors! After all we want to be out enjoying the wind and water - not in the boat park tweaking settings and splicing lines. Here are a few tips on how I prepare my Weta for a race. It doesn't matter where I am sailing or how old the Weta is - I run through the same preparation.

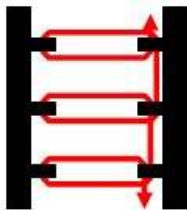
BEFORE YOU RIG YOUR WETA (THIS TAKES APPROXIMATELY AN HOUR)

1. Tension the Trampolines

This sets the platform for a stiff responsive boat. Note that this is only done once. There should be roughly equal trampoline tension around the beam frame. Note that the trampolines will stretch a little from when they are new – so it is a good idea to re-tension them after a few sails. This is the technique used to correctly set up the trampolines:

- Set the boat up with the beams fully in the sockets (trampolines on the beams but not laced up).

- Loosely tie the trampolines around the beam frame so it does not fall off. (Note: older boats only have 2 sleeves)
- Rig the inner tensioning line (the one that goes through the block on the boat - see tip #15 below) and adjust it so it sits 'in line' with the block i.e. it is not pulling 30° off the side. Once you have done this pull on approx 5cm more to allow for the fabric to settle.
- Begin to lace the trampoline to the beam frame starting at the outer aft corner. Use a ladder lacing pattern shown on diagram at right. Tension this up as much as you can.



- Once the entire tramp is laced up tied it off with some half hitches.
- Note: depending on the length of the line you may need to tie-off the end and start with another piece half way though which is not a problem.
- Now the trampolines should be tight and perfectly set up!
 - Next time you sail you only need to rig the inner tensioning lines (see the tip #15 below on how to tension the trampolines each time you sail).



2. Carefully bend up the jib cleats for easy use

This should be done by removing the jib cleat swivel piece (no need to unscrew entire fitting from deck) and gently bending the aluminium plate up using a vice and a large block of wood. This makes it easier to cleat the jib sheet when out on the beam. Be careful when doing this to avoid damage to the fitting. It is a good idea to use loctite when replacing the cleat to prevent the screws loosening.



Unscrew aluminium plate from cleat base



Take only the aluminium plate screws out



CAREFULLY bend the cleat 'up' approx 5mm



Replace cleat back on the deck using loctite

3. Rudder lock down position

Set the rudder system up so that it is in the fully locked down position with a little tension in the mechanism. Also tighten up the nut/bolt so there is no slop in the system. If you do find a little slop of the blade in the stock due to the cheeks being loose you can pack any gaps with a plastic shim (cut out ice cream container lid etc) so it is tight. This will ensure a stiff responsive helm. The boat is not very sensitive to rudder angle as there is little helm and the rudder is small.

4. Tape the Harken roller-furler drum

Most owners have experienced the notorious drum override spoiling a perfect sailing session. This is easy to avoid by wrapping some tape around the bottom of the cage so the line entering the unit cannot jump under the drum. Be sure to leave enough room for the line to enter.



5. Batten tension

I like to put plenty of tension in my battens. They should just be starting to 'rib' on the sail (see batten in photo below the sail is just stretching slightly around the batten). Be careful not to put so much on that sail shape is completely distorted or the batten pocket protectors break! Because the rig is naturally quite flat and the downhaul is very effective it is easy to get rid of power as the breeze increases. By having good tension in the battens you get more camber in the sail for lighter winds. It is unlikely that you will stall the flow in light winds with too much batten tension – it will be mainsheet tension that does. If you find you are really overpowered in high winds then you can think about loosening some batten tension. Although it is recommended to loosen batten tension for storage this is only really necessary if the sails will be stored for 6+ months.



6. Jib Tack position

This should be shackled onto the stainless ring on the bow fitting. Make sure that the ring height is set so that when the rig is tensioned the angles between the three lines from the bow ring make approx 120° with each other. Some boats may have the eye bolts with lashing and the newer boats will have the dynex stop.



WHILE RIGGING YOUR WETA**7. Mast Rake**

Mast rake is something that should be adjusted depending on the balance of the helm (see Weta manual). Over time it has become clear that the boat sails well with plenty of mast rake. So if you are rigging a new boat set the mast rake with the stay adjusters on the 3rd hole up (~30mm). If you find after the first sail you have too much weather helm upwind then you can rake the mast forward.

**8. Rig tension**

There are many debates about how much rig tension to use on the Weta. I like to use plenty of tension. This is generally as much as I can comfortably get on. As you tension the forestay watch the beams rise in the sockets. When they stop moving, pull a fraction more tension on then tie it off. Note that the amount of forestay tension (length of lashing) effects the mast rake. You should aim to rig the same amount each time you go sailing for consistency.

9. Jib halyard tension

This is adjusted depending on the wind. The windier it is – the more I pull on. If I am in doubt of conditions I will always pull on more than I think I need. You should never have scallops between the jib hanks. You should also remember that once sailing on the water you will lose a little tension. Note that it is possible to rig a 3:1 purchase by tying a loop in the halyard 150mm from the cleat and doubling the line back through itself. You can also replace the horn cleat with a Clamcleat CL236. If you do this you can leave a loop approx 400mm long hanging from the cleat so you can adjust the jib halyard tension on the water. This is handy if condition change so you do not need to use the horn cleat.

**10. Gennaker halyard tension**

The boats performance does not seem to be affected much by this tension. I have a reasonable amount on so that you can easily furl the gennaker away. In lighter air I run slightly less tension.

11. Main sheet clew position

General rule of thumb – for more power use the aft holes in the clew board – to depower use the forward holes in the clew board. Exactly when you transition will depend on your weight crew configuration. In up to 18 knots I use the aft most hole in the clew. Between 18-22 I use the middle and in 22+ use the front hole. This will depend on skipper size – but if you feel overpowered with the main sail – move the sheeting position forward.



Heavy wind clew position

Light wind clew position

Moderate wind clew position

12. Jib Sheet clew position

This is the same as the main sheet clew position. However you must be careful not to have the sheeting position too far aft and choke the sail. When rigging the jib sheets I use the following technique which allows relatively simple changes on the water. Note the images below illustrate the technique.

1. Select the clew hole you will use tie a loose bowline through it with one of the jib sheet ends
2. Tie the other sheet through the bowline of the first sheet
3. When you need to change clew position on the water (in 25+ knots is possible) simply figure out which sheet (port or starboard) has the loop through the clew hole and loosely cleat it off. You can then tack over so the jib clew is just to windward of the mast. Now you should be able to untie the slack jib sheet and re-tie it through the new clew board position with a loose bowline. Now repeat the process (cleating the new sheet loosely and tacking over) so you can re-tie the old sheet to the new position.

Rigging the jib sheets

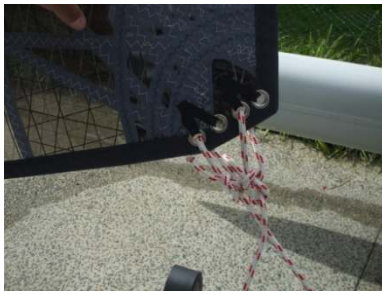


Select the clew hole and tie first sheet with a loose bowline

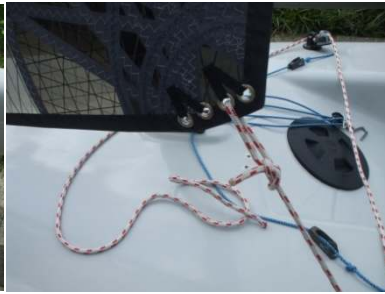


Tie second sheet through first bowline

Adjusting the Jib Sheets on the water



Retie first sheet in new clew hole



Untie old sheet and tack over



Tie old sheet through new sheet loop

13. Tie jib sheets to main sheet

I like to tie the tail of the mainsheet to the middle of the jib sheets with a tight bowline. This means that in high winds out of a tack I am able to access all 3 sheet ends from the beam rail without having to move weight inboard. I prefer to run these sheets over the gennaker sheets however this is personal preference.



14. Tape tiller extension on

Self explanatory. No one likes the automatic 360!

15. Correctly tension the trampolines

Too often I see incorrectly tensioned trampolines. It is important to get this right for two main reasons.

1 – Safety. There have been some cases where the rig tension and trampoline lines have both been loose and an ama has come out during a capsize.

2 - Performance. The boat will feel stiffer with a more stable platform to move on. Follow the steps and comments in the images below to correctly rig your trampolines. Not only will the boat perform better but your rigging time will reduce!

Front Line



Loop line around the block



Loop it through the tramp eye



Tie onto the block dead end with bowline

Aft Line

Tension the line direct from the tramp



Loop line around the block keeping tension



Keeping tension, loop the line through the tramp eye and cleat off



Tramp should be tight!

16. Spend time to get the perfect amount of wraps on the gennaker

One of the limitations of the Harken unit is the amount of wraps you can get with the gennaker. Spend some time furling and unfurling the sail so you can 1) completely unfurl the sail and 2) completely furl the sail away under load. The second point is more important. I will usually put 3 more wraps on the sail in heavier conditions when compared to lighter conditions.