

EMAILS FROM MAY 2018 WITH MR JIB FURLER – MALCOLM BLACKBURN

Hi Malcolm

In your role as Mr Jib Furler, I ask for some enlightenment please!

Squib 745 which I share with Gill Lamb already had a jib furler when I bought in. I do like the peace and quiet of a furler but I feel I don't point as well as other Squibs in our fleet which lack furlers. You obviously don't have this problem or you wouldn't go so fast. I know that jib halyard tension, barber position and tension and jib sheet tension all play their part but I can't seem to get the various parts in harmony. I'd really appreciate your advice if you could spare a minute.

Best
Ricky

Hi Ricky

Pointing ability is often more in the mind than reality, as I find that other boats appear to be pointing higher, yet people talk about me pointing high, so be careful not to get too paranoid as this can lead to you pulling everything too tight and that certainly stops a Squib. I sail with the furler very similarly to without, the only difference is that without the furler in heavy winds you can let off a bit more halyard so that the forestay starts to share the load with the jib halyard. With the furler because the jib is not hanked to the forestay, it is important that the forestay never takes any load.

I will start with a bit of science, then let's see how we relate this to sailing. With the Squib rig being set up slack, there is nothing to control the sag in the jib luff other than the mainsheet load or backstay. If there is not much tension in the luff because there is not much mainsheet load, the act of pulling in the jib causes more jib luff sag which makes the sail fuller so it backwinds and thus it does not point. Pulling the jib in even harder simply makes things worse. Also I noticed about 3 years ago Batt started to make his jib with less luff curvature (flatter shape) and my 2017 Hyde I found had similarly reduced the curvature. The impact of this is that the jib luff can sag a bit more and have the same shape, thus needs less mainsheet tension to end up with the same pointing ability. If you have one of the older fuller jibs this is not a problem, but it does need sailing differently, that is with more mainsheet tension.

One effect of the furler is that the jib is set a little higher which can affect the sheeting angle and, for the same barber position, can tighten the leach of the jib. Make sure the tack of the luff wire is fitted onto the drum without shackles. The drum makes the jib luff wire about 60mm off the deck, but most non furlers use a shackle of at least 30mm, so the effect is not much, however you may want to put your barbers about 30mm back from the sailmakers' settings. However do not get too hung up on this as mast rake influences jib sheeting angle more than you think. Take care not to tighten the jib Cunningham too tight. Leave it rather slack. People do not realize but when sailing in a blow the jib luff wire is under about 200lbs load and the wire stretches about 10mm, thus if the Cunningham is set just tight at the loads on the mooring, the effect of the wire stretching tightens the Cunningham by 10mm, not what you want.

I tend to apply a lot of backstay pre start so that the mast does not flop about, it helps me psychologically as it minimises the jib luff sag until you get on the beat and the mainsheet tension right.



Try doing this pre start set up. Sail on a beat with the mainsheet set as you would do for the conditions. Pull on the backstay until it has a little tension. Now let go the jib and you may then need to put on a little more backstay. Now leave that backstay setting alone.

Pull in the jib as you normally would to the settings Hyde or Batt give for the Barbers. If when you sail against the other boats you feel you are not pointing as high as them, apply more mainsheet tension. This is the only control you have to control the jib sag to make the jib flatter and thus point higher. You could try pulling this in very hard just to see the influence that has on the pointing ability. You will notice if you do this that the backstay will now become slack. That is because the whole rig is stretching and the mast rake is now increasing. Earlier I gave a figure for the stretch in the luff wire. Under the same load the jib halyard and tensioning system will stretch by a further 20mm at least. All this stretch increases the mast rake, and alters the jib sheeting angle so that there is less leach tension thus

opening the leach. This is kind of handy, because without you doing anything other than pulling the mainsheet harder as the wind pipes up, the jib sheeting angle changes opening up the leach, which is just what you want. If you think the jib is too open, release the mainsheet, tighten up your jib halyard to pull the mast forward, then pull in the mainsheet as hard as before. Conversely if it's not open enough let off the halyard. I believe that the reason that we have a favourite / optimum jib halyard setting is because this gives the best jib sheeting angle, and thus the leach open the right amount, rather than the actual mast rake angle.

I find that especially in lighter winds say up to force 2 that to get enough jib luff tension the mainsail is rather too tight in the leach. Be careful not to bring the traveller up too far as if the boom is on the centre line it stalls out and does not drive the boat forwards, try to keep the end of the boom down from the centreline a little, and in these conditions I may well increase the backstay just to get a bit more twist in the mainsail and get the top tell tail to fly. If you let the mainsail twist nicely by not having a lot of mainsheet tension, the result is not enough jib luff tension which lets it sag and become too full, thus not point. The act of pulling the jib harder simply increases the sag and makes things worse.

In stronger winds force 4 upwards simply pull on the mainsheet as hard as you can, and only use the traveller to balance the boat.

Give this a try, and see what happens. Contact me again whenever you want.

Cheers

Malcolm