

# Racing Classic Designs

cruising them too



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My observations on racing and cruising the CCA hulls:

These boats do not mind heeling as much as a more modern design. However, they do not like to have a lot of weather helm. I think that you can steer in medium to heavy air with the traveler as much as the wheel. As long as the helm is only slight weather helm the boat will be at her best. If you let the main overpower her that big 'barn door' rudder will only slow the boat down. Remember that the main is usually your largest sail on this type boat, although this is not necessarily so on a newer type.

Try not to bury the rail as you usually will have the boat overpowered if this happens, however they are faster when the rail is much closer to the water than most people like. Reef the main to keep her from being overpowered. Reef the main, then reduce the headsail as the next 'gear' down. As soon as water comes over the bow to fill the skirt of the genoa, I start thinking about putting on a Yankee cut jib. This is a high cut jib, which may have a pennant on the tack to allow you to get it off the deck. This will extend the lifespan of your sails and the good will of your crew.

## **Starts:**

Because of the full keel design this type boat doesn't do well in the tight turns and ducks of modern fleet racing. This is a type start born in dingy racing, and I feel it best suits dingy type boats (J-boats, Catalina, etc). I have had good luck with the old 'Vanderbilt' start. This is where you get your start time. When you calculate you are just over two minutes from the end of the line that you wish to cross (distance and time) you turn and run back down your path to the start and hit the line at speed. You should have the bearings so that you do not have to change course in order to cross the line where you wish. This type start will intimidate the dickens out of many J-24 crews, when they try barging and see that bow charging them at 6 knots. You can loosen sails to loose speed if you are approaching too early, but should cross as the gun sounds.

## **On the course: (cruising too)**

This type of boat does her best if you keep her moving, acceleration is not a strong point. Keep her out of the wind shadow of the newer designs. **Don't** pinch (stall the sails) at all, however high you can point fall off a couple of degrees and foot (get boat speed). The boat will slip less in the water and your VMG (velocity made good) will be improved. Also go for less tacks, if possible tack 'the pyramid' i.e.- sail bigger tacks on the beginning of a leg. This also applies to cruising. You should start out with big tacks and as you close on your goal they should be smaller. They can be surprisingly good downwind, particularly the centerboard designs. I have seen many heads turn when an

older boat cruises past after stealing the wind from behind. Most of all be positive, persistent and enjoy your self. In addition, be sure you crew has a good time if you want to continue with the sport.

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### Some things I learned from racing a heavy boat:

Keep her moving - they don't accelerate quickly. Foot off and full up the jib a bit out of the tacks to get her moving again.

Power comes from the jib. Invest in a good one before investing in a new main. We will have a new 155 this year.

Don't let her be down by the stern. Get the bodies forward to keep her from dragging her behind.

You can intimidate smaller and lighter boats. They know you aren't as nimble as they are, and they know how much mass is bearing down on them. Use this when you can. Just don't endanger or collide with any one. We never worried too much about the excessive heeling angle we get on a narrow, full keel boat unless it became really extreme and slowed us down. We pretty much had to have the cabin lights under for that to happen, probably the same for your boat. We never reefed, although we raced in wind a few times that I definitely would have taken in a reef had I been cruising.

Downwind, carrying the asymmetrical, when the wind gets over about 15, the fastest course is dead downwind with the spinnaker wung out on a pole like a jib. Steer the spinnaker a little by the lee and she'll really go. Carrying the symmetrical spinnaker on a broad reach: when the wind gets over about 12, it's faster to change down to a jib. Learned that in the Governor's Cup.

One tactic we used successfully again and again was a barging start. In our fleet, the top boat consistently won the start, starting first at the boat end. We would barge down on her right at the gun and steal the start from her. Did this every chance we got, and no one ever luffed us into the committee boat. Otherwise, have boatspeed at the start (acceleration problem again). Timed starts work well for this.

Do whatever you have to do to ensure that the boat is pointing as well as it can. Boatspeed upwind will be pretty close to the lighter, faster boats, and you don't want to give that up. Downwind, pile as much sail on as possible and hope for the best. Pray for wind in the 20's.

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Posted by Geoff Baldwin on March 09, 1998

We have some fairly successful such programs still around on the Long Island Sound. In fact, there is a minor resurgence at the club level of cruising boats of the generation following CCA. Having said that, there are a number of disadvantages to sailing this type

of boat competitively against newer designs. Assuming a typical CCA 35-footer might rate similar to a J-24, you would expect the older boat to be slower in light air, and not able to accelerate as well. Conversely, the longer water line will be a benefit in moderate air on distance races. In strong to heavy air (say 18 to 25 knots) the smaller lighter boat may have a new advantage in its ability to surf. In 30 knots+ the heavy boat gets the edge.

One thing you have going for you is a rating which is based on past performance and the committee's perception of your type of boat. If the bottom is faired and the keel optimized within the boundaries of the local PHRF regulations, a burnished bottom paint and new composite sails and running rigging added, this can be a very competitive boat. Other go-fasts discussed last year in Sailing World apply to older boats as well as new boats - take a hard look at the entire rig if you really want to go faster. Any improvement in your acceleration will be an unpenalized bonus.

Tactically, you want to really plan your race to avoid tacking/gybing duels. If you can find a corner, you are better to dig in and hope for the best. Obviously, this is a problem in shifty breezes. If you can learn to minimize your losses during tacks and gybes, you may be able to tack if you stay away from the lighter boats.

Lastly, if you are sailing in a tight rating band, try to start at the right side of the line as much as possible (unless the left) is obviously favored. This is important because your slow tacks will make it impossible to cross on port tack after the start if you want to go right or up the middle.

The unflattering opinion of Jeff H.

I assume that you are talking about the 1966 through early seventies Ted Hood designed keel sloop and not the later later Hood designed centerboard boat. That Bristol 32 is a very hard boat to make competitive. Even under CCA they did not do well. They were intended as a CCA rule beater with a very short water line even for a CCA boat. They were also a bit narrow. Unlike the Tripp and Morgan designs of the period the Bristol had a very narrow transom so it doesn't develop as much additional water line length as they heel. This because the angle of the counter is such that they don't draw out their water line in a reach like the S&S, Tripp and Morgan designs.

Tips on racing one:

1. Don't tack or do anything that gives away speed: The boats loose speed quickly are very slow to regain it again.
2. Get the largest sails you can without a penalty: Maximize roach and go to a loose foot main with max. legal roach. Max girths on the spin etc.
3. Head downwind: Because the boats do not benefit (much) from the reaching cycle (build speed, increase apparent wind and waterline length, build more speed, etc.) there is very little advantage to the relatively high reaching angles that are critical to a more modern design on downwind legs. I would think that you can sail closer to dead down wind than your competition without VMG penalty.
4. Get your boat handling, and tactics down: You can't afford to give away any speed its very hard to get back.
5. Get a reputation. (Actually, I hate this one and probably would not do

this myself but) get a reputation for not letting anyone sit on your wind. The Alberg thirty class races one design in our area. You don't mess with an "Old Dog"<sup>30</sup>. Those guys have a reputation for hard luffing any one that threatens their air or in any way threatens to impede their progress. If you sail through their lee and start to head up to their wind line they will sit on you to the point that you have to reach down to clear your air. They then quickly head up creating separation. They are relentless, and after an experience or two, the word gets out and no sensible racer gets any where near the defensive zone of an Old Dog.

6. Avoid Chop Chop is death for these boats, go for deep flatter water on choppy days. In flat water, take advantage of your relatively shoal draft to stay out of the current.

7. Keep the sail plan balanced. With your short keel for a boat of the day and its relatively inefficient rudder it is crucial that you keep the boat in balance. Good sails are critical. Being able to adjust jib halyard and sheet leads on the fly is important to powering up and down the jib. A backstay tensioner to reduce sag in high winds is important. A good traveler, vang, and an easily operable downhaul and outhaul are critical to balancing the main. Remember the boats originally raced with 170% to 180% Genoas. Today we all race with 150's (to avoid the 3 sec/mile PHRF penalty. Check that rating reflects your actual sail size).

8. As to the moving the jib sheet lead inboard: It might work but there are other factors far more limiting. In their day the boats were actually known for their pointing ability in flat water. That is, they pointed high which helped make up VMG for their relatively low boat speed. I suspect that the keel design will be the limiting factor in how high you can point.

I have always hypothesized that fin keels became popular because sail cloth became better. Before the modern Dacron of the late 60's, boats were limited in their ability to point by the shape of their sails. Modern tight weave Dacron allowed sailmakers to produce precise sail shape that remained relatively stable. (Thank you, Ted Hood, wherever you are.) The trouble was the keel efficiency was no longer up to the weatherliness of sail plans. Designers cut away the forefoot and moved the rudder posts forward to allow greater keel efficiency. (your boat and the Morgan 45 (as in Starrett/Jenks45) were the extremes of that trend) The trouble was the boats became hard to steer with their attached rudders. S&S pioneered the "Constellation Rudder" which was triangular in shape moving the largest part of the rudder lower in the water. (Some on the 32's had connie rudders)

The connie rudders helped a bit but it was only a simple next step to a fin keel spade rudder. With the fin keel spade rudder, the Air foils were now a match for the water foils, except for one thing; shroud base width. Now that boats could point higher the width of the shroud base limited sheeting angle which limited pointing ability. So it was in the early 70's we started to see the proliferation of double spreader rigs on anything over 25 or 30 feet.

Sorry about the long dissertation but the point is narrowing your sheeting lead angle won't help much because your spreaders will get in the way and if you point too high you'll just make more leeway. Of course the key is to find out where the point of "too high" occurs (in all conditions and sail

combos) and sail just below that.  
Good luck! Jeff H.

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Any one can get their ideas posted here by simply sending me E-mail with the ideas or opinions written so they are easily published. Remember there are no stupid questions, and probably no bad ideas either.