

Dinghy Racing Vocabulary Words

Up (head up)/ Higher- To head the boat up closer to the wind

Down (head down)/Lower- To bear away from the wind

In- Move one's body inside the boat.

Out- Move one's body to the rail and/or hike to flatten the boat.

Trim/Sheet- Pull the sail in tighter.

Ease- Let the sail out.

Trim to Course- When the skipper is simply aiming the boat at the next mark (holding course on a reach), it's the crew's job to adjust the jib/spinnaker trim to any change in wind direction or speed.

Back (the jib or main)- Pull or push the sail to the wrong side, either to turn the boat sharply or stop it.

Hold- Keep the trim as it is.

Made- Used to alert others that a knot has been tied, or a line properly secured. Comes from "made fast."

Pinch- To point the boat just inside the no go zone, while still maintaining enough power to keep the boat moving. This is important to do in puffs and can be tactically advantageous at times also.

Foot/Press- To point the boat slightly below close-hauled. By slightly easing the sails the boat will sail forward very quickly, while sacrificing pointing.

Point- The direction one's bow is pointing. Often good to reference one's point compared to the point of others.

Puff- Small isolated gust of wind, or patch of wind that is higher in velocity than the surrounding wind.

Lull- A dead patch or area where the wind is lighter than the surrounding wind.

Pressure- Broad sustained wind that is stronger than the average wind in another area of the course.

Lift- A shift in wind direction that allows your bow to point higher when sailing close hauled.

Header- A shift in wind direction that forces you to bear away in order to keep your sails from luffing when sailing close-hauled. When you tack a header becomes a lift. It's good to be headed as you sail away from the middle of the course.

Layline- An imaginary line extending 90 degrees from the centerline of the boat. A boat is on layline when she can tack and head right for the mark without having to tack again.

Overstand- When a boat overstands, they overshoot their layline by sailing further than they have too. This often results in having to reach into the windward mark. On starboard it's better to overstand by 1-2 boat lengths than understand.

Understand- When a boat understands layline she must tack again to make it around the windward mark. It's a good idea to understand port layline by a few boat lengths if you are coming into a crowded mark rounding. Beware understanding the layline on Starboard!

Bias- Bias is the result of the race committee trying to make the course even. If too many boats are going left, the race committee may use bias (in the line, gates, placement of Windward Mark etc.) to give an incentive to go right and make the course more even.

Favored Side- The favored side is where you are likely to find the best pressure, wind angle, current, or other advantages. The favored side is independent of the actions of the race committee.