

Telltails

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Why? Telltales can help you sail your boat more efficiently and faster. They provide information about the airflow across your sails. Let you trim your sails with greater accuracy.

Location:

Headsail, On luff, 8-9 inches in three pairs- 1/3 top, 1/3 bottom, middle.
Starboard telltales are placed higher than port telltales.

Mainsail, On leach at each batten pocket.

Headsail: When the luff of the headsail is aimed perfectly into the wind, both windward and leeward telltales stream aft. If steered too close to the wind or eased too much, the luff of the headsail is no longer aimed perfectly into the wind and the telltales flicker.

It is optimum to have the windward telltale just flickering and leeward telltale streaming aft.

Sailing too much to windward causes the windward telltale to flicker up or down, the windward telltales lift, the air is not flowing smoothly, steer away from the wind or trim the sail until the telltales stream aft.

Sailing too much to leeward causes the leeward telltale to flicker up or down, the sail is stalled, ease the sail or steer closer to the wind.

Sail the boat gradually closer to the wind eventually luffing the headsail and watch the telltales to see which telltale breaks first.

If the top telltale lifts first, move the lead forward to bring in the top of the sail more.

If the bottom telltale lifts first, move the lead aft.

Mainsail: Telltales on the mainsail leech are guides for judging main sheet tension.

For close-hauled, it is optimum to trim the mainsail until the stream straight aft to indicate a smooth airflow along the entire curve of the sail. You will "go fast" but may sacrifice pointing ability.

For maximum pointing, trim the mainsail tighter until the top batten's telltale is not streaming after. Best to sail with top telltale streaming about half the time.

For reaching, trim the main and boom vang so the telltales stream aft all the time for maximum speed. First, ease the sheet until the main just starts to luff, then trim it in a little. Next, tension the boom vang until the telltales start to stall, then ease it in a little to keep all the telltales streaming.