

Feb 1993

# An Incremental Improvement

By Bob Anderson

The *Mainsheet* is full of articles about how to anchor and how to install a dual battery system and the like. C-15 sailors scan these articles with mild interest and pass on to the stories about "How I Won the Nationals" and that sort of thing.

I have been crewing on a C-15 for some years now and I believe I have come up with a rigging tip that has helped me quite a bit. It could be valuable to other trapeze hands but it has absolutely no value to owners of any other boat built at Catalina Yachts.

The problem I solved can be described as follows:

There we are, sailing a hotly contested weather leg. The wind is up to 16 knots and the sea is on the lumpy side. The motor boats have been out in force so the chop tends to come from everywhere. In this weight of breeze, full time trapeezing is the order of the day. Tacking in these conditions calls for "wire to wire" trapeze work. The penalty for sloppy work is lost boat lengths. Soo... for whatever reason my driver and I decide we must tack. Wire to wire tacking should be thoroughly rehearsed and the moves so automatic no conscious thought is required. The tack is initiated by my nucleating the jib sheet. When the driver hears the pop, she (I prefer women drivers) starts heading up. I swing in, maintaining some tension on the

jib sheet. I pivot and release the old jib sheet as the boat passes through the eye of the wind. In the same motion, I complete the pivot and sit on the new windward side tank. I then immediately cleat the jib fairly tight. Now comes the fun part. With my forward hand I reach for the trapeze handle while my aft hand is occupied with the jib sheet. On this bumpy, windy day the trapeze handle is not positioned where I expect. I reach for it but it has sagged toward the center of the boat and it is dancing wildly with the motion of the boat. Precious seconds are lost while I eventually snag the wayward handle and complete the tack. Why? Why...?

Because with a standard trapeze set up, the trapeze handles are connected with a shock cord that is too short. The shock cord is routed from the handle down to a small block mounted about six inches aft of the shroud adjuster. The routing continues forward to a block mounted forward of the mast and then to a third small block mounted aft of the shroud adjusted on the opposite side of the boat. Finally the cord leads up to the trapeze handle and is secured there.

With this set-up, when the cord is tight enough to control the position of the trapeze handle, it's too tight when the crew is fully extended. When the crew must move aft to balance the boat on a screaming reach

there is serious pressure pulling the crew forward.

Is there a way to improve this situation? There sure is!! The answer is to develop a system that uses a much longer shock cord. In developing the system I considered running the cord to the bow down the centerline of the boat and I considered running the cord back under the deck. Then I hit on the solution! I tripled the cord length by mounting a single block on the leading edge of each shroud adjuster and a double block on the partner as far forward as you can get it. To rig the system, secure the shock cord to the handle, in the normal way, then lead it down to the block mounted aft of the shroud adjuster on either side of the boat. Next lead the cord forward to the double block then to the block at the leading edge of the shroud adjuster then back to the double block and repeat the process in the opposite side of the boat. A fair amount of tension can be applied because of the tripled length of shock cord to deal with and thicker stronger cord.

Since I installed this improved system, the problem of the dancing trapeze handle had been totally eliminated. But there are still other challenges. Now I'm trying to figure out how to rig the vang to the barney post so it can be played as easily as the mainsheet.