



Boat Maintenance for Better Radio Sailing

Like many sports, Radio Sailing is largely equipment reliant. To get the most enjoyment and reward from it, we encourage skippers to get to know their equipment and take care of it on a regular basis.

Preparation is the key with preventative maintenance and a little love shown to your boat paid back to you in spades whether you sail in calm fresh water in glorious sunshine or the bleakest of icy salt water environments.

Below I have set out a list of easy to apply tips that I have worked with over many years for near trouble free racing to help you prepare for any level of radio sailing. Clear the work bench or dining table and press on.

Preventative 'pre-event' Maintenance

Rigs

- Smear a light coat of Vaseline or use a silicone spray over any movable parts of rigging. E.g. gooseneck threads, turnbuckles
- Make sure all parts are moving properly and no corrosion has formed. If it has, wash thoroughly, dry, then lubricate or replace as needed.
- Check that any sheets are not frayed. If so, (or even if unsure), replacements are needed. Use a good quality Dyneema line. Make sure to use cyano/super glue on any knots tied otherwise they will slip and come undone.
- Test rig all of your rigs ready for use, making sure of sheeting travel and tuning as it is much easier to sort any issues indoors than at the pond where often rig changes are required in limited time. Inspect any line attachments, boom bands etc and make sure they are secure with no way of working loose in hard conditions.

Radio Equipment

- Make sure all servo, winch and battery lead plugs have a very light smearing of Vaseline, as this will keep away any corrosion.
- If any light corrosion is found on plugs, only ever use an electrical contact cleaner spray and an old toothbrush to clean immediately, then reapply Vaseline.
- Always remove the battery from your boat in storage. If the battery is showing any signs of rust, corrosion or swelling, discard responsibly and replace, as it will only fail in the near future.
- If you have had a rudder servo fail and it is showing signs of water ingress or rusted screws, do not try to repair or save it, just throw it away and source a replacement as it will only give you more grief down the track. A weekend or event lost to known or past faulty radio equipment is just inexcusable in my book and total false economy!



- Check your winch for signs of louder than usual running noise or visible corrosion. Always refer to the winch manufacturer's guidelines as to the correct lubricants to use and how these should be applied.

Most of all be diligent with inspecting your radio gear as a weekend or event lost to known or past faulty radio equipment is just inexcusable in my book and total false economy, with our generous suppliers too often incorrectly shouldering the blame for poor owner maintenance.

Deck Patches

- Have new patches firmly stuck down before arriving at the club as it is much easier to do it at home rather than out of the wind/rain. It is always best to stick these down dry, without any detergent
- Make sure the surface they are being applied to is free of polish and that they have no creases in them.
- Use a good sized patch with an area of adhesion no less than 7mm on all sides.
- If a patch needs to be lifted in wet conditions, replace the patch, DO NOT RE-USE.
- Only ever use a good quality Dacron Stickyback or similar. Never ever use Sign vinyl, Fablon or similar as this will become brittle in colder weather and split at the first sign of a contact resulting usually in a sinking.

Before Racing

- Check sheeting travel, rudder calibration and that the pot lid and drain patch/bung are in place.
- If your rudder is fitted with connections below deck, ensure a good coat of Vaseline is applied to the shaft to avoid water being sucked up inside the hull.

In Between Races

- If your boat is known to take a small amount of water in, drain boat after every race, only exception is on a very light air day, but leave never more than 2 races to drain.
- When not sailing, the boat should be laid flat with a towel covering the hull and fin from direct sunlight. The reason for this is that any salt moisture inside the boat will steam and be sucked straight through all electrical parts.

This is the number one reason why so many boats have electrical failure in open water conditions.

- Make sure to leave the pot lid loose so that the hull can still breathe between races.



At the End of Racing

- If you are very happy with the set up of your boat with a particular rig on a given day, mark all of your bowsies, turnbuckle and mast ram positions so that settings can easily be repeated next time this rig is used.
- Boat and rigging must be thoroughly washed with fresh water. Remove the drain hole bung/patch and fill hull with half a cup of fresh water. Gently roll the hull length ways, washing any salt water out of the hull. Do this carefully as not to splash the radio gear.
- Remove one of your middle deck patches above either the servo or winch so that the boat can air out and dry, storing the boat vertically at home until fully dry with pot lid removed. If this is not done immediately after sailing and then stored in a dry, moisture free place, you will forever have radio problems.
- Make sure you thoroughly wash all rigging, washing inside all booms and masts and stand to dry.
- Towel down your sails afterwards, they should not be put away wet, as they will sweat in their box/bag, distorting and ruining the sail film.
- Be sure to remove all tensions from your mainsail from the gooseneck and mainsail luff as your sail will be ruined very quickly if this is not done.

Cheers
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bg
Sails
& Design