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Basic Sailing Terminology

Bow –The front of the boat

Stern – The back of the boat

Cockpit – The area of the boat that has seats/space for the crew to steer the boat and adjust the sails.

Mast – The vertical pole to which the sails and rigging are attached

Boom – The horizontal pole to which the foot (bottom) of the mainsail is attached

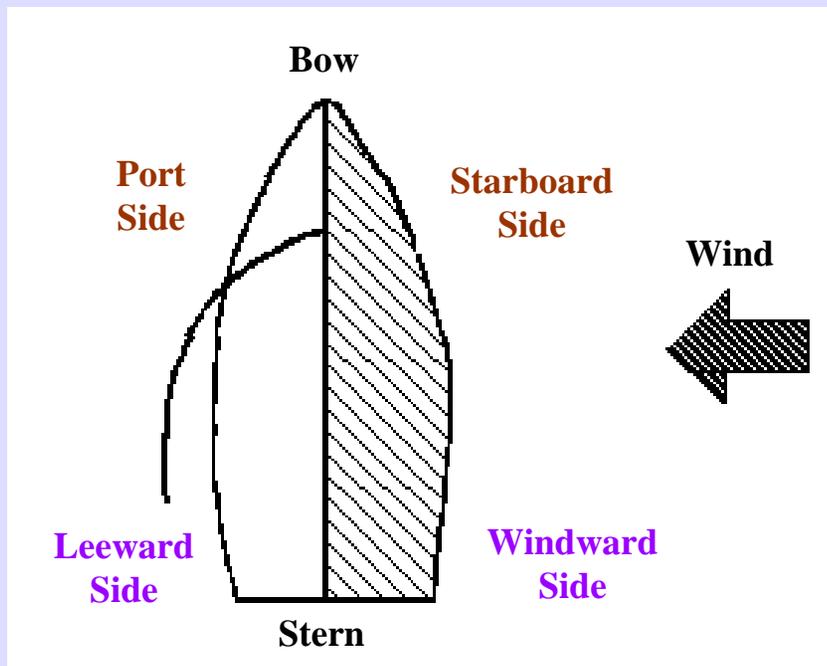
Main (mainsail) – The sail attached to the mast and the boom. This sail projects back from the mast toward the stern

Jib – The sail forward of the mast. Usually attached to the bow of the boat and the mast.



More Sailing Terminology

The diagram below identifies sailing terms that refer to locations on the boat or the boat's position in relation to the wind. The left side of the boat, while facing the bow is **port**. The right side of the boat is called the **starboard side**. **Leeward** and **windward** are terms which refer to the sides of the boat in relation to the wind. The side nearest the wind is the **windward side**, and the side which is away from the wind is the **leeward side**.



Course – The direction the boat is being steered (heading)

Falling off (bearing off, bearing away) – Altering the boat's course to be further away from the direction of the wind (falling off or away from the wind)

Jibing – Turning the stern of the boat through the wind so that the sails swing from one side of the boat to the other

Heading up (coming up) - Altering the boat's course to come closer to the direction of the wind

Halyard – A line (rope) used to raise or lower a sail

Irons ("in irons") – A condition in which the boat is pointing into the wind so that the sails cannot fill and the boat significantly slows down or stops.

Line – General term for any rope used on a boat

Luffing – When a sail starts to flutter and causes the boat to lose speed. This usually indicates that the sails, course of the boat or both need adjustment to sail effectively.

Points of Sail (see next page) – Points of Sail describe the angle between the boat's course and the direction of the wind (often referred to as beating, reaching and running)

Sheet – A line used to trim (pull in) or ease (let out) a sail

Tacking – Turning the bow of the boat through the wind so that the sails swing from one side of the boat to the other

Points of Sail (The Wind...The Boat)

The **points of sail** relate to the angle between a sailboat's heading, or course, and the direction of the wind.

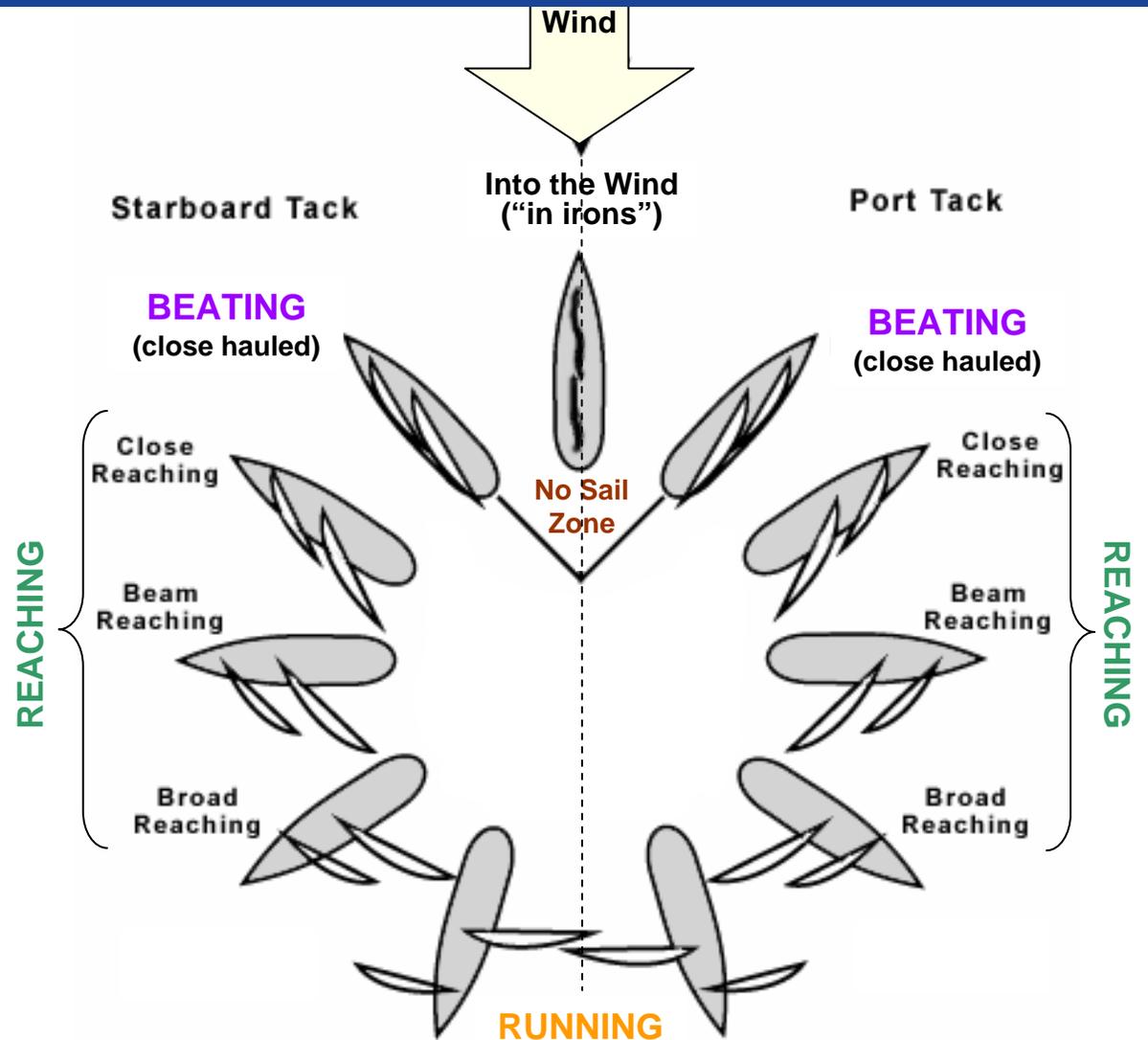
There are three basic courses:

- **BEATING** (wind is from the bow)
- **REACHING** (wind is from the side)
- **RUNNING** (wind is from the stern (astern))

A sailboat can sail in any direction except into the wind. Specifically, there is a zone of about forty-five degrees on either side of the eye of the wind (ninety degrees altogether) in which the sails will not fill. This zone is called the **No Go Zone** and the boat will be "*in irons*".

Notice two things:

- Sails are trimmed in (pulled in) as you head closer to the wind (heading up) and eased out (let out) as you head further from the wind (falling off).
- The diagram is symmetrical about the eye of the wind (dotted line). For example, there are two close reaches, one with the wind hitting the starboard side first (**starboard tack**), and one with the wind hitting the port side first **port tack**.



Crew Roles

Driver or Helmsman:

- Responsible for steering the sailboat.
- Focus is on speed!
- Must communicate & coordinate his/her actions with the Main & Jib Trimmer

Main Trimmer:

- Responsible for the main sail
- Key contributor to speed & maneuverability of the sailboat.
- Must coordinate actions with Jib Trimmer and Driver

Jib Trimmer(s):

- Responsible for the **Jib** (sail)
- Contributes to speed & maneuverability of the sailboat.
- crucial role when the sailboat makes major course changes

Tactician:

- Focuses on the “chess game”
- assists Driver with course navigation & planning
- monitors the boat’s, progress & performance relative to the course and the other boats

