

IT IS THE OBLIGATION OF EVERY SKIPPER TO PREVENT UNSAFE AND DESTRUCTIVE BOOM MOVEMENT BY ENSURING THAT THE BOOM IS RIGGED FOR GYBE CONTROL

Accidental Gybes

Rigging preventers and boom brake type systems

Accidental gybes happen in all conditions, even in light air a momentary lack of concentration can result in an accidental gybe. All booms should have some sort of control rigged when sailing deep off the wind. Again, even in light air conditions a boom can develop dangerous and destructive inertia when allowed to gybe freely. In-boom furling systems are heavier than standard booms, and it is more important to control their freedom of movement.

Preventer systems and boom brake type systems must be rigged to suit the layout of the boat, and all boats are different. Likewise the choice of which type of control system to use is an individual decision with varied opinions between experienced sailors.

A preventer is rigged from the bale on the bottom of the boom, and led forward to the toe rail.

A snatch block can lead the line aft to a winch.

If your boom can dip into the water at any time, a shock absorber must be included. **Shockle** is a product which can be rigged into the preventer line to allow the boom to have some freedom of movement. If the boat cannot be steered back to the original gybe, a rigged preventer must be released after the gybe to get the boat controlled.



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Another popular approach is to rig a boom brake type system which allows the travel of the boom at a slow rate during the gybe. These units do not require the immediate crew attention that rigged preventer must have. The brake usually rides on a line running perpendicular to the boom; when the boom brake is actuated, it grabs the line and either works as a preventer, or slows the boom's speed while gybing. The brake is actuated by tensioning the line upon which it rides.

