

PREVENTING ACODENTAL JIBES – MAIN BOOM PREVENTER/FOREGUY

By Donald Street

Every year, numerous sailors are injured, and some are killed, as the result of inadvertent jibes. These accidents can be avoided with the use of a preventer/foreguy on the main boom.

For downwind sailing, the first and most essential piece of gear is a strong preventer on the main boom that can be easily rigged and unrigged.

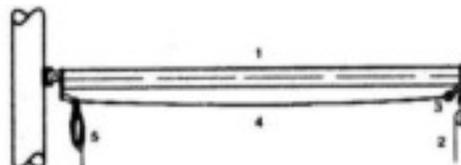
To set up an effective preventer, you need a strong bail on the end of the main boom, preferably angled forward at about 45 degrees. If you don't have a suitable bail, you can use a loop of line to make a strop. Make the loop long enough that you can wrap it twice around the boom. Tuck one end of the loop through the other and work it tight. (The two wraps will ensure the strop doesn't slip along the boom.) To make the loop, take a piece of line of the appropriate length, tie the ends together with a sheet bend, and mouse the tails of the knot with electrical tape.

Secure a wire (or a length of high-tech line like Spectra or Onyema) to the bail or strop. This is the permanent part of the boom preventer. It should be about a foot shorter than the distance from the bail to the gooseneck and have a thimble spliced into its gooseneck end. A lashing line tied into the thimble will allow you to snug the preventer up to the gooseneck and tight under the boom when it's not in use.

Lead two spinnaker-pole foreguys, one each side of the boat, through blocks at the stem head or the end of the bowsprit. Clip the snap shackles to lifeline stanchions abreast of the mast and run the other ends aft to the cockpit.

To set up the preventer when you're sailing, all you have to do is untie the line under the boom from the gooseneck and clip the snap shackle of the leeward foreguy into the thimble eye. Make the lashing line long enough that you can tie it loosely to the lifeline and use it as a retrieval line when it's time for a jibe.

Once the wind gets on the quarter and the boom is well eased, connect the preventer and set it up tight using a winch. If no winch is available, over-ease the mainsheet. Take up on the foreguy, trim in the main to make the foreguy tight. A Jibe is now all but impossible.



Key to the diagram

1. Main boom
2. Mainsheet
3. Bail or strop
4. Wire preventer
5. Light line