

How to Ship Boats Overseas to a World Championship

By Barney Harris

Albacore 6701 + 505 USA 8643

Container Organizer Emeritus

I have found myself in the unenviable position of having to organize a total of three overseas expeditions: the 2000 505 Worlds in Durban South Africa, the 2001 Albacore World Championships in Torquay, England, and the 2001 505 Worlds in Cascais, Portugal. With no experience in international shipping, we plodded our way through the shipping process like a rat through a maze, expending an enormous amount of time and energy figuring it all out from scratch. Lets face it, shipping things over seas is not something that one normally does unless that's one's business. Trying to get the best deal on things is even more difficult without some background understanding of how the entire process works, the players, and the rules of the game.

Having been intimately involved with the planning and execution of three overseas trips, I feel I am a seasoned container organizer—and need to find a way out of doing this for the rest of my life, so here it is, the comprehensive guide on how to ship boats overseas to attend regattas.

Planning a Trip

Duuude, I'm Definitely There! Yeah, right. The first step in organizing a boat shipment is to figure out who really intends on going and who is just blowing smoke. Lots of people will SAY they want to go but will cave to other pressures when the moment of truth comes and its time to load up the boats. The only way to get the real answer up front is by requiring non-refundable cash deposits months in advance. Somehow the prospect of putting up hard cold cash turns the flakiest yahoo into a pragmatic, hard nosed realist, instilling a clarity into their ability to predict their true mindset never before seen. Amazing. Another reason to obtain cash deposit is that the organizers must defend against the few flakes who are “definitely” planning on going, but who drop out at the last minute. The loss of these persons increases the shipping cost to all, since the expenses are shared by fewer, and places the entire enterprise at risk, due to high cost blowing out other marginally funded teams. The need to get a real answer up front and in advance is imperative. When we organized the Albacore container to attend 2001 Worlds, we began asking for a \$400 deposit over a year in advance. We initially had a very large group who SAID they were definitely going to attend—but when presented with the hard truth of a non-refundable deposit, thought again. The bottom line is that nearly anyone who forks over a deposit has thought it all through well enough that the probability they will make it is pretty high.

Figure Out What You Need

With sponsored shipping, the event sponsor may make a good portion of the arrangements and the competitors only needed a freight forwarder to provide limited services. For example, the 2001 505 worlds, the event sponsor MACS took care of all arrangements and costs from the point where the container was delivered to the port including terminal handling charge, ocean freight, arrival, and clearance at the destination port, truck transport to the event site, and re export and shipping back to the US. All we needed from our freight forwarder was clearance papers for export from the USA and re import, and trucking to and from the port. In contrast, shipping to the 2001 Albacore Worlds, for which there was no sponsor, required all details to be covered, as there was no shipping sponsor.

Figure out what is being shipped. Assuming you have a non-refundable cash deposit from each team shipping a boat, this should be relatively easy. If you go soft here and do not require a cash deposit, then you really do not know anything until the boats are loaded. If anything deviates significantly from the boat and related equipment such as surfboards, bicycles, or other gear, it's best to list them separately. List the identifying numbers for each of the boats as well as any additional items. This means hull identification numbers—not sail numbers.

Figure out exactly where you are going as in the exact address and the location at that address. It is best to have a local person take a look at the site and supply photographs with the exact location at the delivery site.

Determine to whom the container will be consigned. When we shipped our boats to South Africa, we had the container consigned to US sailor Macy Nelson—and he was also the shipper. Occasionally a local person will act as consignee for the load. Other times it makes sense to consign the load to a foreign freight forwarder.

Now, create a written statement of exactly what you want to have the freight broker quote. This will include a listing of what is being shipped, the means under which the boats will be cleared through customs (regular export or carnet), the value of the items being shipped for insurance purposes, where and how the container is to be packed, the exact location where the container is to be delivered, and the desired and hard dates for loading, arrival, and return.

Find and Qualify Freight Brokers

In the absence of a recommendation or some knowledge of the local market place, a good place to start is the yellow pages or internet [try www.forwarders.com]. Find the freight forwarders who have offices in the port of departure. Ask prospective freight forwarder the shipping routes in which they specialize. Ideally, one will have regular business and relationships with customs brokers and trucking affiliates and the shipping lines which service that destination and country. Solid business relationships with local contact will enable them to get things done, stay abreast of what is going on, and more readily dig themselves out of any contingency. Ask what the duty and sales tax rates and whether a bond will be needed (if a Carnet is not used). If they are regularly shipping goods to this country, they should know this or at least have it readily available to look up.

Obtain Quotes

Email or otherwise transmit the plan to the qualified freight forwarders for quote. Ask for an itemized breakdown of all cost elements so you can verify that each facet of the trip has been addressed. Its good to avoid all in one pricing— which is a good way to get your equipment in some foreign place only to find out that it's all stuck and needs a cash injection above and beyond the agreed to price and you have no choice but to pay.

Get them to the same baseline.

You need to make an “apples to apples” comparison, so collect all the responses and build a spreadsheet to compare them. This spreadsheet will serve to help comprehend what you are paying for, verify that all bidders have addressed every facet of the trip, and to compare each offeror's estimates to negotiate the final price. The table below contains the actual quotes we obtained from five different freight forwarders when organizing the 2001 Albacore container from the US East coast to the UK and back. Note that the responses differed substantially in cost per element. Some of this difference is due to certain items being rolled into others such as terminal handling charge and ocean freight.

Table 1. Summary of Itemized Cost Estimates to Ship One Container of Albacores from Baltimore, Md to Torquay, England and Return for the 2001 Internationals

Freight Forwarder	Dan Transport	EOF	Pride	C I L	Shapiro
Port of Origination & Return	Baltimore	Baltimore	Baltimore	Baltimore	Baltimore
Destination Port	Felixistowe	Thamesport	TBD	TBD	Felixstowe
Cost Element					
Carnet	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250
Carnet Bond	\$750	\$750	\$750	\$750	\$750
Shipping Insurance thru Carnet	750	750	750	750	750
Trucking to the Port of Baltimore	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250
Forwarding Fee					\$125
US Terminal Handling	\$500			\$545	
Chassis Fee	\$80				
Container Service Fee	\$1,770		\$400	\$358	
Export Documentation	\$95	\$300	\$150		
Ocean Freight USA - UK	\$550		\$1,275	\$1,625	\$1,075
Fuel Surcharge	\$110				
UK Terminal Handling					\$175
UK Carnet Clearance			\$50		\$150
Courier Charge			\$40		\$37
Customs Clearance	\$54	\$450	\$0		
Trucking from Destination Port to Torquay	\$822	\$2,944	\$860	\$498	\$750
Container Demurrage	\$326	\$320	\$1,200	\$2,380	\$485
Chassis Demurrage					\$486
Event site storage fee	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
Racing Insurance, 10 boats	\$460	\$460	\$460	\$460	\$460
Crane Services	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150
Trucking from Event Site to the UK Port	\$822		\$860	\$480	\$750
UK Forwarding charge					\$125
Export Documentation	\$54		\$50		
Terminal Handling at UK	\$500	\$300		\$1,000	\$175
Chassis Fee	\$60		\$60		\$40
Container Service Fee	\$177	\$225	\$400	\$358	
Ocean Freight UK-USA	\$1,100	\$2,944	\$2,436	\$1,775	\$1,250
Fuel Surcharge UK-USA	\$110				
Terminal Handling at US port					\$500
Destination Handling	\$65		\$150	\$120	
Customs Clearance- USA	\$95				\$125
Trucking from Port to Unload Site	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250
Total Cost for 10 boats	\$10,099	\$10,292	\$10,741	\$11,949	\$9,058
Total Cost Per Boat	\$1,010	\$1,029	\$1,074	\$1,195	\$906

Select the Freight Forwarder

Price is a major selection criteria, but is not the only consideration. All the sailors are betting their vacations, the airfare, hotel, and their precious time off on the idea that the equipment in the container will arrive at its destination on time without any problems, so I place a significant value on the quoter's responsiveness. Did the freight forwarder come back with a hard quote or did you have to pester them several times to get any action? Was the quoted price all-inclusive, or had they "forgotten" to include certain key parts of the trip? When you called to speak to the contact, were they in the office and available or were they always out to lunch or on a day off? Will the individual you dealt with to obtain the pricing be the same person who would handle the shipment? Freight forwarding is

the type of career, like real estate, that one can get into and learn without any academic training, and so there are good and less than proficient vendors. It's likely that if an outfit is a nightmare to deal with when getting the price, they will be a disaster doing the work.

Gather Paperwork

The freight forwarder must obtain signed Power of Attorney from each person or entity for which a clearance is required. Have each boat owner provide a copy of the bill of sale for each boat.

Schedule the Loading

Boat owners must pack their boat and gear in advance of loading. We used a trucking company who had a covered warehouse. We were able to drive our vehicles into the facility and prepare the boats to load under cover, and then simply roll them into the container. This kept us out of the rain and sun and made the whole process run smooth. If one is loading a container from a loading dock, a minimum of one person for each boat is required. If one is loading a container sitting on a trailer in a parking lot, a minimum of six persons are required and eight are preferable.

Follow up

This is pretty simple, call and verify that the container left the loading point and was transferred to the port, when it clears customs, when it is loaded on the ship, when the ship leaves. Establish contact with the receiving end freight forwarder and verify when it arrives, and at each point on the way until it has arrived at the destination. These periodic checks will quickly alert you if things have gone wrong somewhere.

At the event

Unpack the container. Keep it locked up. Use a lock with a user settable combination and set it to a number that everyone will remember. Try to keep the container organized during the event.

The return trip

The destination country Customs personnel will want to check each container before its closed up for shipping to verify that every boat that arrived will leave, especially if duty and taxes have been informally waived. Make it easy for the customs inspector by having all the boat's data and documentation ready and well organized.

Maintain contact with the exporting freight forwarder and track the container's progress from pick up, loading on the ship, and arrival in the US. After the container arrives give a call to your freight forwarder to be certain they are aware of it and are taking action. Typically these guys are pretty busy and its easy for a single load to get lost in the noise, so regular follow up phone calls to continually bring your shipment to the top of the pile are a good idea. The unloading party must be ready to go soon after the container clears customs. Work with the trucking company to schedule the exact time and location. Pay the final bills and hope you never have to do it again.

Organizing a container load of boats for an international trip is, well, a tremendous pain in the ass. The time investment to prepare, execute, and recover from an event is a real intrusion on your life—but it has to be done. I've had my time in the barrel—and now you all know just as much as I do, so I'll never have to do this job ever again!

Corollary Article

International Shipping Players

One must know the players in the game and understand how they relate to one another to ship boats internationally.

Shipper

The shipper is the person who is shipping the container. The shipper's name is entered in the appropriate place on the Bill of Lading.

Consignee

The consignee is the person to whom the container is being shipped. This person can be anyone—when we shipped boats to South Africa in 2000, we listed United States' sailor Macy Nelson as consignee. Macy was also listed as the shipper. The freight forwarder can also be listed as consignee. Alternatively it can be a third person such as a point of contact at the destination.

Freight Forwarder

A freight forwarder is the commercial entity that deals with the others to make it all happen. Their business consists of organizing and bird-dogging cargo being shipped overseas on behalf of their clientele. A good freight forwarder will have contacts with a number of shipping companies, be well versed in the laws and practices of the countries to which they ship, with familiar business contacts in trucking, freight forwarding, local Customs, or contacts with persons who do.

We have found that customs, practices, differ to a surprising degree from port to port. When we shipped the container to South Africa in 2000, we used the same freight forwarder as the west coast. There were a number of snafus on the outgoing trip and the freight forwarder realized that they were going to have to expend more time figuring it all out that our small fee was worth. We were advised after our container left that they would not be coordinating our return. We found a local freight forwarder for the return trip.

Customs Broker

The customs broker's business is assisting their customer's cargo being cleared through US and other country's Customs. A good customs broker will have a direct electronic link to US customs, so clearances can be submitted and returned instantly and without the use of a courier. More often than not, a Freight Forwarder and customs broker will be the same person.

Stevedores

The guys who operate the container handling machinery from the trucks to the cranes belong to a group called stevedores or longshoremen. These are highly unionized and well entrenched into the port operation. I remember being on a ship that required no longshoremen due to its self off load capability. In every port we had to pay for two gangs of longshoremen to sit on their ass and do nothing while the ships own crew handled the cargo. The ship's captain explained to me that if we did not do this, the tugboat and other union run port services would not service our ship. This amounted to extortion in every port we visited. Longshoremen have a well-earned seedy reputation for theft, featherbedding, and cost that exceeds their value. When shipping boats we do not want to deal with them. They will not understand the delicate nature of our equipment, and most of it would be stolen anyway. The Longshoremen union contract with the port often require that any containers being loaded in the port or surrounding area be performed by longshoremen.

The way to avoid these guys is to have the container trucked from the port for loading to a site outside the reach of the longshoremen union's tentacles.

Trucking Company

As described above, we wish to escape the stevedore union's influence by transporting the container from the port area to the loading site. The trucking company is a commercial entity that will go into the port, pick up the container, and transport it anywhere you want. Ideally, the trucking company will have an electronic tie in to the port's status system so they will be appraised instantly when a container has cleared customs and is ready to be picked up.

Corollary article SPOT's Glossary of International Boat Shipping

Venturing into the world of international shipping is like visiting another planet in your own city. Its full of strange customs, things that everyone takes for granted that you have never heard of, and a language all its own. One thing is for certain; you cannot function in this arena unless you know the lingo.

Customs Export/Import Documentation

Before anything can enter or leave a country, an application must be filed with the customs officials in the destination country describing the nature of the material, who owns it, its value, and the ultimate destination. Each country will have its own particular forms and process. When exporting from the US to a destination, this requires a submission to US customs when departing, and to the customs entity in the destination country. A customs broker in the United States will typically rely on an affiliate with an office in the destination country. It is important to use a freight forwarder who is well connected in the destination country to avoid glitches. It is typical that the person who deals with the export is not the same one who handles import. It is important when dealing with a freight forwarder to establish contact with both persons who will handle the transactions, and to make certain that there is good communication between the two on the outgoing route. Often, the import paperwork can be filled out and signed at the same time as export, saving time and ensuring accuracy.

Duty & Sales Tax

Countries often have significant import fees for foreign goods being imported. The purpose of these fees can range from revenue generation to protecting the local supplier base. These fees can be significant. For example, when importing into the UK, a Value Added Tax of around 17% will be assessed. This tax is then passed on to the ultimate consumer when the product is sold. These fees impact us since many countries will require that an entity that claims to be temporarily importing to post a bond equal to the sum of duty and taxes. This can be a significant—upwards of 30-100% of the declared value. A really sharp broker should be able to have the bonds waived in some cases. During our last two worlds in Durban and Portugal, the sponsoring shipper requested that these bonds be waived for competitors, greatly reducing the cash outlay for the competitors. As a class we should work to get relief from these import bonds when shipping to Australia in late 2002.

Carnet

A Carnet is a passport for goods that are to be shipped into a country for a finite period of time and then re-exported. Its purpose is to clear the red tape for persons such as representative attending a trade show who wants to bring in product samples for display that will return after the show. The Carnet offers some advantages. First, it enables the shipper to avoid posting duty and taxes at the destination country. Second, everything included in the carnet can be shipped under one clearance. In the case of shipping boats, each boat owner must get their own customs export or entry prepared at a cost of 100 to 150 dollars. The Carnet costs around 250. If three or more boats are being shipped, the cost to export and import with a carnet will be $2 \times 150 + 250$ or 550. If no carnet is used then it will total 3 boats times 150 per boat for export + 150 per boat for re-import or 900 for the round trip.

For all the good they do, Carnets have a downside. First, the actual paper Carnet can be lost or messed up. The actual Carnet is like a 100,000 dollar bill to the owner—but its worthless to everyone else. It seems that Carnets get lost—EVERY TIME I have dealt with one, it has been misplaced at some point in the trip which has caused a delay. If it is lost you cannot get your gear out of customs. This may occur in the destination country or on the return trip. You can get a replacement Carnet, but this costs another \$250 and a delay that may incur more demurrage or worse yet, cause you to miss part or all of an event.

Another way that a Carnet can screw you is if the customs clerk botches up the entries at any point. The Carnet consists of several sheets of paper that must be signed and stamped by Customs officials at each point of the trip. If all the correct entries are made, there is no problem however, if one of these guys screws it up, it could lead to import duty and taxes at the worst or a delay and additional cost for a replacement at best.

I had previously obtained a carnet for the 2000 505 Worlds in South Africa and for the 2001 Albacore Worlds in the UK. In 2001 I attempted to obtain a Carnet for the 2001 505 Worlds in Portugal, but the Carnet provider, Roanoke Trade, said that I could not obtain a Carnet on the behalf of others in spite of providing two within the past year. This apparently has been discussed at some length and made a formal policy among all Carnet providers. The US West coast containers heading to Portugal in 2001 went under individual Carnets. The US East coast did not use Carnets for the Portugal trip.

I believe that it will be possible to use a Carnet for shipping multiple boats, but ownership of the boats must be transferred to a single entity for this to happen. It may be that the American Section of the 505 class association can purchase the boats for the period of time they are shipped overseas. This topic requires more research.

Demurrage

A shipping company typically owns their containers. A shipper is typically given around 5 free business days of use of the container after it is delivered to a port to clear customs, get emptied, and returned. If the shipper has the container for more than the free period, the shipping company will assess demurrage or rental charges. Demurrage is typically charged at an increasing rate after the five day grace period starting at around 35 and ending at around 70 to 100 per day. If the container is on a rolling chassis, there will be an additional charge.

Dunnage

Packing material used to secure the cargo being shipped. In the case of 505s, padding between the hull and sides of the container, securing lines, straps, are used to restrain the boat could be considered dunnage.

Drayage

Charges associated with transporting a container from the port area to the point of unloading. For example, Drayage to pick up the Portugal Worlds container and transport it to Northern VA from the port in Baltimore ran \$375.

Terminal handling charge

Cost associated with receiving the container at the port and loading it onto the ship or removing the container from the ship and trucking it to a location at the port facility where it can be picked up and removed are referred to as terminal handling charge. The container is loaded and secured onto the ship by longshoremen who operate the container handling machinery. In the port of Baltimore, the THC was \$500. Sometimes a shipping company will roll the THC into the ocean freight.

Ocean freight

The cost of transporting the container across the ocean once it has been loaded onto the ship. Typical costs are one way from the US east coast to the UK are around 600 dollars. Ocean freight costs are not fixed and will vary significantly with market pressures, the cost of fuel, and competition for the route. It is not uncommon for the outgoing ocean freight to differ dramatically for the return trip.

Insurance: Shipping

It's a good idea to buy insurance for anything shipped. Hazards can range from a dropped container, lost container through bureaucratic f*ck up, theft, or getting washed over the side during a storm. A typical rate for insurance is $\frac{3}{4}$ of one percent of the declared value of the shipped material. This will cover the load from the time the container door is closed and placed under customs seal until the door is unsealed and opened at the destination.

Insurance: Sailing

Most insurance policies issued in the US do not cover boats sailed outside the US. There are some exceptions to this such as USAA, which provide worldwide coverage. For most sailors, it will be necessary to obtain insurance for the time period after the container door is opened at the destination until it is placed under seal for the return trip. US Sailing has worked with several underwriters to create a product that sort of satisfies this need. I have found that one can always get a better deal from a local underwriter. As with all things, it is important to work this out well in advance of your arrival.

Bill of Lading

The one document that all shippers and destination countries have in common is the Bill of Lading. This document contains a listing of all stuff in the container, where it is coming from, who is shipping it, the consignee, the destination address, and other information such as container number, customs seal number. I believe it is impractical to list every last bit of material brought into a country – and have used the following description with good results:

“505 racing dinghy with rigging, spars, sails, foils, covers, tools, sailing gear, spare parts, and launching dolly.”

It's a good idea to separately list every item which does not fall within this description such as bicycles, sleeping bags, surf boards, etc. I always asked for a copy of the bill of lading for my records to assist tracing the container's location and status during shipping.

Commercial Invoice / Packing List

This document contains a detailed listing of materials that are to be shipped including any serial numbers or other identifying data, and their value for customs purposes. This information is entered into the Bill of Lading.

Container

Containers come in two types, rail and sea. The difference between rail and sea containers is in the structure - the sea container is designed to withstand wave slap and high wind loading it may encounter while stowed on the exposed deck of a merchant ship. A rail container must only deal with winds encountered while on a truck or rail car, so they are not as stout. A sea container is equipped with "d" rings at the confluence of the walls, deck, and overhead, whereas the rail container typically has no internal securing attachment points.

Containers come in a variety of sizes ranging to 53 feet in length. All are 8 feet in width and 8 or 9 feet in height. To ship boats we will need a container of at least 40 feet in length. 40 foot containers are pretty ubiquitous. 45 foot containers are available, but only from certain ports – for instance, 45 footers are only handled out of the US East coast through New York and Norfolk. I used a 45 footer to ship Albacores to the UK last summer - the extra 5 feet enabled us to increase the number of boats jammed in there by 50% - from 8 to 12. Albacores are 15 ft in length - we overlapped the bows a small amt. For 505 use, a 45 footer would cost a bit more, and would not increase the number of 505s we can ship, but it would make packing the dollies and other gear a bit easier.

“High cube” is the shipping industry’s buzz word to describe a container that is around one foot taller than a regular container. We need this extra height so the boats suspended from the overhead clear the boats on their rail underneath. The extra height enables us to jam 10 boats into the box. With a regular container, we will only be able to fit in 8 boats.

It is possible to get a sea container for overland travel - but they are not generally used for this service. A sea container is not as efficient a means of shipping general boxed cargo as the rail container since a greater percentage of the maximum gross weight and internal volume, which are both constrained by various regulations, is dedicated to steel structure. When shipping over land, one will have to specifically ask for a sea container. For the 2000 505 North Americans were held in Santa Cruz, CA. Ten East coast 505 owners shipped boats in a single container. Unfortunately, we ended up with a 45 foot high cube rail container, which required extensive on site modification. I won’t divulge the responsible party, but his initials are BILL SMITH. The good news was that there was plenty of room - the bad news was that we had to install our own tie down points. I believe that everyone on the East coast now knows the difference between a sea and rail container.

A semi tractor will tow the container on a rolling chassis to the ultimate destination. Off Loading at the delivery site can be accomplished with a roll back truck, crane, or by leaving the container on a rolling chassis. A roll back truck is equipped to tilt and slide the container off the back much like flat bed car trailer. A clear distance equal to twice the length of the container plus the truck trailer is needed to deposit and retrieve the container which may make this method impractical. A crane can be used to simply lift the container off of the rolling chassis and set it on the ground. There will be an additional charge for this service which can range from 150 dollars for the use of a crane which is already on the site to well over 500 dollars for a crane which has to make a special trip. Leaving the container on the rolling chassis is another option. This will be less convenient than options where the container is left on the ground from the boat unloading and loading standpoint, and there is an additional per day rental for the rolling chassis above and beyond the container demurrage. This expense can range to 50 or 100 dollars per day for the rolling chassis alone.

For the 2001 Albacore worlds, we were fortunate that the event site was having some major work done at the pier that required a large ringer crane. We were able to informally hire this crane to lift our container off of and onto its truck chassis quite cheaply and for far less than what it would have cost for a similar crane to make a special trip.

Hull Identification Number

A hull ID number contains information regarding the boat’s manufacturer, date of construction, and other identifying data. The hull ID number will be molded into the transom. Waterat’s also have the hull ID molded into the left side of the bulkhead. The vast majority of state governments do not require small boats without motors to be titled or registered. As a consequence, most 505s are typically neither titled nor registered. While each 505 has a unique sail number assigned consecutively by the International 505 Class Association, the sail number does not contain any information regarding manufacturer identity, date of construction, or any other information and, as such, is generally regarded by government agencies charged with titling and registration as inadequate. Some 505s do not have hull ID numbers—Hamlins, Parkers, and some Rondars which were originally build for the non US market are examples.

Not having a hull ID numbers can cause delays when clearing through customs. Customs personnel want to collect import duty on everything they can. When gear is returned to the US they must see proof that the boat described in the paperwork is actually the one being shipped AND that the person bringing it in actually owns it. Note that Customs is not interested in ownership on the way out, so the fact that something was exported two weeks ago has little to do with its re importation. Ownership is most clearly demonstrated via a title. If there is no title, then a bill of sale will usually work. Optimally one should obtain a copy of every bill of sale before the container is loaded and provide this to the freight forwarder to be ahead of the game for the return trip.

Power of Attorney

The POA is a document that enables the customs broker to represent the shipper to Customs when exporting and importing boats and equipment. The customs broker must have a signed POA on file for each shipper. The POA contains the shipper's legal name, SSN#, address, and a statement that the shipper hereby permits the customs broker to act on their behalf.

Sidebar Article:

SPOT Speaks on the Finer Point of Boat Packing and Shipping

One cannot ship boats around the world several times in one year without picking up a few tricks along the way. Here are some tips to make it happen from the mind of SPOT.

Schedule

It is a good idea to have extra time on the delivery side. A week is the minimum, and two weeks is better. To attend the Portugal Worlds, we had to pack up our boats in the middle of August and did not see them again till the end of November.

Label Everything

Clearly mark all dollies, wheels, tool boxes, bags, and masts with the boat number. When we unloaded the container returning from Portugal, nothing was labeled, and no boats made it onto the correct dolly. This is critical.

No Loose Gear

Do not allow anyone to place loose gear in the container. No loose sails, spinnaker poles, small boxes of parts, line. All sails and spars must be in the boats save for the masts. Have all tools, parts, line, etc packed into larger containers, tie or tape them shut, and indelibly marked with the owner's name.

Duffle Bags off the Deck

All clothes bags should be held up off the deck with lines secured to the overhead d rings. Containers can leak, and it would be a shame if all your clothes were soaked when you arrived at your destination.

Mast Preparation

Hoist all halyards to the top of the mast, coil the tails and tie them to the mast base. Remove shrouds and spreaders and place them in the boat. Now, wrap the gooseneck, pole fitting, spreader bracket, and the top and bottom of the mast in carpet and secure it with duct tape. Do not permit anyone to marry two spars together as this will complicate getting them into or out of the container. Spars can be slid into the spaces below the boats. The carpet will hold the masts off the deck and away from the boats and each other. Only masts are placed into the container separately; all other spars are secured inside the boat.

Boat Preparation

Roll and bag all sails, remove the main sheet swivel cleat, secure the boom and other spars into the hull below the level of the centerboard cap—otherwise they will interfere with the boat nesting. Put on the bottom cover. Now, tie two lines from the thwart around the bottom of the hull and to the other thwart. This makes a convenient grab handle to help lift the boat while it's on its side. Boats in the overhead should have a 2 ft by 2 ft piece of carpet rolled up and held to the deck at the partners with a line tied from the carpet to the mast step. A few layers of carpet should be folded around the corners of the transom where the boat will contact the overhead. You do not want to go too crazy with the padding here since there is not much room between the hull suspended from the overhead and the boats on their side below.

Securing Hulls in the Overhead

Wheel the hull into the container on its dolly right side up and all packed up. Run four lines from d rings in the overhead down the bulkhead, across the deck, and up to D rings on the opposite side. Roll the boat into position and lift it off the dolly, following it up with two of the four loops of line. Raise the hull to

the overhead and tension the lines as best as you can. Once the hull is suspended from the overhead, connect a length of line between the two lines supporting the hull. Now, simultaneously lift the hull and tension this line. The combined action will tension it all at once and force the hull into rigid contact with the overhead. Next similarly tension the second two lines as redundant supports. Place the finishing touch on the boat now suspended from the overhead by securing a line from the mid point of one sling, over the hull to the opposite side of the same sling. The hull will now be held tight against the container overhead and will be constrained from forward, aft, or lateral movement.

Securing Boats on Their Side

Place the first boat bow into the container with the hull bottom facing outboard. Set the rail down on the deck on a few layers of carpet, an old tire, or better yet, a one inch thick piece of fairly soft durometer sheet rubber. Now, with the upper side deck directly vertical of the lower side deck, lean the bottom onto the container bulkhead. Attach two lengths of line from a D ring located approximately above amidships around the hull to one D ring a few feet from the bow and a second a few feet from the transom. Tension these lines with a trucker's hitch. Note that the hull will become reasonably well immobilized between the lines and points of contact. In other words, the securing line length would have to increase to permit the boat to move around very much.

Bring the second hull into the container stern first and rotate it vertically. Place it next to the first boat deck to deck in a clamshell fashion, also setting its rail down onto a pad consisting of several layers of carpet, an old tire, or a piece of sheet rubber. The two lifting lines tied between the thwart will greatly ease this step, since persons standing around amidships can help lift. The handholds provided by these lines will also stabilize the boat, and eliminate the tendency for it to turn upright when lifted at its ends. Lash the second hull into position using the same scheme as the first hull. Repeat this process for the third hull. Now, notice the fourth and final hull must be inserted stern first, or else it won't fit into the space remaining, and is the entire reason for following the afore described loading order.

For containers shipped by rail, truck, or ocean vessel, can see accelerations of +/- one g in any direction. Imagine after all the boats have been packed up the container being stood on its end. Would the gear and boats survive this? Following the above guidelines and it will.