

Regatta Preparation – What to Bring

Hey Barn, can I borrow your screwdriver again?

Sure, but didn't you bring any tools at all with you?

Well... No.

So...what were you thinking? You traveled across the Atlantic ocean to sail a boat you have never seen owned by someone you have never met – and you assumed that your chartered boat would not require any adjustment or work to make sailable? You thought that the owner who could not see fit to get him/herself to the regatta would have been so fastidious with his boat that you would not have to perform any work on it at all to make it function right in some of the heaviest winds we have seen all season?

OF COURSE you can borrow my screwdriver and are more than welcome to anything else I have - but this conversation will haunt you....

What should one bring to an event to ensure that you can make any adjustments or minor repairs quickly and efficiently to not impact your time on the water? I have found that what where I am going has a direct implication to what I pack. I would categorize my preparation into three classes: local events, traveling events, and long distance remote events.

At local event at the home club you may have access to club tools and or supplies, and well known friends who are more than willing to help out. Even for these events, you will need to bring the most rudimentary level of tools and parts with you - if for nothing else than to help out the good friend who inadvertently forgot their stuff - and more importantly to not be the person who chronically has to ask for everyone else's help.

When traveling to away events where there is no or little local support, one must be even more prepared and must bring the next level of tools, supplies, and spares. While it may be possible to rely on local marine or hardware stores, it may not be possible to make a trip and get the repair done in time to make the start. I will therefore make certain that I come ready with a few more things.

Events in foreign countries where differences in electrical power or the remoteness of the location eliminate any possible reliance on external assistance require still more planning and preparation. For these events one must be ready for any eventuality. If the sailing conditions are going to be rough and the water is shallow, it is entirely possible that you may break more fundamental parts of your boat –like a rig or worse. I have personally broken one mast, two booms, one rudder, one centerboard, and have had to deal with ripped sails, holed boats, seized blocks, exploding trailer bearings, melting trailer lights, and worn, chaffed lines, not to mention the occasional muffler and overheating radiator!

I have listed a good starting point for tools, supplies, and spares for different levels of local, traveling, and remote events.

Suggested Packing List			
Event Type	Tools	Supplies	Spares
<i>Local Events</i>	Channel lock pliers small adjustable wrench folding knife Phillips screwdriver slotted screw driver	duct tape	tiller extension universal shroud pin jib tack pin spare ring dings a couple blocks a few bits of line
<i>Do not show up without these.</i>			
<i>Traveling</i>	Tools above PLUS:	Supplies above PLUS:	Parts above PLUS:

<p><i>Events</i></p> <p><i>You really should have this stuff.</i></p> <p><i>Buy it and keep it with the boat!</i></p>	<p>needle nose pliers Swedish fid marlin spike scissors sail needles blue masking tape pocket torch round & flat files “Felco” wire cutter 11/32 inch wrench 3/8 inch wrench tape measure</p>	<p>#2 whipping twine #4 whipping twine yarn for telltales electrical tape Spray can of Mclube</p>	<p>spare tiller extension extra main and jib spare goose neck pin spare fasteners – note 1 spare sheets – note 2 spare line – note 3 spare fittings – note 4</p>
<p><i>Remote Location Events</i></p> <p><i>Cheap Vacation Insurance!</i></p>	<p>Tools above PLUS: hog ring pliers rivet gun bucket sponge marking pen(s) hacksaw + blades drill index extra 3/16 bit extra 11/64 bit extra 1/8 bit portable drill charger for drill extra drill battery power converter nico press tool scraper</p>	<p>Supplies above PLUS: 3m 5200 3m 101 80 grit sandpaper 220 grit sandpaper 600 grit sand paper 1000 grit sand paper sail repair tape epoxy repair kit acetone paper towels latex gloves ½ in epoxy brushes sanding block</p>	<p>Parts above PLUS: Rivets Hog rings Spare battens replacement tiller Extra boom, rigged transom rudder fittings Spare rigged mast thimbles, sleeves and wire rope – note 5 spare rudder, complete spare centerboard</p>
<p>Notes:</p> <p>1 – ideally include several of every type of fastener used to construct and rig your boat.</p> <p>2 – replace sheets before they are too far gone – keep the old ones as spares</p> <p>3 – bring enough line to replace any one system on your boat’s rigging</p> <p>4 – at least one of every running fitting used to rig your boat</p> <p>5 – include wire to replace any one system on the boat</p>			

Instead of simply grabbing a tool chest from your house, which will have some things like ½ inch drive socket sets and plumbing tools you will not likely need, and some very critical things you will need, prepare a sailing tool kit. Start by making a list of what tools you will need to fix anything on your boat that you can accomplish in 3 hours time. Then make a list of the hardware and supply items you will likely use. Some supplies like duct tape seem to be important every time the boat hits the water. Others, like sail repair tape are needed only infrequently. Start with a basic list and then go to events. Every time you find yourself wanting a particular tool or supply, add this item to the list for next time. Also, if you notice that you are not using particular tools, remove them from the box. If you do not miss these items, then you really did not need them to begin with; less stuff to carry around. Eventually your additions / subtractions will become smaller and ultimately there will be not more. At this time, print the list out and laminate it inside your toolbox as a check for every time you go sailing.

Racing an Albacore is relatively inexpensive however, when we attend an event we are committing our most precious resource: our free time. Spend a little attention and money to ensure that the large expenditure towards your enjoyment is not ruined by some random failure. Keeping a few extra parts and some tools with the boat for local events and a more comprehensive selection for traveling events is like a holiday insurance policy - the cheapest one you will ever buy. - Barney Harris, USA 6701