

**Upwind sailing technique: High Wind**  
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At some wind level the Albacore will become overpowered. The reader may know the sensation - boat over on her ear, huge weather helm, having to ease the main, which is always luffing, well outside the leeward rail, and pinch up into the wind to keep from being blown over. The skipper and crew are hiking really hard, but the boat just does not move. The boat feels "bound up." Here is a quick set up and technique recipe for curing this.

**Set Up:** First, pull the Cunningham and then outhaul as tight as you can. Then, set the jib halyard to produce around 50 or 100 lbs of tension in the shrouds. Now, tension the vang. The boom will both pivot down at the goose neck and translate forward, bending the mast. At first, the rig tension will reduce slightly, since the bent mast is somewhat shorter than when straight. The jib luff tension will have dropped somewhat. The jib luff should continue to slacken with increasing vang tension until the mast contacts the forward travel limit on the partner. At this moment the mechanics change since the mast is constrained from further forward motion by the partner. Additional vang tension now pulls the top of the mast aft in the boat and adds directly to the jib luff tension. Now, ease the jib halyard a small amount and watch the entire rig bend aft with only a small additional increase in vang. At this point the aft end of the boom will be 8 or 10 inches above the deck. When the boom is eased off centerline the leeward shroud will become totally slack and the mast will bend both aft and to the leeward. The windward shroud will be banjo string tight, and sharply kinked aft at the spreader. Set the jib leads about 2 inches aft of their normal position.

Place the boat in the water and add lots of wind. With the rig bent like an archer's bow, wind pressure on the sails will increase leech tension - and pull the top of the mast to leeward and aft. Now, when sailing to windward, gusts increase the tendency for the mast tip to be pulled still more to leeward and aft, further flattening the main and reducing power, making the boat quite easy to sail - merely ease the main an inch or two in all by the largest puffs and the rig depowers all by itself.

**Technique:** Sail the boat with the inside tell tail lifting, crew hiked out, and main eased to the rail. If you find yourself trimming the main to centerline and sitting in, you have depowered too much. Ease the vang a bit. If this persists, pull a little on the jib halyard and move the jib leads forward a pin. Conversely, if you find yourself frequently having to luff the main, you have too much power. Reduce power by moving the jib leads one pin aft, adding vang, and easing off the jib halyard a very small amount.

When properly set up, the boom will be eased a bit - to the rail perhaps, with the crew fully hiked out. The jib inside tell tail should be just lifting a bit all the time. During lulls, pull the main in just a bit and sail a little lower to increase power. Keep hiking. In gusts, steer just a little higher - to where the jib inside tell tail just begins to lift and maybe the front of the jib backs slightly, and ease the main only a few inches. The boat

should stay on its feet - flat or nearly so. Steering is critical here: if you are too far off the wind you will have to ease the main and lose height. We will frequently sail so high that the jib luff is backed to shed power in puffs with an accompanying ease in mainsheet

The crew and helm should sit a bit further aft. This requires an acquired touch - if the boat feels as if it ran into a pillow when encountering each wave, move a bit aft. If it seems as if you are dragging something from the stern, move a bit forward. A small rooster tail is acceptable. The helm and crew should sit next to each other and move as one. Never have the crew hang on the shroud - it tends to drag them too far forward.

With just a few adjustments the Albacore can be transformed from an overpowered monster into a team of obedient sled dogs. The sensation is wonderful - it literally feels like something has grabbed the boat by the bow and is dragging it to windward, smashing over waves and sending spray far to either side in the process. The rig feels efficient and the helm balanced. Gusts require only a small ease on the main sheet - and the boat lunges ahead with every increase in wind strength and/or hiking effort. You can feel it. Ease the main and jib a and steer a bit low and the Albacore will just begin to plane to windward. The only thing more fun than sailing an Albacore to windward in a breeze is the ride back!