

Direct sheeting: Pros and Cons

What is direct sheeting?

- The Direct Sheeting rule change proposal gives race organizers the option to allow Direct Sheeting for the working jib. Standard sheeting with the jib club would continue to be allowed in all races and by default.
- Direct sheeting involves port and starboard sheets, affixed at the clew, and trimmed directly to cabin-top leads, located within prescribed areas.
- If invoked in the NOR, any boat may use this option, and forego the use of existing jib fairleads -- which must remain installed -- and the jib club
- The sail itself is unchanged and would continue to comply with existing class rules (section E)

For Direct Sheeting

- All One Designs go through developments. The Bullseye itself was developed from the H 12.5.
- The Bullseye has had several rigging changes over the years: genoas, spinnakers, sheeting, etc.
- Direct sheeting avoids tearing the spinnaker on the club as well as making the crew an integral part of the team.
- Direct sheeting attracts new people. Anyone who has sailed other sloop rigged boat uses direct sheeting. Yacht clubs like Winter Harbor teach juniors with direct sheeting.
- The largest fleet in the US has used direct sheeting for at least 10 years.
- The change is not mandatory. Each fleet may have the option to adopt it or to keep the club.

Against Direct Sheeting

Each numbered comment was submitted by a different person

1. A little history:

The curved jib club is what Nat Herreshoff intended from the beginning on the Fishers Island Sound Bull's Eye. The jib club was required equipment with the working jib from the Bull's Eye Class Association's inception.

Timeline:

1938 Fishers Island Sound Bull's Eye sail plan is created by Nat Herreshoff for Fishers Island sailors (jib club & sheet clearly present on the 1938 sail plan).

1947 The design is sold to Cape Cod Shipbuilding Co.

1949 Sidney Herreshoff & Les Goodwin developed the fiberglass Cape Cod Bull's Eye (jib club & sheet clearly present on the 1949 sail plan)

1961 the Bull's Eye Class Association was formed. The constitution & bylaws were created, assuring the Cape Cod Bull's Eye remains unchanged

1962 The 1st Bull's Eye National Regatta occurred. Since then, any Bull's Eye that competed in the National regatta had a jib club attached to its' working jib.

2. The reason the Association was formed in the first place was and is stated front and center

on our website: “To provide specifications and rules in regard to hull, spars and sails in order to protect one-design aspects of the fiberglass Bullseye, and to insure uniformity and safety in racing.”

Since the Association's inception, there has always been a separate & clear rule requiring the use of the jib club when racing with the working jib. The jib club and the location of the jib sheet fairleads are clearly present on the sail plan diagrams in documents from 1938, 1949, and 1972, for example.

3. The idea [of One Design] is straight forward: every boat is the same and the first to finish wins. From its beginning, One Design was intended to keep boats as equal as possible, leaving the individual sailors to win by skill, not technology or check book. Proposed changes to class rules [can be evaluated] with the following measuring stick. Does the propose change:

- Make the boat easier to sail?
- Does it make it last longer?
- Does it make it cheaper to own and race?

Direct sheeting does not pass these tests.

4. One Designs are One Designs for several reasons. The main one is to keep boats the same so that the skill of the skipper and crew determines the outcome. Some of the other reasons are to:

- Keep boats uniform as designed
- Keep boats and class rules simple, clear, and specific to make it easy for competitors to understand what is acceptable and what is not.
- Keep fleets affordable and fair.
- Maintain tradition.

Changes like this should not be instituted unless it is for safety reasons, to dramatically reduce costs, or somehow makes the boat significantly easier and more efficient to sail.

[Another] argument heard was that the crew is bored with the jib because there are few or no adjustments. This is simply not true. The club hole adjustment and its location on the forestay (above or below certain hanks) and jib luff tension can be adjusted.

The only way to get new blood into the fleets is to keep it simple and affordable for EVERYONE (families, non-millionaires, beginners, intermediate, and experts). The Bullseye is not a “performance class”, nor should it be. The Bullseye’s wide range appeal is that it is an affordable, “CLASSIC DESIGN”, with a straightforward “One Design” configuration. The boat can be single-handed and is fun and competitive for all ages and skill levels. You can’t find this range of inclusiveness in any other fleet.

5. Direct sheeting will drastically change the shape of the jib compared to the current class rules/specs. In contrast, changes in the ways we trim the main sheet (classic versus head knocker) do not change the shape of the mainsail.

Changing the rig design on a one-design sailboat undermines the fundamental principle of fair competition within the class by giving some boats an advantage and diminishing the emphasis on sailing skill. One-design racing thrives on the concept that success is determined by the skill of the sailors rather than technical modifications. Maintaining uniformity in rig design preserves the integrity and spirit of the one-design class as well as the class's appeal to the broader sailing community.

Individual fleets are already allowed to have direct sheeting on their own, it is just not allowed for Nationals and regattas where the boat must adhere to the strict, uniform and fair One Design class rules as they are currently written. This allows for the maximum inter-fleet participation.