

SamM

We are just working out how to fit out our new boat at the moment and were wondering whether to go for chocks instead of a strut. Obviously there are weight savings, things are more simple and you don't go through jibs quite so quickly, but what happens with inversion etc. (i.e. will the mast invert?) I have seen people putting a rope puller on to stop that (but then you still have added complication) and have heard that you can chock front and back (but how do you get around the jib halyard problem at the back of the mast?).

Does anyone have any experience with chocks or has anyone gone through this same dilemma?

Sam

Vyvo

I've had chocks on my last two boats and Dave Wade has fitted it to his new boat.

There are advantages from weight saving as you say and further chocks don't come unclated or break. You also have one less thing to adjust so you can concentrate more on sailing the boat rather than thinking whether you should be pulling the strut on a smidge. I also think that in gusty conditions it allows the rig to breathe a bit more rather than being locked up at gooseneck level by a strut so it makes the rig a bit more forgiving which is a bonus if you are light.

The only draw back is that if it's really light and you have no chocks in/pre-bent and the wind increases and you start wiring you can't get a chock in to power up the rig. Having used the system for 6 years I have never been caught out by this. Normally it will be reasonably flat water so you can live with it and you can get a chock in on the run.

You definitely need something to stop the mast inverting downwind. I have a rope (5mm dyneema) that is fixed at the front of the gate on the starboard side, goes around the back of the mast, around a turning block at the front of the gate on the port side and then to a cleat. There is a little give in the system but seems OK. The rope is cleated before you launch and unclated at the end of the day. Simple.

Dave W has a rope between the strut points on the mast and foredeck which is led back to a cleat by the helm with a few purchases for extra pulling power. I think it's an idea stolen from the Merlins. He pulls it on for the reach and its uncled for the beat with shockcord pulling back against the mast to keep it out of the way upwind. Probably works better than my system as it pulls the mast forward higher up but it's more string, it can come uncled and could break.

Chocking behind the mast is tricky so I haven't really considered it.

In terms of chocks you will be amazed how thin they might have to be. On my last boat we were putting 1mm chocks in between light and medium and medium and windy. On the current boat I think they are 2mm. Teflon (available from winders) is good as it doesn't compress and comes in 1mm thick increments.

One last tip, if you are setting rig up and find (assuming your chock sizes differ by 1mm) that the smaller chock is a bit loose and the larger chock is a bit tight it is better to over chock and go for the thicker one.

Hope this helps. Any other questions just shout.

SamM

Thanks for that Vyvo, that has helped. Just one more question on it: Can you bend off the mast enough in light airs to flatten off the rig without the strut or does your puller do that job?

Cheers,
Sam

James

Same as the 470 I'd imagine Sam. You need the chocks to chock the mast back, same as the wire thing with the bobbles on on the 470, and a string to pull it forwards in light airs, and which will also stop it inverting on a reach.