

Tips for Racing the Firefly-

The Firefly is not nearly as weight sensitive as an FJ or 420. The bottom bilges are rounder so you do not gain appreciable wetted surface if sailing a bit heavier than others. The centerboard is aluminum (yes, it hums) and the rudder has a very short chord length. The rudder is very ineffective if moving very slowly or stuck into the breeze.

Rigging Tips-

Two plugs, one in cockpit and one under rudder. Hoist Jib while on dock but do not hoist mainsail until launched. The jib halyard hooks into a 3:1 fine tune purchase system to tension. Do not over tension as the luffs of the sails have sag cut into them. Use your jib Cunningham to remove all wrinkles in luff. Hoist mainsail after launching and before attaching the clew and the boom. Pull very hard on halyard and double wrap on cleat before tying your cleat hitch. Then lift boom up to attach clew and tension outhaul.

Jibs generally sheet with 5 holes showing behind the jib car and the jib must be used to help pull the bow down on the starting line if you get too close into the breeze. The mainsail has end-boom sheeting so when combined with a bendy, tapered mast it pays off to adjust it a whole lot. Never lock in and be sure to constantly adjust your sheet tension. The mainsail is rather large so be careful to not get stuck in irons on the starting line. Keep the gnav free in the pre-start so you can turn down easily if needed. Likewise, if you get to the windward mark be sure to ease the gnav before attempting to turn as the boat will not bear off....

Sailing Tips

Almost all collegiate crews face backwards upwind in a Firefly and keep their weight quite far forward upwind. Downwind the sailors must be sensitive to breeze and move aft before a puff hits and back forward as the wind pressure fades. Generally 2/3 board in jibes and no board once settled into running. Once settled into a dead downwind heading you can take as much board out of the water as you dare.

Most collegiate teams ease the outhauls in a Firefly while running but remember to get it back on before turning to go back upwind.