

D-ZERO SET-UP TIPS

After the Nationals I (Steve Bolland) was asked to provide some tips on the set-up and sailing of the D-Zero which you may find useful. Here goes...

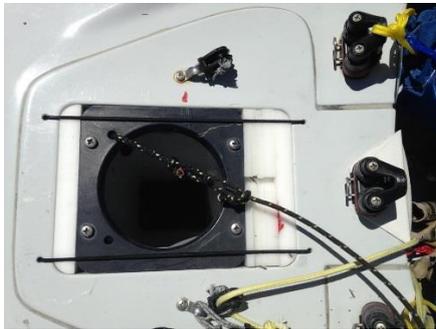
Static set-up

The D-Zero is just about the least fiddly boat I know, so no fiddling! Go to the website and read through the 'Basic Tuning Guide'. This is how I have my boat set up. Basically –

- Mast foot in aft position



- One chock in front of the mast



This puts the mast in the most upright position. Any more rake and you won't be able to get sufficient leech tension when you sheet in block-to-block, so you won't point high enough.

The only other thing to think about is the traveller. Set up per the tuning guide above – 40cm off the centreline. Put a 2:1 purchase on the tensioner, put your foot on the side of the boat and pull as hard as you can to get the traveller as tight as possible. It's better if you do this before going afloat. If it's loose you'll lose leech tension.

Actually there is one more thing; toe strap. Pull it on as tight as you can. Then pull it on a bit more.

Sailing

Getting the most from the rig is all about managing the power correctly for the conditions. You don't want to be underpowered in light conditions. Equally, being overpowered in breezier conditions is just as slow relatively.

For context, I am 78 kilos (or just over 12 stone if you were born before 1980).

Up to 8 knots

Underpowered conditions so you are trying to extract maximum power from your rig. Upwind – no Cunningham, outhaul eased a bit (I use the width of my fist as a rough guide to sail depth at the boom), mainsheet eased no more than 6 inches (unless it's really, really light when you really shouldn't be sailing at all), no kicker.

8-11 knots

This is fully powered-up conditions for my weight (a couple of knots higher or lower if you are a bit heavier or lighter than me). No Cunningham, outhaul still eased, mainsheet block-to-block (if it's not you won't point high enough), kicker on enough to take out the slack and to stop the boom rising and the sail losing power when you tack.

Be prepared to adjust the rig settings in gusts – i.e. pull on kicker to depower if you get a gust (remembering to ease it again as the gust passes).

Above 11 knots, up to about 15

Power management is absolutely critical now as you begin to depower the rig. You have 3 controls + the mainsheet so you will need to use them. All of them! If you don't and you find yourself having to pinch to keep the boat flat there is excess drag from the rig which is SLOOOOOW!

Outhaul pretty much full on, perhaps eased up to half an inch at the clew, full on once you are really overpowered. Cunningham progressively pulled on. Once you're at about 15 knots it needs to be full on to bend the topmast and to flatten out the top of the sail. Full on means pulling it as hard as you physically can. I have an 8:1 purchase on the Cunningham and I still use all my weight on it. When you need the Cunningham you REALLY need it. Try pulling it on onshore one day and see the dramatic effect it has on the mast and sail shape.

Kicker. Everyone laughed at me when I turned up at the 2017 champs with my 32:1 kicker purchase, especially as the wind was light and I hardly touched it all weekend! However, I like to be able to play it upwind and I have no muscles. Up to about 15 knots I use the kicker to fine tune the power in the rig – pull it on to bend the mast in each gust upwind, easing it a couple of inches as the gust passes and the boat starts to come over on top of you. How do I know when to adjust the kicker? What you are really trying to do is to keep the mainsheet block-to-block for as long as possible while keeping the boat flat and not pinching. When you're sitting out hard and the boat starts to heel then I pull on kicker to depower (bending the mast = less fullness in the sail = less power). Remember – less power is good in these conditions as too much power creates drag.

Over 15 knots

Outhaul fully on.

Cunningham full on.

Kicker fully wanged on. What does wanged on mean? This means kicker on enough so that when you ease the main in the gusts the boom goes out sideways rather than sideways and up. If it rises when you ease the sheet you have too much twist in the sail and you'll stop pointing. This is why I favour a really powerful kicker set up. As I have a powerful kicker I never touch the traveller, just ease the mainsheet when the boat starts to heel. However, you can create the same set-up with slightly less kicker, dropping the traveller to a more outboard position and keeping the mainsheet block-to-block a little longer.

This is what fully wanged on looks like.



My crazy kicker system!



To be honest, I don't play the kicker much in wind this strong but it does make it easier to pull on. A health warning though. With a really powerful kicker it is easy to pull it on too much. If the bottom batten starts to invert, that is too much. In other boats I've sailed this is quick but in the D-Zero it is not. You'll know when you've pulled on too much as the boat will just feel dead. There is also no weight in the mainsheet. This can happen all the way up to 30 knots or more, so be careful.

Play the mainsheet in the gusts to keep the boat flat. I mentioned above that you are trying to progressively depower the rig to keep the main in block-to-block for as long as possible. If you pull on your controls enough you should be able to manage this up to about 20 knots, possibly a bit less. Above this the only further options to depower are to ease the main and to pull up the centreboard a few inches.

Other stuff

There is really no substitute for time spent in the boat, in all conditions. The more you sail the better you'll get. But as a sport generally we race too much and train too little. The only other sport I've done where we didn't train was when I played in a veterans's football team, and we were really bad. This was probably not a coincidence. I probably train twice as much as I race. I know, I'm Billy No Mates. But if you can do some training with a partner it makes it more interesting.

A bit of fitness helps too. A bit of running or cycling will help and if you can join a gym, so much the better. Better again if you actually go. As the D-Zero hull is so narrow it's difficult to gain leverage – I've found that working on my core strength (stomach and lower back) has really helped extend my upper body when sitting out and gaining that extra bit of righting moment. My six-pack is still hidden under a layer of fat though.

Hope that helps,

Steve Bolland (D-Zero 11)