

CAUTION WATER

OPTIMIST RIGGING GUIDE



The optimist is sailed by over 160,000 sailors in over 100 countries, and is the only internationally endorsed dinghy for juniors, and is probably the most popular racing dinghy in the world for juniors. They are excellent for kids to learn to sail in, as they are a centre main boat, and kids can easily transfer into a race rigged Topper or a Laser when they are older.



More than you wanted to know about the Oppi?

There are several manufacturers, including Laser and Hartley Laminates. You'll find many variations built over the years, from wood, to GRP and foam. Most training centres use the foam boats, whereas racers use wooden ones (as they are lighter) or GRP.

Optimists are a gaff rigged boat, so slightly different to the other rigging guides we've done so far, but they are still simple and easy to rig, so let's get started.

What You Need

Hull, Mast, Sprite, Boom, Daggerboard, Rudder, Mainsheet (10mm x 5 metre), Sail, Downhaul (3mm x 0.5 metre), Kicker (4mm x 1 metre), Outhaul (4mm x 0.5 metre depending on boom), Uphaul/Halyard (3mm x 2 metre)



Photo 1, The oppi hull



Photo 2, Rudder pintles



Photo 3, Boat parts

Remember if you are buying a boat that it may not always be class legal - we are kindly borrowing these boats from a sailing school and they may not fall to form on class regulations. If in doubt - get a copy of the Optimist Class Rules and measure for yourself.

Let's Get Started!

First of all, as you can see we have laid out all of the parts, to show what they are (Photo 3), and to make sure we have everything we need. As always, a spares box with varying diameters and lengths of rope and a few spare pulley blocks or shackles is good to have at hand, as is a toolbox with screwdrivers, hammers, pliers etc, just in case you need to make little adjustments as you go along.



1. The Mast and Sail

We'll start with the sail - take the mast, and feed it up inside the luff sleeve of the sail (Photo 4), all the way to the top. The pulley block half way up the mast should fit outside of the gap in the sleeve as shown (Photo 5). Feed the mast all the way up until it reaches the strap inside the top of the sleeve (Photo 6).



Photo 4, Sail onto the mast



Photo 5, gap in the mast sleeve



Photo 6, Top of mast sleeve

2. The Boom and Outhaul

Next, attach the boom to the mast with it's large clip fitting. Tie the sail down to the boom with the downhaul - the one on this boat is just a length of string, which is tied around the boom with a reef or granny knot. Different boats will have different arrangements, and a racing oppi would have an adjustable downhaul.



Photo 7, Fix the gooseneck



Photo 8, Attach the downhaul



Photo 9, Attach the outhaul



2. The Boom and Outhaul continued...

To attach the outhaul on this boat, first we feed the line through the hole in the end of the boom (Photo 10). Secure this line with a bowline, or any other suitable knot. Feed the working end through the clew in the back bottom corner of the sail (Photo 11), then back through the loop of the bowline, then secure it with a round turn and two half hitches (Photo 12). Again in a racing oppi, this would be adjustable, but as this is a training boat that kids learn in, you need to keep it simple!



Photo 10, Attach the outhaul



Photo 11, Attach the outhaul



Photo 12, Finish the outhaul

3. The Sprite

Next, we need to attach the rest of the rig (the sprite). Attach it to the loose top corner of the sail (Photo 13), then pass the outhaul (yellow and white rope) around the pulley block on the mast, and attach the end of the outhaul to the other end of the sprite (Photo 15).



Photo 13, Attach sail to sprite



Photo 14, Attach the outhaul



Photo 15, Pull up the sprite



3. The Sprite continued...

Pull on the uphaul to raise the sprite, and take it through the jammer block on the front of the mast, and jam it off (Photo 16).



Photo 16, Cleat the uphaul



Photo 17, Raise and step mast



Photo 18, Tie on the uphaul

4. Raise The Mast

Next, raise the mast - pretty simple on this boat, lift it up and drop it through the hole in the wooden beam/deck (Photo 17), making sure it drops into the cup socket below, or it could damage the deck. For security, now take the uphaul line, pass it through the hole in the wood in front of the mast, take it around a few times, and tie it off (Photo 18). This will stop the mast coming out if the boat capsizes.



Photo 19, Tie on the uphaul



Photo 20, Attach kicking strap



Photo 21, Cleat kicking strap



5. The Kicker

Next, attach the kicker. Start it off with a bowline from the fairlead on the underside of the boom near the front end (Photo 20), then pass it through the cleat on the back of the mast (Photo 21). This is only a single ratio Kicker - you can get multi-purchase ones. Again as this is a training boat, it's kept simple - the Kicker line is then fed around the wooden crossbeam and tied off, again as a security measure.



Photo 22, Secure kicking strap



Photo 23, The sail downhaul



Photo 24, The mast complete

The downhaul for the sail is next - on this sail, it's just a line from the bottom of the sail luff pocket, then tied to the fairlead on the mast (Photo 23). The mast setup is now complete.

6. The Mainsheet

The last line to attach is the mainsheet. There are different arrangements of mainsheets, including multi-purchase systems.



Photo 25, Attach the mainsheet



Photo 26, Feed line through



Photo 27, Feed line through



6. The Mainsheet continued...

This one is started by tying a stopper or figure eight knot in the end of the line, and passing it into the fairlead on the boom which has the block attached. Next, it's fed into the foremost block in the cockpit, from front to back. Next, it's fed back up to the block on the boom, and passed from front to back (Photos 25-28). We used the lower pulley of the block and haven't used the top one, as we said, it could be rigged different ways.



Photo 28, Feed line through



Photo 29, Finish the mainsheet



Photo 30, Completed mainsheet

Next, the line is fed down to the backmost block in the cockpit, going from front to back again. Push the sail out as far as it should go, and tie a stopper knot in the line to stop the sail going out too far (Photo 30).

7. The Rudder

Attach the rudder by dropping it on to the rudder pintles (Photo 31).



Photo 31, Attach the rudder



Photo 32, Insert daggerboard



Photo 33, All done



8. The Rest of it

To finish up, drop in the daggerboard, and pull the elastic loop around it to sit in front - this will help hold the daggerboard in place depending how high you adjust it. The boat setup is now complete. You're ready to go - now get learning to sail!

9. Packing Up

An oppi sail is not so large that you need to completely dismantle it to put it away or take it home. The easy way to store an oppi sail and rig so it's quicker to rig next time, is to lay it out as shown on the floor, with the sail, mast and boom still together, with the sprite lying next to the mast. Next, move the boom up alongside the mast, and fold the sail neatly.



Photo 34, Layout the parts



Photo 35, Fold in the sail



Photo 36, Fold in the sail

Pull the top corner of the sail down, and start rolling the spars inside the sail. When it's all rolled up, use the mainsheet to tie up the bundle neatly. This will now easily fit in most cars for the trip home.



Photo 37, Roll the sail



Photo 38, Wrap the mainsheet



Photo 39, Completed package