

Are you dragging your foot in the water?

By Harry Carpenter

One of the beauties of the Flying Scot is that they never wear out. With a little care, the boats go year after year without getting soft and remain capable to compete with much newer boats. Many owners, however, think it is possible to race their Scot without ever doing anything to enhance performance. To me, it is like dragging a foot in the water during a race. Why start with a handicap when just a little effort will make a big difference in performance?

There are two key elements to boat speed. The first is good sails. Worn out sails are pretty obvious to most because they are seen and handled every time the boat is sailed. The second is a clean and smooth hull and centerboard. This is a little tougher to determine because it requires some effort to inspect the bottom and board on boats that are wet sailed.

The advantage of dry sailing doesn't have anything to do with water absorption or weight. It all about having the board and bottom clean and smooth. A well maintained wet sailed boat is every bit as fast through the water as a dry sailed boat. It just takes a little effort and preparation to keep the wet sailed boat clean.

Many boats are sailed year after year without ever having new bottom paint applied. The copper will leech out after three, maybe four seasons and what is left is just paint that does not discourage growth. At the start of the season, make sure the boat has a good active antifouling paint. Also check the board, repair it as needed and paint it. Also make sure the centerboard gasket is in good shape and that the board fits tight in the trunk. A little wet sanding may be necessary after painting to be sure the surface is smooth. As the season goes along, the bottom and board should be wiped down with a sponge every few weeks to keep performance at its optimum.

It isn't necessary to spend much time on the rudder because it is a flat plate and the flow does not attach. A quick scrub with a steel wool pad, like Brillo, is all that is needed to keep it clean and working well.

Sailboat racing is a sport with many variables that can influence the outcome of a race. Like most sports, a little preparation and care of the equipment can help control some of the key variables and dramatically increase the chances for success.

Flying Scot, Inc. is here to help with any preseason tunes up that your boat may require. We are pleased to answer questions and work with you to get your Flying Scot up to speed.

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