

Launching Jib Pole

The adoption of the motion in the 2009 AGM which allowed the use of aluminium jib poles has facilitated the development of a self-launching pole mounted on the boom. A few of us in Sydney have been working cooperatively to develop a pole that works.

The basic design has been borrowed from the spinnaker pole used in classes like the MJ and Flying 11 for many years. The principles involve: automatic retraction along the boom by shock cord carried internally in the boom; a launching rope to pull the pole out; a line attached between the mast and the clew of the jib, fed through the leading edge of the pole and a conical guide to catch the end of the pole as it retracts. These photographs show the use of a topping lift which is in current development. The photos are of 'Flat Chat'.



Movie of launching pole. Click on photo

Forward end of pole



Conical guide (a plumbing fitting)

Launching line

Line between jib and mast

Aft end of pole



Shock cord enters boom

Retraction shock cord

Launching line

Pulley for launching rope on mast. This is mounted off centre to help launching. The red line passes through a hole in the mast step, through a cleat on the kingpost then down to the hog through another pulley.

Topping lift—runs up to hounds

The retraction shock cord attaches to the forward end of the jib pole (internally) and runs out through the hole in the rear of the pole into the boom, around a pulley at the forward end of the boom and to the aft end, all internally. This means that there is something like 6m of shock cord to allow sufficient stretch to allow the pole to be pulled out and sufficient tension to retract it back into position.

What are the advantages of this system? I have found that younger crews can have difficulty in setting the pole, particularly in stronger wind. While this system takes a bit of practice, we have used it in 25 knots on a few occasions in waves—a situation we'd be reluctant to have the crew standing up in the front of the boat. Much of the development was done by Greg Harris and Warren Monaghan.

Steve Watts