



Effective Use of a Powerboat for On Water Training and Coaching



RYA Coaching from a Powerboat

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Introduction

The RYA is very grateful to Clive Grant for collating the following resource, with input and collaborative working from the RYA Training and Racing Departments.

Designed to aid instructors in the delivery of safe coaching and good practice while coaching from a Powerboat. This resource accompanies and supports The RYA Safety Handbook (G16), as well as other RYA Instructor and Coaching Handbooks, it is not designed as a stand alone manual.

Each section details general principals and guidance when coaching beginners to more experienced sailors, in both a training and racing environment, with top tips and information to enhance safe practice and assist on water delivery.

We do hope you find the resource a useful tool in your coaching and instructing environment.

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FUNDAMENTALS



- ✓ **KILL CORD FITTED TO SELF AT ALL TIMES**
- ✓ **ONE HAND STEER - ONE HAND GEAR**
- ✓ **STEER BEFORE GEAR**
- ✓ **PLAN – APPROACH – MANOEUVRE – ESCAPE**
- ✓ **ENGINE OFF WHEN CHANGING HELMS**
- ✓ **BE AWARE OF YOUR WASH AT ALL TIMES**
- ✓ **CONSIDER OTHER WATER USERS**



Top Tips: Using a powerboat for teaching

General Principles Apply to ALL

KILLCORD

One hand *Steer*, one hand *Gear*

Plan/Approach/Manoeuvre/
Escape

Steer before gear

Engine OFF when alongside
and locked in

SLOW speed, minimum wash

Powerboating around Beginners

KILLCORD

Safetyboat on water before
launch

Briefing, before afloat

Signals afloat

Position of powerboat
when teaching

You to them, or them to you*

Fingers clear on final approach*

Follow my leader

Group Control

**Please see page 13 for more details*

Powerboating within the Sailing Modules and Start Racing

KILLCORD

Approach slowly, under control

Upwind (Position to leeward)

Downwind (Position to windward)

Lock the dinghy in, centreboard
UP, kicker off

Furl the sails when possible

Engine OFF when talking

Position upwind when
free floating

Powerboating when Coaching High Performance

KILLCORD

Best position upwind

Best position downwind

Use of video

Racked boats, sailors
on sponson

Foilers, sailors on sponson

Check for lines in the water
on final approach

CHAPTER 1 – GENERAL PRINCIPLES

AIM:

The aim of this section is to examine how we can use our coaching/teaching boat to best effect. We will look at:

- ✓ Type of boat
- ✓ Kit to carry when teaching
- ✓ Signals
- ✓ Controlling the fleet
- ✓ Setting the scene

Type of boat:

The first thing we should look at is the type of boat you are using, a soft sided RIB or a hard sided Jaffa/Dory style. RIB is a roving fender and can come alongside Glass-Reinforced Plastic (GRP) boats easily, the Rigiflex is hard sided and care should be taken when approaching GRP boats or boards, but it is low in the water and good for beginner groups in windsurfers or dinghies. Slow should be our default speed on final approach.

Rigiflex



RIB



Kit to carry for Instructors

The boat should already be carrying all the required RYA safety equipment:

What kit should we carry if we are instructing?



Whistle



Watch



Wet notes

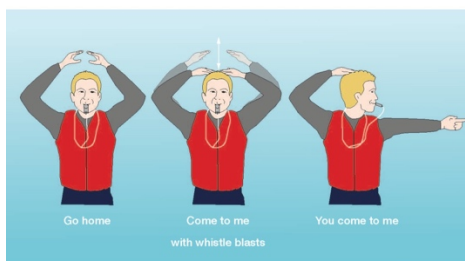


Knife

Plus your Instructor grab bag

(Remember to pack any spares you want to take afloat with you)

Signals:



Some commonly used signals; what signals should I put in my brief? Make sure the students understand what they mean!

Controlling the fleets:

After the BRIEF, prepare the safety boat and consider how we can manage the launch to reduce/control bomb bursts by doing one or more of the following:

- ✓ Ensure the course is laid prior to releasing them
- ✓ Set a holding area for the fleet to keep to
- ✓ Use Follow my leader to control the group
- ✓ Ask them to circle the coach boat

Setting the scene:

The next few chapters are not a didactic set of rules which you must follow to the letter, the content is a guide to help you use your safety boat effectively.

Positioning of you and your boat will vary for different disciplines (Keelboat, Multihull, Windsurfing, Dinghy), wind strengths, type of exercise, level of competence, coaching techniques (videoing) etc. So the contents are a guide to what you **COULD** do rather what you **MUST** do.

That said, the points made in Chapter 1 should always be adhered to.

CHAPTER 2: TRAINING WITH BEGINNERS

AIM:

The aim of this section is to look at:

- ✓ Positioning our boat
- ✓ Driving techniques
- ✓ Top tips for instructors

Positioning:

Where is the best place to position the safety boat? This will depend on what the instructor wants to achieve. Do they want to have a conversation, give some direction, have input on the skill or give a demo? Let's look at a scenario:

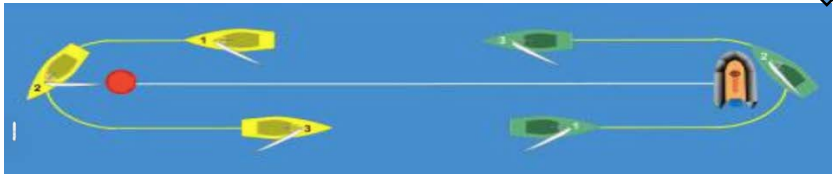
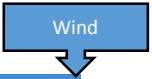
Scenario:

"We are responsible for a group of novice adults on their Introduction/Basic skills course. There is a fleet of six Pico's, the instructor is in a coach boat, the students are sailing across the wind on a sausage course tacking at one end, gybing at the other end. The instructor is helping them develop their tacking and gybing skills.

Where can the instructor place the teaching boat to have effective input and remain as safety cover for the group?

Option 1

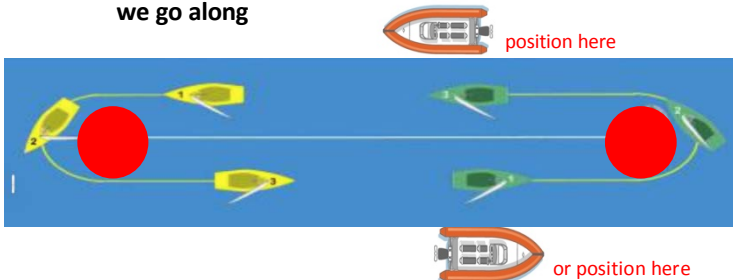
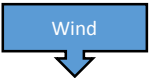
Sit inside the circle and have input at either end



Good for: Gives them a point to sail towards
You can see into the boat and assess their technique
You can control the length of the sausage

Weakness: You can only have a short conversation
Safety boat is stuck inside if there is a problem elsewhere
They are moving, concentrating on sailing

Option 2: Drive parallel matching speed and instruct as we go along

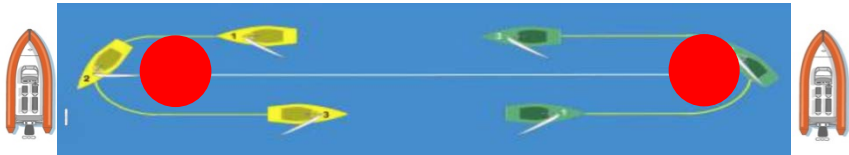


Good for You can control their direction
You can have a longer conversation as you go along
With the dinghy moving there is little sail noise

Weakness: Need good powerboat skills
Engine noise could be a problem
They need to concentrate, so limited input from instructor

Option 3: Stop at either end and instruct as they sail past:

Wind



Good for: Ability to move quickly if there is a problem
You can see their technique and provide feedback
You can turn the engine off whilst sat there

Weakness: You can only have a short conversation
You can only focus on one skill
You may distract the sailor's attention at a crucial moment

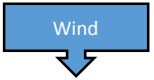
Option 4 Stop them, come alongside, hold onto them and have a coaching conversation



Good for: You are locked in and can have a good conversation
They can focus on you and what you are saying
You can ask questions and get answers

Weakness: You are alongside and can't move away easily
Flogging sails could be a distraction when talking
You could focus on them and forget the rest of the group

Controlling the fleet when we launch or return to the shore by a very effective “Follow My Leader” plan.



Good for: Controlling the fleet launching and recovery
Put them on a point of sail
Keeping the group together

Weakness: You are stuck if there is a problem
You can only see and talk to the first boat
You must have good powerboat skills



A commonly used signal for follow My Leader (used when stationary)

When positioning the Safety Boat - THINK

PLAN:

- *What do I want or need to do?*
- *Shall I drive alongside, stop them, go to them?*
- *Ask them to follow, come to me?*
- *When you have decided - communicate plan to them*
- *Whistle / Signals?*

APPROACH

- *Once you have decided, plan your approach*
- *If going to them, drive slowly and think about the elements*
- *If they are coming to you, position boat so you make it easy for them*
- *Think wind and tide?*
- *If driving alongside, think speed, direction, escape and fingers away from edges.*

MANOEUVRE

- *Putting your boat where you want it*
- *Think steer before gear*
- *One hand steer/one hand gear, slow speed*
- *Neutral is the favourite gear*
- *Use the elements if possible*
- *Communicate*

ESCAPE

- *Always have an escape plan/route*
- *Are you going to abort them coming to you*
- *Are you going to abort going towards them*
- *Once committed go for it, safely and effectively*

Top-Tips when teaching beginners:

For all groups:

- ✓ KILL CORD – around leg where possible.
- ✓ Brief the plan and then confirm with group.
- ✓ Position yourself upwind where possible.
- ✓ Have the safety boat on the water, before they launch.
- ✓ Stay stationary unless going to them or going to a capsized boat.

Dinghy specific:

- ✓ When approaching dinghy, keep fingers clear.
- ✓ When alongside, centreboard UP, kicker OFF.
- ✓ Go into the Secure position (see later in booklet, page 26).
- ✓ Furl jib if possible (reduce noise).
- ✓ Keep safety boat across the wind this will stop the boom flapping across the dinghy.

(Remember what you were taught on your Dinghy Instructors course)

Windsurfing specific (Top Tips):

- ✓ If coaching advice is being exchanged this can be best given with the safety boat alongside or close to the board
- ✓ Ask the sailor to drop their rig the board will slowly pivot around the rig until it comes to rest downwind of the rig

Working with beginners:

Usually, the coach boat is used to take beginners back up wind when they have ended up sailing or drifting downwind.

Use the 'put-across' method found in the Safety Boat Handbook (see later picture Page 15):

- ✓ Approach to the mast tip (rig flat on water) with the safety boat facing the same direction as the board
- ✓ Take hold of the mast tip. Stop the engine
- ✓ Instruct the sailor to sit on the board, arms and legs out of the water and raise the dagger board, if it has one
- ✓ Keeping the rig low, draw it across and over the safety boat, drawing the board towards the boat as it goes
- ✓ Once alongside, ask the sailor to step into the safety boat

- ✓ Position the sailor where they can best assist with holding the rig.
- ✓ Ensure that the boom is 'in' the boat if possible and the mast is facing into the wind.
- ✓ Motor slowly back to a position upwind.
 - Reverse this procedure to put the sailor back onto their board and the rig back into the water.

(Remember what you were taught on your Windsurf Instructors course)



Put-across method

Top Tip - You will learn a lot more about rescue and using a powerboat around boats etc on an RYA Safety boat Course .

CHAPTER 3: COACHING THE DINGHY AND WINDSURF MODULES

AIM:

The aim of this section is to look at:

- ✓ Effective safety boat skills for the stopping skills modules (Dinghies)
- ✓ Positioning the support/coaching boat effectively for Dinghy and Windsurf modules
- ✓ Top tips for instructors both Dinghy and Windsurf
- ✓ Effective and suitable courses

Seamanship / Day Sailing:

These sessions are all about stopping skills, anchoring, mooring, reefing afloat, all under control with the instructor supplying support, coaching and safety.

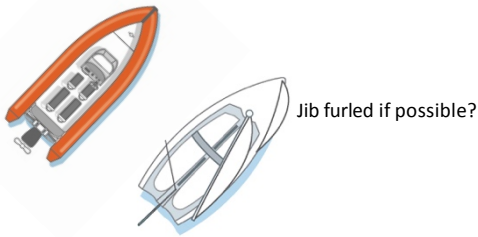
Positioning:

As a support/coach boat we are going to be stationary lots of the time, and when coaching we will want to go alongside and have a coaching conversation – ENGINE OFF.

When we are wanting to go alongside a dinghy, we whistle, signal, STOP the dinghy and go either hove or lay to. When they are ready, we need to approach the dinghy, using the elements to best effect, remember the **P**lan **A**pproach **M**anoeuvre **E**scape rule; then approach and go alongside.

Progression:

- ✓ Stop the dinghy, go hove to, or ask them to lay to (*sails flapping*)
- ✓ Plan Approach Manoeuvre Escape, plan the route in
- ✓ Come in on windward side (fenders if not in a RIB)
- ✓ Sails flogging or jib furled
- ✓ Kicker **OFF**, centre board **UP**, when alongside
- ✓ Lock them in by holding the shroud, get them to hold on too (*secure position – see page 26*)
- ✓ Now you can have a coaching conversation – BUT watch the drift and the rest of the fleet



Top Tips:

- ✓ Remember they are experienced sailors, get them to do as much as possible
- ✓ Set a holding area but control the return to beach/jetty/slipway
- ✓ Set larger sailing areas, longer time for sessions
- ✓ For much of this coaching you may wish to attach the safety boat to an anchor line and pick up buoy so you generally have the sailors come to you but can easily slip the line if required.

Windsurfing: Intermediate/advanced:

Top Tips:

- ✓ Coaching is usually delivered from another board
- ✓ Safetyboat is usually moored close by ready for safety support
- ✓ A point of reference must be given for sailor to sail to and back from
- ✓ Courses should be large enough to allow the sailor time to perfect the skill



Follow My Leader is effective with windsurfing too

- ✓ The sailor is probably the best person to handle the rig, so once they are in the boat, ask their advice
- ✓ If the 'rescue is over a longer distance, consider a 'de-rig'

CHAPTER 4: HIGH PERFORMANCE TECHNIQUES

AIM:

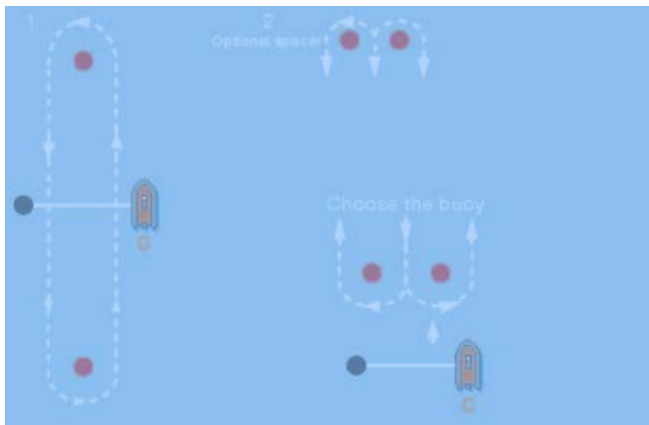
The aim of this section is to look at:

- ✓ Coaching faster moving dinghies/windsurfing
- ✓ More advanced driving techniques
- ✓ Top tips for positioning

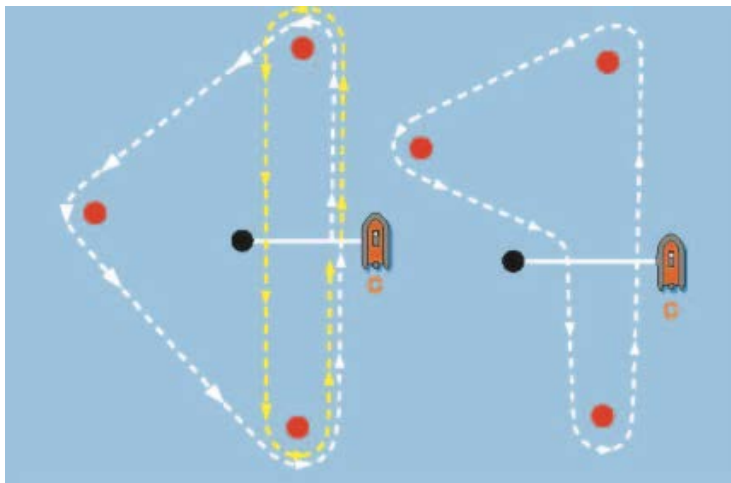
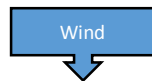
Courses:

Coaching performance dinghies forces us to lay much larger courses, and instructors usually have to drive more powerful RIB's to ensure they can cover the ground between dinghies and get around the course.

We traditionally lay long windward/leeward courses for asymmetric boats.

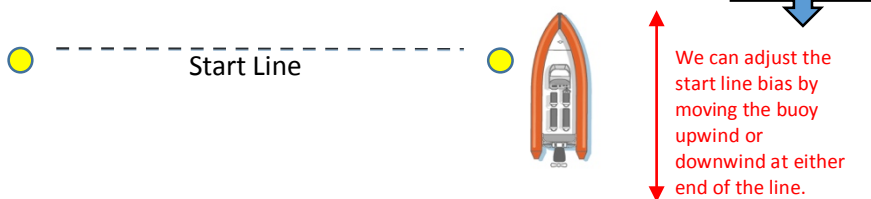


A triangular course would be set for symmetric dinghies.



These configurations will allow the sailors to tack, gybe the boat, launch, gybe and recover the spinnaker, whether it is asymmetric or symmetric.

Starting:



There may also be a need to lay start lines with a varying amount of line bias. So laying marks and moving them is an essential skill as is keeping the safety boat on station into wind and tide, if on tidal water.

Driving to drop marks putting lines in the water means we need awareness. When we approach buoys or boats we need to be aware of the elements, wind and tide. We should also remain vigilant when approaching boats or marks for any ropes floating in the water which may tangle in the prop.

It is also usual that we remain free floating so we can react to the changing situation if boats capsize, or need a speedy response.

Coaching:

To ensure we provide effective coaching at this level we need to watch their techniques, therefore we will have to:

- ✓ Drive faster and closer
- ✓ Provide instructions and or coaching on the move

Coaching on the move is difficult for both the instructor and for the student. The students are concentrating on what they are doing, especially if they are learning a new skill, their focus will be in the boat and on the skill. The instructor has to raise their voice over the engine/wind noise and try to get their message over. So if moving, consider:

- ✓ Get them to hold their course and speed, then
- ✓ Give them a focus (sails, rudder, centreboard, etc)
- ✓ Use minimum words, think what to say prior to engaging

Positioning:

Let's look at what we can do to position our boat effectively to ensure we are in the safest position when we are coaching them on the move. We will want/need to see them both sailing upwind and downwind, so what can we ask them to do to ensure we are as safe as possible?

We need to pick up on their movements in the boat as clues to when they are going to do a drill – tack, gybe, hoist, drop, are they close to the lay line etc .

We must raise our AWARENESS and focus on their MOVEMENTS, we need to be prepared and think what they are going to do before they do it!

The fundamentals:

- ✓ Sailors:
 - The sailors **MUST** stay focussed on sailing, concentrate on what they're doing
 - Watch where they're going
 - Agree signals and confirm at brief
 - Listen!
 - Confirm understanding (Thumbs Up)

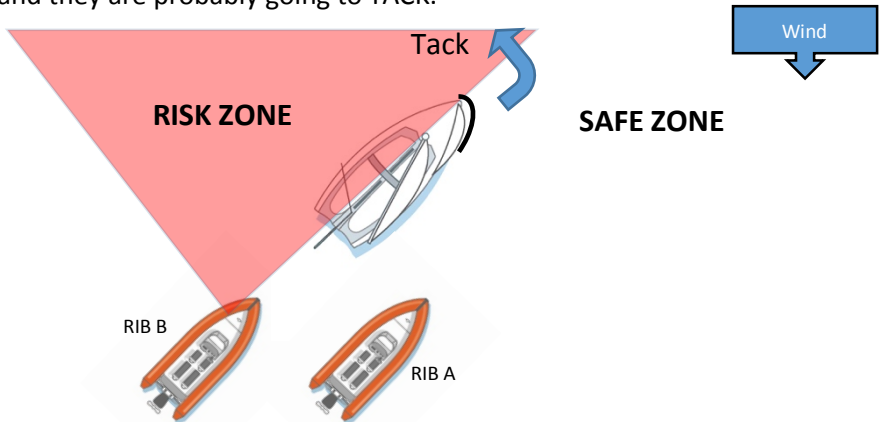
- ✓ Instructor in the coach boat:
 - Match speed first, then position themselves
 - Have a short exchange, highlight areas for improvement, give focus
 - When going alongside, stop them first, then you approach on the windward side
 - Fingers clear – go alongside
 - Depower the rig
 - Engine off

When moving, where can we position the support boat where we are SAFE and we can also see their techniques:

UPWIND:

✓ **DRIVE TO LEEWARD AND ASTERN UPWIND**

Following a dinghy upwind, the crew is sat out, sails in and they are probably going to TACK.



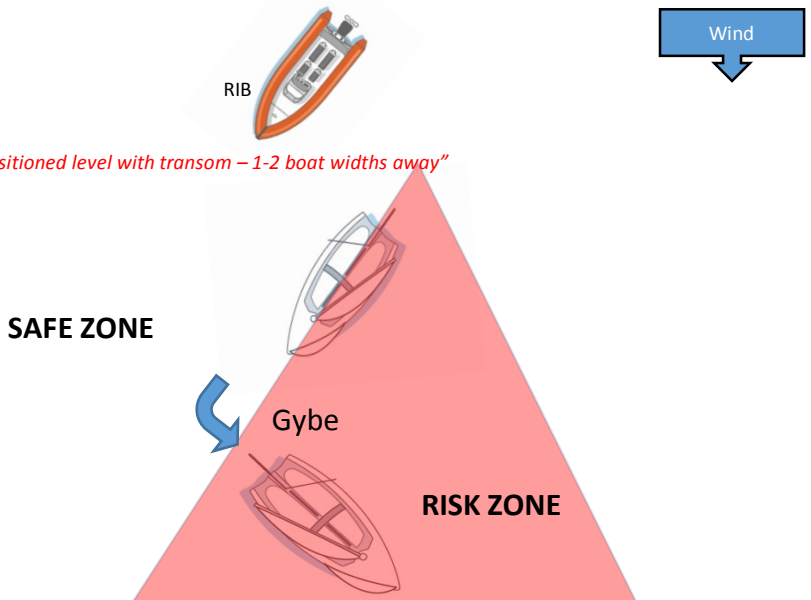
RIB A - This position allows us to watch what they are doing, we can see into the boat and watch their tacking drills, when they tack, we slow down, re-position the boat and come in to the same position on the other tack.

RIB B - When following from behind you will have better visual of the sailor's techniques but any communication with the sailors will be ineffective. Also you must be aware and anticipate any manoeuvres the dinghy may do as you are directly behind the dinghy and closer to the Risk Zone.

DOWNWIND:

✓ **DRIVE TO WINDWARD AND ASTERN DOWNWIND**

Following a dinghy downwind they are probably going to GYBE – BUT when they get overpowered, they may round up, so be PREPARED:



This position allows us to watch what they are doing, we can see into the boat and watch their gybing/spinnaker drills, when they gybe, we slow down, re-position the boat and come in to the same position on the other tack. When a gust arrives, get them to BEAR AWAY when flying the asymmetric spinnaker. On trapezing boats watch out for the “Tea Bag” and boat capsizing to windward.

CHAPTER 5: RACE TRAINING:

AIM:

The aim of this section is to provide advice and top tips for:

- ✓ Club Racing Coach Level 2 and Racing Instructors
- ✓ Coaching the Zone Squads and above
- ✓ Coaching using video

It is unlikely that any race training above zone squad level will have a second crew in the coach boat. The coach is likely to need to manoeuvre their RIB in close quarters of multiple moving dinghies, so a high standard of driving and the need for good AWARENESS and ANTICIPATION is required.

There may also be the need to stand when driving to provide a better view ahead, and allow a better position for video coaching. So we will need to make decisions about positioning ourselves as well as the coach boat.

So if we stand – consider the following best practice:

- ✓ Ensure the kill cord is fitted securely
- ✓ Ensure we are safe to stand, with a firm base
- ✓ Ensure we can brace against something
- ✓ Ensure we are in complete control
- ✓ One hand steer one hand gear
- ✓ Maintain a safe speed
- ✓ Maintain a good look out for your wash/waves
- ✓ Stand astride console, if fitted



Coaching Zone Squads:

It is very likely that you will be coaching multiple boats, helmed by sailors who may be new to having coaching from a RIB so good awareness and anticipation is required.

Good coaching practice is to allow the sailors to discuss and consider their sailing and how they may improve so most talking with sailors should be done in the “secure position” with the sailing boat alongside the RIB with the engine off, the coach facing the sailors.



Coaching using the “secure” position

Planing Sessions:

A secure stable position for helming is required as you will be driving at high speed and standard good practice of communication and seating of any crew will be necessary. RIB positioning will mirror the section on coaching High Performance Dinghy's. Anticipation and preparation for 'what if' will be needed particularly when following closely behind a fast moving dinghy.

When following boats at high speed it is preferable to only working with small numbers of boats, as closing speeds and angles boats may sail, mean good all-round awareness is required at all times.

Communication with the sailors when sailing in mainly ineffective so look to come alongside the dinghy for discussions.

Non Planing Sessions:

Predominately the majority of slower boats coached will be single-handers and as a consequence you may be working with more boats. This requires a higher degree of all-round awareness as you will have boats who can manoeuvre with little or no warning and may be driving in very close proximity to the sailors.

Coaching using video:

When videoing for coaching it is preferable to have a dedicated, and separate, helm and camera person.

It is the helm's responsibility to maintain the safety of the craft by observing the rules of the road, specifically all-round look out and safe speed.

Should the coach be alone in the powerboat, advances in video equipment enable options which allow hands-free videoing by using body, or boat-mounted cameras, leaving the driver free to concentrate on coaching, boat positioning and safety.



Things to remember:

- ✓ Avoid panning or zooming
- ✓ RIB position for shots you require.
- ✓ Keep to the coaching points
- ✓ Keep clips short
- ✓ Commentary – beware if you are recording sound
- ✓ Look after the lens (rain/spray/fingers/lanyards)
- ✓ Battery and memory card
- ✓ Use of an assistant
- ✓ Try to avoid video bouncing in waves

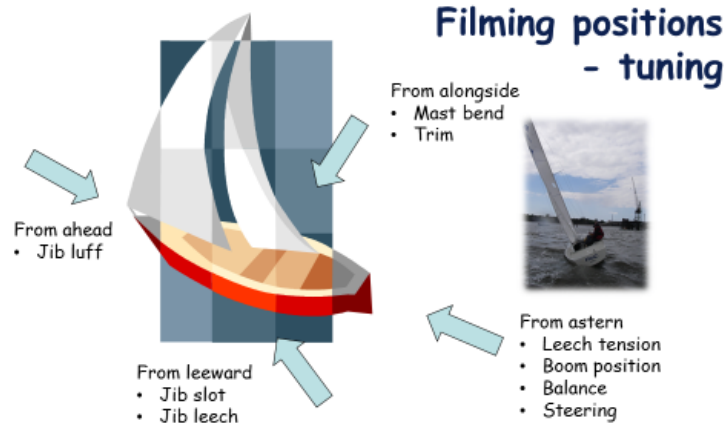
Coach Boat Positioning:

Where is the best place to position our RIB when filming?

When Coaching 'Tuning':



Filming positions - tuning



From ahead

- Jib luff

From leeward

- Jib slot
- Jib leech

From alongside

- Mast bend
- Trim



From astern

- Leech tension
- Boom position
- Balance
- Steering

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Protecting your Rights, Promoting your Interests

When Coaching 'Boat Handling Techniques':



Filming positions - boat handling

- Windward Mark**
 - Lay line
 - Bear away
 - Approach tactics
- Windward mark**
 - Spi hoist
 - Sail controls
- Starting**
 - Leeward end
 - acceleration
- Starting**
 - Line sag
 - acceleration
- Leeward Mark**
 - 3 boat zone
- Starting**
 - Gaps to leeward
- Leeward Mark**
 - Rounding
 - Rule 18

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Tidy Coach Boat:

When driving fast it is important to keep a tidy boat:

- ✓ Inflatable marks may need to be tied in to the RIB as at speed they bounce out the boat
- ✓ Anchors and warps neatly coiled for quick and efficient use
- ✓ Stow anchors and warps aft of where you stand as any marks that bounces out a fast moving RIB will quickly move back through the RIB

Helming Position when Coaching:

Due to the advantage of much greater visibility and vision in to the boats you will be coaching, helms may often be standing when driving. This requires the helm to ensure that they are in a stable position with the ability to brace your body while driving. Purpose built coaching RIBs will often have walk through helming positions, with no or small seats and just back rest.

Useful RYA Publications:

- ✓ G16 - RYA Safetyboat handbook
- ✓ G12 - RYA Dinghy Advanced Handbook
- ✓ G14 - RYA Dinghy Instructor Handbook
- ✓ G19 - RYA Powerboat Instructors Handbook
- ✓ G51 - RYA Windsurfing Intermediate Handbook
- ✓ G52 - RYA Windsurfing Advanced Handbook
- ✓ W33 - RYA Windsurfing Instructor Handbook