

Paul Kamen's Spinner Thong notes and pictures

Here's some more info and pix of the spinnaker thong/wedgee from Paul Kamen.

Steering and control under spinnaker was greatly facilitated by a very unconventional spinnaker reefing line. This was a small diameter Kevlar line running through an extra tape sewn down the centerline of one of the spinnakers. The top of the Kevlar line was tied to the halyard shackle or head grommet of the sail. The bottom of the line exited the tape in the middle of the spinnaker's foot, and went through a block on the stem of the boat and then back to a spare halyard winch.

Tensioning this line had the effect of "elephant assing" the spinnaker. That is, it created a large fold down the centerline and reduced the sail's projected area. It also made the section shape of the sail more wedge-like than cup-like, resembling twin jibs when it was "reefed" all the way. The technique only worked on a very deep reach or run, but it made possible some comfortable nights under autopilot with the spinnaker up and the boat surfing and planing. Squall strategy was greatly simplified because this single control could de-power the spinnaker down to about 50% of full power. It was also very easy to jibe with the spinnaker "dialed down."

<http://www.well.com/user/pk/TZtranspac.html>

FYI, my experience during the 06SHTP in lite air and lumpy seas, adding a touch of thong helped the spinnaker refill more quickly after a collapse. Seems that the air would tend to flow from the middle to the edges and unfurl the leech magically. Bonus! 🤓

Synthia/Eyrie

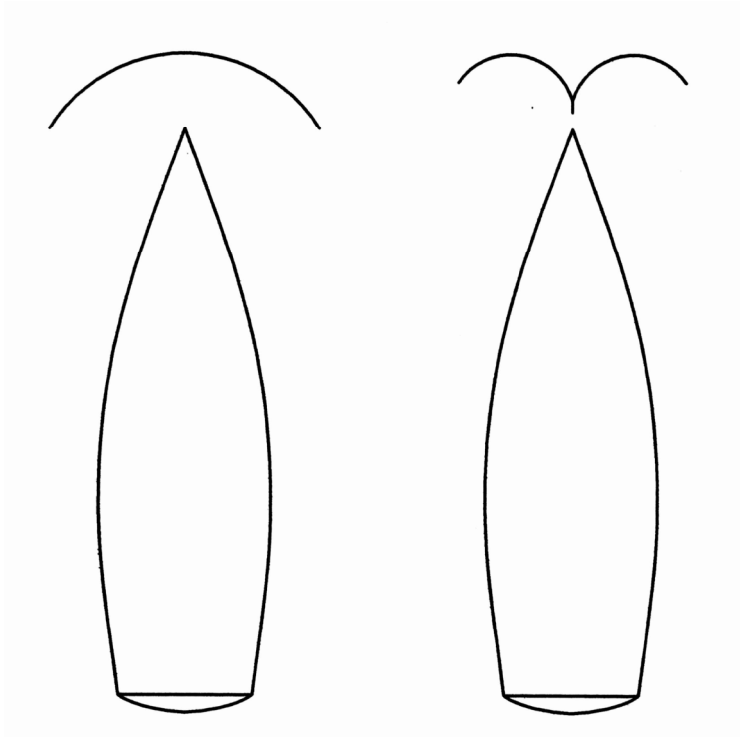


Diagram showing boat from above with spinnaker pulling in front. On the left is the spinnaker in regular flying mode, with a nice round shape. The thong line runs vertically down the center seam of the sail. The sail is free to oscillate laterally.

On the right is the same sail with the thong tensioned (thong-on mode). The sail is pulled together along the center seam, changing the shape of the sail into a less-efficient shape - good for depowering the sail - with a reduced tendency to oscillate as the thong line tends to limit the sail's oscillation.



Merit 25 Twilight Zone sailing under full spinnaker (thong-off mode). The thong is lead through the nylon tube sewn vertically down the centerline of the sail, with patches and grommets to help transfer the load of the thong to the nylon sail. The thin line exiting the bottom patch is the thong line.



Merit 25 Twilight Zone sailing under spinnaker in thong-on mode. The thong has been tensioned, drawing the sail together along the centerline. Note that the sail shape has changed considerably, reducing power. The tensioned thong line, lead to the deck at the bow, helps to reduce the sail's lateral oscillation.