

Spinnaker pole systems

Halo Winter 2010

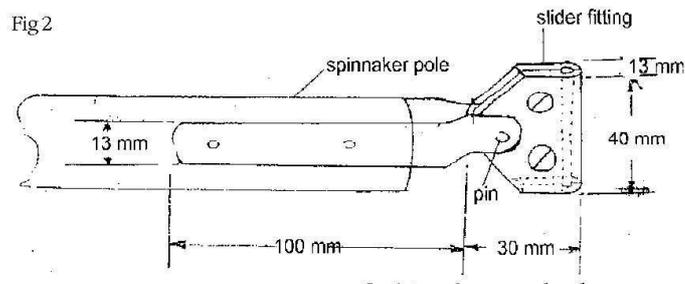
Flying a spinnaker can add another dimension to sailing a *Miracle*. In the Spring 2000 issue of *Halo* Rod Brown outlined 3 different systems and what he said then is still as valid today and it is hoped will encourage more members to "have a go" and fit a spinnaker on their boat.

Three systems are outlined which for simplicity are referred to as Novice, Intermediate and Advanced.

Novice system

This system stores the pole vertically on the mast so it only needs pulling down and setting with the minimum of effort.

With reference to Fig. 1, the system requires a length of 3mm wire with rope tail, fastened as tight as possible between two eyes on the front of the mast. Except for some more eyes, a piece of shock-cord and rope, all that is needed is a slider fitting, home fabricated to approximately the dimensions shown in Fig. 2, making sure that the overall length complies with the measurement rule for spinnaker poles.



The slider can be made from pieces of nylon and the slide fastenings to the pole out of stainless steel. A pin with circlip joins the 2 parts together allowing the slider to pivot freely when the pole is stored.

You will also have to fix a plastic clip on the front of the mast for the pole to snap into the stored position.

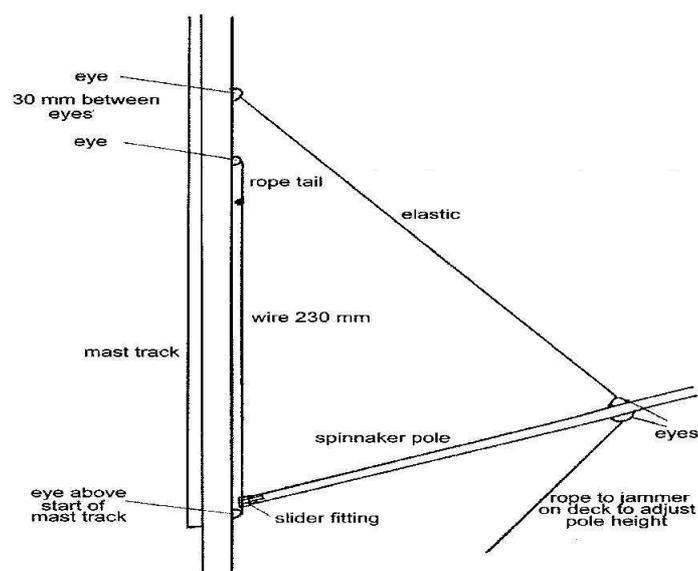


Fig 1

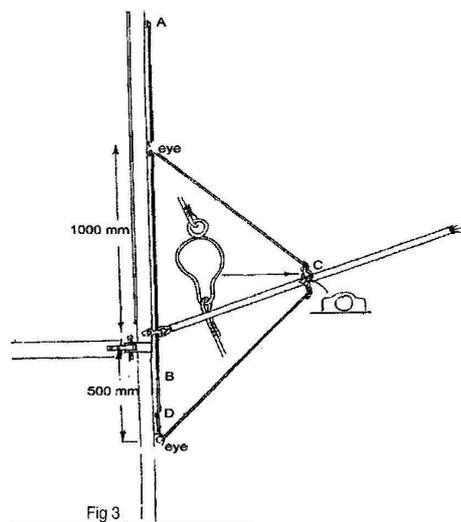
Intermediate system

The following system begins to approach a more conventional one in that the crew needs to pull the pole from its stored position on the boom to its position on the mast. It is a progression on the previous system in that it gets away from the serious problem of windage caused by storing the pole on the mast.

Very young crews find the tension in a conventional system to be too great, but the system to be described is in comparison very light. Pushing out the pole is relatively easy and there are no adjustments to make. The pole is very easily taken down and stored along the boom.

With reference to Fig. 3 this system required a piece of shock-cord AB secured at point A behind the lower bolt used to fix the two halves of the mast together. A rope is fixed to point B, fed through a lower eye on the mast and terminates at the bottom end of the spinnaker pole ring C. To the top of the spinnaker pole ring C is fixed a rope which finishes at another eye set as shown. The length of this rope is calculated so that the ring lies level with the boom when the pole is stored. A small button is fixed at D so that the pole will not rise above a pre-determined height and finally sufficient tension is required to take up all the slack in the system when the pole is stored.

You will also have to obtain a spinnaker pole ring designed to only move when twisted over the plastic fitting fixed to the centre of the pole.



Advanced system

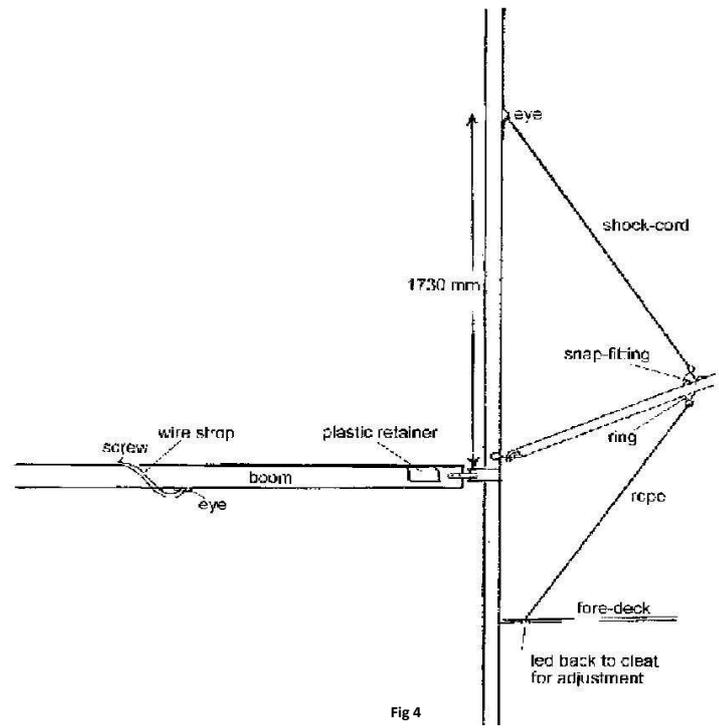
When you and your crew have spent a few seasons Miracle sailing with a spinnaker and are ready to get down to some serious racing you will abandon the earlier systems in favour of one of the many more "conventional" systems used by most of the "top" people.

The system described below is very simple to install, but is very effective in the hands of a capable and strong crew. It provides much more flexibility for pole adjustment, allowing optimum spinnaker performance.

With reference to Fig. 4, the downhaul is a piece of shock-cord fixed to an eye on the mast and to the top of the circular ring which slides on the spinnaker pole. The up-haul is attached to the bottom of this ring by a shackle and fed through a hole in the fore-deck and then to a single cleat positioned for ease of adjustment by the helm or crew (e.g. on a thwart close to the centreboard case).

Pole storage is accomplished by screwing a wire strop (or piece of hose pipe) to the top of the boom and the front of the pole is held in place by a piece of plastic pipe again screwed to the top of the boom.

You will need to purchase or make a fitting that allows the crew to get the ring past the centre of the pole. This can be done with a homemade snap-fitting (relying on an elastic band) but most boats manage with a ring and bulls-eye like in system 2.



Needless to say there are many variations of spinnaker systems, but it is hoped the above will enable someone to get started and enjoy flying a spinnaker on their Miracle.