

2. Getting Ready for Spring RC Laser Sailing – Boat & Sails

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Time to order new parts from [Intensity Sails](#) if you discover they are needed. This brief article will review some of the things that I think you should do to insure that you don't get frustrated at the last minute. This is the second article in the series and deals with just the boat and sails. I have tried to insert hyperlinks into the article so that you can go the source of what I am talking about or recommending. If you want a word file, just ask.

The RC Laser North American web site used to have a nice series of "Tips & Tricks" articles written a while ago by Steve Lang. **I currently don't know what happened to them.** The articles were pretty good. Just the article listing the detailed steps to take on replacing the monofilament control line is worth the price of admission if you have never done it before. I am not going to repeat information that can be easily found on the NA web site.

Here is my list of key things you should do before the start of spring sailing.

1. Inspect and replace any worn or frayed sheets. This includes the mainsheet and outhauls. The "stock" mainsheet in my opinion is way overkill in weight and thickness. When there is any breeze, it is not an issue. Under drifting conditions the weight of the line prevents the sail from going out in the very light puffs. I personally use 80 lb. test Spectra (non-stretch) kite string. Any braided fishing line between 50-200 lb. test is another option. For the outhaul, it doesn't make a difference on the weight of the line.
2. Inspect the monofilament main control line. Pay particular attention to where it attaches to the winch drum and where it goes around the bow pulley. Any signs of worn spots are potential failure points. Make sure there is enough tension in this control line, otherwise it can skip off the winch drum.
3. Put a small dab of grease under the winch drum and the rudder servo horn after carefully removing them from the servo. This helps prevent water from working its way into the servo. Be careful removing the winch drum as there is a lot of tension on this drum from the monofilament control line.
4. Inspect the rudder control rods and make sure there is a good solid slop free connection between the servo horn and the rudder tiller.
5. Inspect the sails. Now is the time to consider replacing heavily used and creased sails. Look at the tell tails and replace if missing. In light air the tell tails are very important. **(Note I have been informed that the Class Secretary is enforcing no user added tell tails)** Check the top of the sail. Is the mast ready to punch through? Spinnaker tape can easily reinforce this weak spot, plus add some color for easy identification.

6. Use very fine steel wool to remove scum/dried salt/and other contaminants on the keel and the rudder. I use 00# or 000# steel wool. This is a cleaning operation and NOT sanding the surface.
7. Clean (do not sand) the hull of the boat using your favorite cleaner and warm water. Don't use any steel wool or abrasive cleaner, the hull plastic will just "fuzz up" and make for a very slow boat.
8. The RC Laser class rules dated June 7, 2011 under section C.4 states;
***Keel and Rudder** - The keel and rudder may be sanded for the sole purpose of removing rough mold ridges. The shape and smoothness of the keel and rudder may not be changed in any way.*

Make sure you do remove this mold ridge along the leading edge of the keel and rudder using 200 grit sand paper and work you way down to at least 400 grit or finer sand paper. The mold ridge can cause the rudder to cavitate badly in heavy air making it very difficult to control your boat. There is a night and day difference between a rudder with a ridge and one that has been cleaned up by removing this ridge. The RC Laser rudder is undersized as the boat gets overpowered and cavitates easily. One trick to get the boat to turn is to bring the rudder back to neutral and try turning again. Sometimes to get the boat to turn, particularly when heeled, I pump the rudder.

Note, the latest class rules says that NOTHING can be changed on the underwater appendages??

Conclusion

Remember the only dumb question is the one not asked. I am here to help you. Just email me or ask me when you see me.