

bear off, the windward telltale will lower until it is nearly horizontal (Figure 5).

The upwind "gears"

Think of telltale activity as representing four distinct gears, like you'd have in a car. By turning the boat a degree or two, the helmsperson "shifts" gears, depending on wind conditions and speed requirements.

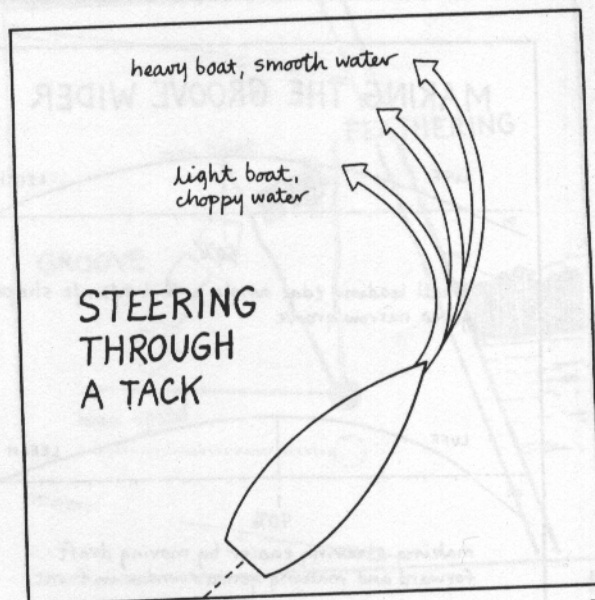
1st gear Leeward telltale stalls for a split second. Windward telltale streams straight aft. As in a car, this gear is used for acceleration from very slow speeds, such as when you need extra power to recover from waves or accelerate after a slow tack.

2nd gear Both telltales stream straight aft. Use this gear for acceleration; also when you are close to full speed and external conditions (e.g. approaching waves or a need to foot for clear air) require that you achieve maximum speed.

3rd gear Windward telltale lifts to about 45 degrees. Leeward telltale streams aft. Once you've attained your desired speed, put the boat on the wind into this "point mode." This is the gear you should use for most upwind sailing.

4th gear Windward telltale lifts to vertical. Leeward telltale streams aft. Cloth begins to lift. This is "super-point mode," used when you need to depower in heavy air, take advantage of a flat spot, or squeeze off a competitor on your windward quarter.

While the helmsperson changes gears, the sail trimmers must also adjust sail shape. For example, pretend you're about to hit terrible waves and almost stop. The driver heads off into second



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gear to accelerate, and the trimmers simultaneously ease the backstay to get fuller, more draft-forward sails.

As the boat recovers, the driver shifts from second into third, while the trimmers pump the backstay to flatten the sails again. This is when communication between helmsman and trimmers is so important.

The "groove"

Every sailor has experienced times when a boat got so hooked up that it nearly sailed itself and went light years faster than the competition. Being "in the groove" is a somewhat subjective state of existence where the boat feels good and performs well. It's a lot like hitting a tennis ball with the "sweet" spot of your racket. You don't necessarily know exactly where this spot is, but you sure know when you hit it.

The goal of the driver is to keep the boat in this groove as much of the time as