



*Steering downwind requires constant communication between helmsman and spinnaker trimmer. The trimmer must think of himself as an extension of the driver's sense of feel.*

possible. You can make the groove wider and easier to find by giving the genoa a wider leading-edge angle and a more draft-forward shape (Figure 6). Do this by easing the backstay and/or increasing luff tension. This rounds up the front of your sail and makes the telltale activity less jumpy. It also permits the sail to function efficiently over a wider range of steering.

A wider groove is a good idea when:

- 1) The helmsperson is not very experienced and is having a hard time keeping the boat on the wind.
- 2) You are sailing in waves or puffy winds, when you cannot avoid being out of the groove for a certain percentage of the time.
- 3) You're racing at night when it's hard to keep track of things.

The disadvantage of a forgiving sail is that you won't point as high as possible. And sometimes the windward tell-

tale will seem insensitive to steering changes. In this case, the luff may be too round for the conditions. Reduce headstay sag to make a narrower, higher-pointing groove. Remember, the more you flatten out the front of the jib, the more "critical" the sail will become, and the harder it will be to stay in the groove.

On a critical sail (one without much halyard tension or with a lot of backstay tension), the telltales will be jumpy. Instead of gradually lifting and lowering, the windward telltale will dance from vertical to horizontal with the smallest steering changes. This indicates that the entry is too fine for the conditions. You should go back to a rounder luff.

Chop vs. waves Bear off and power through chop, but steer around waves — up the face and down the back side. You have the right amount of windward helm when you can let the boat steer smoothly up into the face of the wave without