

Flying Headsails – Summary and Q&A

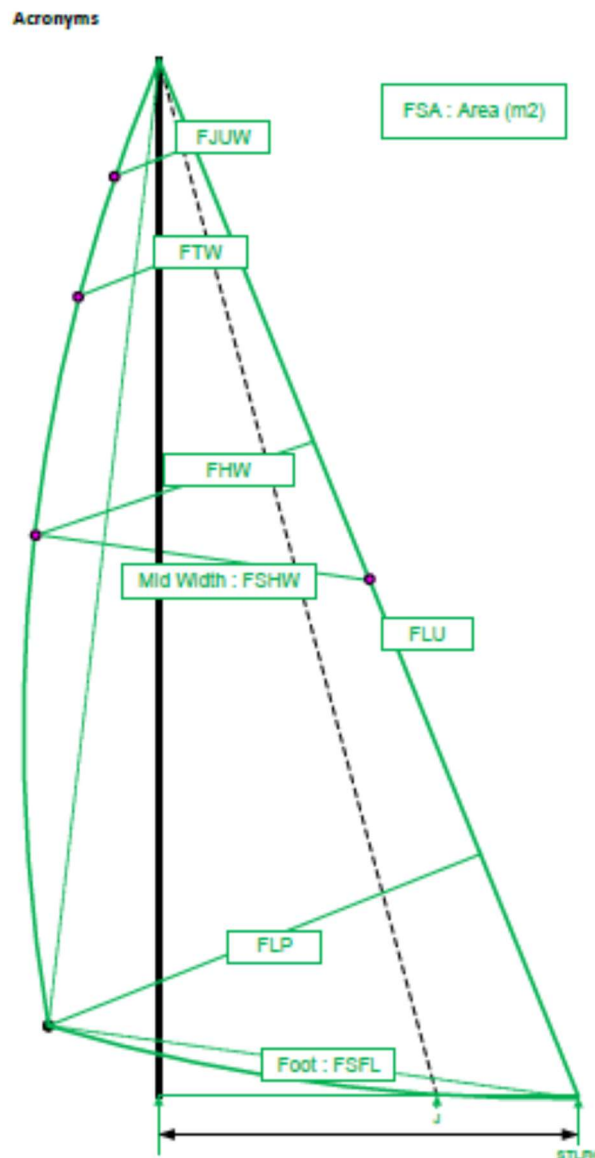
Version 2 – 7 November 2023

Applicable from 1 January 2024 (1 June 2024 in countries with June-May validity)

1. SUMMARY

A Flying Headsail is:

- Set Forward of the Forestay – either to the bow or a bowsprit
- The Half Width (FSHW) must be equal to or greater than 60% of foot length and less than 75% of foot length (FSFL);
 - If the Half Width is less than 60% of foot length the sail must be rated as a headsail. (This will increase the rating)
 - If the Half Width is greater or equal to 75% of foot width the sail must be rated as a spinnaker. (This will reduce the rating)
- No Battens
- Typically these sails will be set on a furling device but this is not a mandatory requirement.
- The sail may not be set partially furled or partially reefed.



2. LIMITATIONS

The following limitations are requirements for a sail to be classed as a Flying Headsail. If it is not a Flying Headsail the sail must be rated as a Headsail or a Spinnaker depending on the FSHW/FSFL ratio.

Half Width to Foot Ratio: = FSHW/FSFL

Minimum FSHW = FSFL * 0.60

Maximum FSHW = FSFL * 0.749

STLFHmax – This is calculated for a specific sail using the formula: - **STLFHmax = FSFL – (0.25 * J)**

If the calculated STLFHmax is less than the value of J then the sail must be rated as a headsail. This means that the minimum FSFL = 1.25 * J.

The sail must not be set further forward than the STLFHmax stated on the certificate. If STLFHmax is mid span of the bowsprit it may be that the bowsprit will not be strong enough at this point and the sail will need to be set further aft at a sufficiently strong point on the hull.

The STLFH cannot be declared by an owner and there is no rating benefit of declaring a STLFH that is shorter than STLFHmax.

Number of Flying Headsails – The number of Flying Headsails carried whilst racing is a rated value declared by the owner and shown on the certificate. A boat shall not have more than the rated number of Flying Headsails on board whilst racing. A boat that has 2 Flying Headsails but is only rated for 1 Flying Headsail aboard may change between races/events subject to IRC Rule 21.1.5(d) and/or the Notice of Race.

3. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q - Can a Flying Headsail be set on the Forestay like a standard headsail?

A – NO, to be classed as a Flying Headsail the sail must be set flying and tacked down forward of the forestay.

Q – Can a Flying Headsail be set with a Whisker Pole to Leeward?

A – YES, if the boat is rated for Whisker Pole(s). The rating impact for whisker poles increases if a boat is also rated for Flying Headsails.

Q – Can other Headsails (i.e. Staysails) be set at the same time as a Flying Headsail?

A – YES, additional headsails may be set at the same time as a Flying Headsail. These sails must be no larger than the rated headsail area (HSA) & maximum headsail luff length (HLUmax).

Q – Can a Headsail (Jib Top, Yankee etc) be set forward of the forestay if a boat is not rated for Flying Headsails?

A – YES, a boat does not need to be rated for a Flying Headsail to fly a Headsail forward of the forestay. As long as the sail area is less than the rated headsail area (HSA) & maximum headsail

luff length (HLU_{max}) it is a headsail and may be set flying forward of the forestay up to STL. Multiple headsails may also be set flying.

RATING EFFECTS (2024)

Owners declaring a Flying Headsail within the IRC definition will see a change in rating for 2024; the rating increase is smaller than when the Flying Headsail was first introduced in 2021. Some representative examples are shown below; these are for guidance only as the rating effect will depend upon the rig configuration and many other boat factors.

Boat Design	Flying Headsail Area (m ²)	Number of Flying Headsails		
		1	2	3
		increase	increase	increase
FARR 30 2.15	45	0.005	0.009	0.016
A 31 1.90	45	0.005	0.008	0.015
J 109 2.10	60	0.005	0.010	0.017
JPK 10.80	65	0.006	0.010	0.018
Volvo Open 70	330	0.012	0.017	0.030

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