

# 29er

## 29er Safety Manual

Risk Assessment:

The three main risks when sailing a 29er are:

1. Hitting the head on something onboard (boom, mast, etc.).
  2. Capsizing and being unable to right the boat due to crew fatigue.
  3. A sailor accidentally trapped underneath the boat by the trapeze harness.
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### Part A: Head impacts

Sailing a 29er in strong winds can be very demanding. These conditions often include choppy water, which makes the boat less stable. If you add inexperienced and lightweight sailors to the mix, capsizing becomes a likely scenario.

The 29er has a steep learning curve, so it's essential to build up progressively:

- Start in 10 knots.
- Move up to 14 knots.
- Then to 18 knots or more as confidence grows.

Eventually, you'll reach the point where you need to tackle that first "big breeze" session.

For that step, it's highly recommended to wear a helmet. It boosts confidence—sailors can focus on sailing instead of worrying about head impacts—and the trade-off comes at almost no cost.

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### Part B: Hard-to-recover capsizes

Capsizing drains a lot of energy, especially for beginners. Plan each session carefully to manage fatigue and maintain safety.

Tips for organizing sessions:

- Practice recovery techniques: train in light wind both *mast to windward* and *mast to leeward*.
- Set exercises appropriate to skill level: avoid gybes for beginners.
- Sail downwind first: it's easier to sail back upwind later when tired.
- Have an extra hand on the RIB: a third person can help if the crew is exhausted.
- Monitor energy levels: bring them in before full fatigue to stay safe.

If repeated capsizes occur:

1. Ensure they're making one consistent and focused effort to right the boat.
2. If not successful, send a helper from the RIB—two sailors stabilize, one climbs the daggerboard.
3. Once upright, the RIB can hold the trapeze or wing to help stabilize.

## Extreme recovery techniques

*Use only as a last resort.*

### 1. Mast pickup:

- Position the boat with the mast lying over the water surface, pointing into the wind.
- Place the RIB close and lift slowly, lift and pull close to the rib following the shroud.
- Keep the **RIB head to wind** and raise until the wing rests on the RIB side.
  - ⚠ Do not attempt in waves. Rib moves too much.
  - ⚠ Keep clear of sailors and the RIB's propeller at all times.
  - ⚠ Be very careful with keeping your fingers caught in the mast while lifting.

### 2. Coach sailing recovery:

Train sailors to drive the RIB safely. If there's no third sailor, an experienced coach can recover the 29er while the beginner sailor follows on the RIB.

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## Part C: Sailor stuck underneath

A sailor getting trapped underneath the boat is uncommon but can happen, especially with beginners. The key is prevention and clear procedures in case it occurs.

Prevention tips:

- Move away immediately: if the boat capsizes, sailors must move out from under the deck area right away.
- If possible, pull the mainsheet tight while capsizing: this acts like a parachute and slows the inversion, giving more time to react.
- Check for crew safety after every capsize: if someone is missing or in trouble, call the coach immediately.
- Carry a safety knife on each life jacket: this is mandatory and allows quick release from lines.
- Use an ejection harness: these systems save lives by allowing quick release of the hook.

**If the situation occurs:**

1. Two rescue options exist:

- Another sailor can dive under to help free the trapped person.
  - The coach can dive underneath if required.
2. It's not possible to right the boat if someone remains caught by the harness hook in a shroud, spreader, or other metal fitting.  
The trapped sailor must be released before any attempt to bring the boat upright.
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## Final Notes

Preparation, progressive practice, and continuous supervision are the keys to 29er safety. Good planning and constant monitoring of energy and awareness levels will always prevent a session from turning into a risky situation.

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