

South Coast Adjustable Back Stay

The standard configuration for the South Coast 21 includes a back stay that is adjustable via turnbuckle. The rules for racing a South Coast 21 allow adjusting the back stay prior to and between races, but not during the race. Increasing back stay tension flattens out the mainsail to help keep the boat on its feet in heavy air and decreases sag in the forestay and hence the jib allowing a finer entry and better pointing ability. The jack stays keep the mast from over bending and the consensus is that they should be kept rather loose to allow bend with minimal back stay tension.

To make an adjustable back stay, one needs a minimum of supplies. You will need:

1. A laser boom vang.
2. A thimble for the back stay.
3. Two nicopress fittings of the proper size for your back stay.
4. Low stretch line.

Tools needed include:

1. Heavy wire cutter to cut the back stay
2. A nicopress tool.

Begin by disconnecting the back stay turnbuckle. Generally, the mast does not fall down at this point, but to be on the safe side, it wouldn't hurt to attach the main halyard to one of the mooring cleats, especially if you are doing this in a wet slip and there might be waves. Select an area approximately two feet from the turnbuckle to cut the back stay. Wrap this area with masking tape to prevent unraveling when the cut is made and cut the stay. If you don't have a heavy wire cutter, a hacksaw will do. Place two nicopress fittings on the stay and wrap it around the thimble and back through the nicopress. Seat the fittings with the nicopress tool. Now one has only to attach the laser boom vang fitting between the back stay and the deck fitting. Put the adjuster at the loosest setting that you think you will use and put a stopper knot there. Put a bowline at the end of the line.

You can now adjust the back stay prior to the race without having to deal with the turnbuckle. The final result looks like this:

backstay

two nicopress fittings

laser boom vang

low stretch line

figure eight knot

