

South Coast 21 Technical Tip: Line Control Bridge

Although the South Coast 21 is a keel boat, it generally sails with a skipper and one crew, and we do everything we can to keep weight off the bow. As a result, South Coast owners have found it convenient to bring all crew control lines to a spot just behind the mast on the cabin top. There are two ways generally to accomplish this, the first being to use a three inch wide by 1-2" thick strip of wood or plastic which is 27" long and is bolted to the cabin top just in front of the companion way. The cam cleats are then attached directly to the wood or plastic. The second way is to fabricate an aluminum bridge that is bolted to the cabin top. It is this method that is described. (For complete instructions, go to <http://austinyachtclub.net/fleets/SC21/>.)

Materials:

1. Aluminum stock 1" x 3" x 42".
2. White spray paint.
3. Cam cleats and fasteners.
4. 8 1/2" fastening bolts with fender washers and bolts.
5. Labels.

Tools Needed:

1. Heavy vice for bending aluminum bridge.
2. Drill.
3. Screw drivers and adjustable wrench.

Make the bends as shown below in the aluminum stock. I actually took a short cut here and had Pat Feagin make the bends in the aluminum since he has all the equipment to do it right. Once this is done, put the aluminum bridge on the cabin top in the exact location that it is to go and lay out the cleats in the order that you want them to be. Mark the exact location on the aluminum bridge in magic marker.

Take the piece home and drill the holes for mounting the cam cleats. Also drill four holes on each side of the bridge for mounting to the cabin top. Lightly sand the aluminum and paint with four coats of white enamel spray paint. Now mount the hardware and be sure to label all lines. I used the p-touch labeler. You can also use pre-printed labels that you can pick up at any sailboat outfitter. Once this is done, you are ready to bolt it onto your South Coast and attach the lines.

A word about organization of the line control bridge. The illustration below shows my solution to line handling. I have tried to make the line controls intuitive (ie. something that makes sense, especially helpful when breaking in a new crew member). I have placed the jib halyard to the port side of the control bridge angled toward the cabin top winch in case extra power is needed to get the correct halyard tension. The main controls are in the center and the spinnaker controls are to the starboard side. Since the spinnaker is generally hoisted on starboard tack, it makes sense to have those controls on that side. The spinnaker halyard is far enough off center as not to interfere with the launching of the spinnaker from its turtle in the cabin entryway. Once the spinnaker is set, the crew works from left to right releasing first the jib halyard, then the main outhaul and cunningham. When dousing the spinnaker, the crew again works from left to right hoisting first the jib, tightening the main outhaul and cunningham, then releasing the spinnaker halyard. The line control bridge is set far enough back on the cabin top that the skipper can access the lines when needed and close enough to the fore deck that the crew can release them even when forward of the mast. Note that there is no main halyard led

to the control bridge. I like to have that secured to a cleat on the mast so that it is not accidentally released in the melee at the leeward mark.

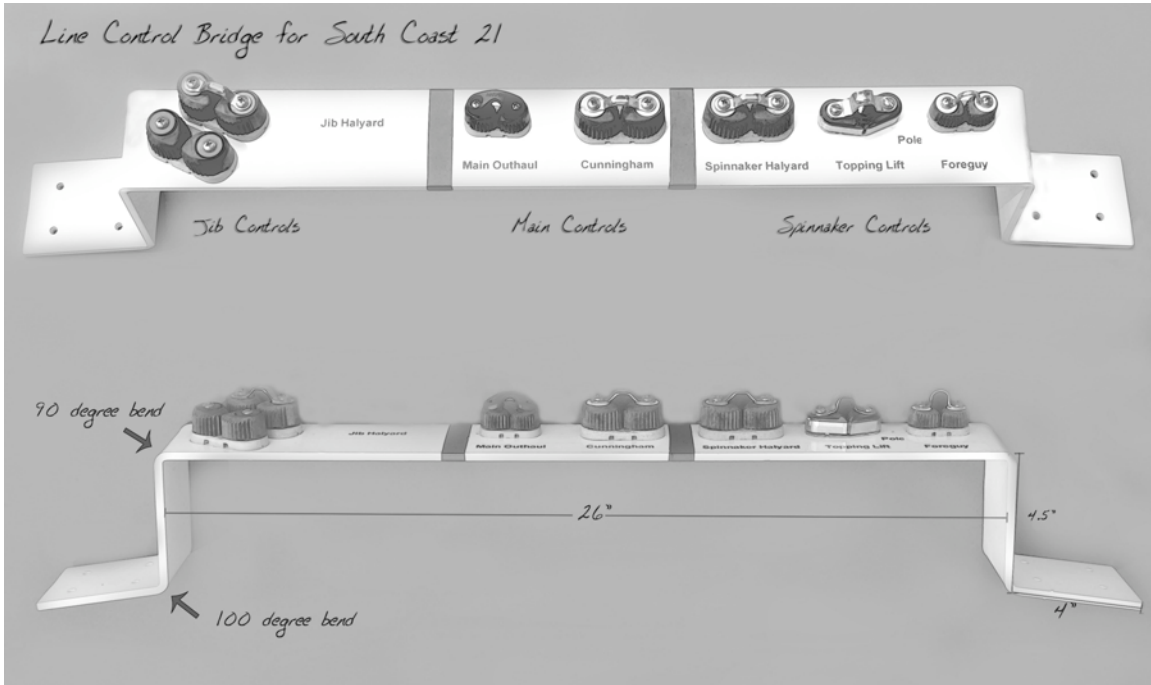


Illustration: South Coast 21 Line Control Bridge.