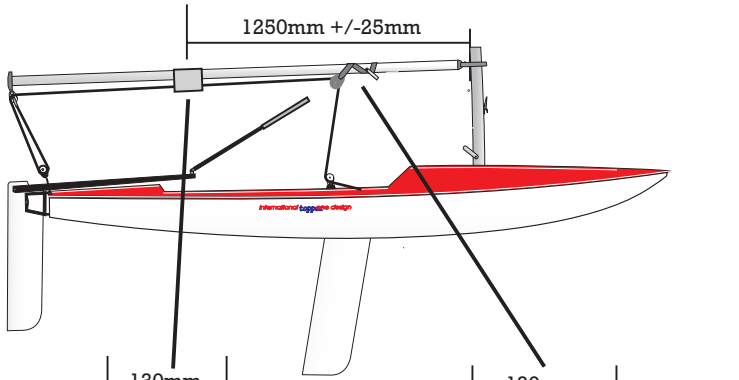
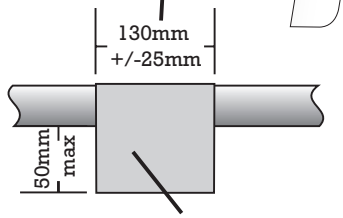
2 The centre mainsheet

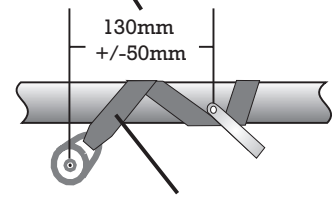
For years the aft sheeting system was the only one allowed. Now we can lead the mainsheet forward to the top of the daggerboard case. This has proved a great success and the photos in this book show the centre mainsheet.





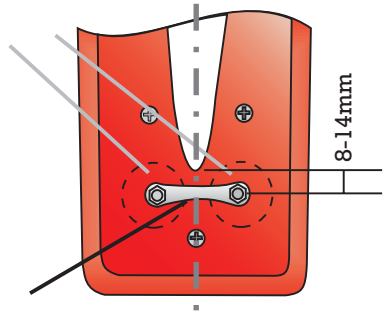
Sailcloth loop attached by Velcro

Hole centres equidistant from the centreline of the boat +/- 2mm



Webbing strap with Velcro fastening

Plan view of daggerboard case moulding



What's the system like?
Measurements are published on www.gbrtopper.co.uk and elsewhere in *Topper Times*.

Stainless steel lacing eye bolted through using 5mm nuts, bolts and penny washers. Bolt head to be inside daggerboard case. Hole centres to be between 30 and 40mm.

The aft sheeting system, with a traveller across the transom, was retained with the rope being led along the boom and down to a ratchet block on the top of the dagger-board case moulding. The attachment at this point is by bolting through from the inside of the moulding, a straightforward job. A sailcloth loop is added on the boom to prevent the rope dangling, when slack, and lassoing the poor sailor!

Webbing straps and Velcro are used to attach the additional block to the boom, as there seemed no point in weakening the boom by drilling extra holes.

Why has the centre mainsheet become the preferred arrangement for racing?

- Transferring to and from other boats is less challenging.
- In strong winds the aft sheeting pulled you to the back of the boat. The way to prevent this was to twist forward, which was both uncomfortable and tiring. Sailors can now hike straight out.
- By the same token, sailors can pivot backwards more effectively when beating through waves.
- Pulling in the mainsheet across your body was less efficient than pulling towards you. The sheet loads on a Topper were a challenge for younger sailors. Less strength is required with the centre sheeting.
- Gybing and tacking facing forward allow the sailor to see where they are going. After all we don't corner a car while looking out of the back window!

HOW IS IT DONE?

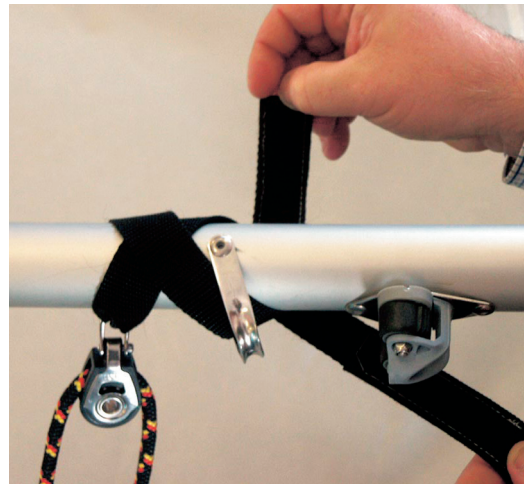
The boom

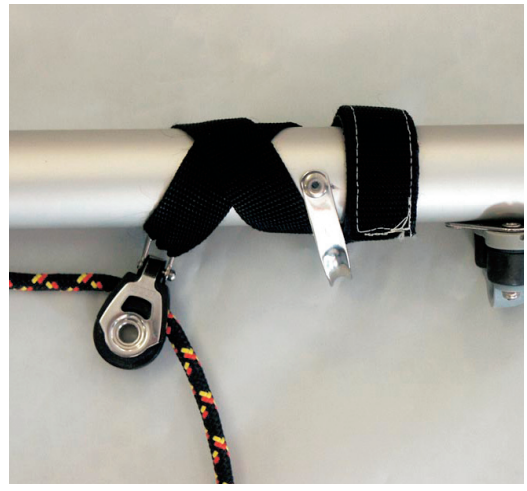
The boom end block

This is hung in the same way as the original. The present block needs changing for a becket version and a shorter rigging link needs to be used between the boom end fitting and the block. This keeps the mainsheet closer to the boom.

The forward boom block

This is attached to the boom with a webbing strap (or rope) by weaving it through the kicker take off point. The ends of the webbing are joined with Velcro or the rope is tied with a reef knot.





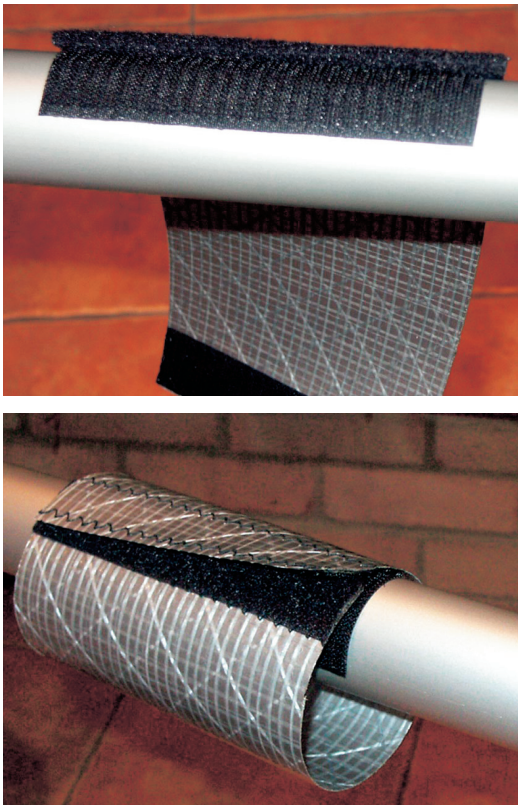
Strapping the forward block to the boom.

The traveller block

The current ratchet block is changed for a non-becket block. Use a rounded (forged) shackle so the traveller rope doesn't get worn.

The boom loop

The loop, to prevent the sailor being lassoed, is attached to the boom with self-adhesive Velcro. Most dealers will supply the material with Velcro sewn on.



The boom loop.

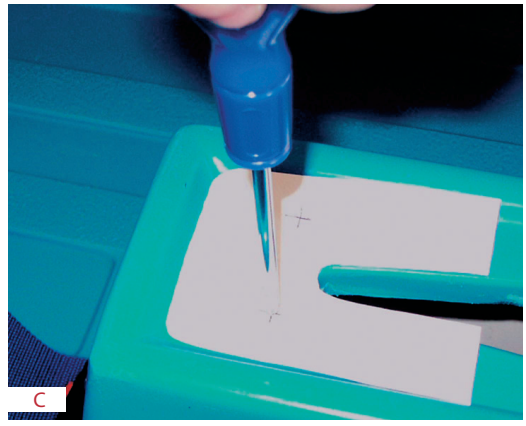
The hull fittings

Two holes need drilling in the hull. Your dealer should include a template with the kit. The process is:

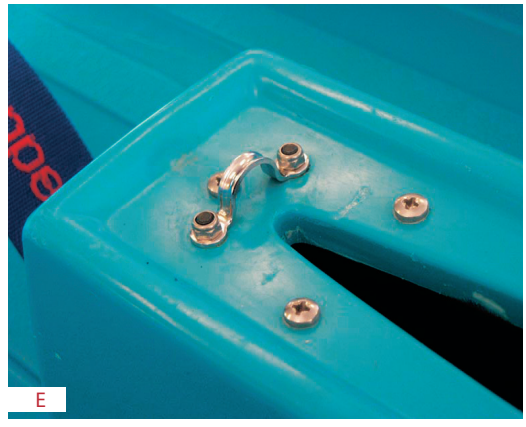
- Unscrew the hull plate (A).
- Remove the bladders (B).
- Mark out and drill the two holes right through the hull from above (C).
- Put penny washers on the bolts and push the bolts through from the inside (D).
- Bolt on the deck eye. It is best to use nyloc nuts (E).
- Shackle on the ratchet block, and away you go!


A


B


C


D


E