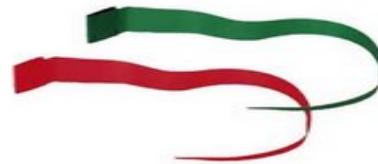


# The Fundamentals of *Telltails*



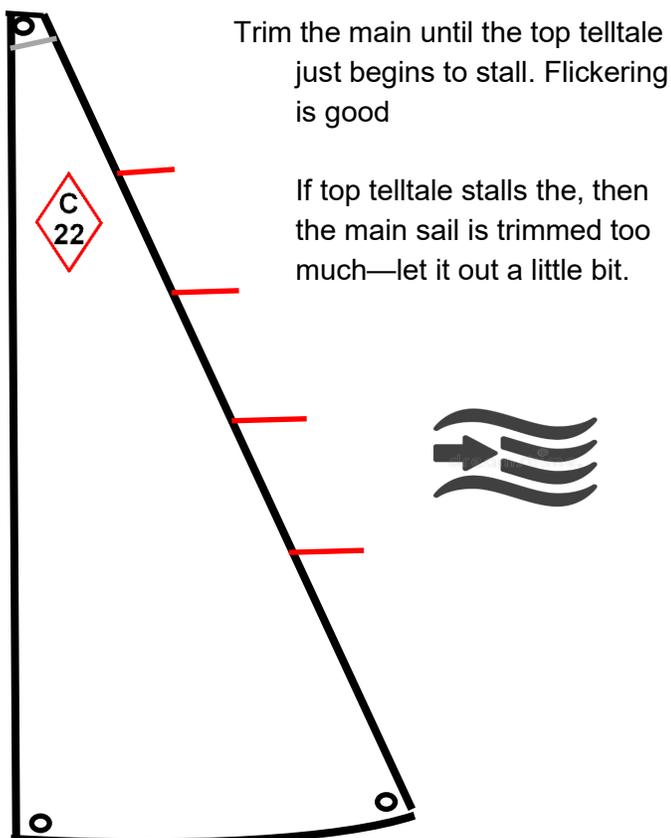
By Rich Fox, Editor

## *Main Sail*

Wind direction often changes (a little or a lot), making it important to monitor the flow of wind across your sails. Telltales are an inexpensive and useful tool to help show you what is happening with the wind as it crosses your sails allowing you to correct the sail trim when sailing to windward.

On the main sail, you will have three or four telltales installed along the leech of the sail. As the wind leaves the main sail all the telltales should be streaming aft.

If you move the traveler and boom to windward the top telltale should eventually break first. If not, and a lower telltale breaks first, then apply more tension on the boom-vang to tighten up the leech.



## *Genoa & Jib*

On the genoa and jib sails, there are typically three pairs of red and green telltales mounted along the leech of the sail. They are typically located about 1/3 from the top, 1/3 from the bottom, and in the middle.

There is lots of information about telltales that can be found on the internet, and it can be confusing.

Let me sum up the key points you should remember:

- ◆ If Telltales UP, you are pointing or pinching
- ◆ If Telltales streaming AFT, good boat speed
- ◆ If Telltales DOWN, you have room to point-up

The following pages provide a graphic of the telltales for the following three scenarios:

- ◆ Go Fast Mode / Max Speed
- ◆ Speed Building Mode
- ◆ Pointing Mode

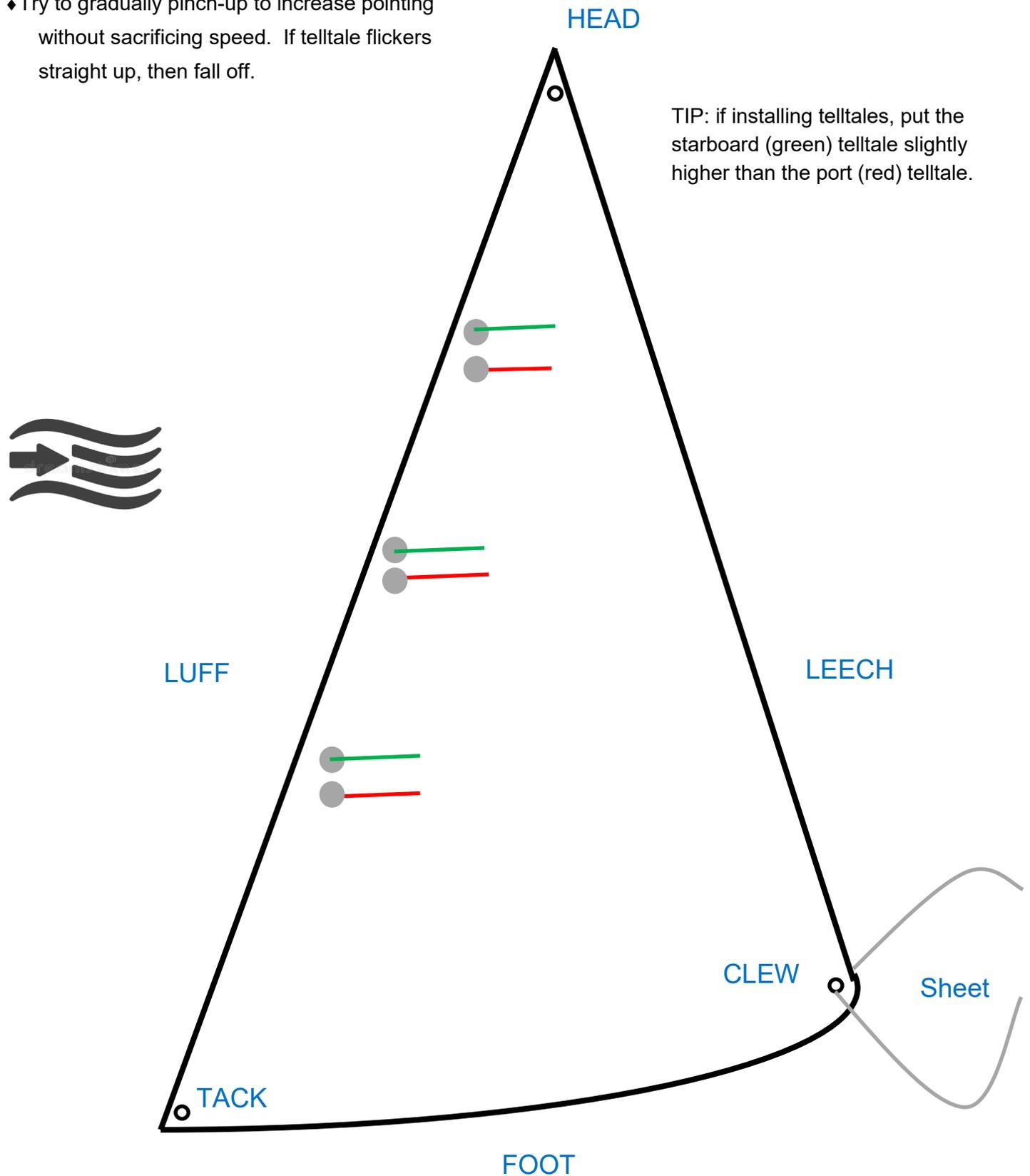
## *Why are Telltales important?*

When racing to the windward mark, wind direction is often changing. The Catalina 22 skipper who does the best job of watching their telltales and adjusting sail trim to maximize wind flow across the sails, has the great opportunity to outperform the competitors who do not pay attention to their telltales.

Many new racers do not pay much attention to the telltales. Eventually, they learn about the importance of telltales, and their competitiveness around the race course gradually improves.

## Go Fast Mode / Max Speed

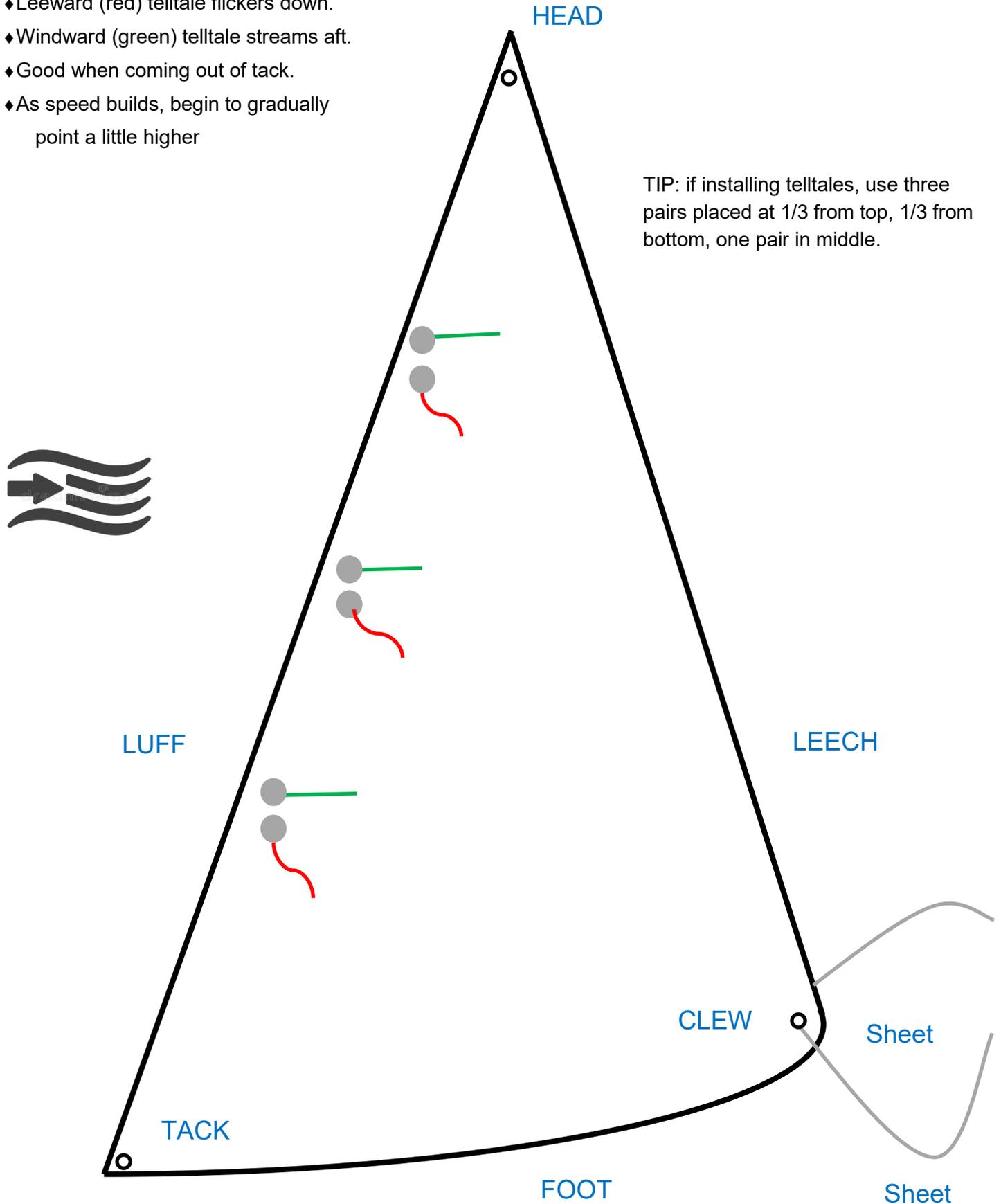
- ◆ Both telltales are streaming aft.
- ◆ Sacrificing pointing ability for speed.
- ◆ Try to gradually pinch-up to increase pointing without sacrificing speed. If telltale flickers straight up, then fall off.



## Speed Building Mode

- ◆ Leeward (red) telltale flickers down.
- ◆ Windward (green) telltale streams aft.
- ◆ Good when coming out of tack.
- ◆ As speed builds, begin to gradually point a little higher

TIP: if installing telltales, use three pairs placed at 1/3 from top, 1/3 from bottom, one pair in middle.

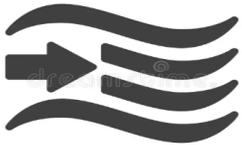


## Pointing Mode

- ◆ Windward (green) telltale flickers up.
- ◆ Leeward (red) telltale streams aft.
- ◆ Good for moderate/heavy wind, but not light wind.
- ◆ If windward (green) telltale flickers higher than 45 degrees, then pinching, fall off or pull in the sail.

HEAD

TIP: Telltales pointing up means you are pinching and losing potential boat speed. Time to slightly fall off.



LUFF

LEECH

CLEW

Sheet

TACK

FOOT