

Furling Malfunction (Nov 2000) - 25/06/2004

Headsail furling gear malfunction

One of the commonest causes of the furling system jamming is a halyard wrap around the partly furled genoa at the top. This will not arise if there is a halyard deflector lead fitted just beneath the halyard sheaves. If you look aloft, you will easily see whether there is one fitted or not. Sometimes I find the lead has been fitted, but the halyard does not go through it. Sometimes the halyard being used for the furling genoa is the no.2, which does not pass through the bullseye.

This all sounds a bit complicated but once you look at your rig it will be crystal clear. There should be a bullseye fairlead fitted about two to three inches below the bottom of the sheaves. The halyard is then fed through this fairlead before being attached to the tack of the genoa. This particular component is missing on many boats and can be fitted by a rigger at very small cost. In fact this fairlead is part of the kit with every new Furlex and should have been fitted by the supplier, when new. The adjacent Kemp diagram shows the arrangement.

If required you will be able to purchase this lead deflector from a rigger (with appropriate self tappers) and fit it yourself. However the halyard will have to be completely unthreaded, leaving a messenger behind and then rethreaded up through the fairlead, over the sheaves and back down the mast.

Do be careful and first check if your furling genoa is full hoist (maximum luff length) and if there is only one genoa halyard, the halyard deflector must not be fitted, because it would prevent the genoa being fully tensioned. Where the genoa is full length luff, such a sail should ideally be hoisted on a second genoa halyard. This will leave the first halyard for the furling genoa and other small headsails, with shorter luffs.

Useful tip

To facilitate removal of halyards for winter washing or changing, sew a small loop in the end of the rope tail to which you can attach the messenger. Make this loop with sailmaker's twine and using a needle. After passing the needle through five or six times, bind the six loops together with frapping turns. Reference to our technical articles "Decorative Ropework" (click "Articles" button), gives a detailed explanation of how to do this.