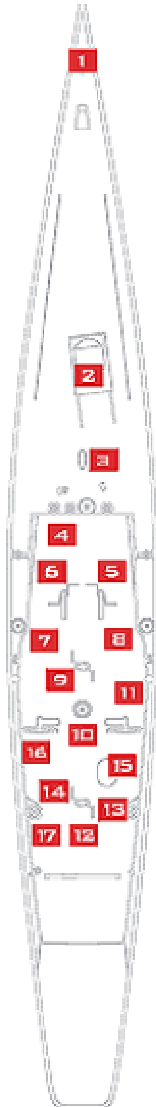


America's Cup Class boat positions

Since the introduction of the America's Cup Class in 1992 there have been 16 active crewmen aboard during racing. Many of the crewmen, however, perform more than one job, assisting in other areas when possible. For the next America's Cup in 2007 an extra crewman has been added to the list, bringing the total to 17. Rather than creating a new position, the extra person has been added simply for an extra set of hands.



Bowman (1): Works the "pointy" end of the boat; is responsible for calling the distance to the start line during starting maneuvers; for working the point during sail changes and mark roundings

Sewer (2): spends most of his day below decks packing sails that have been used; often is soaked to the bone after racing because he is in the direct line of all the water sloshing through the foredeck hatch

Mastman (3): jumps the halyards at the mast in a hand-over-hand fashion to assist hoisting the sails; also helps gather the genoa after the spinnaker is raised and also helps with grinding on occasion

Pitman (4): is responsible for tailing and releasing the halyards during mark roundings; is a critical component helping control the spinnaker pole during jibes; can be seen assisting the grinders sometimes during pre-starts

Grinders (5,6,9,12): the most physically demanding position on the boat, there are usually four crewmen dedicated to grinding; the grinders spin the handles that drive the gears that spin the winches that control the sails; the key is to keep grinding, even when you're out of breath and your muscles burn like a four-alarm fire

Headsail trimmers (7,8): two people split the responsibility for trimming the genoa (upwind) and the spinnaker (downwind); the off-trimmer assists with tailing the genoa sheet during tacks upwind, and trimming the afterguy (which controls the angle of the spinnaker pole) downwind; they must be in constant contact with the helmsman regarding the different speed modes

Mainsail trimmer (10): one of the most critical positions on the boat, as the mainsail is the gas pedal; is in constant contact with the helmsman regarding the different speed modes; will offer some tactical input when possible

Mainsail traveler/wind spotter (11): works closely with the mainsail trimmer when adjusting the traveler, which controls the amount of wind pressure in the mainsail; also looks outside the boat calling wind puffs and shifts as an extra set of eyes for the tactician

Runners (13): the running backstays are connected to the mast and are the primary device used to bend the mast, which changes the shape of the genoa and the mainsail; the position is critical on America's Cup boats; failure to do this job results in catastrophe, like a broken mast

Helmsman/skipper (16): the man holding the wheel is ultimately responsible for the performance of the boat; has to know when to go into a speed build mode or a high-pointing mode (depending on where they are on the racecourse and in relation to their competitor); also has input on tactical decisions

Tactician (14): is in constant contact with the helmsman, telling him where to go on the racecourse; is always looking outside the boat, judging the windshifts and his boat's position relative to the competition

Navigator (15): plots the racecourse on the chart and is responsible for keeping tabs on the current and any changes to the course that might occur during a race as a result of a windshift

17th Man (17): A non-active role onboard; position created along with the class to give an opportunity for sponsors to ride aboard the race boat and feel the action up close and personal