

BOAT CARE

— The Foils

The rudder and centreboard are probably the most important equipment on the Laser when it comes to maintenance and care. Most of the foils for the Laser are made from steel reinforced polyurethane foam or wood. Both types need the same precautions in handling.

Care

The finish of the foils should be protected from dents and scratches, whilst not in use, with a padded cover. These can be obtained from your Laser Dealer or you can make one yourself — the more padding the better. When using covers, make sure that you do not allow sand and/or grit, tools or other items to accumulate in the covers as these will damage the finish on the foils.

When storing the foils avoid long periods of exposure to high temperatures (back seats of cars etc) as this can make the foils warp. Always lay the foils flat with support along the whole surface of the foils. Avoid heavy point loads on the foils. Failure to observe these points can again result in warping.

Most foils after a season's use look like they have been attacked by 'Jaws' due to bad handling. The aerofoil sections are designed to give the Laser its super performance. Any disruption of the flow of water over the foils caused by a poor finish can affect performance, in particular upwind. A poorly finished rudder will also stall more easily at speed, causing a loss of steerage. It is therefore worth spending a bit of time and trouble to ensure that your foils are in good condition with a good finish.

Repairs

The Laser's polyurethane centreboard and rudder can be worked with normal woodworking tools. You should be aware, however, that the reinforcement (steel wires) runs the length of the components in a strip approximately 3.25 in (9 cm) wide and located 3 in (8 cm) from the leading edge of the centreboard and 1.25 in (4 cm) from the leading edge of the rudder, and this reinforcement is only 1/32 in (1 mm) below the surface.

Dents - Rub down the damaged area with sandpaper, ensuring that the surface of the dented area is completely clean, without any gloss or dust, before attempting to place the

filler. Any proprietary polyester filler of the type used for auto bodywork may be used. Sandpaper the finish flush with the surrounding area ready for painting.

Scratches - Generally, scratches will be treated similarly to dents. However, if the scratches are deep enough to expose the steel reinforcement on the polyurethane foils, careful examination should be made to see if rusting has occurred. If this is the case, cut back the polyurethane locally, to expose the rusted area and clean off thoroughly with steel wool before applying the filler as above.

Breakages - Breaks will not extend appreciably into the reinforced area on polyurethane foils but will be limited to the leading and trailing edges. Cracks should be filled with an epoxy glue and when this is set, the surfaces can be restored as above.

If the breakage results in a piece becoming detached, this may be glued back into place with epoxy glue, or if lost, may be replaced with a piece of wood which can then be planed and sanded to the original contours.

Blisters - There is a remote chance that a polyurethane foil may blister up to several months after manufacture. If this occurs, the affected area should be planed flush, filled if you break through the bubble, and painted.

Painting - After repairs have been carried out, the repair should be lightly rubbed down with sandpaper to provide a key for the paint. Polyurethane based paints should be used, giving at least one coat of primer undercoat and one coat of gloss. A final rubbing down with fine cutting paste of the type sold for auto body finishing will blend the new paint into the surrounding area and render the repair almost imperceptible.

When the whole foil is to be painted, a thorough sanding all over the board is necessary to provide a key for the paint. Use a sanding block to ensure a flat surface. We suggest that all foils should be painted white. This makes it easier to spot damage and also, when sailing, to spot weed on the foils.

Follow the paint manufacturers' instructions. When the paint is hard dry, flat down with 1200 grade wet and dry, working back and forth between the leading edge to the trailing edge.