

Learn to Sail

UNIT 4: YOUR FIRST SAIL



YOUR FIRST SAIL

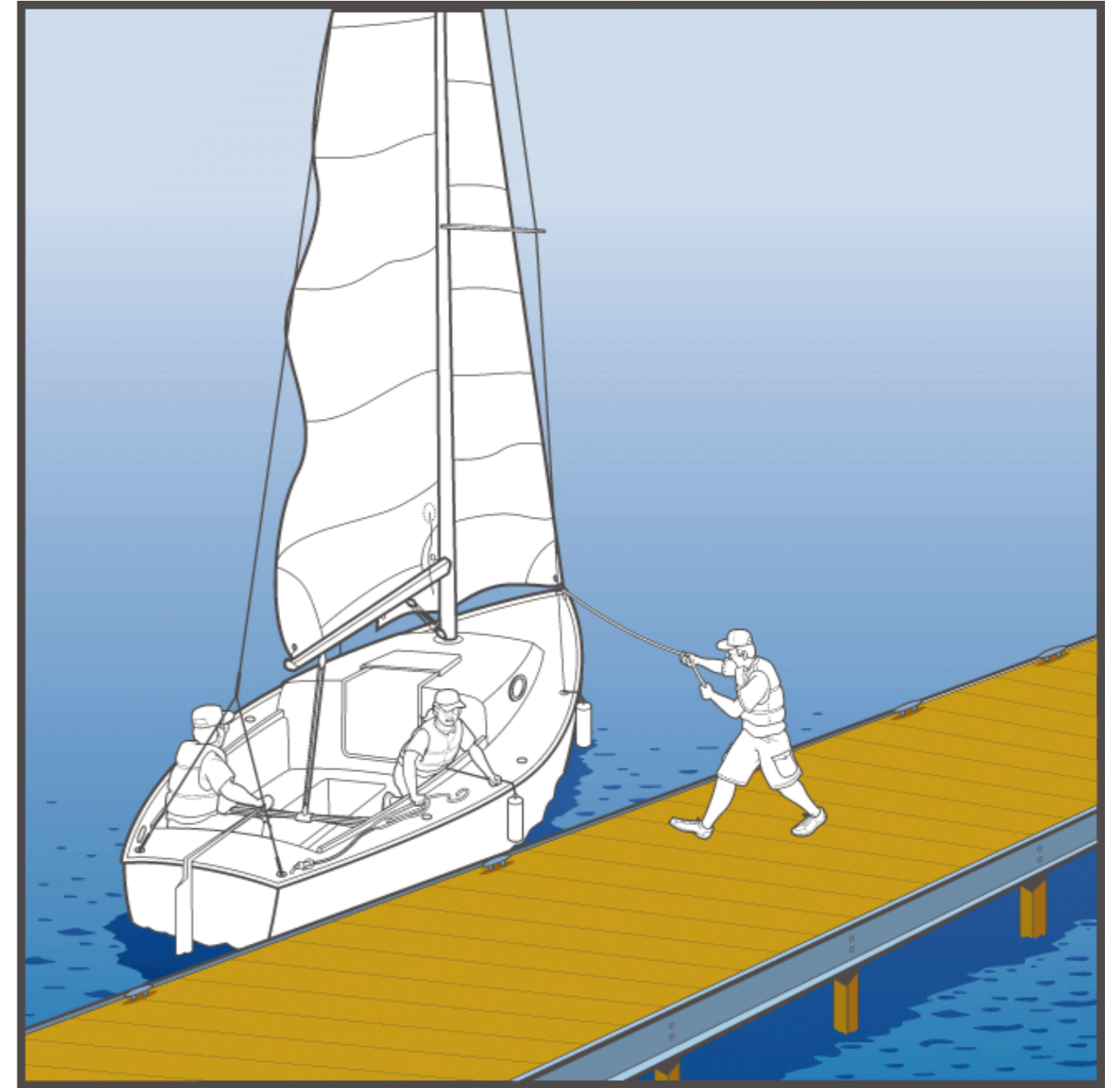
By the end of this unit, you will know:

- Leaving the dock in your sailboat
- The positions and responsibilities of your crew
- Starting and stopping using the wind
- What it means to sail in the groove
- Trimming your sails using telltales
- Step-by-step instructions for tacking and jibing
- How to “heave to”
- And returning and tying up at the dock

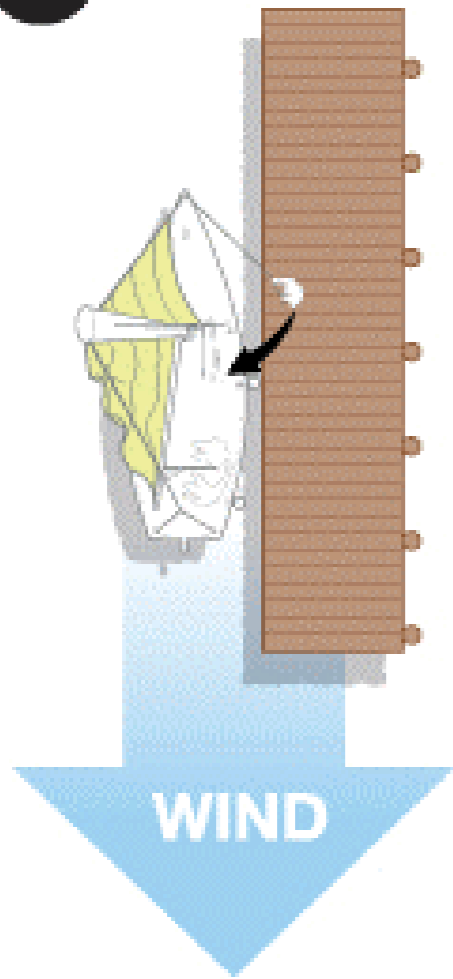


LEAVING THE DOCK

Remember that the safety of your fellow crew should always be your top priority when departing and arriving at the dock. Make sure to do a final check of weather and traffic before shoving off.



1



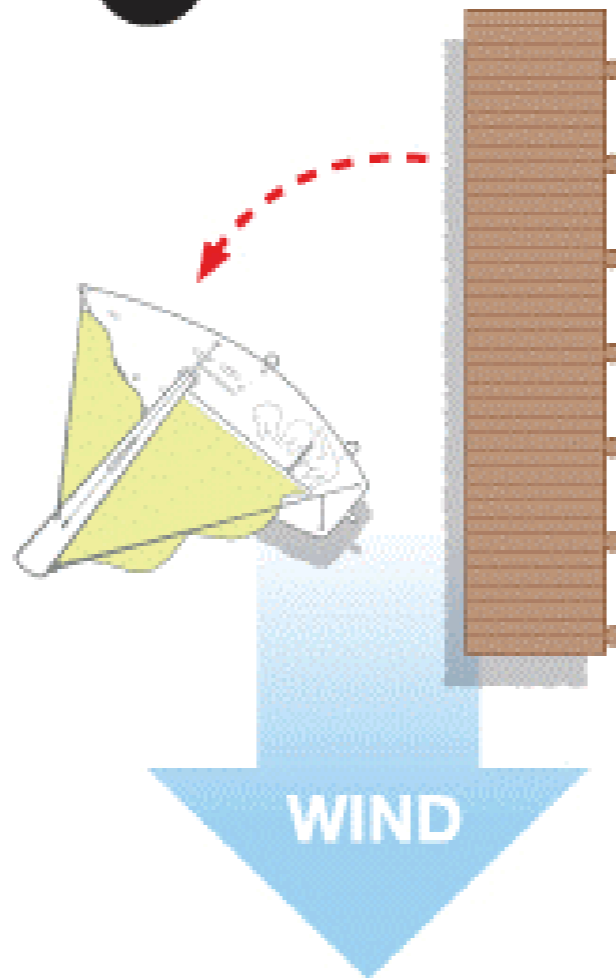
Step 1

The boat is pointed directly into the wind, with the sails luffing. The crew member on the dock releases the bow line and then steps aboard using the shrouds as a handhold while pushing the boat away from the dock.

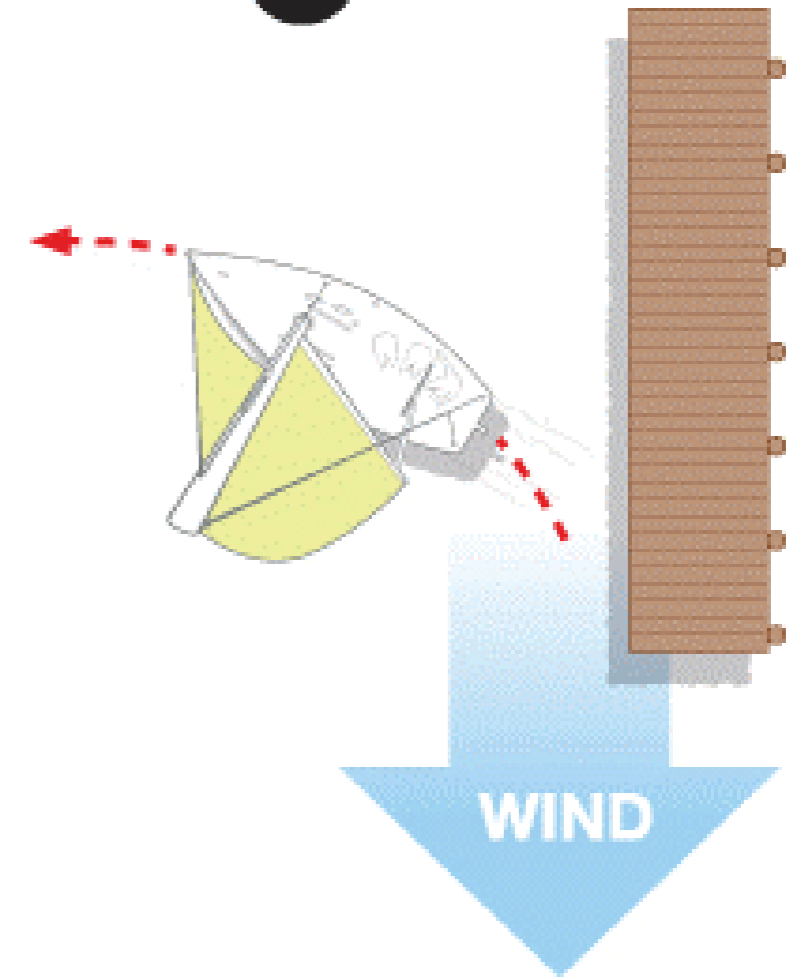
Step 2

The crew sheets in the jib on the dock side until it becomes backwinded. The backwinded jib will then rotate the boat slowly out of the No-Go Zone. The crew member holding the stern line can now unloop the line from the cleat, freeing the boat from the dock.

2



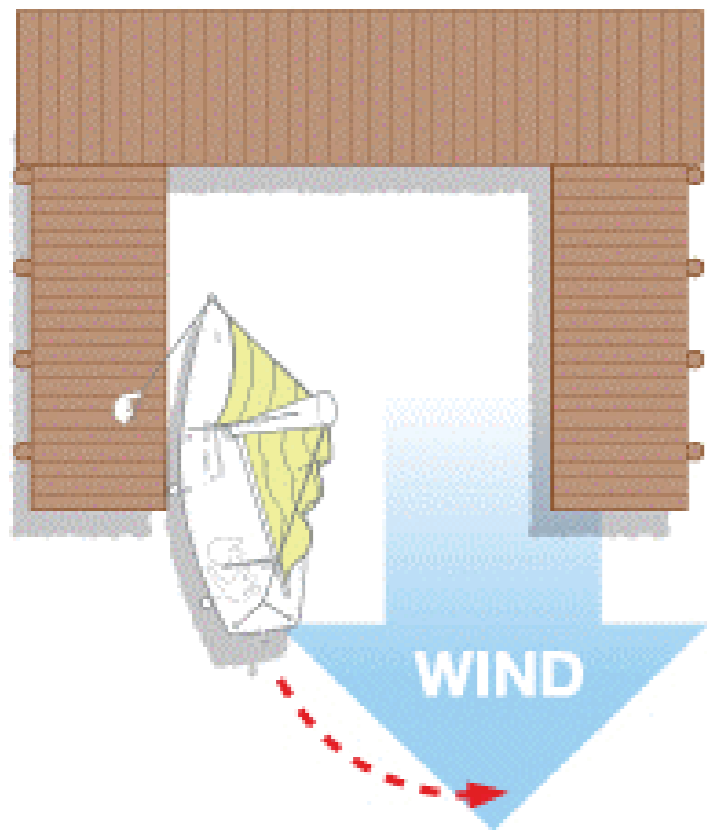
3



Step 3

With the boat safely rotated away from the dock, sheet the jib in on the other side, and trim the mainsail to propel you forward.

1



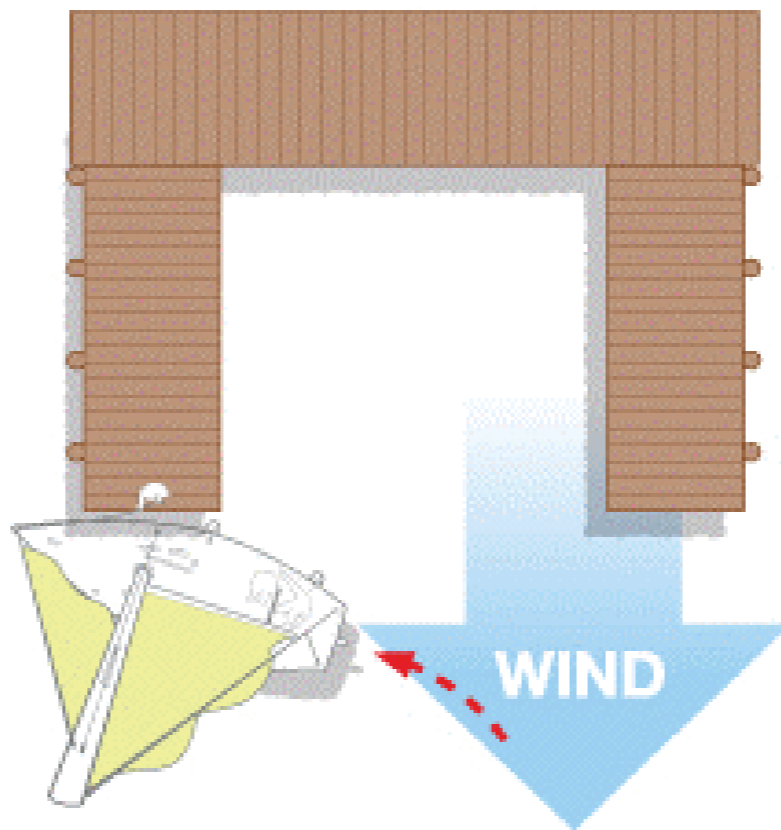
Step 1

The crew on the dock uncleats the docking lines and then carefully guides the boat using the bow line around the edge of the dock.

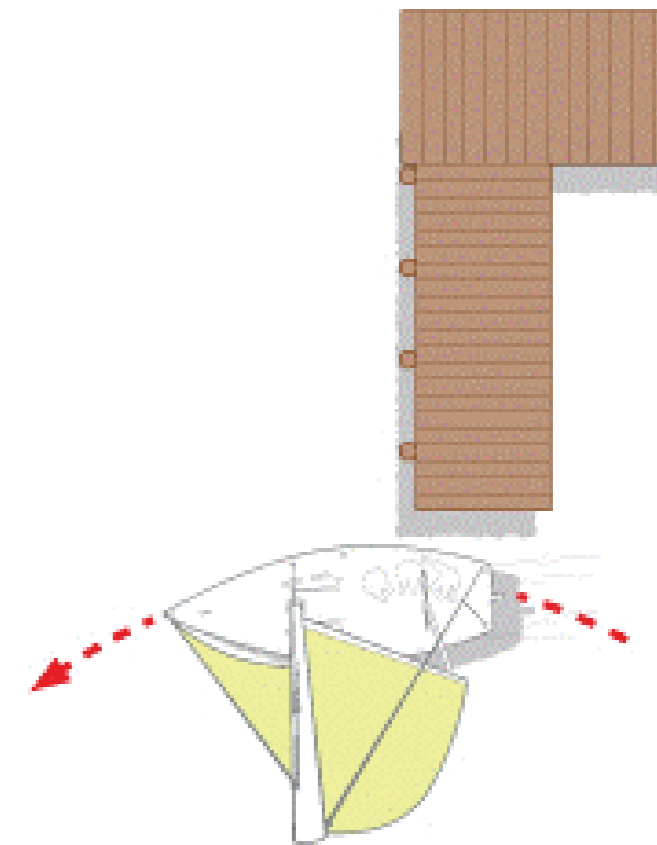
Step 2

With the bow maneuvered past the end of the dock, the crew guides the boat alongside the dock towards the open sailing area. The crew then pushes off from the dock and steps on the boat holding onto the shrouds

2



3

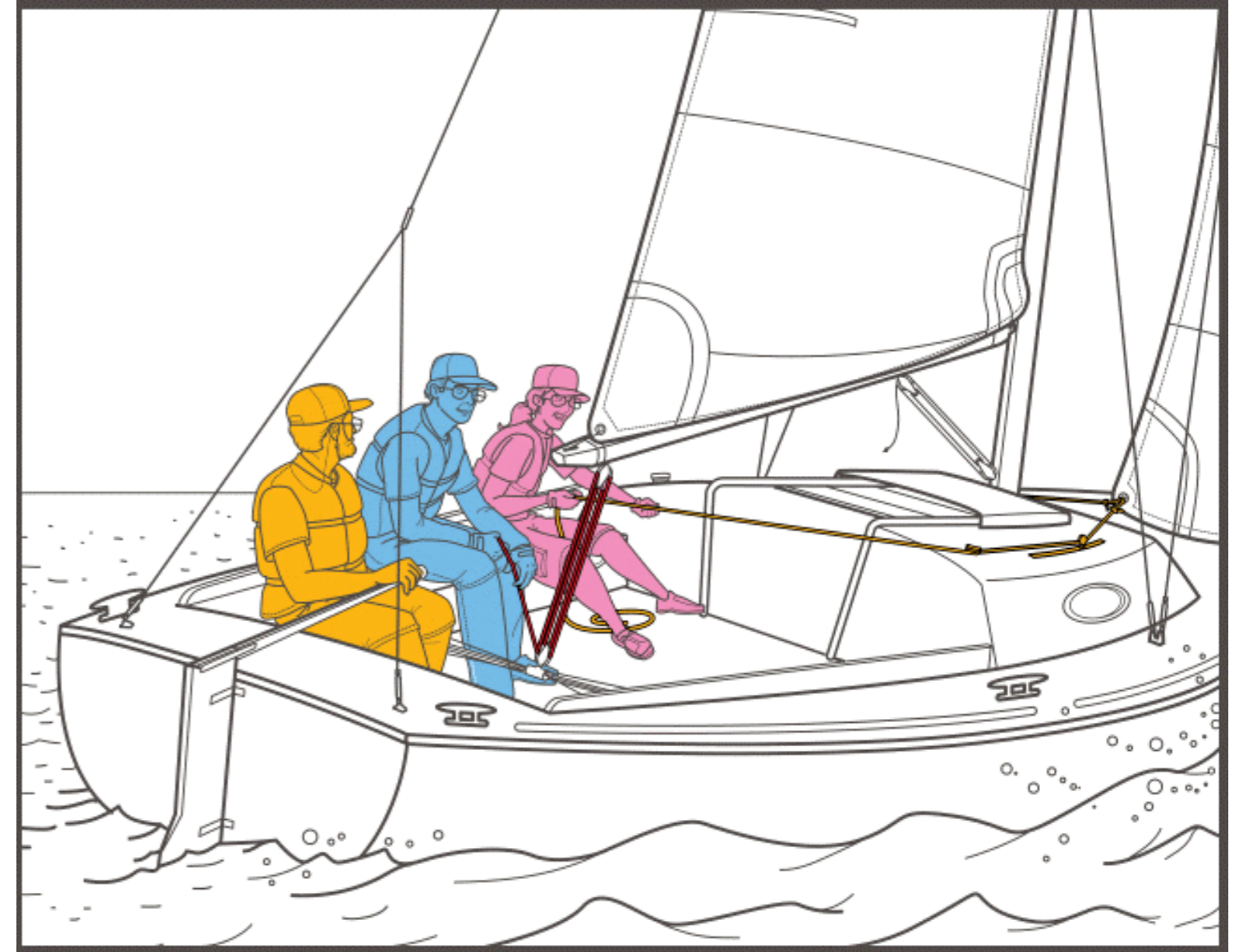


Step 3

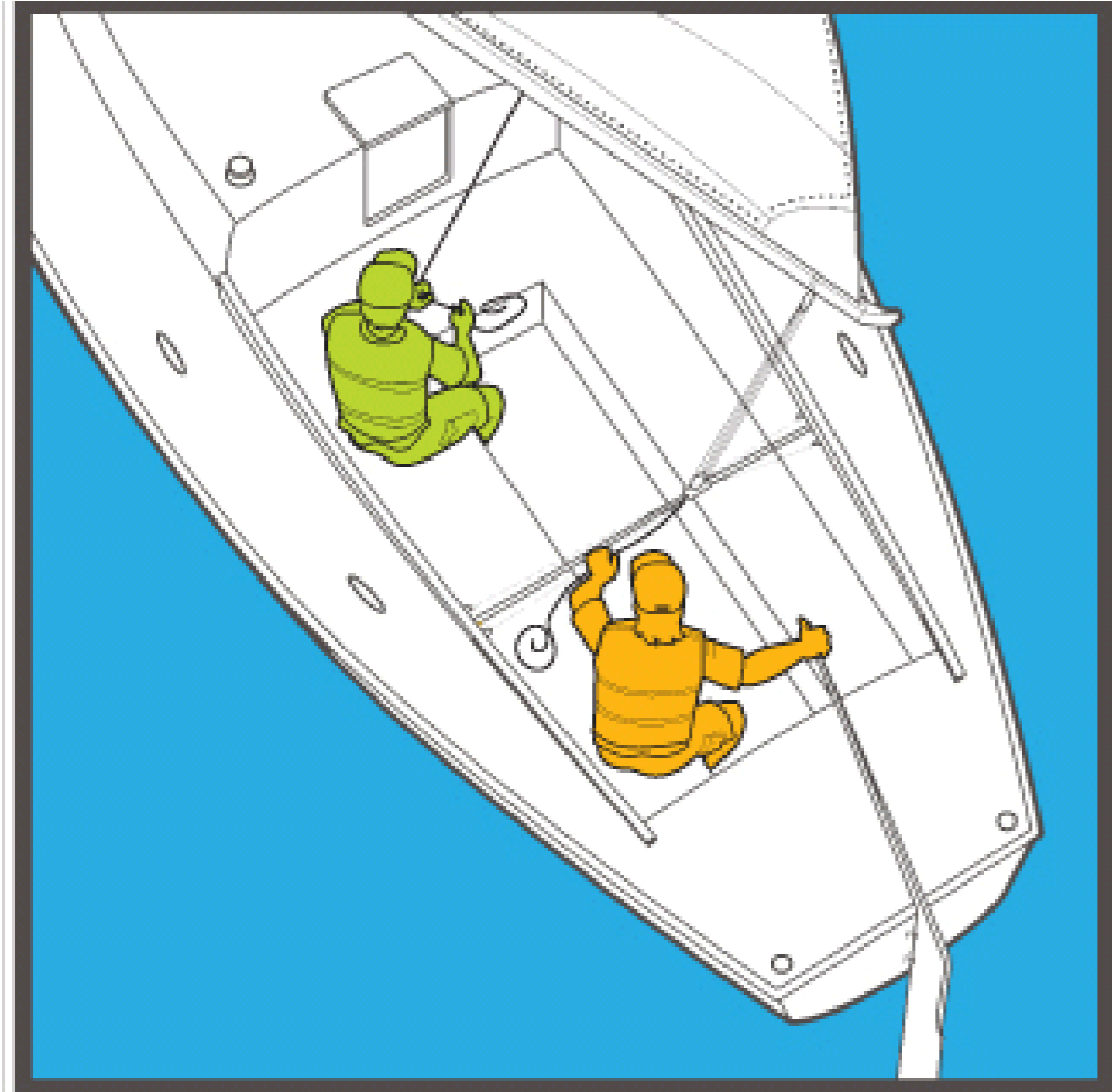
The crew sheets in the sails and the boat is propelled forward and is off for a great day of sailing.

CREW POSITION

Note how everyone is positioned on the windward (high) side of the boat. This helps balance the boat as the wind pushes against the sails.



CREW RESPONSIBILITIES



Helmsman Responsibilities

The helmsman steers the boat while sitting just forward of the tiller, holding the tiller with the hand farthest aft (towards the stern of the boat).

On a two-person boat, he or she is also responsible for trimming the mainsail, and will hold the tiller in one hand and the mainsheet in the other.

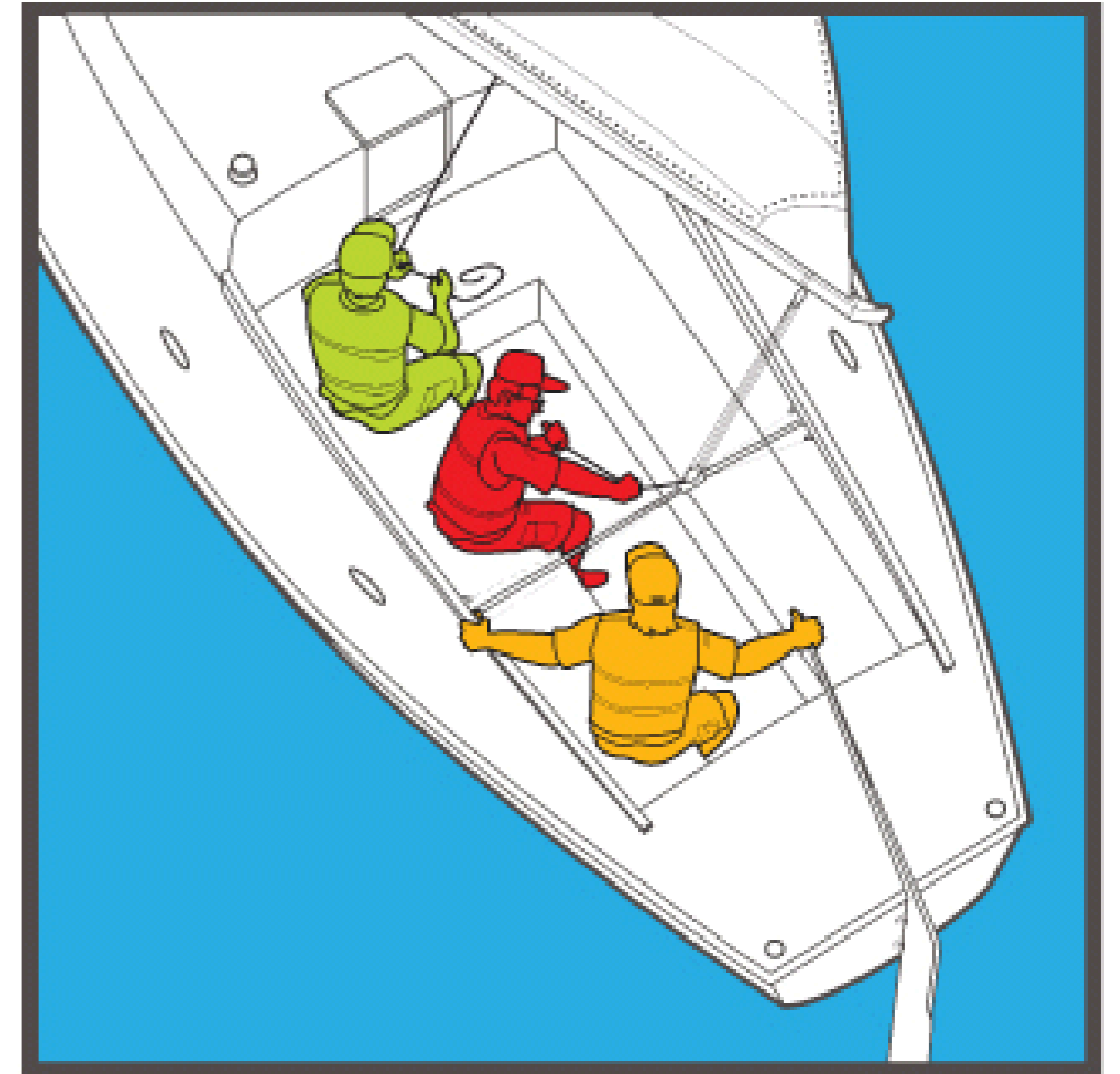
On a three-person boat, the middle crew usually handles trimming the mainsail.

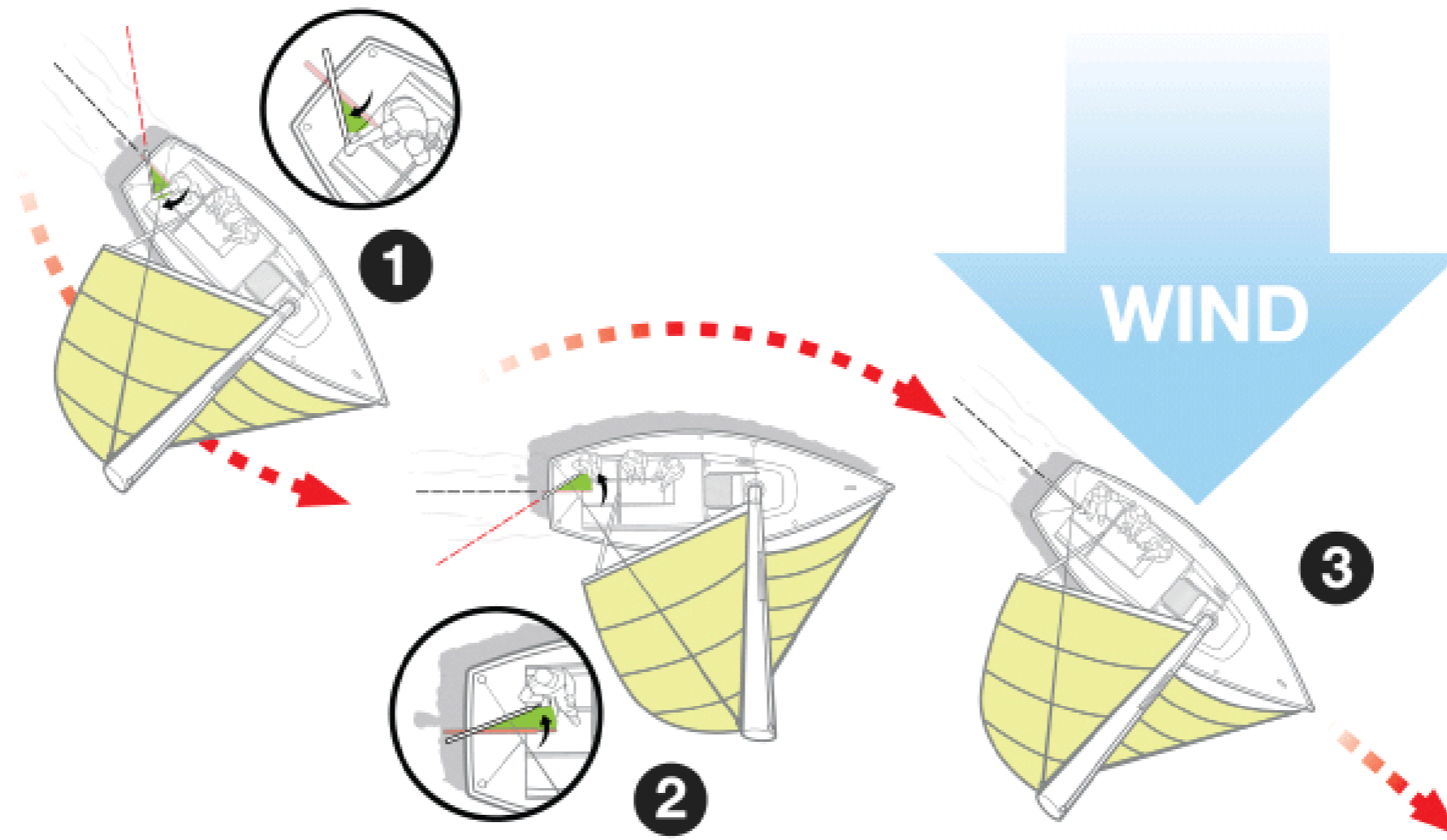
CREW RESPONSIBILITIES

Crew Responsibilities

The crew are in charge of trimming and easing the sails and helping to balance the boat.

During a tack, the crew crosses the cockpit before the helmsman, ducking under the boom and helping shift weight to the new windward side of the boat.





Remember: You push or pull the tiller away from where you want to go.

Left Turn: The helmsman pushes the tiller to starboard and the boat turns to port.

Right Turn: The helmsman pulls the tiller to port and the boat turns to starboard.

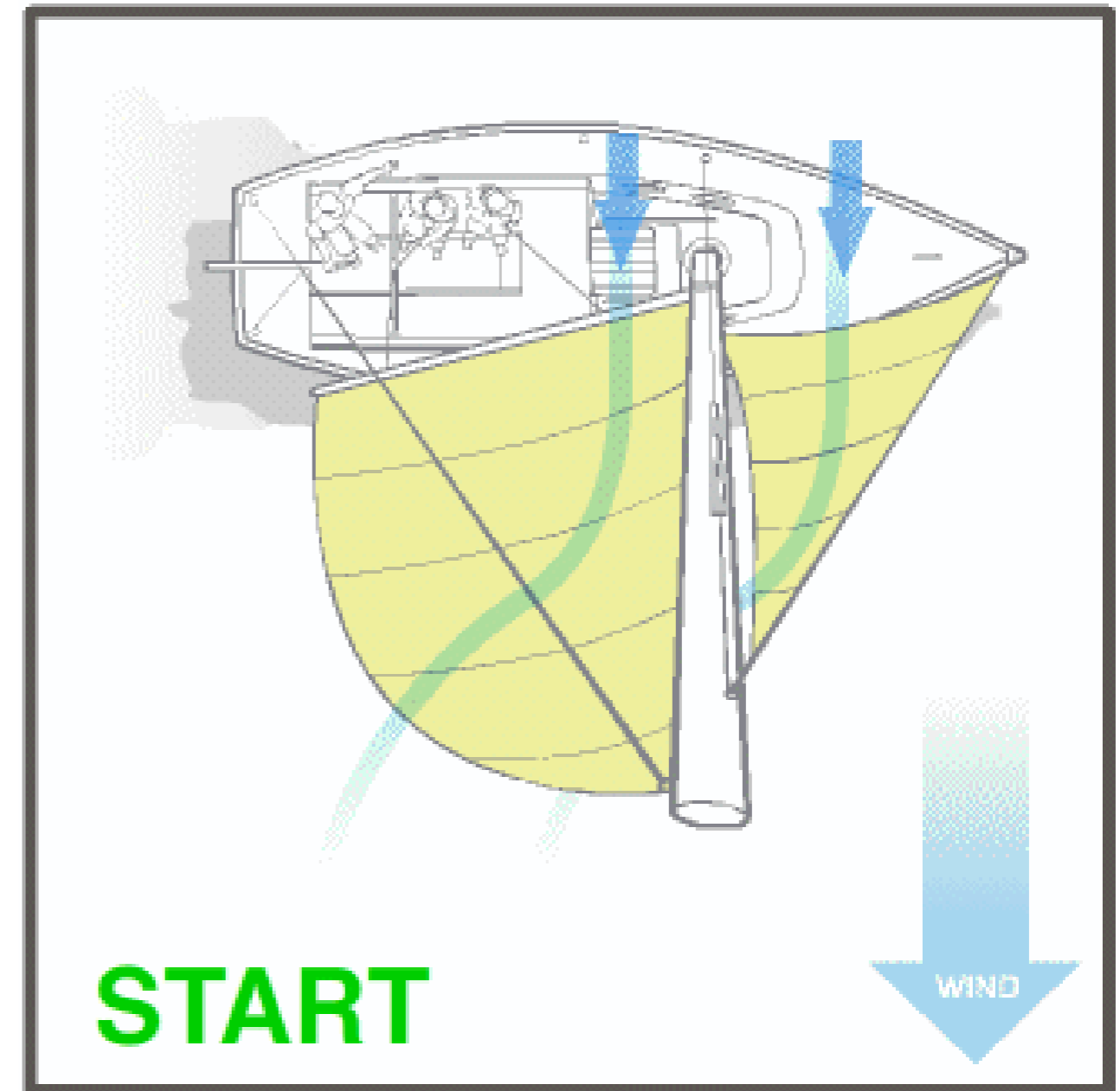
Straight Ahead: The helmsman centers the tiller and the boat sails a straight course.

STARTING AND STOPPING

You can start or stop your sailboat simply by sheeting in or easing out your sails.

Sheet in your sails and you start to move.

Ease your sails out all the way until they are luffing and you will coast to stop.

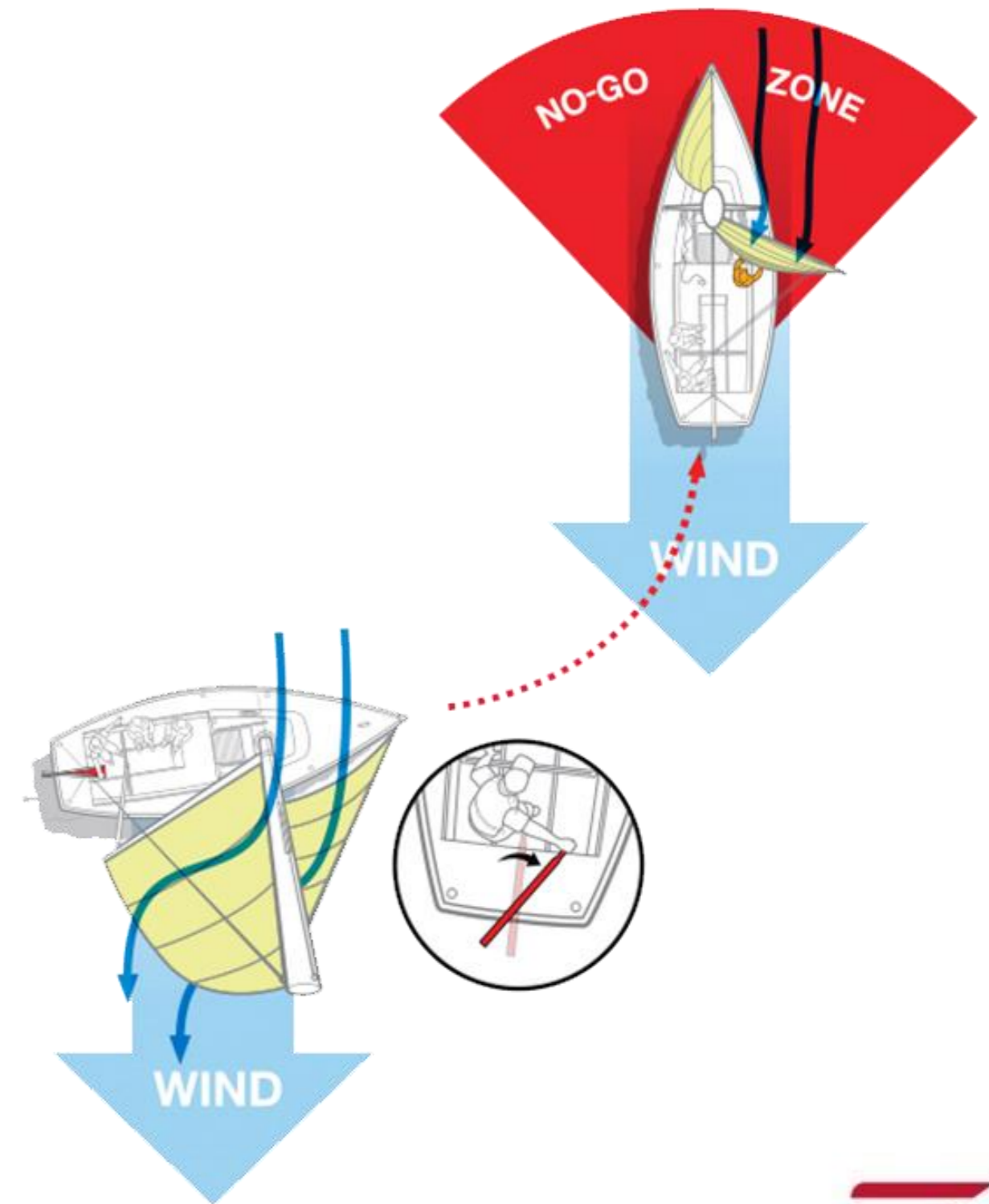


STOPPING USING THE NO-GO ZONE

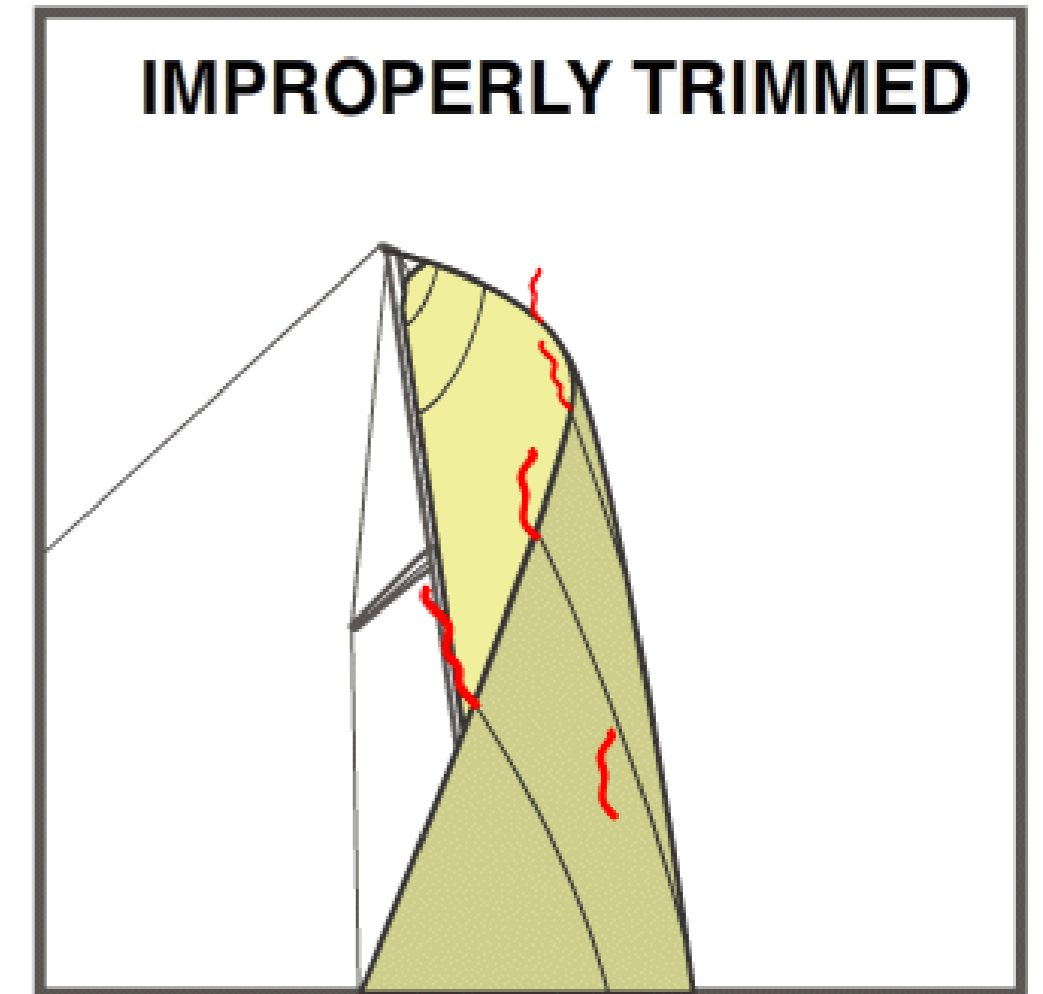
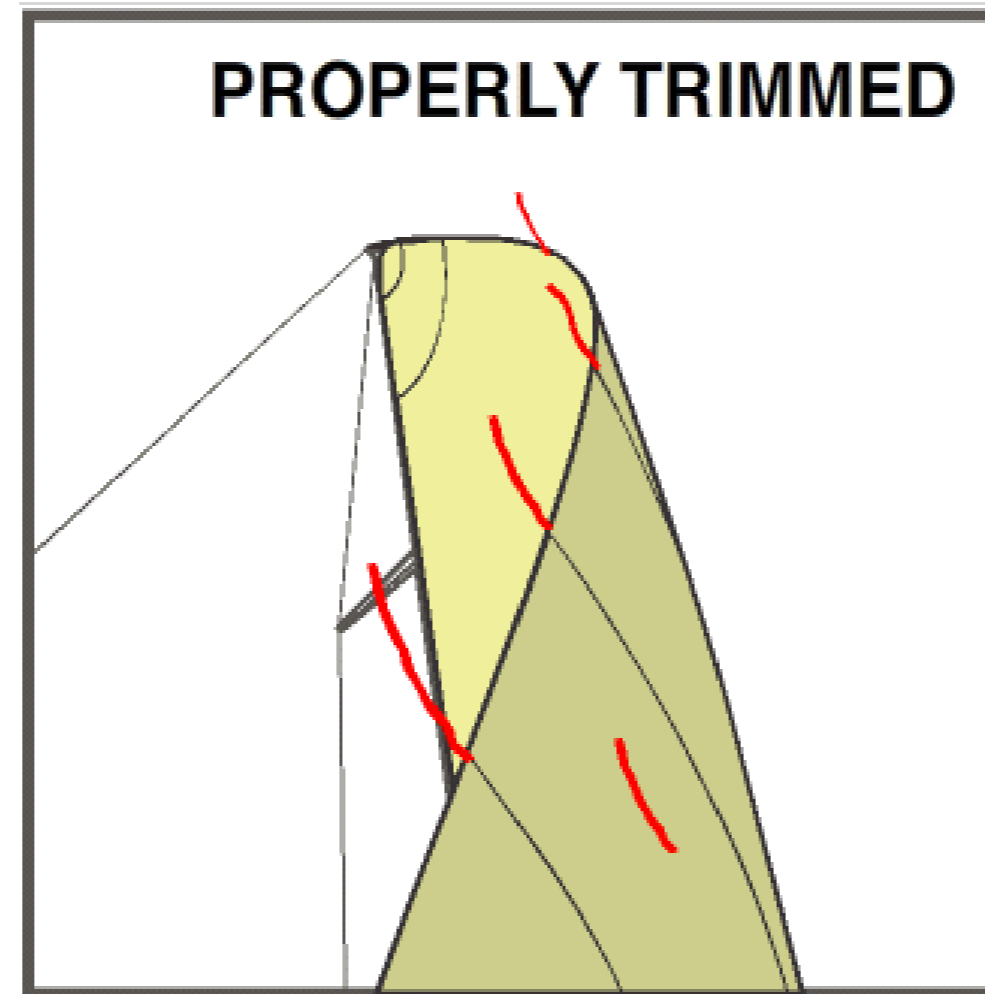
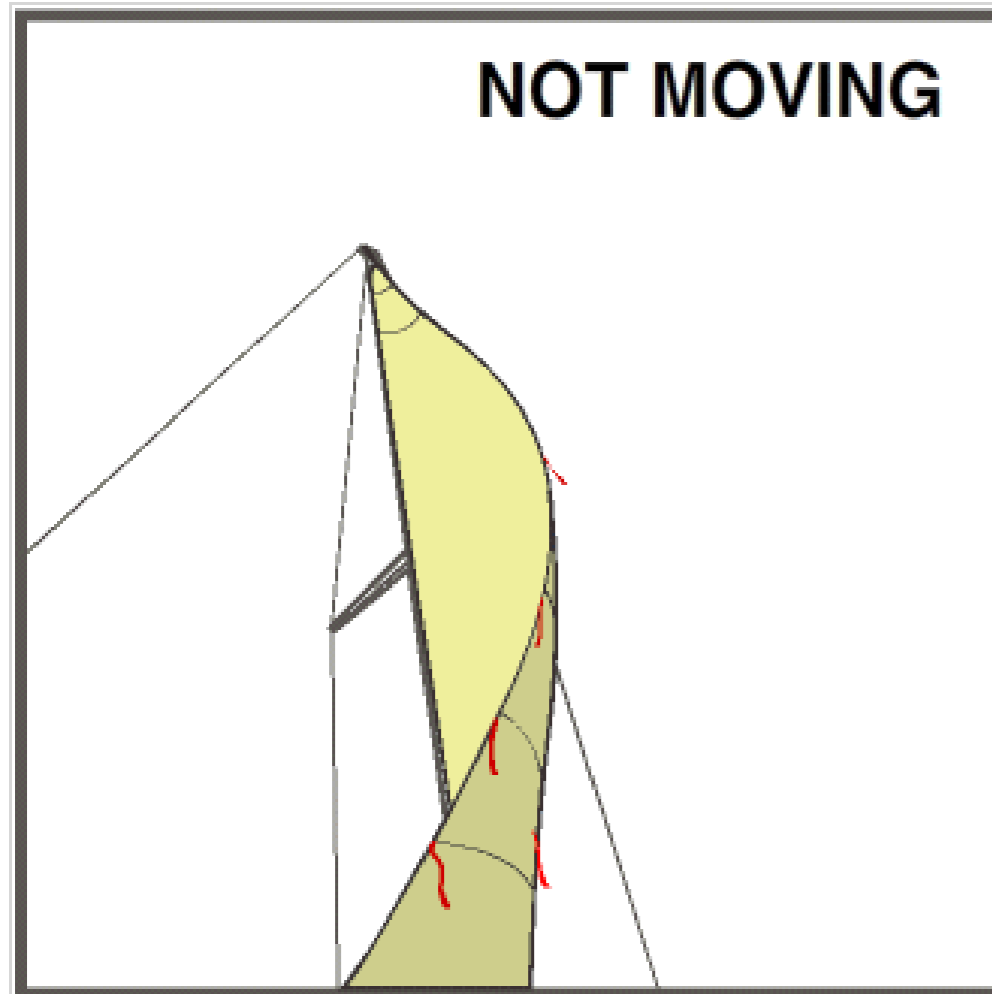
Another way to bring your sailboat to a stop is to head up into the No-Go Zone.

Push the tiller to the boom, steering to port and heading up directly into the wind. The sails luff and the boat starts to slow down.

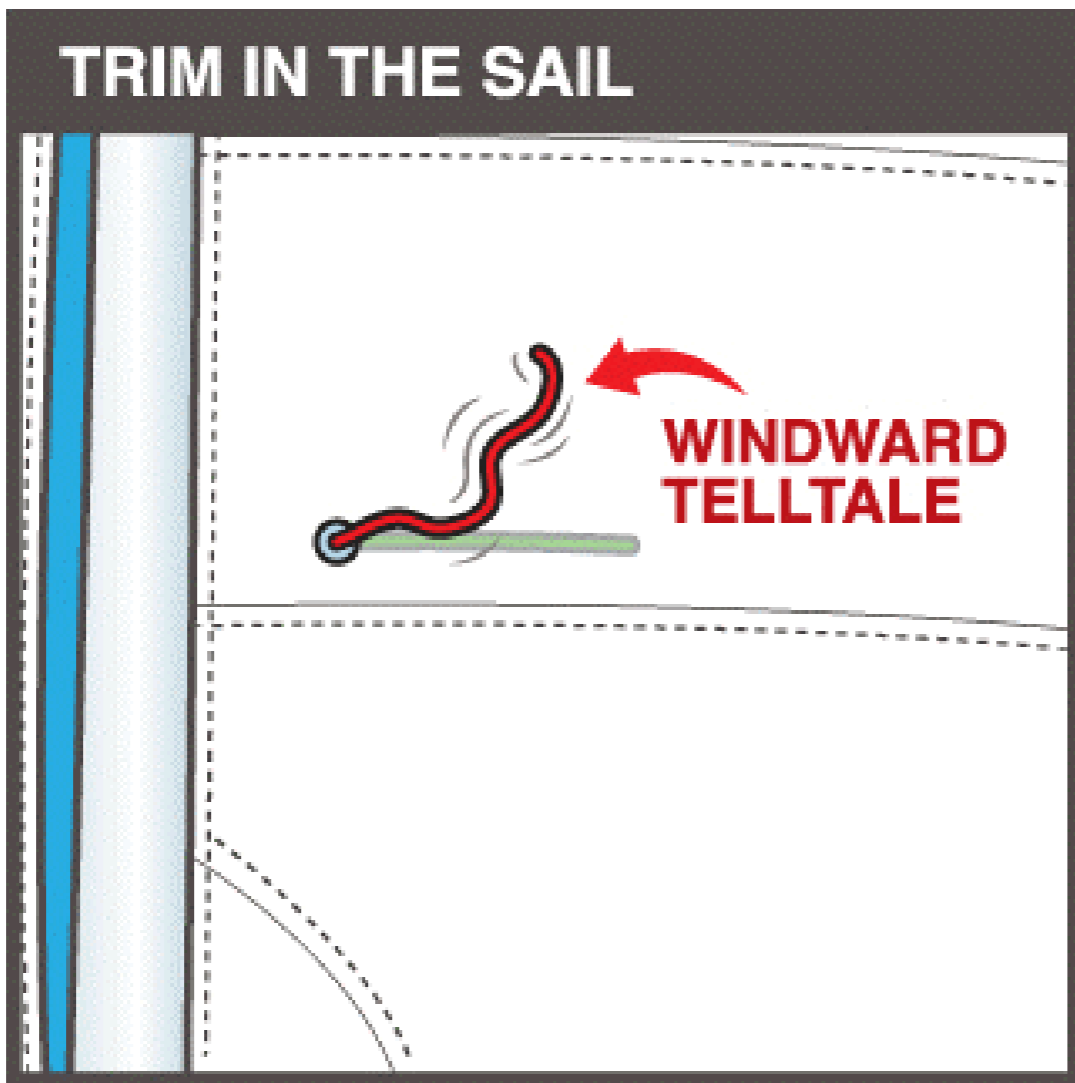
To stop the boat more quickly, a crew member backs (pushes) the mainsail against the wind.



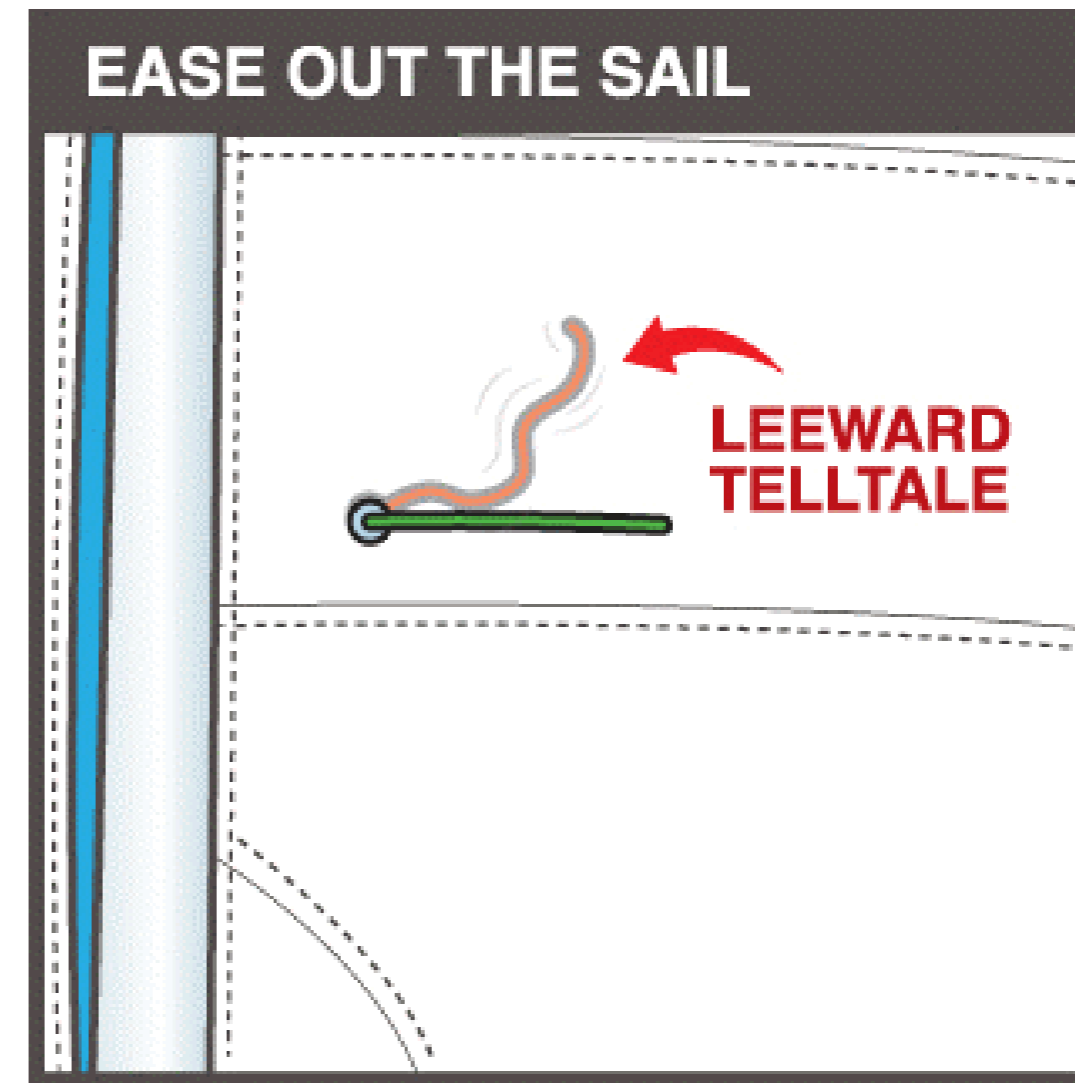
TRIMMING THE SAILS USING TELLTALES



Telltales are pieces of fabric attached to either side of the sail that help you determine whether you have your sails trimmed too loose, too tight or just right.



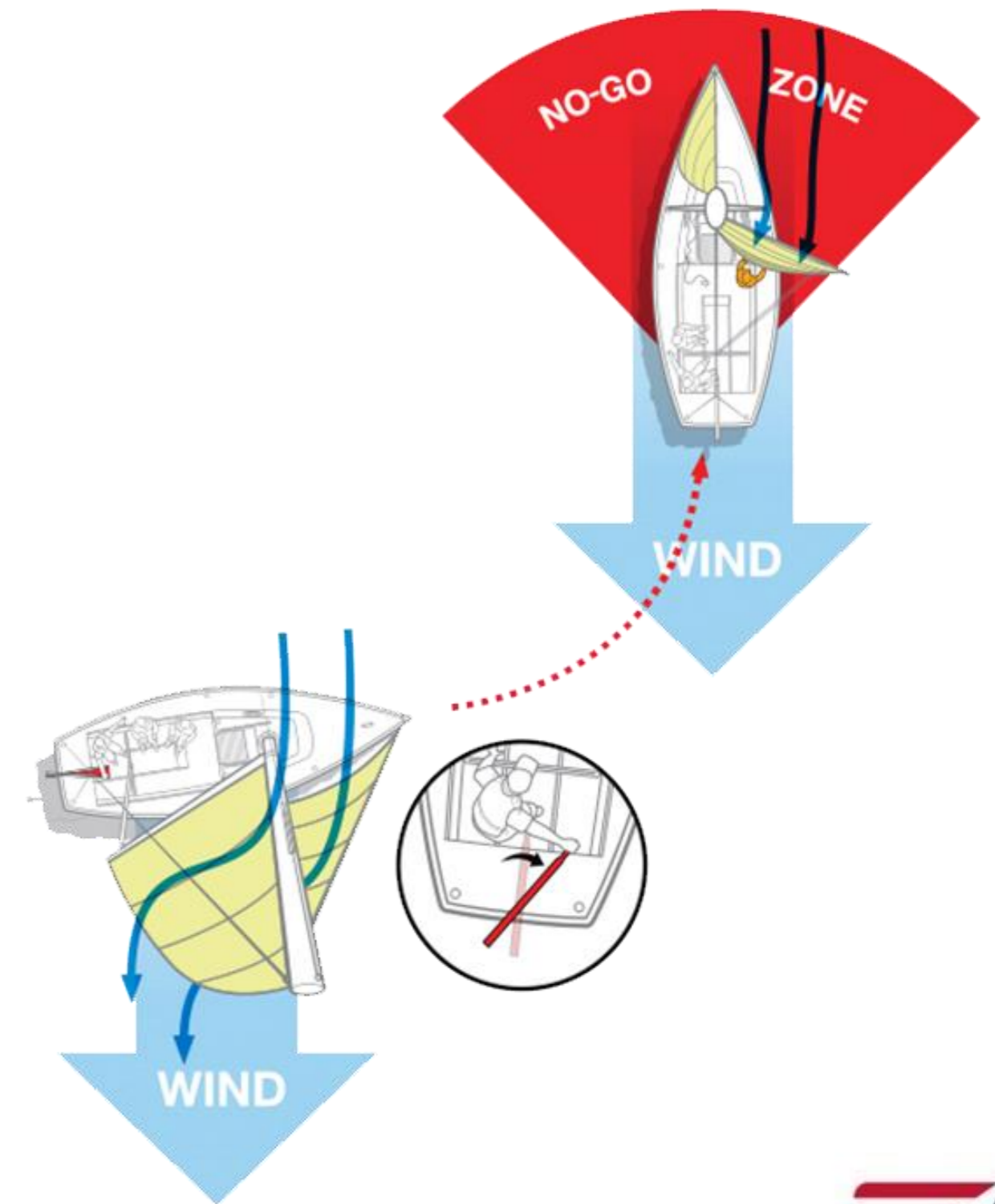
If the windward telltale – the telltale closest to the wind – is not flowing, trim in the sail.



If the leeward telltale – the telltale away from the wind – is not flowing, ease out the sail.

SAILING IN THE GROOVE

The **groove** is an invisible angle for making your best progress upwind. It's an angle that is always changing with the wind, waves and your boat.



Too high

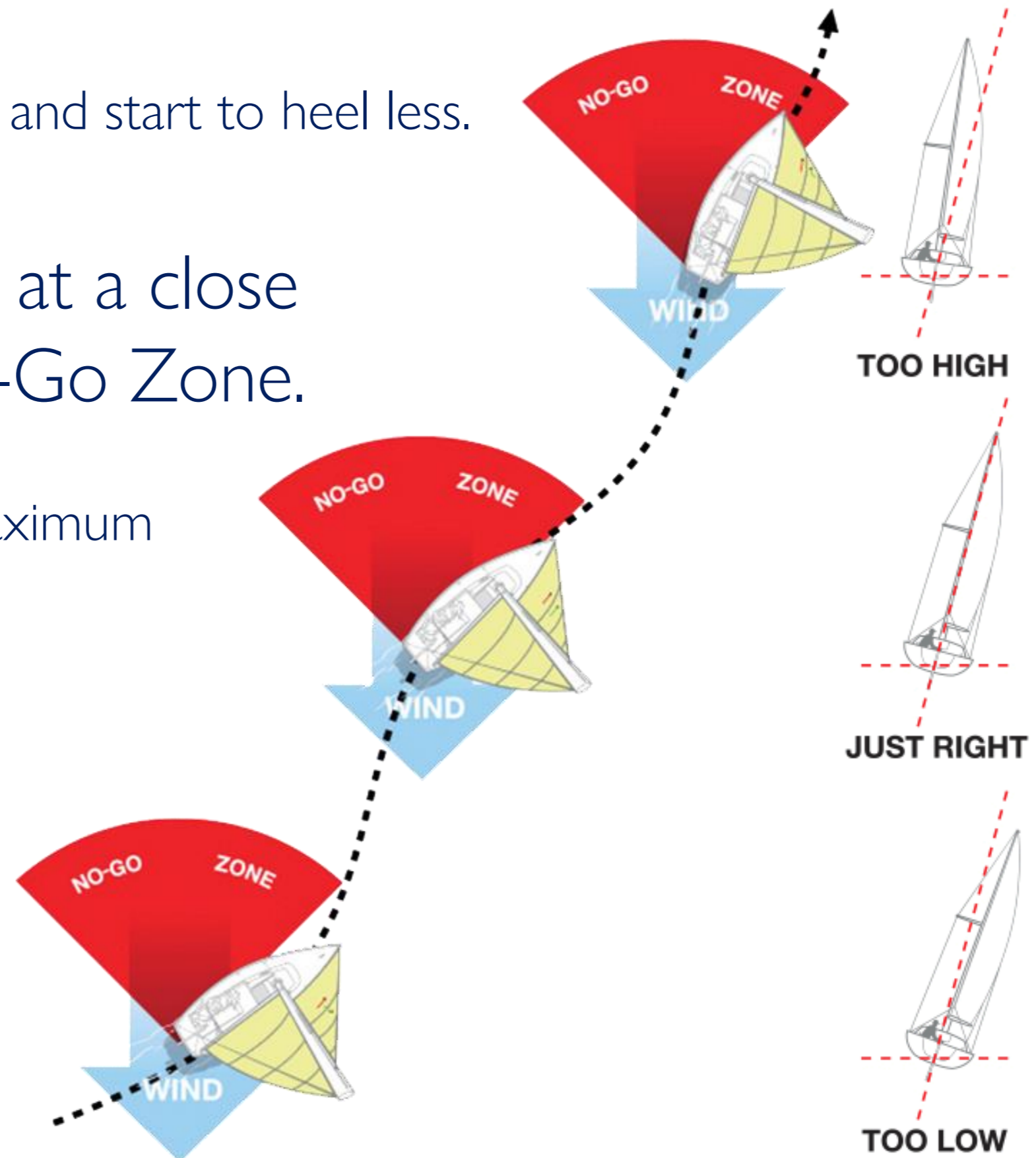
Your boat will lose power to the sails and start to heel less. The windward telltale will also flutter.

To find the groove, you need to sail at a close angle to the wind, almost in the No-Go Zone.

Just right Your sails will be working their maximum upwind efficiency.

Too low

Your boat will still have power to the sails, but your windward efficiency will be reduced.



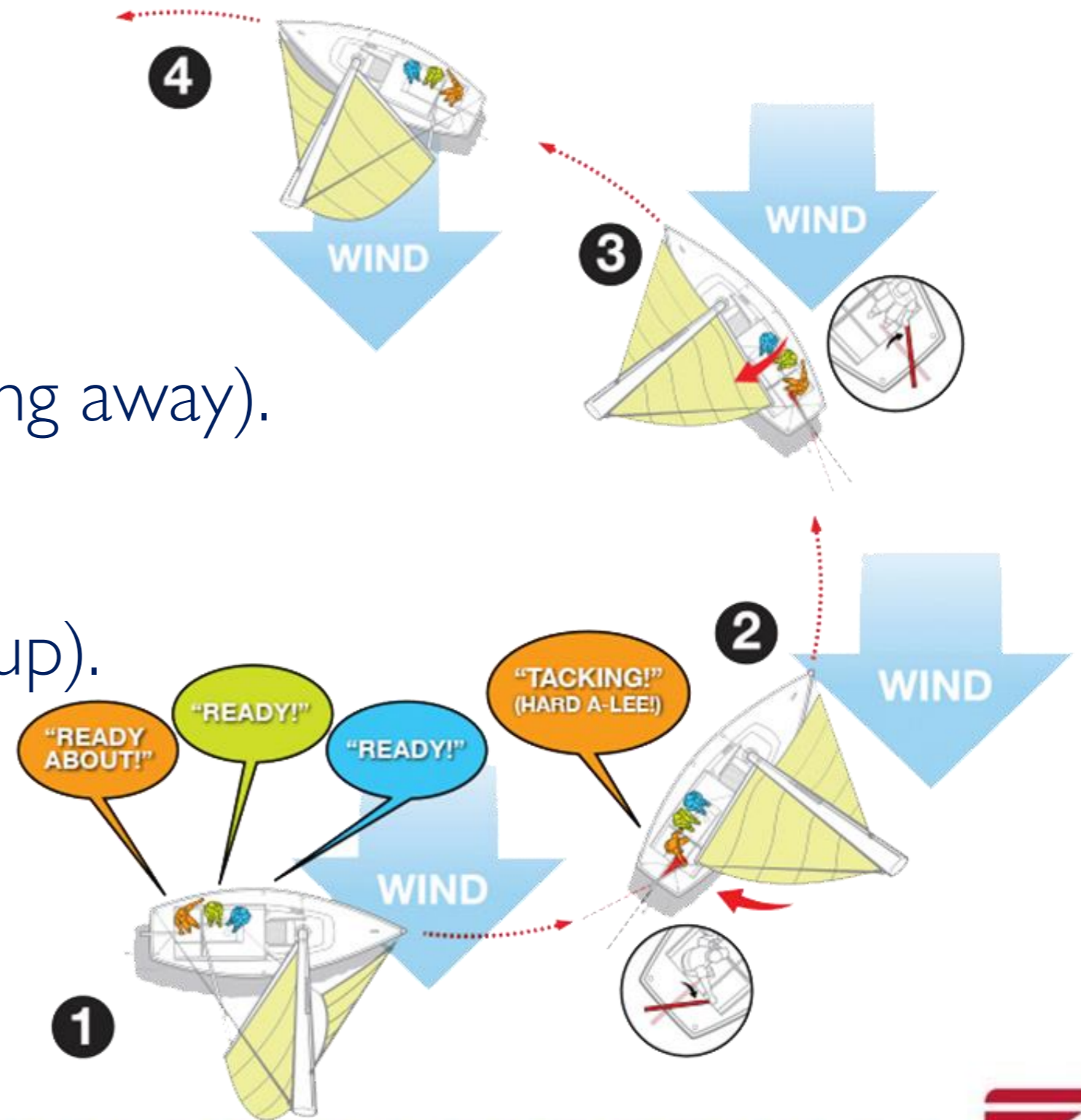
TACKING STEP-BY-STEP

STEP 4: Completing the tack.

STEP 3: Turning away from the wind (bearing away).

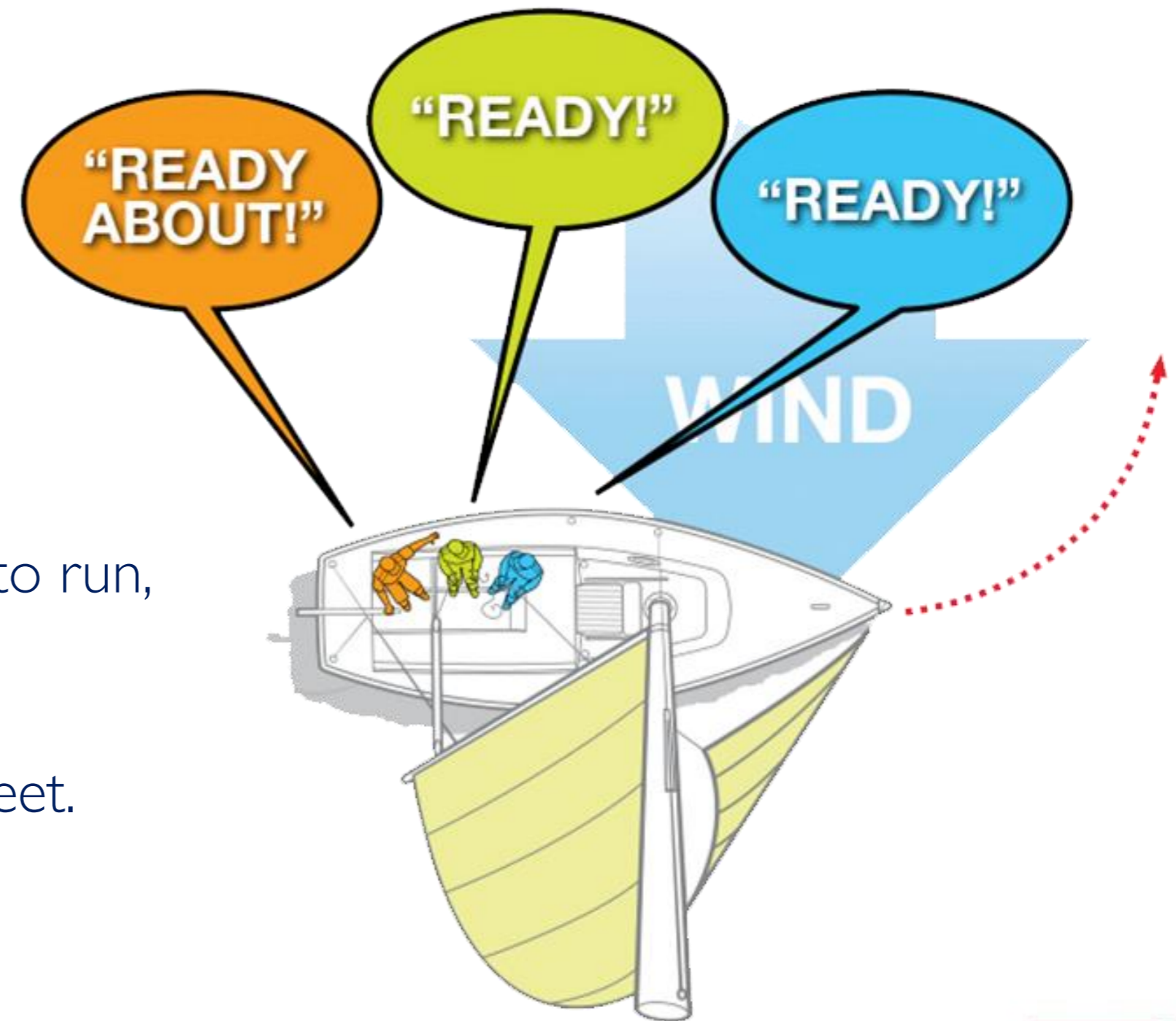
STEP 2: Turning toward the wind (heading up).

STEP 1: Getting ready to tack.



TACKING STEP I: GETTING READY TO TACK

1. Helmsman picks a reference point to steer to and makes sure the course is clear.
2. When ready, the helmsman calls out to the crew, *“Ready about!”*
3. Before responding, the crew
 - a. checks the jib sheets to make sure they are clear to run,
 - b. uncleats and holds the working jib sheet, and
 - c. prepares to sheet in the lazy (non-working) jib sheet.
4. The crew then responds *“Ready!”*



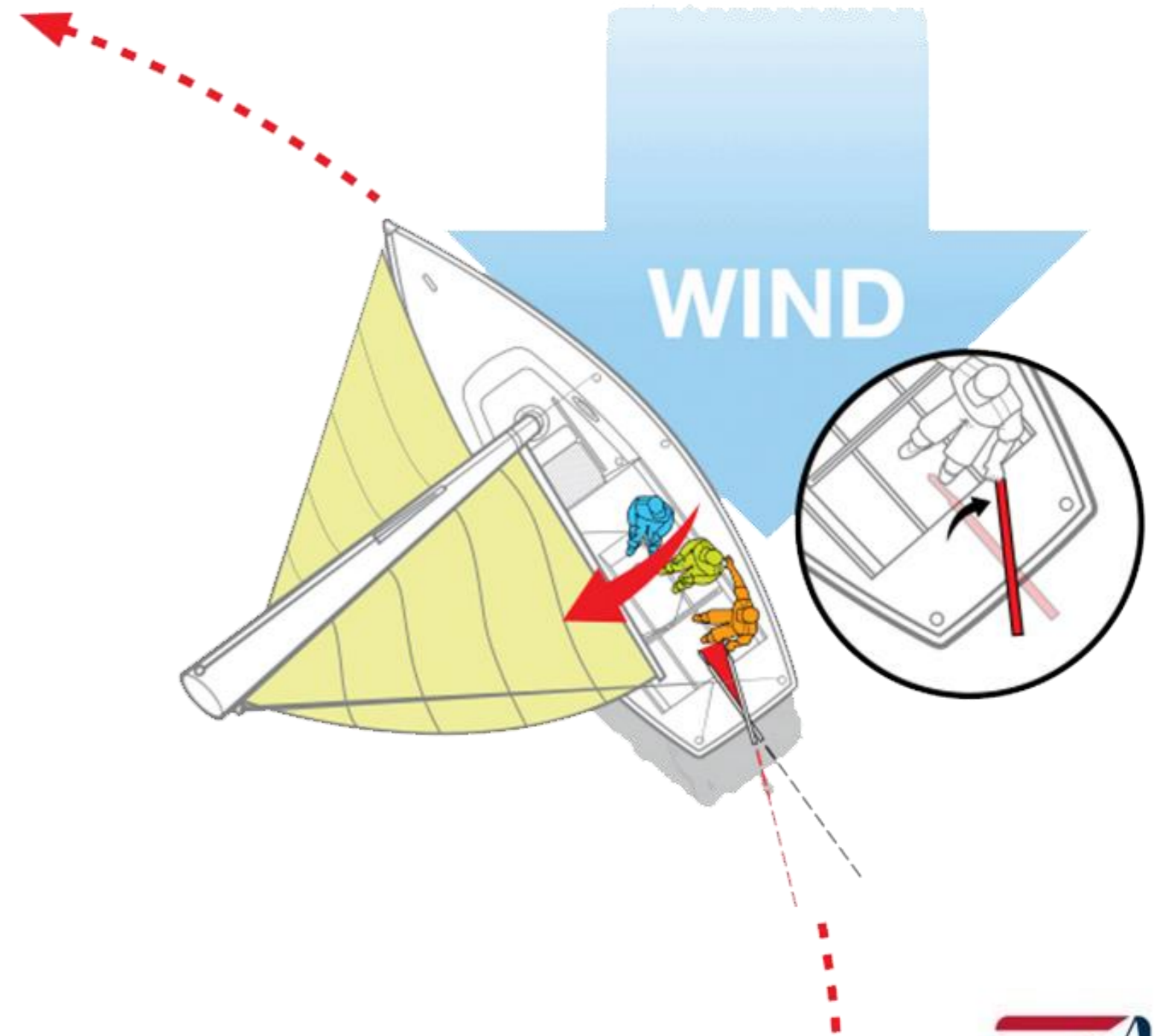
TACKING STEP 2: TURN TOWARD THE WIND (HEADING UP)

1. After hearing the crew is ready, the helmsman calls out, “Tacking!” to announce the beginning of the tack.
2. The helmsman then moves the tiller toward the boom, which steers the boat toward the wind.
3. As the boat turns in to the wind, entering the No-Go Zone, the sails begin to luff.
4. As the forward edge of the jib begins to luff, the crew releases the working jib sheet allowing the jib to cross over to the other side of the boat.

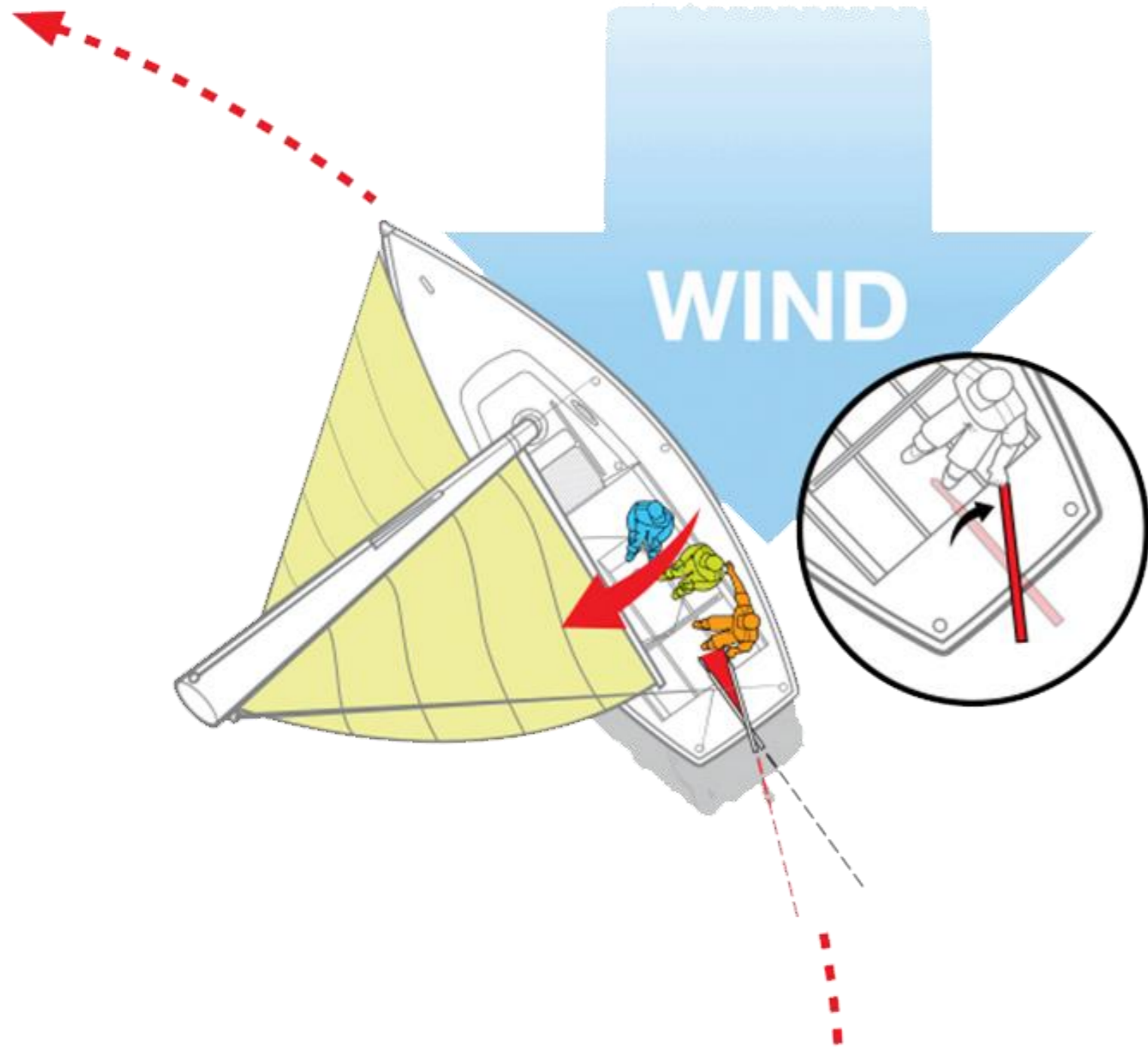


TACKING STEP 3: TURNING AWAY FROM THE WIND (BEARING AWAY)

1. The helmsman continues his or her course, steering the boat through the No-Go Zone.
2. As the boat crosses to the other side of the wind, the jib will blow across the bow. The crew crosses the boat (passing under the boom) and sheets in the lazy jib sheet, which is now the working jib sheet.



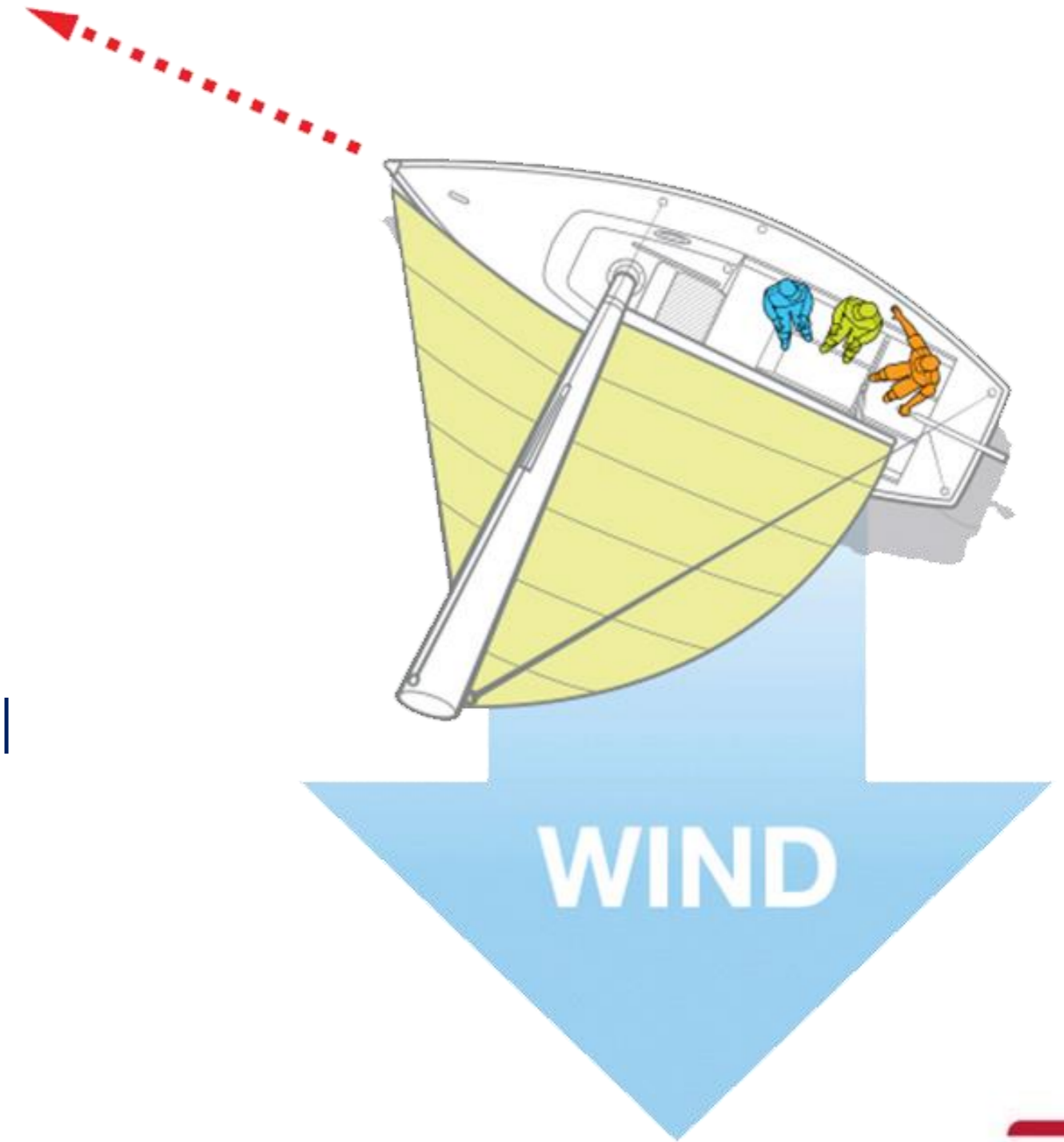
TACKING STEP 3: TURNING AWAY FROM THE WIND (BEARING AWAY)



3. Next, the mainsail crosses the cockpit, and the helmsman crosses the boat with the mainsail. In our example, the wind is now blowing over the starboard side of the boat, and the crew and helmsman have all crossed the boat to sit on the starboard side.
4. With the wind and crew all on the opposite side of the boat, most of the work of tacking is done. Time to complete the tack.

TACKING STEP 4: COMPLETING THE TACK

1. Once through the No-Go Zone, the helmsman centers the tiller to stop the turn.
2. The helmsman can now steer to the reference point picked out at the start of the tack.
3. The crew adjusts the trim of the jib and mainsail for the new direction and coils the jib sheets so that they are ready for the next tack.



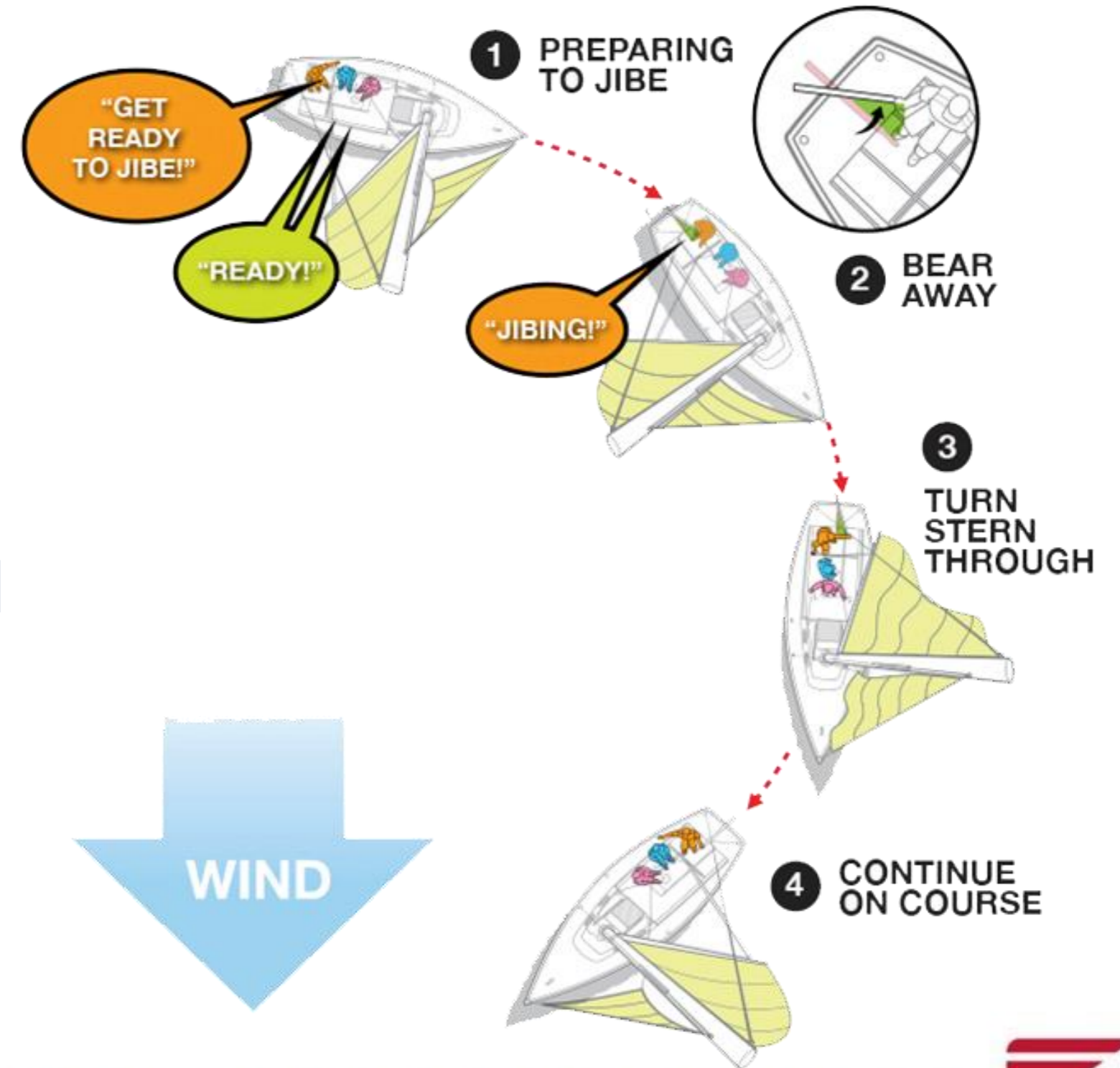
JIBING STEP-BY-STEP

STEP 1: Preparing to Jibe

STEP 2: Bearing Away

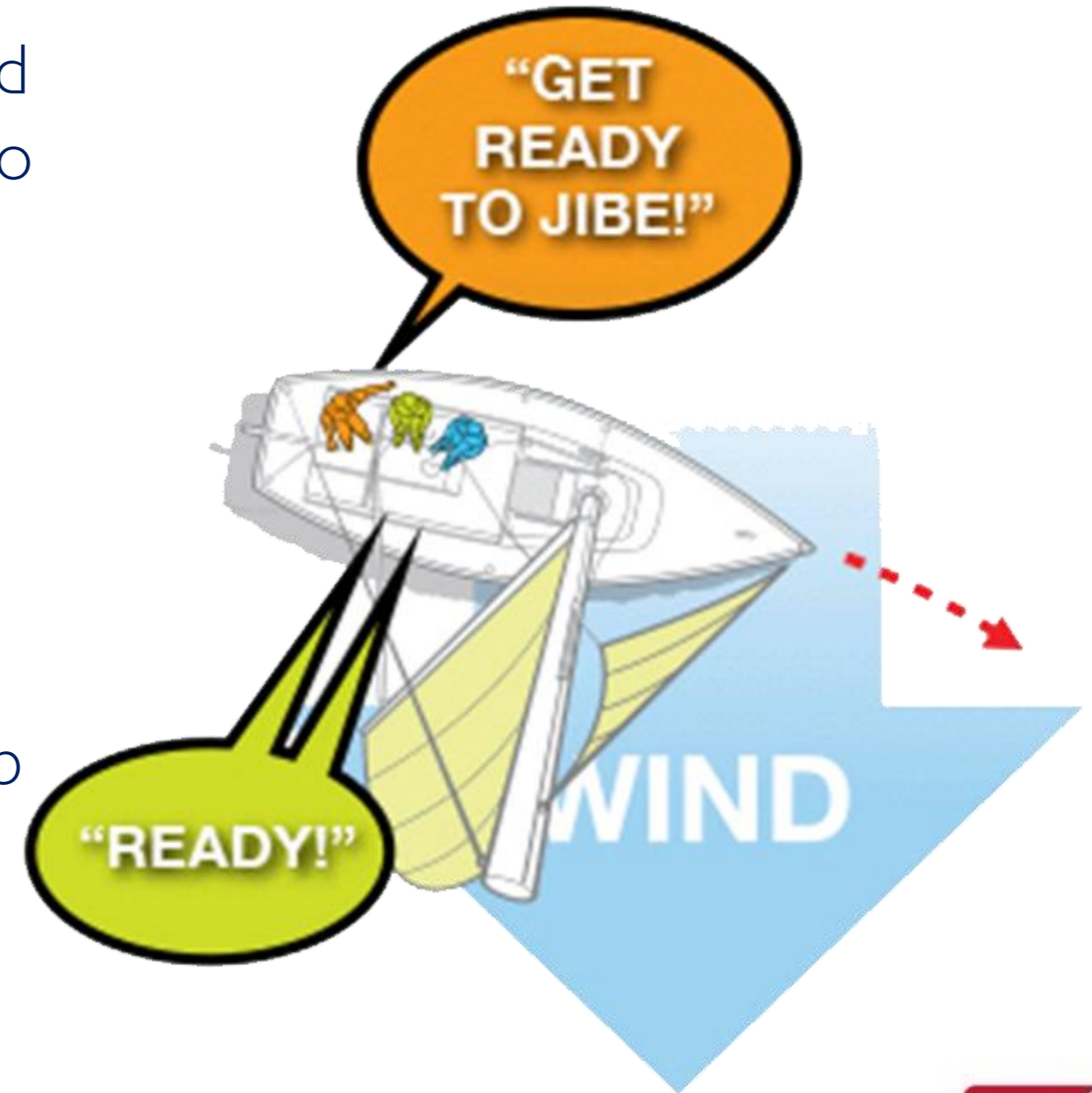
STEP 3: Turning the Stern through the Wind

STEP 4: Completing the Jibe



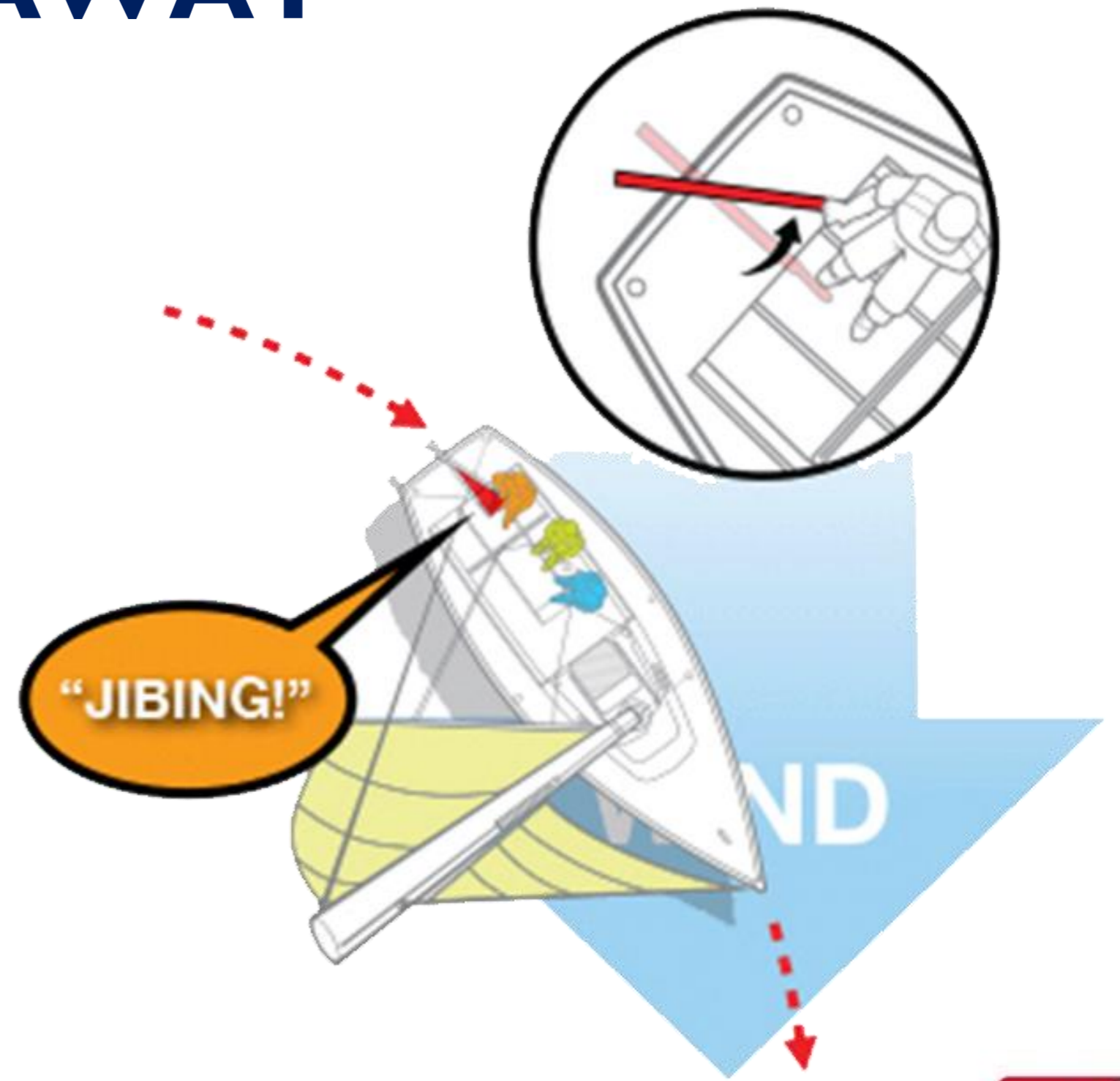
JIBING STEP I: PREPARING TO JIBE

1. To get ready to jibe, the helmsman checks the wind direction and chooses a reference point at which to steer after completion of the jibe.
2. The helmsman then calls out “*Get ready to jibe!*”
3. Before responding, the crew checks the sheets to make sure they are clear to run and uncleats the jib sheet and mainsheet.
4. The crew then responds “*Ready!*”

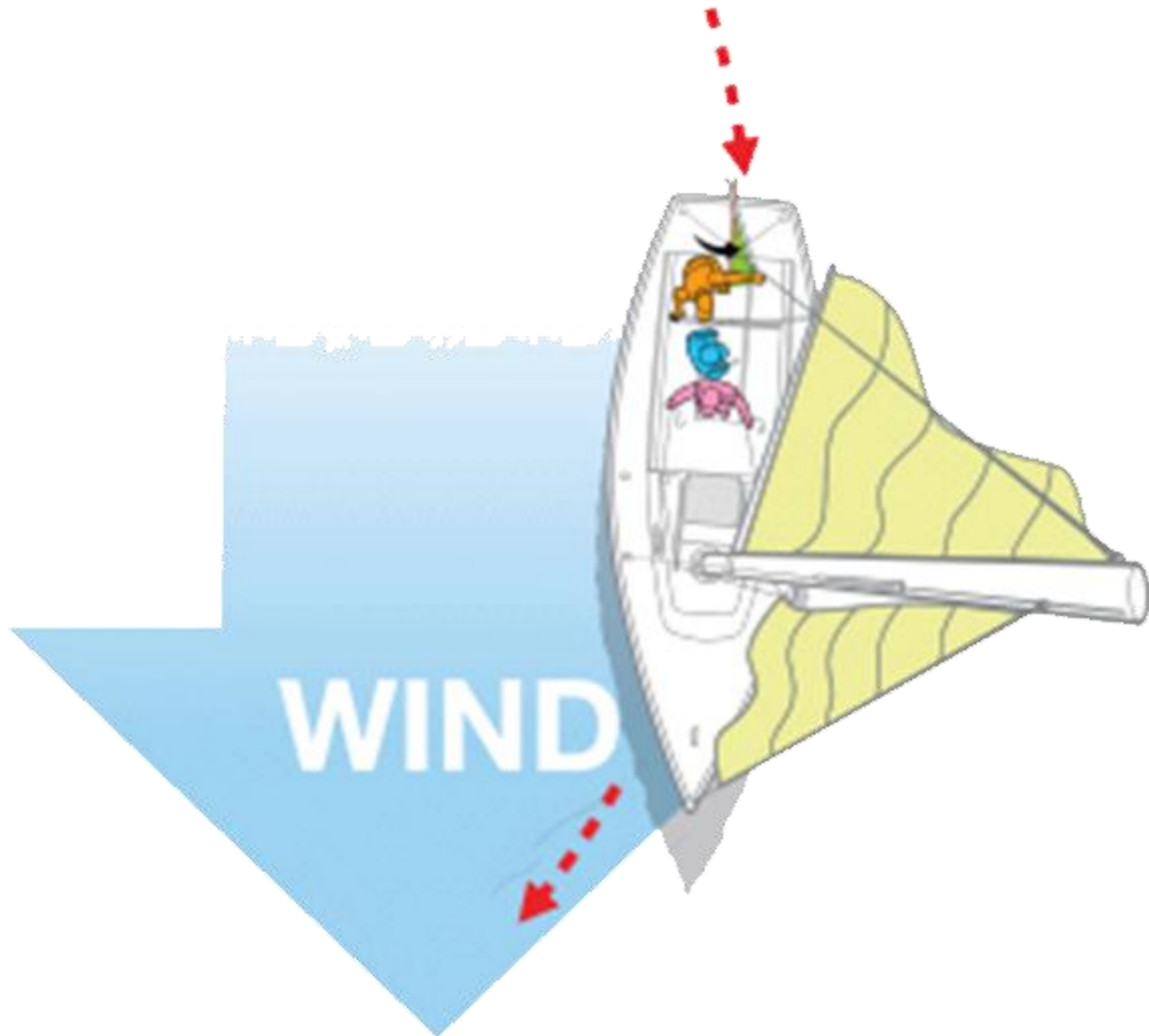


JIBING STEP 2: BEARING AWAY

1. After the crew respond, “*Ready!*” the helmsman calls out “*Jibing!*”
2. The helmsman then slowly starts the jibe by smoothly pushing the tiller away from the boom, which begins to turn the stern through the wind.
3. At the same time, the crew eases out the working jib sheet while sheeting in the mainsail.



JIBING STEP 3: TURNING THE STERN THROUGH THE WIND



1. The helmsman continues to turn the boat through the wind. Now the mainsail should be sheeted to the center of the boat.
2. As the boat turns through the wind, the jib crosses to the other side of the boat. This is a sign that the jibe is imminent. The crew releases the former working jib sheet.

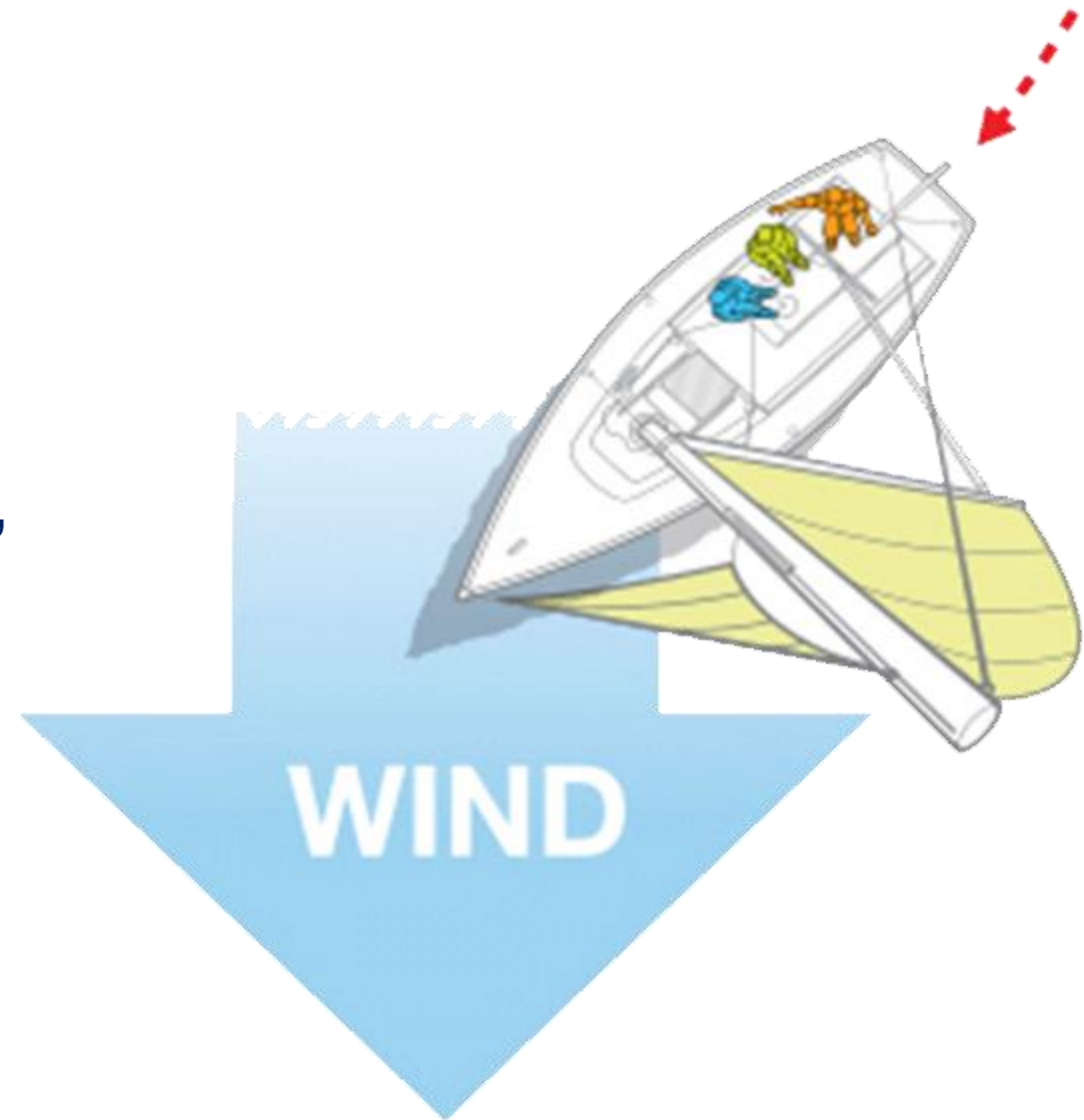
JIBING STEP 3: TURNING THE STERN THROUGH THE WIND



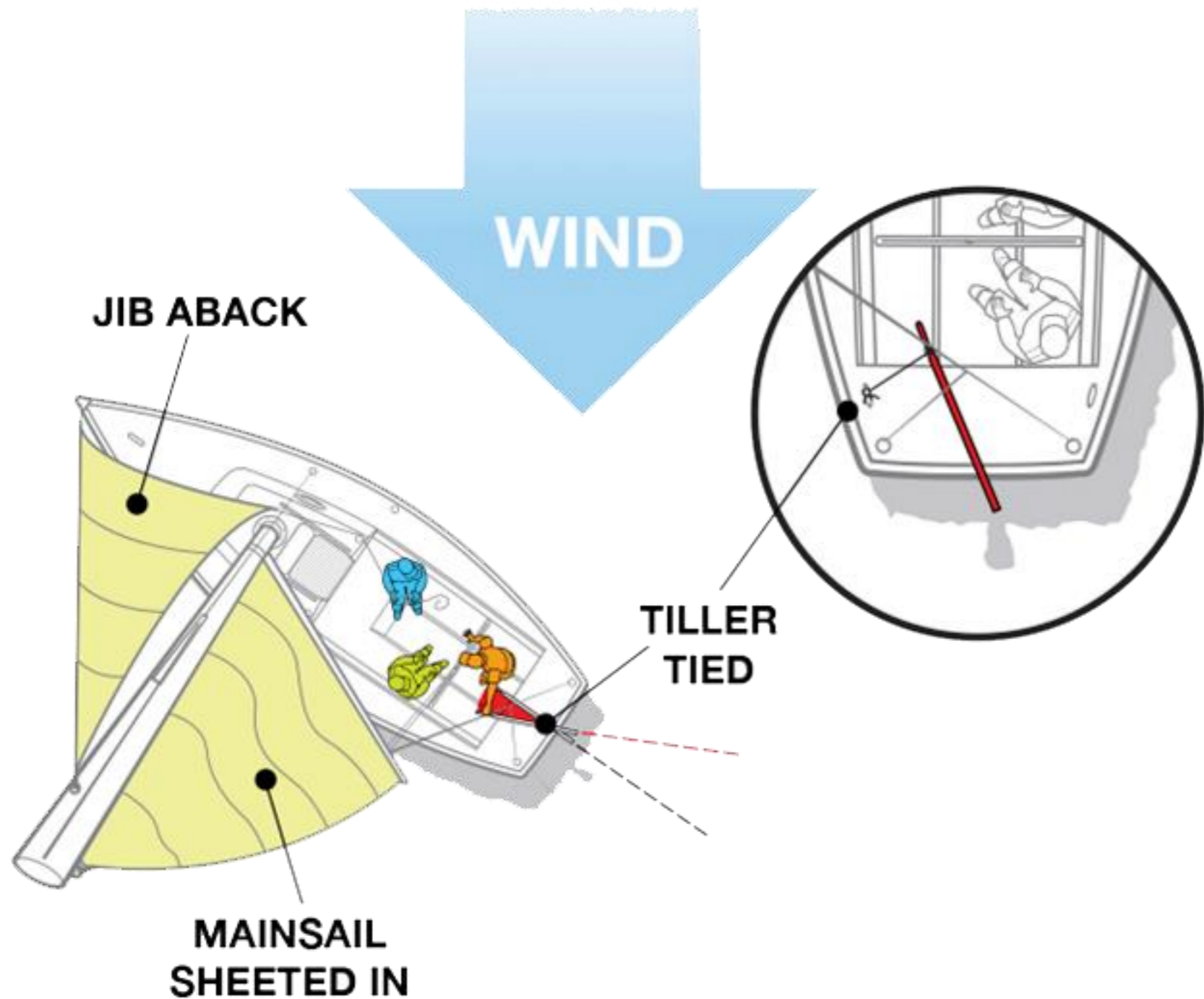
3. Next, the boom will flop across the boat. Before this happens, the helmsman will call out “*Jibing*” to warn the crew to duck under the boom. Everyone keeps his or her head down as the boom crosses.
4. As the mainsail crosses the center of the boat, the helmsman centers the tiller to steer out of the turn.

JIBING STEP 4: COMPLETING THE JIBE

1. As soon as the boom crosses the cockpit, the crew lets the mainsail sheet run out to keep the boat from rounding up (turning too much).
2. The crew sheets in the former lazy jib sheet, which becomes the working jib sheet.
3. The helmsman can now steer toward the reference point picked out before the jibe.

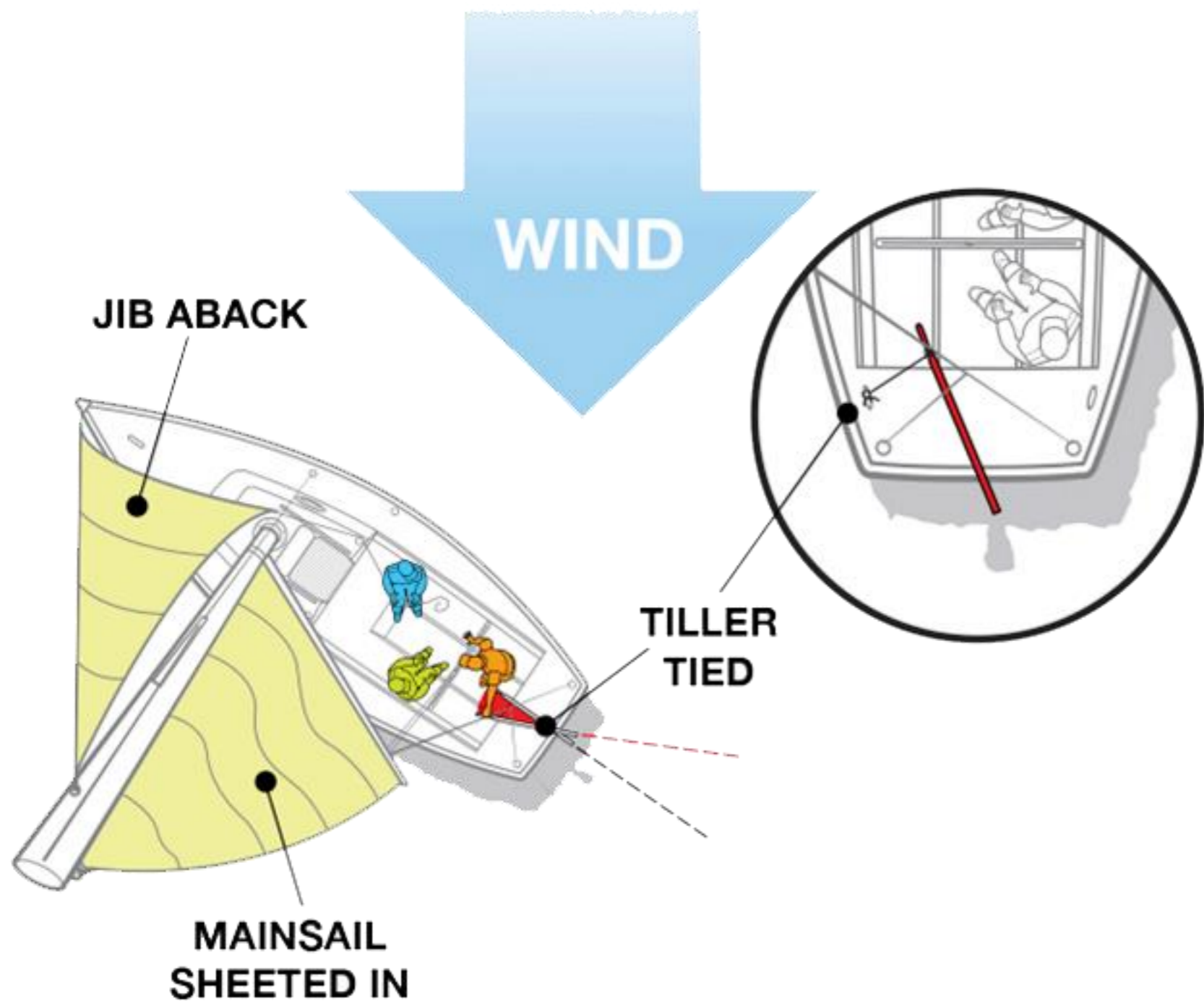


HEAVING TO



1. Start by steering your boat so that you are sailing close to the wind with the jib sheeted tightly in.
2. Now tack the boat but, unlike a regular tack, do not uncleat the jib sheet. As you cross the No-Go Zone the jib will become “backed” with wind.

HEAVING TO



3. Ease the mainsail so that that boat slows down to a stop while moving the tiller to the boom, steering the boat upwind. This will counteract the wind in the jib.
4. After the boat has come to a stop, secure the tiller so that the boat stays at a constant angle to the wind.
5. Trim the mainsail to help keep the angle to the wind steady.

RETURNING TO THE DOCK - PREPARATION

Crew Responsibilities

- Hang the fenders on the outside of the hull.
- Get the docking lines attached properly under lifelines.

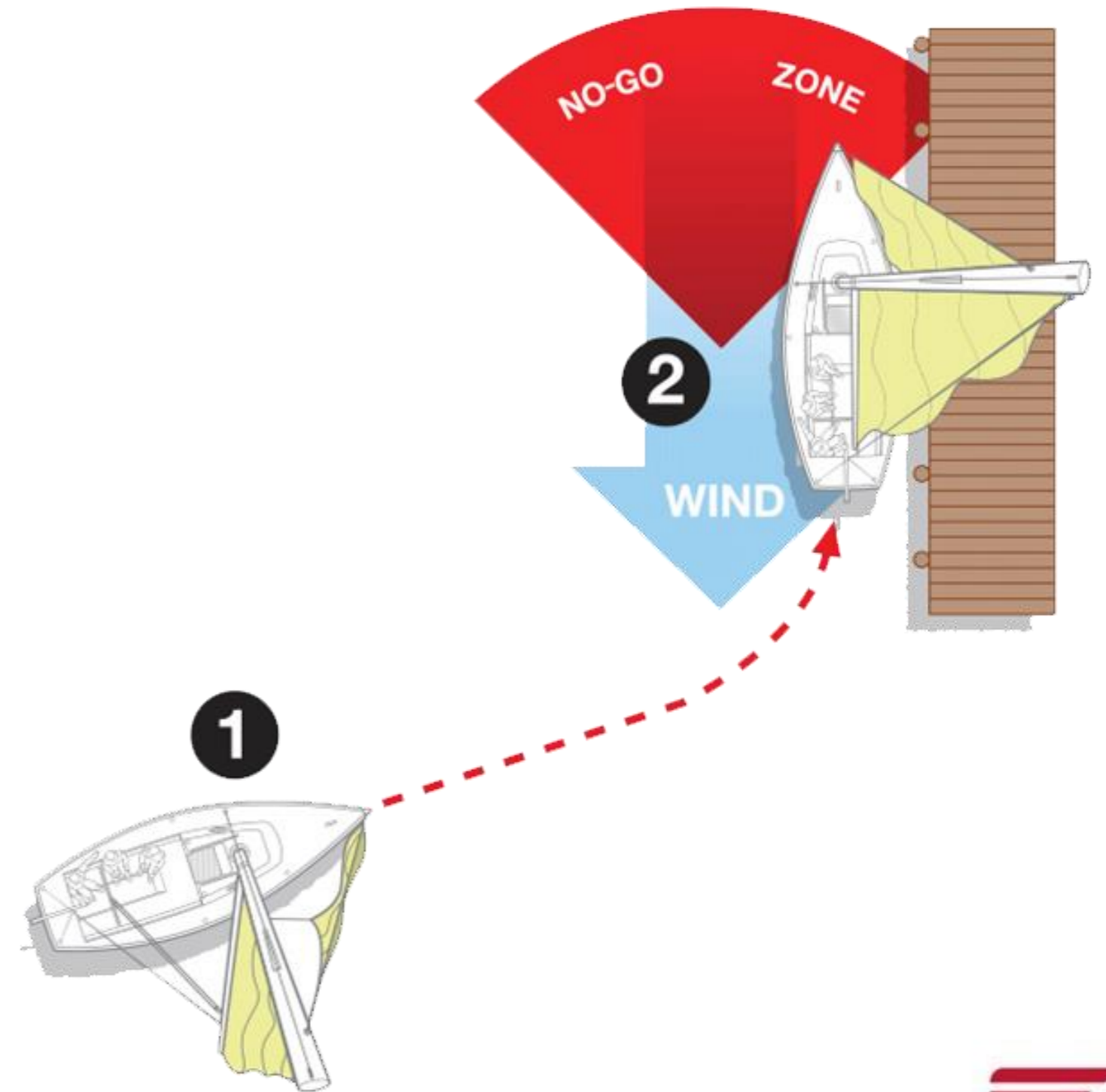
Helmsman Responsibilities

- Plan for a safe and controlled landing.
- Develop a “Plan B” if docking needs to be aborted.
- Communicate this plan to the crew, informing them of their responsibilities.



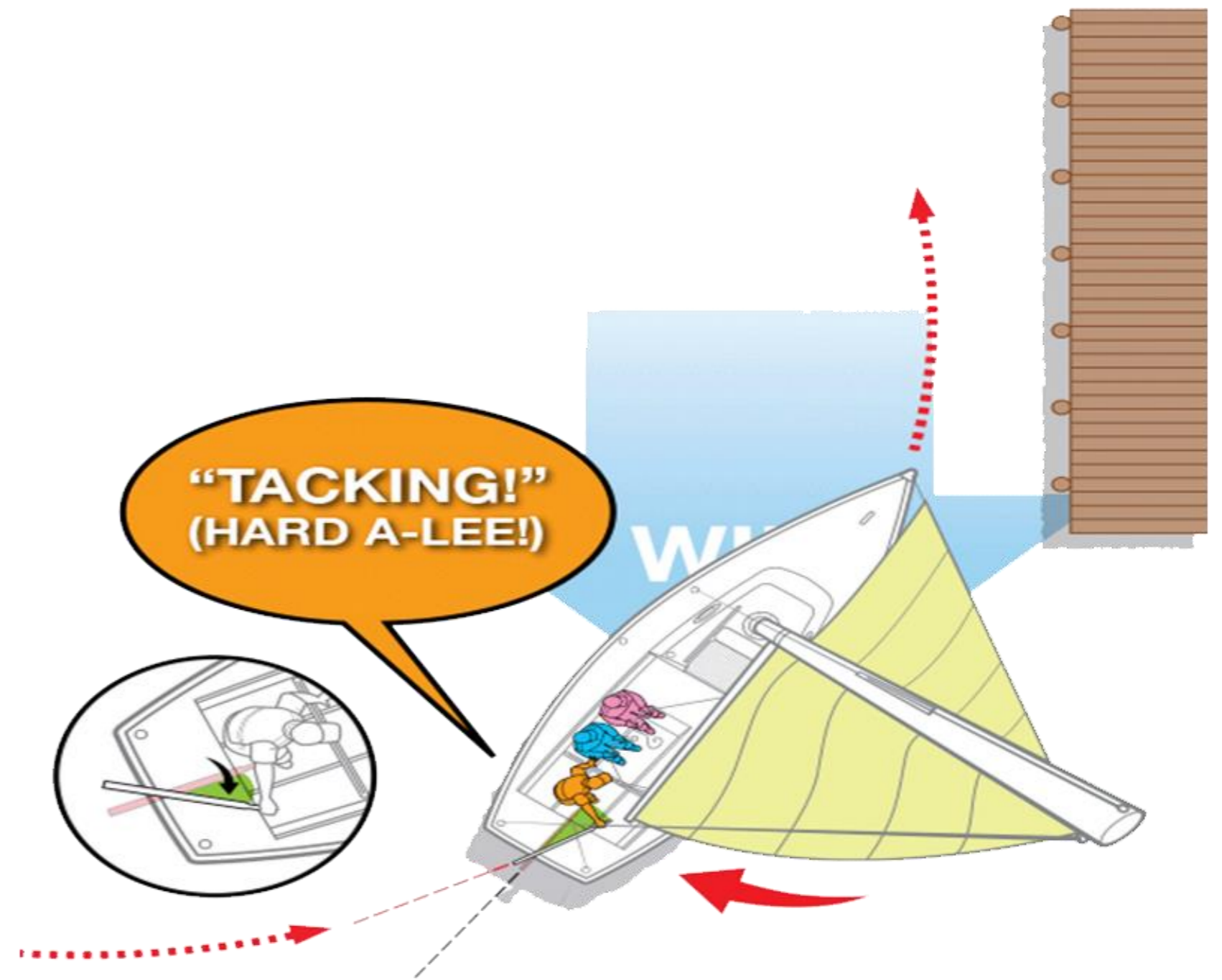
RETURNING TO THE DOCK

1. Ease out the sails to slow your speed.
2. As you approach the dock, head up into the wind, letting the sails luff.
3. Coast to a stop alongside the dock.
4. Holding the docking lines, the crew carefully steps off the boat onto dock.



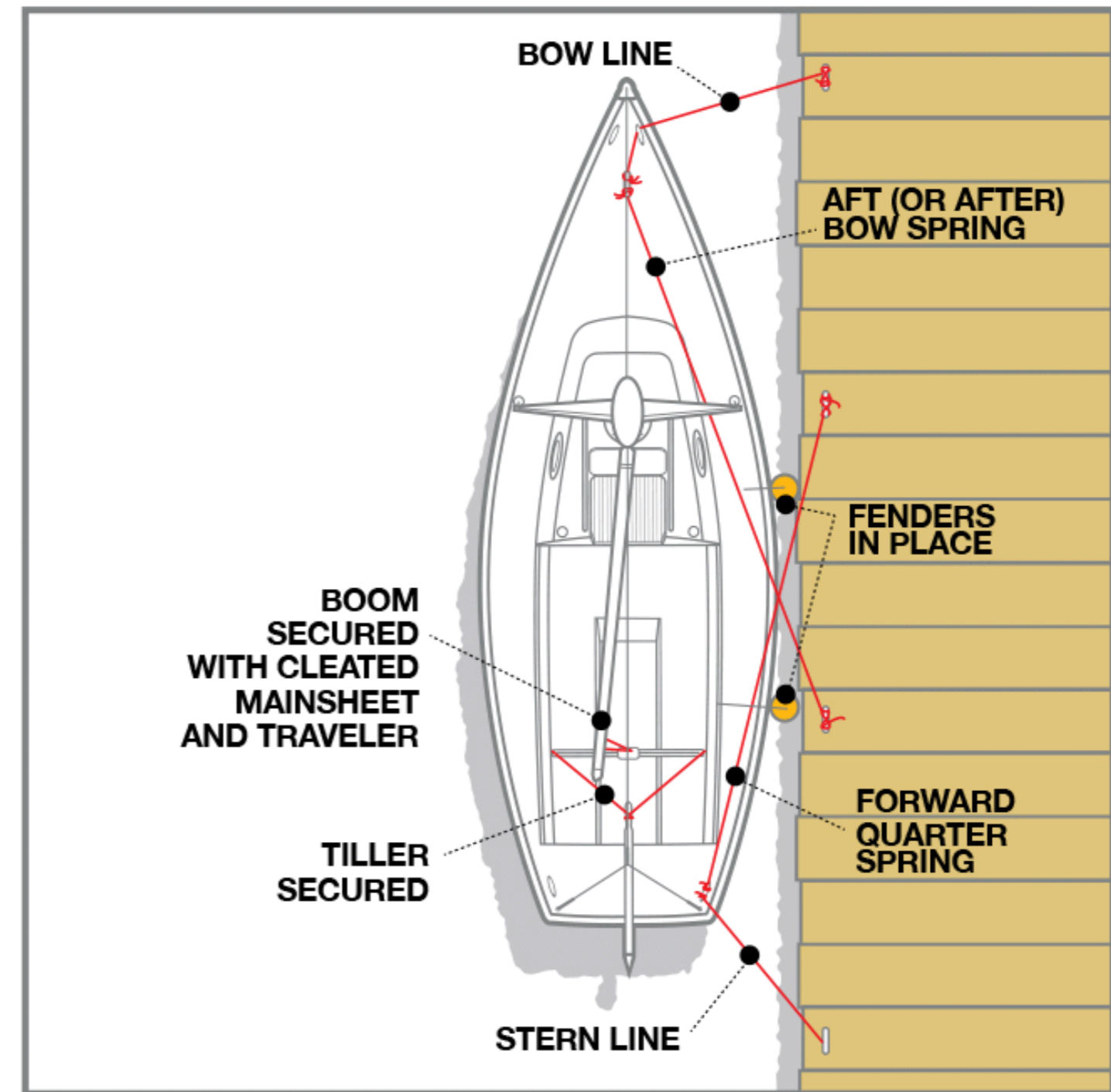
RETURNING TO THE SLIP

1. Ease out the sails to slow your speed. If needed, use the tiller to wiggle the boat back and forth to further decrease your speed.
2. When your speed is just right – fast enough to get into the slip, but not fast enough to ram your bow into the end of the dock – steer into the slip.
3. Holding the docking lines, the crew carefully steps off the boat onto dock.



TYING UP AT THE DOCK

Bow and stern lines help keep your boat close to the dock but do not prevent the boat from moving forward and backward with the wind and waves.



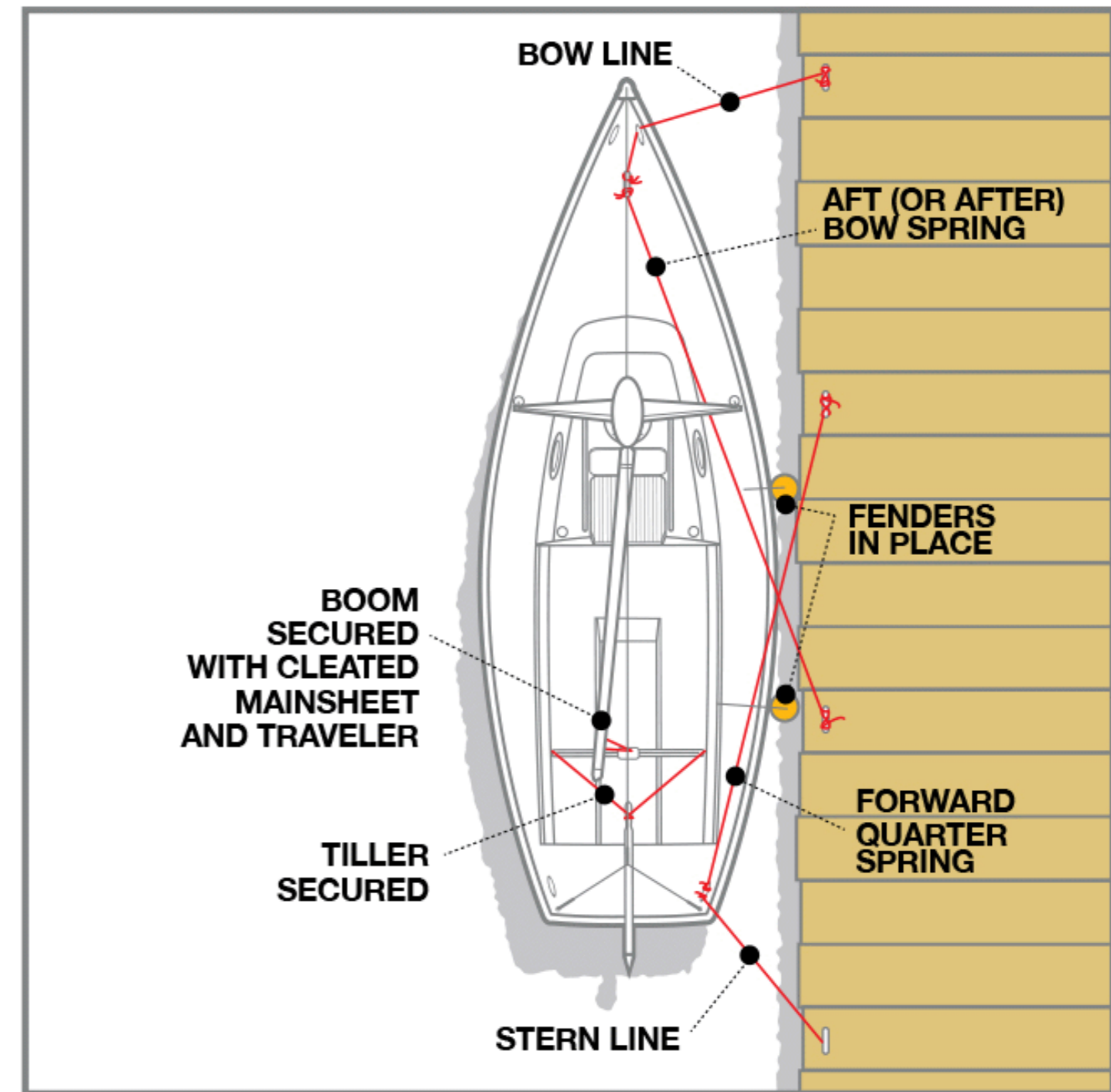
TYING UP AT THE DOCK

Spring lines prevent the boat from moving forward and backward.

The name of each spring line refers to the direction the line is going.

The spring line that starts at the bow and is tied up on the dock near the stern is called the Aft Spring Line.

The spring line that starts at the stern and goes to the bow, is called the Forward Spring Line.



REVIEW



UNIT SUMMARY

TOPICS COVERED

- How to leave a dock or slip
- The responsibilities of the helmsman and crew
- Starting and stopping using the wind
- Using telltales to trim your sails
- Finding the groove
- All of the steps of tacking and jibing
- Heaving to
- Returning and tying up at the dock

