

TUNING THE H38 B&R RIG

The easiest method for tuning the B&R rig is to perform step one as follows before the mast is stepped, with it lying aft side down on two sawhorses. Begin with all rigging slack. If the mast is already stepped, loosen all the rigging, and then proceed to step one.

1. Start with all the rigging slack. Then induce the mast bend by tightening the reverse diagonals (diamonds). Measure the bend by tensioning a line or the main halyard between the masthead and the gooseneck. The maximum amount of bend should be no more than 8" [203mm] for the standard rig and no more than 2" [50mm] for the furling mast. Measured perpendicular from the aft face of the mast to the halyard at the deepest part of the bend. It can be less than that based on the sail shape and your own preference. The bend should also be evenly distributed along the mast to give a smooth shape. Keep in mind that bending a furling mast may make it more difficult to furl and will not do much to flatten the sail as in a standard rig. It is very important that the mast also be straight from side to side at this time. Tighten or loosen the reverse diagonals to achieve this.
2. Step the mast with all shrouds attached but with the turnbuckles completely loosened (if the mast was not already stepped).
3. Attach the jib halyard to a cleat on the bow to support the mast in a raked position (the masthead should be about 2'-0" [~6cm] behind the step). Attach the verticals and tighten them until you can just see the hole for the cotter pin in the turnbuckle. Tighten the jib halyard until you can attach the forestay. At this point the masthead should be raked so that a weight hung on the main halyard hangs about 1' behind the mast step.
4. Use the main halyard to check that the mast is centered from side to side. Pull it tight and mark the halyard next to the verticals chainplate. Now do the same

to the other side to see if the marks line up. If not, tighten and/or loosen the verticals until the marks line up. Once the masthead is centered, begin tightening the verticals until the turnbuckles are approximately half closed. While tightening the verticals you may notice the bend in the mast increasing. Now you can tighten the lowers, which will tend to straighten the lower part of the mast. Be sure to tighten port and starboard sides evenly.

5. Now you should tighten the headstay until it is approximately half closed as well. This should induce the appropriate amount of headstay tension. Never use anything more than a pair of wrenches to tighten your rigging. If you use an extended piece of pipe on the handle of a wrench you can over tighten the rigging and do damage to the mast or rigging.
6. On the Hunter 38 it is necessary to go up the mast in a bosun's chair to tighten the number 2 diagonal shroud (D2 or intermediate shroud). Always use caution when "going aloft". You should always use a mountain climbing harness or Bosun's Chair intended for this use. Always tie into the harness with the halyard using a bowline and then secure the shackle as a back up as the knot is more reliable than a mechanical fastener. The person hoisting you aloft should keep the halyard stopper closed to prevent falls. Good communication between the two of you is also important. Tighten the D2 until it has just become tight and then add two complete turns. While at the first spreader, look up the back of the mast to see if it is straight (rather than bent from side to side). If it is not straight then adjust the appropriate D2 to straighten it.
7. Have the person on deck carefully lower you. They should keep the halyard wrapped at least twice around the winch and should always have one hand able to stop the halyard from running free. Once on deck look up the back of

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the mast and see if it is straight (rather than bent from side to side). If not then adjust the lowers (D1) until it is.

8. If you have the standard rig you need to attach the struts at this time. Attach the lower end of the strut to the smaller hole in the chainplate. Adjust the length by turning the ball joint bearing in the upper end of the strut until the holes in the pin can be attached. It is normal to have some play between the strut and the chainplate and strut bracket

9. The final test is to go sailing in 10-15 knots of wind. If when sailing upwind, the shrouds on the leeward side are slack then tighten them to remove about half the slack keeping note of the number of turns. Then tack and do the same to the other side. Do this until you are happy with the tension and the leeward side does not get loose when the boat is heeled. Now sight up the mast to be sure it is still relatively straight from side to side. If it is not then adjust to appropriate rigging to correct it. For example: if the mast is straight until the upper spreader and then hooks to the windward side then you will have to revisit steps 6 and 7 above. Remember to always tighten the leeward shroud, tack and tighten the new leeward shroud the same amount. This prevents damage to the turnbuckles and is also much easier to

do. Keep in mind it is also possible to have something too tight such as a diagonal shroud.

10. At this point you should have adequate headstay tension. The sails are built for an average of 14" [350mm] of headstay sag, possibly more or less depending upon light or heavy air. The bend in the standard mast should be about 4" [100mm] and 1" [25mm] in the furling mast and it should be nearly straight from side to side when sailing upwind. If any of these are not true then revisit the appropriate step above to correct it. If the sag in the headstay is too much then adding tension to the verticals will fix it.

11. Once the rig is tuned you should make sure to add the cotter pins to all the rigging bending back the ends and taping them to prevent snagged lines, sails and fingers.

Remember that rigging, like everything else, can age. As it gets older it may need to be replaced. The frequency for which this becomes necessary depends on the climate and conditions in which the boat is sailed. For example: if you sail in the Caribbean it should be replaced every 2-3 years compared to every 10 for the great lakes. You should consult a professional rigger for advice.