



Leaky Boat - Let's Fix It

It is not uncommon in extreme conditions to have a small amount of water in the hull as mentioned above but this should never be more than an egg cup full over a full days sailing. If you are experiencing more than this then the source needs to be found and fixed ASAP. While an easy answer would be just to send the boat back to the builder, most times small a leak can be fixed with the minimum of skill required in a very short amount of time.

- Firstly, set your boat up ready to sail with all patches on (less fin and rig). Mix up some washing liquid in water to a foamy consistency. Now gently apply bubbled soap over a few fittings at a time and carefully blow air in through your drain hole. Any leaks will be seen through bubbling local to the problem. If nothing is found, then continue over all fittings that have been fastened until a leak is found. If a leak is found at a fitting this can be solved easily with some epoxy glue carefully applied to the underside of the deck local to the leak. Re-test when dry.
- Secondly, if nothing is found through deck fittings, we must check the fin case and mast tube. Put a generous amount of bubbles to cover the mast tube on the deck and blow air in again. If the bubbles raise then a mast tube leak is the cause. If not proceed to fin case. Cover the fin box on the bottom of the hull with some packing tape. Now place bubbles over keel bolt hole and blow air once more. If this shows a leak then a fin case pin hole may be the issue. Pin holes can be easily fixed with a little thickened resin on the tip of a cotton bud/brush/finger locally worked into the area.
- Dependent on just how much water is inside your hull over a period of time, this would help determine how bad the issue but the above may help to diagnose the smallest of problems saving time away from the water. Of course if you feel the problem to be sufficiently bad enough with excessive leaking or beyond the realms of an easy fix locally, you should contact your builder/commercial supplier for rectification.

While this may not cover every aspect of boat maintenance, if you follow these guidelines you will get far more enjoyment from your sailing with more time at events spent socialising or focussed on the race course than having your head down in a boat.

Cheers
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