

Chocks

Chocks are the small 'mushroom-shaped' plates that you can put in front of the mast. They affect the pre-bend and as a result affect the amount of power you have in the mainsail:

Less pre-bend = Straighter mast = Fuller mainsail = More power

More pre-bend = More curved mast = Flatter mainsail = Less power

Chocks alter the pre-bend by pushing back on the lower mast, therefore straightening it. So the more chocks that you put in the straighter the mast becomes and the more power you achieve.

Therefore; **more chocks = more power**

If you set up your light wind mast rake you will find a gap in front of the mast where the chocks go. If you fill this gap with chocks so that they are touching the mast but not pushing back on it this is your **neutral number of chocks**.

Record/remember this number of chocks.

When you have neutral chocks in your sail is at its flattest, so neutral chocks are good when the wind is very light or if you are overpowered. As soon as you get on the wire there is enough wind for the sail to cope with being a bit fuller & more powerful put one more chock in (we call this +1). When you are well out on the wire (but not flat wiring/overpowered), and especially in choppy conditions put two extra chocks in (+2) for maximum power. However, as soon as you become overpowered (i.e. flat-wiring & playing the mainsail all the time) then go back down to neutral chocks because you do not need any extra power.

Also, do not exceed two extra chocks – putting in three extra chocks is likely to invert the mast!!!

It is not always practical to change chocks in a race so make sure they are right before you start. If the wind does change in a race such that you need to change the chocks then the best time to do it is on a run – there is less forwards pressure on the mast on a run & the crew is in the boat and able to reach the chocks.

P.S. If you are very overpowered in very strong wind then you can remove one of the neutral chocks (-1). This will help to flatten/de-power your sail even more.