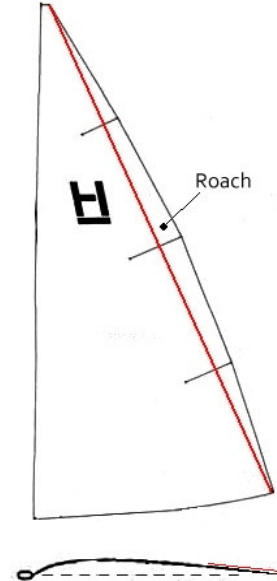


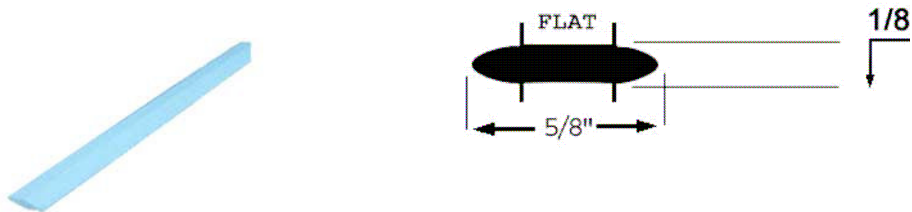
# Sail Battens

Battens play an important role in helping the mainsail take a proper airfoil shape. The battens support the roach of the sail and help to maintain the designed sail shape. This subsequently affects the sail's ability to perform at its peak performance.

The roach is the sail area that extends past a straight line from the head to the clew of the mainsail.



Fiberglass is the common batten material in use today. Batten stock can be found at sailboat suppliers and is most economical when purchased in long sticks and cut to fit by the boat owner. Wood can also be used and up through the 1950s was the typical material until it was replaced by lower maintenance, stronger fiber reinforced plastics.



Since the purpose of battens for these boats is solely to hold out the sail's roach, stock battens used are generally in the medium-stiff to stiff range.

Soft plastic end caps are recommended to prevent the batten from chafing its pocket.



Battens for the Holder mainsail are housed in pockets that top load near the outboard end. The batten should be snug to install and remove, without being so tight as to place excessive stretch on the sailcloth. Conversely, too loose and you risk losing a batten as the sail reverses its curvature from one tack to the other. When replacement battens are fit, use just enough batten tension to remove the vertical sail wrinkles across the roach. One note here is that the sail can stretch and the batten pocket can loosen while sailing. On heavy air days you can put a piece of sail tape over the pocket opening to further insure the batten will not fly out.

Remove battens after each day's sail to prevent stretching and prematurely deforming the sail.