

Swapping Forestays on the J35

Two fully functioning forestays on a racer/cruiser is a great way to go for a boat that is used for both hard core racing and lightly crewed cruising and especially handy for deliveries between races. When I purchased a Harken roller furler system for our J35, we had a second rod rigging forestay built to enable swapping out the systems.

Here are some helpful hints and steps for swapping the forestays in/out.

I have done the swap with only one experienced assistant, but you'll be faster and safer with more.

What I take up with me:

Small canvas tool bag with wire ring top with rope handle (provided by my sailmaker, Kent Sails – thanks Tommy!) filled with

- Electrical or rigging tape
- Spare ½ inch pin
- Spare ½ to 5/8 inch collars (see below for description)
- Couple screwdrivers
- 2 Vise grips (small needle nose and normal size)
- Spare cotter keys

Swapping Furler to Race Forestay

The J35 has plenty of halyards, which helps make this process safe and easy. I have tried several methods, but found using the topping lift as the temp head stay is the best solution. My topping lift comes out of the mast about 8 ft short of the top giving your working room at the top. I attach the topping lift to the rear part of the horn, again to give a little more working room at the bow.

I know it's obvious, but loosen the backstay and main halyard.

Tighten the topping lift till the forestay swings freely.

Attach forward halyards to your climbing harness or boson chair, tying bowlines, leaving a 3 to 6 inch tail with the shackle free. The shackles will come in handy for holding toolbag and forestay during swap. If only one assistant, use halyards run to one side of the boat to make tailing easier.

Attach the spare forward halyard to the race forestay at the top just below the swaging. Hoist to within a foot of the top of the mast.

Detach the bottom of the furler forestay. Wait, before you do this, when did you last replace your topping lift? 😊

Have your crew help you (or the lightest crewmember) to the top of the mast. Don't forget your tool bag.

Attach the halyard tail to the furler forestay below the swaging. Detach the forestay (catch the collars and pin).

Attach new forestay while still attached to the spare halyard.

Remove halyard from race forestay and attach to the furler, and have the crew lower the furler forestay. One crew will need to handle the bottom, directing it to a safe flat area, while the other lowers the halyard. If only one assistant, wait till you are down to help.

Have the crew lower you to the deck.

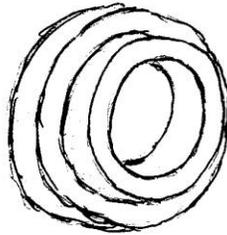
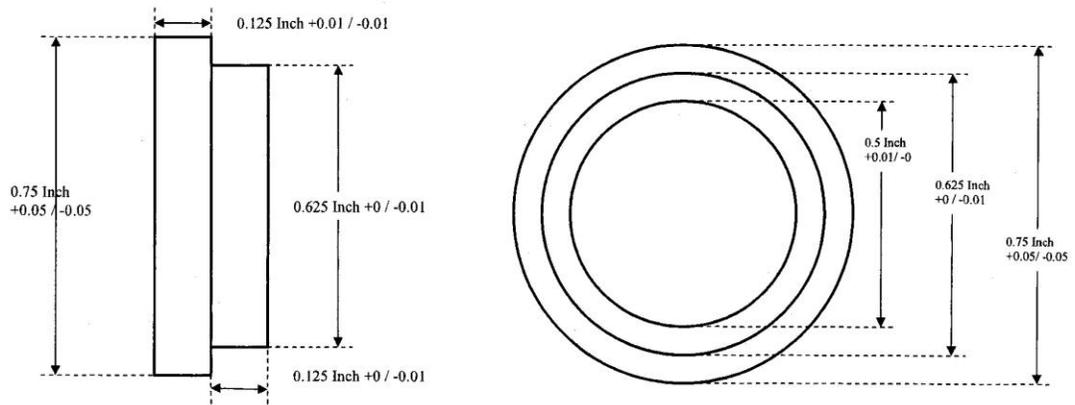
Attach the new forestay at the base.

Swapping Race to Furler Forestay

Basically the same process, except there may need to be someone to assist the person at the top with supporting the weight of the furler from below. This depends on the upper body strength of that person (if you choose to send the lightest crew, they may need assist!).

Stainless Steel Collars

The Harken furler system comes standard with 5/8 inch pins. My J35 forestay is rigged with ½ inch pins. I had a machine shop do some collars to fit on either side of the tangs of the top and bottom of the furling unit.



I used epoxy to attach to the tangs. This didn't hold extremely well, as after a year or two, some started coming off. I think if you coarsely sand the surfaces, it will work longer. Either way, when you have them made – make spares!