

CAPSIZING RECOVERY

Paul Tara, 2014

Capsizing is part of dinghy sailing. El Toros are not self-bailing, but they can self-rescue. No matter how capsize occurs, sooner or later in the recovery process the boat will be lying on its side. *That is the critical point.* Bringing the boat up as dry as possible reduces the amount of bailing required. To accomplish this, the boat must be fitted with proper floatation and the correct technique used:

- **PFD:** wear one with adequate buoyancy; keep it zipped.
- **Buoyancy:** Floatation should be distributed along the gun'ls, either in the form of enclosed tanks or buoyancy bags. Buoyancy forward helps to support the weight of the rig once the boat is righted, but buoyancy on the centerline does little when it's on its side.
- **The Secret:** *Ask not what your boat's floatation can do for you; ask what you can do for your boat's floatation.* Stay in the water; let your PFD, not the boat, support you.
- **Step 1;** Use the dagger board to bring the mast to the surface.
- **Step 2;** *Wait. Do not try to pull the mast up into the wind.* The windage on the rig increases the required righting force, which forces the boat down into the water, causing it to act as a scoop. If necessary, swim the boat around until the bow is headed into the wind.
- **Step 3;** Press down gently on the board with the *absolute minimum force* necessary to slowly right the boat.
- **Step 4;** Stay in the water, get to the weather side and start bailing.
- **Step 5;** When the water in the bilge is down to around 2-3", board over the weather quarter. Sheet in the main if necessary to counteract your weight.