

Roller Furling & Cruising Headsail Credits Explained



Approximately twenty years ago, PHRF of Narragansett Bay instituted a credit specifically aimed at cruisers – hopefully making it more attractive for them to come out and race. This “Cruising Headsail Credit has been “tweaked”, over the years, and on occasion has been a point of uncertainty (and in some cases, contention). Along with the Cruising Headsail Credit, PHRF-NB also provides a “Roller Furling Credit”. This was introduced at about the same time as the Cruising Headsail Credit, and over the past few years, this also has been updated and there has been some confusion about the differences between the two. This write-up is intended to make it clear what the requirements for getting the Roller Furling Credit and the Cruising Headsail Credit are, and some of the implications of the restrictions PHRF-NB imposes on those boats carrying this credit.

The easier of the two credits to understand is the **Roller Furling Credit (+3)**. The first item to understand is Class Boats or a custom boat equipped by the original manufacturer with a roller furler, upon which the base boat handicap is established, are **not eligible** for the +3 roller furl credit. Given the above your boat will receive a rating credit of +3 seconds if your furling headsail is:

- Short hoist (i.e., its luff length is at least 2.5% of the “I” measurement shorter than the headstay length where headstay length is measured from deck sheer line to mast) AND
- Attached to an above deck bottom drum, hoisted in a foil extrusion and have a top swivel, with the system functional AND
- Regularly used at the primary racing headsails AND
- Is roller furled during racing.

For this credit, you are allowed to have any number of roller-furled sails of any size up to the largest headsail you enter on your form in the headsails section. This means you can have a light, medium, heavy #1, a #2, etc., as long as they meet the ALL FOUR of the requirements above. In addition, you may have any number of headsails 110% or smaller – and, just to complicate things, the 110% or smaller sails can be either roller furled or not. This means it is acceptable to have a full hoist sail which measures 110% or smaller. So, in summary for the Roller Furling Credit, you can have:

- Any number of roller furling sails between 111% and the largest declared sail on your rating form – as long as they meet the four criteria above
- Any number of roller furling or non-roller furling sails measuring 110% or smaller.

Please note that for the Roller Furling Credit, there is no restriction on sail material. Please also note that this credit is built into the ratings of some one-design boats.

The **Cruising Headsail Credit (+6)** is quite different, even though it appears to be similar to the Roller Furling Credit. The restrictions for the Cruising Headsail Credit are the following:

- A Short hoist (i.e., its luff length is at least 2.5% shorter than the “I” measurement of the headstay length). The “I” measurement is the head stay length as measured from the deck sheer line to the mast intersection.
- The cruising headsail shall be attached to the bottom drum, hoisted in a foil extrusion, and have a top swivel, the system shall be functional.
- The cruising headsail is the only headsail used for racing, day sailing or cruising AND
- Any number of headsails 110% or smaller, roller furling or non-roller furling, also can be used, in its place, at any time. AND
- The cruising headsail is regularly stored on the headstay when the boat is not racing or sailing AND
- The cruising headsail has a UV leach cover attached to the sail (e.g. stitched or glued AND
- Sail must be of a Woven Polyester, Polyester Composite or Polyester laminate, with an additional layer of woven polyester (taffeta), or Composite skin, both with the intent of adding durability to the sail material AND
- No exotic sail materials such as (Pentex, PEN, Aramid, Technora, Carbon, Spectra, Ultra-PE, etc. AND
- The Cruising Headsail Credit will be the only PHRF-NB certificate issued during the sailing season.

What does this mean? The intent of these additional criteria is to differentiate between sailors that have added a roller furling system and still use a full suite of sails and those who have a roller furling system but effectively use one sail for racing and cruising. If you want to use a light #1 and a heavy #1, the Cruising Headsail Credit is not for you. If you have a single sail greater than 110%, use that sail for racing and cruising, leave it on the roller furler week in and week out, and have a UV leach cover, then you are a candidate for the Cruising Headsail Credit.

There are, of course, some other implications of the Cruising Headsail Credit requirements. If you have the Cruising Headsail Credit, you will not be issued a PHRFNB certificate without that credit. By accepting the Cruising Headsail Credit, you are agreeing that when you race, you will be using effectively the cruising headsail all the time (except when you change down to a 110% or smaller sail). It violates the criteria for the Cruising Headsail Credit to race in any race with a 111% or larger sail other than the cruising headsail.

Roller Furling / Cruising Headsail FAQ

If I have the Roller Furling Credit, can I have a heavy #1 and a light #1?

Yes, so long as they are short hoist on a foil extrusion, attached to the drum and swivel, and are furled during racing.

If I have the Roller Furling Credit, can I change headsails sails during a race?

Yes.

If I have the Cruising Headsail Credit, can I change from my larger headsail during a race?

Normally No – However, Yes, if changing to a small sail which measures 110% or less.

If I have the Cruising Headsail Credit, can I get another certificate for races where I want to use more sails?

No. Acceptance of the Cruising Headsail Credit precludes a boat from having a certificate that does not include the Cruising Headsail Credit.

I have the cruising headsail credit, and I want to go out for a pleasure sail on a windy afternoon. If I put a 110% or smaller headsail on, do I have to put the cruising headsail back on at the end of this pleasure sail?

No. The cruising headsail must be “regularly” stored on the headstay. PHRF-NB interprets that to mean “much more often than not”. However, if you are, on a regular basis, putting your “cruising headsail” on just before the race, you may be subject to protest.