

Mast Building

David Lucas



Now on to mast building. It's been a while since I've made one so when Peter the Plumber said he wanted to swap out his oak tree for a better mast I jumped at the chance. Wally had just finished the yellow one so I had a refresher on how to do it; mine is the bright one. Most of you think it's a big deal to make a mast for a small boat so I'll tell you the easy way to make one of these sixteen footers that are three inches at the bottom tapering to two at the top. First go to Lowes or Home Depot and pick out two sixteen foot "whitewood" 2x4's. Not yellow pine or cedar or fir, just the cheap ass stuff. Pick out ones with the smallest knots and straight. They cost about \$6 each and are light. Lay them on your bench and route a one inch half circle down the

middle of each one about two feet from each end. Get your chalk line and snap lines angling from three inches up to two inches at the other end; get out your circular saw and cut the line. Mix up some epoxy with a little silica to thicken it up some and smear it on both halves and clamp the hell out of the two halves. So far this has taken you about two hours and no super human skill. The next day you get your grinder and smooth off the hard epoxy that oozed out the seam then snap lines on that side. The bottom is already three inches so go from there to the two inches at the top. Saw the line leaving it all a little big.



Set your saw to 45 degrees and eyeball off some of the square sides. Don't worry about getting this perfect, the next step takes care of that. Now the fun part; get your power planer out and go up and



down the long stick for a while to get it half ass shaped. Then, I can't believe I'm saying this, get your long hand plan out (I don't own one but Wally does) and make a bunch of passes to get the humps out. Now for the sanding. go get a wooden rolling pin, pull off one end and put in a big screw so that end won't turn, take a bicycle inner tube wrap it around the pin and staple the ends. Chuck it up in your drill, turn a belt sander belt inside out and go to town. It'll be smooth and slick in about an hour once you get the hang of

it. Like everything else there is a learning curve. That's it except for the finish. I wrapped the bottom with a couple turns of 9 ounce 60 inch wide cloth and then put two coats of uv resistant epoxy on the whole thing. You can see how heavy it turned out. I can hold it



straight out with one hand and Steve is balancing it with three fingers. It weights about 15 pounds and will turn your boat over before it'll break. The only ones ever to break were the ones some dumb ass backed under tree limbs while backing down for a beach launch somewhere. Go for it, it really is fun and we've found these to be stronger and stiffer for masts this size than birds mouth masts made from fir. The total cost will set you back about \$20.

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