

## Recovery Under Sail Requires Close Coordination

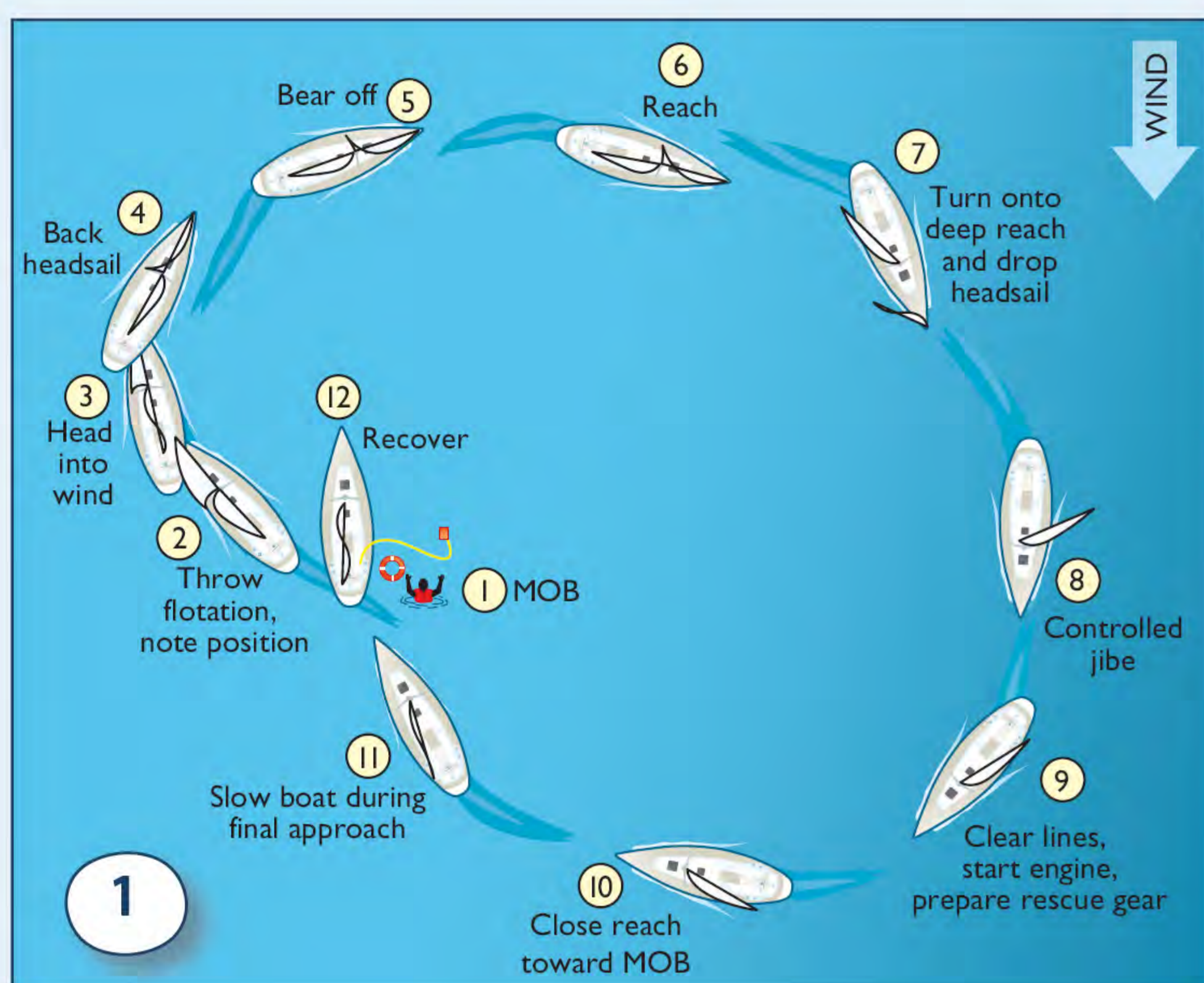
Recovery maneuvers carried out under sail can be separated into two categories: those that utilize only tacking, and those that also incorporate a jibe. The **Quick Stop** maneuver is the most popular example of the latter. The upside of this maneuver is that it keeps the victim close at hand, while the downside is discovered in a heavy breeze

when the initial tack and backwinding places high demands on the crew, as does the requisite jibe.

The **Figure-8, Fast Return**, and **Deep Reach Return** are all variations on the reach away-and-tack approach, and intentionally start out by sailing away from the person in the water. Unless the crew is extremely disciplined, these maneu-

vers stretch well beyond the suggested two to five boat lengths their advocates proclaim.

All of these maneuvers involve a vocal alert, flotation deployment, position marking, and crew assignment, but a quick look at how each differs with regard to the vessel maneuvering is worth pointing out.



### 1 The Quick Stop

The **Quick Stop** maneuver requires a quick reaction from the crew that keeps the victim close at hand. When sailing on the wind, the maneuver entails a jibe, and heavy weather can make this a much more difficult alternative. When initiated during a beat, the first step is to tack leaving the headsail backwinded, a process that stops the boat in its tracks. The next phase involves bearing off, getting rid of the headsail, and sailing deep enough prior to jibing to allow for a close-reach approach to the victim. Recommended by U.S. Sailing, it is best suited to fully crewed vessels not moving at extreme speeds.

### 2 The Figure 8, Fast Return, and Deep Beam Reach

The initial response in the **Figure 8** is to reach off approximately five boat lengths, tack, drop or furl the jib, and return to the victim via a broad reach that rounds up into a close reach as the final approach is made. This simple sail away-and-tack-to-return maneuver lessens the challenge of boathandling but introduces the risk of losing sight of the victim.

A derivation of the **Figure 8**, the **Fast Return**, cuts the separation in half and by defining the tack point as two to three boat lengths from the victim and leaves sails up and flogging during the pick up. The **Fast Return** technique requires quicker response from the crew and leaving the sails up in heavy weather oceanic conditions can make it difficult to remain alongside the victim.

The **Deep Beam Reach** is initiated with a reach away from the victim, but this time, the point of sail is a deeper reach and after just two boat lengths of separation, the tack is made, and on the return close reach to the victim, the sheets are cast free and the sails left to flog. The plan is to pick the victim up on the leeward side with the boom and headsail flailing away.

### 3 Lifesling Rescue

A **Lifesling** helps a shorthanded crew make contact with a less precise maneuver. The approach varies with boat and crew skill but the concept is the same. Passing close by the victim and making a sharp buttonhook (often under power) on the final approach is the most effective way to connect. Aim to get the boat—not the towed sling—to the person. If you overshoot, the sling can be pulled in, so the victim can grab it.

