

## Traveling to Regattas by Air **By Steve Sherman and Spencer Wiberley**

Flying to a regatta and chartering a new Optimist is easy, no-pressure and can save money. With the Nationals being held in California and the range of great “away” events many of you will be traveling with Opti gear for the first time. Here are a few tips to help things go smoothly.

### **Tools:**

McLaughlin will be at most of the larger events and will have all the tools you need regardless of what brand boat you sail. But if you want to be independent, get yourself 2 each of the 5 in one multi-tools, extra sail ties and you can fix anything that breaks on the Optimist. Oh... don't forget the duct tape!

### **Blades:**

Removing the tiller. Possibly replace aviation nut with locking washer and wing nut for ease in assembly and disassembly. Lay the rudder on the centerboard with the pintle nuts facing upward. Lay some cardboard or other material between the blades to protect the centerboard from the screw heads.

What can get damaged are the corners and edges of the centerboard. Take 3 inch wide strips of cardboard folded into a V. run these along the edges for extra protection. Now wrap the whole bundle in cardboard. Most airlines will let you carry this package on board if you don't get too bulky. If they want you to check them the extra padding will assure they get their undamaged.

Another solution is to find a hard plastic gun or bow case. Dicks Sporting Goods has a good selection. Or do an on line search.

### **Spars:**

The Deluxe Rig Travel Bag from Optiparts usually can be checked just like skis. Confirm sizes with the airline to be on the safe side. When we fly from Atlanta we have no trouble. But from Chattanooga the commuter plane has size restrictions.

### **Sails:**

Can be placed in a triangle box if you have one. Then again, conveyors have been known to rip them in half! The Rig Travel Bag is designed to take a thin wall PVC tube (available at hardware stores) to protect the sail. Roll the sail on the boom and your ready to go. We have also seen sailors just ship the PVC tube alone with the ends duck taped shut.

If you are just traveling with your sail and want to avoid extra expense, roll or flake the sail and fold it gently in half. Put it back in the sail bag or make a small box, carry it on board and it will fit in the overhead compartment.

