

When looking to purchase a used (fiberglass) boat, check the following:

- How stiff is the boat - if you step in or press on the boat, does it flex a lot under your feet? Can you easily depress the sides of the boat up front (especially around the waterline)? Stiffness is definitely important if you plan on racing the boat, however in general it does signal the quality of the boat's construction. You want to purchase a boat that is stiff, though a used boat will exhibit some 'softness'
- Look at the bottom of the boat. Does the bottom of the boat have a lot of stress cracks (spider web looking cracks)? Most used boats will exhibit these cracks, however if there are too many be aware that it does signify a weakening of the fiberglass. Not all cracks on a used boat are the same though. Gel coat will crack and that will not affect the structural integrity of a boat. Be sure to press on the hull in key places such as the bow and where the sailor sits to see how soft the boat might be.
- Check around the edges of tanks for cracks as well as the tanks themselves for the stress cracks mentioned earlier. Tanks sometimes become cracked where they are attached to the hull. This can be a major problem because they are relatively difficult to patch as a "do-it-yourself" project and leaky tanks can be very unfortunate in the event of a capsize. Definitely look closely at this, and if you purchase a boat in this condition fix them or have them fixed.
- Weight. If you intend to competitively race the boat, it is important to consider the boat's weight. If you purchase the boat from a racer, he/she will likely already know the boat's weight. Minimum weight is preferable.
- Accompanying equipment - how old and in what condition are the sails in? Does the boat come with extras? Are the blades/foils in good shape? ...

These are simply suggestions for you to look at when considering purchasing a used boat. If all of the above are taken into consideration you probably won't find a used boat to purchase in any class. Simply put, no used boat will be perfect. However, there are great deals to be had on used boats, so look closely and carefully. If you have any questions or want a second opinion, feel free to e-mail me, Mgaillard@aol.com.