

Offshore sailing

Cruising

The offshore cruising category implies sailing further a field than the inshore or coastal sailor. You are more likely to sail all the year round with frequent long distance cruises. The garments, therefore, need to be made out of more durable fabrics with higher collars and there will be more adjustments on the hoods.

Type of boats

There is nothing to stop you going offshore in any size of boat but in reality it is likely to be in the 30ft plus region. You will mostly have an open cockpit with little in the way of protection from the elements.

Duration

Because you could be away for days on end you need to cater for all weathers. You will also encounter much bigger seas. Once you are out into the Atlantic waves can be 20-30ft high and when they break over you, you certainly know about it.

Base Layer

Base layer is essential for this type of sailing. You are away from normal washing facilities, you are wearing waterproof clothing for long periods and you want to keep as comfortable as possible. Cotton is an absolute no-no. It will soak up moisture and sweat and stay damp for the duration of the trip.

The options are a crew or zip neck top and leggings. They are made in a thermal stretch fabric woven in a two yarn "bi-polar" system to enhance moisture vapour management. You'll find the fabric moves moisture away from the skin and traps air in the weave to keep you warm. It is also very quick drying.

Page 22 Gill catalogue 2003 Gill Base layer

Offshore sailing

Mid Layer

This is the insulating layer. Being away for long periods, including night sailing, there is no doubt you will need it at some point. Even in the middle of summer it is cold on the 0200-0600 watch. The mid layer follows the 'no cotton' rule and is fleece based.

The options are i4 fleece jacket or smock and salopette or the micro fleece toasty top and pant. You might even want to consider both. In extremely cold conditions the micro fleece can be used as an additional layer or in milder conditions as the mid layer. More than one thermal top is always a good idea and the different weights give you added flexibility.

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i4 fleece, Toasty micro fleece

Waterproof layer

With Offshore sailing you could be on deck for long periods of time, and what you need is a high fleece lined collar that can give you good protection even when the hood is not up. Ideally the collar should just cover the tops of your ears. The hood should have ample adjustment. With all the flaps closed it will only be your eyes and nose exposed. There are three main options in the Offshore Cruising section and the main differences are down to cost and durability. If you are trying to limit the overall spend perhaps so you can widen the product selection, the Southern Cross range should be considered. It is made in a traditional PVC coated fabric and is not breathable. Having said that it has a very high feature level and is exceptionally durable. The Key West is made to the same specification but is in a breathable fabric.

Finally, there is the Atlantic Jacket and if offshore cruising is going to become a regular pastime, this is the one to go for. It features a higher collar and has all the adjustments mentioned above. The fabric is three layer and breathable which means it is more durable.

Page 8 Gill catalogue 2003 Offshore Waterproofs

Offshore Racing

For the Offshore Racer one significant difference is that the hot shower will not be there at the end of the day. More all round protection is needed and there could be frequent night passages where it can be pretty cold at two AM sitting on the rail as you beat into a westerly gale, even in the middle of summer. Whilst weight is important the usage is likely to be more arduous than inshore sailing so durability becomes more of a factor.

Type of boats

You could be racing in anything from a 20ft (check) Mini Transat boat to an open 60 or more. The one thing that they all have in common is they are wet, very wet, and they will be driven hard whichever direction the race takes you.

Duration

You could be on anything from an overnight race to Cherbourg to a Fastnet or more. Typically races of two to ten days

Base Layer

A base layer is essential for this type of sailing when you are away from normal washing facilities, you are wearing water-proof clothing for long periods and you want to keep as dry next to the skin as possible. As covered in the Offshore cruising section, the base layer garments are made in a thermal stretch fabric woven in a two yarn "bi-polar" system to enhance moisture vapour management. You'll find the fabric moves moisture away from the skin and traps air in the weave to keep you warm. It is also very quick drying. Forget cotton. It will soak up moisture and sweat and stay damp for the duration of the trip.

Page 22 Gill catalogue 2003 Gill Base layer

Offshore Racing

Mid Layer

When it comes to mid layer garments, you are looking for extra warmth and also something that gives you flexibility. Most skippers put a limit on the gear you can take with you so a garment needs to do as many jobs as possible. The Crosswind shelled fleece jacket and salopette does exactly that. It is warm, windproof and water-resistant and in some conditions can be worn on its own. If weight, space and budget permits I would also go for the Toasty top for additional flexibility. It is a heavy base layer or light mid layer whichever way you look at it.

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Mid Layer, Toasty micro fleece

Waterproof layer

When offshore racing you could be on deck or on the rail for long periods of time, and what you need is a high fleece lined collar that can give you good protection even when the hood isn't up. Ideally the collar should just cover the tops of your ears. And the hood should have ample adjustment. With all the flaps closed it will only be your eyes and nose exposed. The best choice is the Atlantic Jacket. It features a higher collar and more adjustable hood than most other garments and the fabric is a three layer fabric which means it is more durable.

If budget permits there is no reason why you should not use the Ocean Racer range featured in the next section.

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Offshore Waterproofs

For further information on your product selection contact the Gill Technical Clothing Specialist on 01159 460844
Or e-mail TCS@gilluk.com
Or visit www.gillmarine.com/

Offshore Racing



Pro-Choice



Ross Hobson

Winner of the 2002 Round Britain and Ireland Race

Ross has been associated with Gill since 1998 (check). By day he is a senior Lecturer in Orthodontics at Newcastle Dental School. He has been sailing since boyhood and racing offshore competitively since he was teenager. He has won the Round Britain and Ireland Race twice plus many other Multihull Grand Prix races. I have sailed with Ross for a day during Cowes Week and the boat is exceedingly wet and very fast and makes my National 12 seem very tame in comparison.

Ross's kit bag contains:

Base Layer

"Gill base layer crew neck and trousers in for wearing in all conditions. The main issue is not to wear any cotton underneath as it totally negates the breathable system."

Mid Layer

"Crosswind jacket and salopette. In warm conditions, only the salopette."

Waterproof Layer

"Atlantic Trousers and Keelboat Smock. Worn in almost all conditions - only removed when wind is light or flat water - Mollymawk is very wet when powered up!"

Offshore Racing

Footwear

"Breathable boots with gaiters. No socks unless very, very cold".

Gloves

"Warm - short fingered Regatta gloves. Cold - long fingered Regatta gloves when sail handling. When helming in cold conditions- Helmsman's gloves"

Head gear

"Base layer hat or fleece hat (both when cold)"

How important is the actual weight of the gear?

"Low - main importance is keeping the water out - especially at leg/boot, neck and cuffs".

What is your favourite bit of kit?

"Gill Breathable boots - Rolls Royce, the dog's B*****'s etc - I would not go to sea without them"

"A close second is my Gill Fleece Blanket - magic for sleeping under when on standby in the wet berth with full kit on "

Offshore Racing

Offshore Product Selector

	Base Layer	Mid layer	Waterproof		Footwear	Accessories
Offshore	Crew Neck	i4 Jacket	Southern Cross	A,J	Tall Boot	Deckhand Glove A
	Zip neck	i4 smock	Key West	A,F	Short Boot	Helmsman Glove A
	Leggings	i4 Salopette	Atlantic	A		Hats & Balaclavas
		Toasty Top				Holdalls
Racing		Toasty Pants				
	Crew Neck	Crosswind Jacket	Atlantic	A	Tall Boot	Regatta Glove A
	Zip neck	Crosswind Salopette	Ocean Racer	A	Boot Gaiter	Championship Glove A
		Leggings				Hats & Socks
					Holdalls	Sailing watch

A denotes all seasons

W denotes warm conditions

F denotes Female specific sizes available

J denotes Junior sizes available