

Framed Boat Ply Cutout Guide

I get a lot of letters from people asking why I don't give them the exact sizes to cut out the plywood for framed hulls. Well, it's not only me but no designer of framed hulls can ever, nor should they ever tell you exactly what size to cut out the plywood. If you build each rib within plus or minus 1/8" and locate them precisely within plus and minus 1/8" the plywood planking can vary by as much as 2"! It's probably more likely that most of these dimensions will vary by a good deal more than that. I'd say if a builder gets within 1/2" he's probably doing a pretty good job on his boat. This means that the plywood planking shape can vary between one hull and the other by as much as 6". It doesn't make any sense to try to cut this out beforehand.

The correct way to cut out the plywood is to first frame the hull. Put all elements in-place, glued and fastened so that the precise hull size and shape is fully established:



The boats framing is then used as the only reliable pattern to cut out the plywood covering. This is done by clamping the plywood in place where you wish to locate it on the framing as shown here:



You then trace around the framing onto the plywood with a pencil being sure to cut it a little oversized to make sure you get full coverage of the area. Then remove the plywood and cut it out along the lines you drew.

Once you cut out the plywood, you can then glue and screw it into place.

The extra material left projecting over the edges of the framing is easily removed with a rasp, sander or angle grinder to make the edges precisely align with the framing below:



Wherever there are joints abutting, a butt block must be installed. These are 6" wide, made from the same thickness of stock as the plywood sides themselves and fitted on the inside from frame element to frame element (usually from chine log to sheer clamp.) These are then glued and placed straddling the

joint on the inside. Screws are then run through the hull from the outside into the butt block to secure it in-place until the adhesive cures fully:

