



## Course programmes

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During the school summer holidays the Skye Sailing Club runs its Summer Sailing School which takes the format of a 4 days learn to sail course. During each of these weeks' participants aged 10 to 16 work their way through the RYA youth syllabus stage 1 to 4. The group of 12 is split into smaller classes where they work towards their next certificate.

RYA youth stages can be completed in less time; however we find that the 4 day format allows more time to practise skills and build water confidence delivering more competent sailors.

The course program assumes perfect conditions, however it can easily be modified to suit the weather.

### Stage 1 | Beginners

#### Day One | Morning

- The participants will be assigned an instructor for the full course who will offer a introduction to the club including the key points highlighted in the Instructor Safety Briefing checklist.
- It is time to get kitted up in a wetsuit, cag top and buoyancy aid.
- The instructor will now introduce one of our larger more stable boats such as the Laser Bahia or RS Quest.
- Time to head down the slip way, participants are encouraged to help control the heavy boat down to the water, yet the instructor will steer the trailer.
- The sails will be hoisted by the instructor and boat made ready to sail.
- Time for the first sail.
- Participants will start to understand where they can sit to help balance the boat.
- Participants can take turns controlling the jib sail adjusting how tight it is, cleating it off, and switching tack.

#### Day One | Afternoon

- Back out in the larger boat with their instructor who continues to do most of the work to sail the boat.
- As the afternoon progresses it is time to have a go at steering using the tiller extension.
- The instructor will give each participant go's at steering between two named markers.
- If things keep going well a basic tack will be introduced where the new sailor simply sits still and steers to complete the tack while the other crew move to balance the boat.
- Towards the end of the session confident new sailors will be encouraged to take part in a controlled capsizes. This is completed near to the shore by the slipway. The instructor will brief the crew beforehand so they know what to do and what to expect.  
Any less confident sailors will have the option to watch from the safety boat, often seeing the fun which can be had is enough to have a go next time.
- Time to head into the slip way. The instructor will take down the sails and show how to use the launching trolley to recover the boat.

- Once the boat is put away there will be time for a swim by the slipway, which is closely monitored by their instructor. This 'play' time is important; as it allows the chance to get used to being in cold water and gain confidence in the wetsuit and buoyancy aid.

### **Day Two | Morning**

- Starting the day with some land-based drills on the large dinghy they are now familiar with to learn the basics of the full tack.
- Once ready to go on the water the larger dinghy can be rolled down the slipway and rigged by the instructor. The instructor should mention the importance of pointing the boat into the wind while rigging and should talk through what they are doing and point out the names of the relevant boat parts.
- Once on the water the instructor will sail the boat with the help from their willing crew for the first half an hour and take this time to demonstrate pointing the boat into the wind to control speed and stop.
- Once settled back into a course across the wind between two named points to steer to, the instructor will hand over the tiller to the young sailors to steer and have a go at tacking using the skills from the land based drill earlier.

### **Day Two | Afternoon**

- The goal for the afternoon is to sail to Camas Ban as that makes a safe and fun location to learn more about capsizing.
- On route in the larger dinghy the instructor will talk more about wind direction and the route needed to make it to the beach.
- The young sailors can take turns at steering while on route to the beach.
- Once at Camas Ban the group will be allowed time to play and swim under close supervision.
- When ready to sail. The boat will be waded out to waist depth, where the Instructor can pull the boat over to capsize and then talk through the steps for a safe capsize recovery. In the controlled shallow location, the sailors should be encouraged to try some of the steps to recover the boat.
- After the shallow water capsize the boat can be taken in to deeper water off the beach to practise the capsize drill. The safety boat will be close to hand and any nervous sailor can watch from the safety boat.
- Head for home!

### **Day Three | Morning**

- Today it is time to introduce single handed sailing in Toppers.
- The instructor will encourage the participants to help take the Topper dinghies down to the shore where there will be a briefing and demonstration of how to rig a topper.
- The sailors will then be asked to have a go at rigging their boat. The Instructor and assistant will be on hand to help and check each boat.
- A race mark will be laid maybe 50m off the shore and directly across the light wind.
- The instructor will pull a boat out on the water and explain how to get the dagger board and the rudder down, then demonstrate how to get in the boat and to set off for the mark.
- It will then be the turn of the sailors to have a go under the direct supervision of the instructor or assistant who will be in the boat with the sailor for the first few turns. The goal is to tack around the mark and get back to the shore.

- With confidence growing the Instructor will stay on the shore and wade while helping the sailors.
- Eventually all sailors will be in their own boat, with the Instructor becoming the inshore race mark to turn around.
- A second race mark can be introduced beyond the first but still across the wind.
- To finish the morning session the instructor must be back on the shore to help catch boats as they come in for lunch.

### **Day Three | Afternoon**

- Remaining in Toppers with each sailor in their own boat, but the assistant can jump in and out of boats to help any struggling sailor.
- A shallow water demonstration of Topper capsize will be given.
- A reminder of how to leave the shore will be given and then all boats will head out to follow the leader on a cross wind course.
- The Instructor in the lead boat will aim to keep boats in a basic line and set when to tack.
- Towards the end of the session if the sailors have not already accidentally capsized they will be encouraged to try a capsize.
- When coming ashore the instructor must make it back first to then be available to catch boats, as young sailors often forget to stop.

### **Day Four | Morning**

- Back in the larger dinghy with the Instructor. The sailors will be encouraged to help rig the boat and answer questions on the boat part names.
- Once on the water the participants will take turns at steering and being the captain. The captain will order the crew of when to tack and when to pull in the sails. The instructor will be on hand to make corrections if needed.
- The goal for the sail is to have lunch on Camus Ban beach.
- After some practice at tacking and stopping the boat, the crew can set course for the beach.

### **Day Four | Afternoon**

- After lunch at the beach it has been traditional at the club to play a game of beach rounders with all sailors and staff.
- After rounders all boats will agree on a fun race home, where the instructors must do as little as possible. This often includes a capsize once nearer the slipway.