



Course programmes

During the school summer holidays the Skye Sailing Club runs it's 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 2 | Beginners

Day One | Morning

- The participants will be assigned an instructor for the full course who will offer an introduction to the club including the key points highlighted in the Instructor Safety Briefing checklist.
- As a returning sailor it would now be hoped that they would own their own wetsuit, however the instructor will ensure they are appropriately dressed for sailing using club kit including a wetsuit, cag top and buoyancy aid.
- The instructor will rig one of the larger dinghies such as the Quest or Bahia. While rigging they should ask the sailors to name the different boat parts, to see what they can remember.
- 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.
- Once launched, the instructor should explain the importance of holding the painter and letting the boat swing to face the wind.
- Time for the first sail of the course with the instructor onboard (3 sailors and 1 instructor er boat).
- The instructor will encourage the crew to help with balancing the boat and work the jib.
- Towards the end of the session participants will be asked to take their go at the helm. The instructor will retain control of the main sheet and be close to hand to help correct any steering mistakes.

Day One | Afternoon

- Before heading out on the water the instructor will introduce and demonstrate the full tacking method using the tiller extension and the main sheet. With the boat on the launching trailer each participant will take turns at trying the method under the direct support of the instructor.
- Once ready, the boat can be launched and can head out. The instructor will helm the boat while leaving the shore, but will ask the sailors to do more to help, including putting down the centre board and rudder.
- The instructor will ask the safety boat crew to lay 2 marks across the wind maybe 100m apart. The boat will be steered between the 2 marks, sailors will take turns trying the tacking

method. After some time practicing, it would be hoped that each sailor would make it around the marks most of the time while attempting the full tacking method.

- Towards the end of the session confident sailors will be encouraged to take part in a controlled capsize. 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 slipway.
- 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

Topper Day!

- The day will start by taking out the Toppers from the boathouse and use the launching trollies to take the boats down to the waters edge. Sailors will be encouraged to help as much as possible.
- The instructor will gather the group and demonstrate how to rig a Topper.
- Next a demonstration of where to sit and how to hold the controls.
- Once ready the instructor will demonstrate how to launch the boat and then the importance of holding the painter to allow the boat to swing to the face the wind.
- A mark will be laid around 50m offshore and across the wind.
- Sailors will be helped by the instructor to leave the shore, with the goal of tacking around the mark and heading back in to be cot by the instructor. Less confident sailors can be joined in the boat by an assistant instructor, however the sailor will be asked to take the helm.
- As the session progresses a second mark can be introduced further out but still across the wind and the sailors can aim to tack around each mark without coming back to the shore.
- Towards the end of the session the instructor must be back at the shore to help catch the returning Toppers.
- Participants will then be shown how to rap up the sail to leave the boat over lunch.

Day Two | Afternoon

- Still sailing Toppers, the sailors will be asked to have a go at rigging the boats. The instructor will be on hand to help and check each boat.
- Before sailing the instructor will again show how to hold the painter to allow the boat to swing to face the wind. Then extend the example to explain what is meant by 'In Irons'. The instructor should offer tips to get out of irons. Such as pushing the boom away.
- The instructor can now help each sailor leave the shore by pointing the boat out, putting down the rudder and dagger board and getting in on the windward side to immediately balance the boat.
- The instructor can leave last in their own Topper and start a 'follow my leader'. Sailors will be encouraged to 'get in line' on a cross-wind course.
- As the follow my leader session continues sailors will be asked to control their speed by pulling in, letting out their sail or turning towards the wind a little.

- Towards the end of the session the group will head into the shore (instructor first to help catch boats).
- Once together the instructor should demonstrate a capsize in shallow water and explain how to right the boat. By this stage there will have been some accidental capsizes already, but each of these will have been assisted by the safety boat.
- Each sailor will be asked to have a go at righting the boat while in shallow water while being assisted by the instructor.

Day Three | Morning

- The day will start with a short theory session offering an introduction to the 'five essentials' and the different directions we can sailing (no go zone).
- With the help of the instructor the group will rig a larger dinghy (Quest or Bahia).
- The instructor will set a challenge for the crew to get to an upwind mark using the sailing directions discussed in the theory session and using the zig-zag idea to make it there. The instructor will be onboard, but the sailors must try and do most things.
- Towards the end of the session the instructor will set a new challenge of trying to stop the boat near a mooring ball by turning into the no-go zone and letting out the sails.
- If successful at stopping for a few attempts, then the instructor can allow the sailors to take the boat to the shore and aim to stop before hitting. The instructor will be ready if things don't go well.
- Once ashore the sails can be taken down.

Day Three | Afternoon

- After lunch another short theory session will cover knots (round turn and two and half hitches, reef knot) and an intro the rules of the road (port & starboard) and windward & leeward.
- The sailors will again head out for a similar challenge as to the morning's session, to make it upwind to a target mark with the instructor on board but letting the sailors do most jobs. The instructor can introduce the idea of pinching to help find the edge of the no go zone.
- To practice stopping and put the new knot in to use, a challenge to stop and tie to a mooring can be set.
- Finally, before heading in a deliberate capsize can be done.
- Once upright the boat can head for shore.

Day Four | Morning

- The goal for the day is to sail to and have lunch on Camus Ban beach, with the assumption it is a relatively easy cross wind course.
- The instructor will lead the group with a briefing to discuss the wind direction in relation to the beach from the boathouse and draw out the ideal course on the blackboard. It will be discussed how the '5 essentials' can be applied to achieve the course. Wind direction in relation to both leaving and arriving (onshore / offshore) will also be considered.
- Toppers will be taken out and rigged with the help of the instructor.
- Once the group are ready the instructor will help each sailor leave the shore in their Topper.
- The instructor can choose to either sail a Topper or support the group from a rib as they set off for Camus Ban.

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 the instructor will brief the Topper group on the return route. Adding in a couple of extra challenges.
- Once back on the boat house side of the bay each sailor will be challenged to deliberately capsize their topper, right the boat and then tie up to a mooring ball. This could be a race.
- Once the challenge is complete the boats will head for shore.