



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 3 | Improvers

Day One | Morning

- An instructor will be assigned to the group of sailors who will be working to achieve the Stage 3 certificate. It would be hoped by this stage the sailors would be attending regular club sessions and have had plenty of practice since completing the Stage 2 the previous summer.
- The instructor will check each sailor is appropriately dressed wearing their own wetsuit and cag top. A club buoyancy aid will be provided.
- Toppers will be taken out and the sailors will be asked to take the boats down to the water's edge and rig them ready to sail. This offers a good chance to see what each sailor can remember as the instructor will check each boat before sailing.
- Before heading out the instructor will brief the group with the goal of reaching an upwind mark and offer a few tips for leaving the shore including getting in on the windward side and aiming to point the boat in the right direction before getting in.
- The instructor can either choose to sail a Topper or follow the group from a rib. The basic challenge of getting upwind and around a mark is a great way to assess the ability of each sailor and identify any mistakes needing addressed.

Day One | Afternoon

- Before heading back out in Toppers. The instructor will lead a theory session covering a more detailed look at the 5 essentials asking the sailors to name them and offer a basic explanation as to how they are applied.
- Before heading back out on the water the instructor will do some land drills on the tacking method to try and tidy up a few bad habits which are likely to have developed.
- Heading back out, the instructor will set 2 marks maybe 100m apart across the wind to tack around and practice the points highlighted in the land drill.
- The group will head ashore for a new briefing where the instructor will formally introduce gybing and demonstrate the method. By this stage the sailor is likely to have gybed a good few times by mistake.

- Back on the water the group will try gybing around the cross wind 2 mark course. As the session continues the instructor can mix it up by changing the mark to be rounded between a tack or gybe.
- The group will head ashore and de-rig and put the boats away for the day.

Day Two | Morning

- The day will start with a shore-based theory session covering the 'points of sail' and how the 5 Essentials can be applied to each named direction.
- Next some larger dinghies such as the RS Quests will be rigged under the supervision of the instructor.
- The instructor will demonstrate how the tacking and gybing method should be applied on these larger boats.
- After a briefing on the goal for an upwind - downwind course where the boats must tack and gybe the sailors will launch the boats and head on the water (two sailors per boat) with the help of the instructor to get away from the shore effectively.
- The instructor will offer tips and manage the group from a rib.
- The morning session will end with the instructor challenging the sailors to pick up a visitor mooring, where the boat will be left with the sails down over lunch.

Day Two | Afternoon

- Before heading back out to the moored dinghies the instructor will lead a theory session formally introducing the techniques needed to pick up a mooring and come alongside a moored rib. And how these skills can be applied to stop the boat to pick up a man overboard.
- The sailors will be taken back out to the moored dinghies in the rib and asked to start pulling the sails back up. The importance of keeping the rudder blade out the water until ready to leave the mooring will be highlighted.
- Once back sailing the boats will take turns at picking up a mooring and coming along side the rib where the instructor will be supervising and offering tips.
- Towards the end of the afternoon the sailors will be invited to try an intentional capsize with the supervision of the instructor from the rib. This allows the sailors the chance to deal with the capsize of a larger dinghy without having the instructor in the boat doing the hard work for them. If needed help can be given from the instructor in the rib by lifting the mast from the water.
- Before heading in the sailors will be reminded that they must unclip the rudders and once near the shore should aim to stop the boat by turning into the wind.

Day Three | Morning

- The morning will start with a short theory session led by the instructor. Talking points will include how a sail works, onshore and offshore wind (lee shore) and terminology which once introduced should be used on board to aid clear communication between helm and crew.
- The briefing for the morning sailing session will be given highlighting the goal of sailing around a triangular course in RS Fevas. Looking for good tacking and gibing technique and clear communication on board while applying the full 5 essentials.
- Boats will be rigged and launched with the help of the instructor.
- Afloat the instructor will offer help from the rib.
- Sailors will be asked to take turns between helm and crew after each lap of the course.

- Towards the end of the session sailors will be reminded that they must not hit the shore and should be stopping the boat in the shallow water by turning into the wind.

Day Three | Afternoon

- Around the blackboard the instructor will start the afternoon by explaining the rules of the road and how Starboard has right of way over Port. The instructor will then draw an upwind start line and ask the sailors if they would prefer to start a race on Port tack or Starboard. With the aid of some drawing the instructor will explain the most desirable position to cross the start line on Starboard tack.
- Once the sailors understand the basics of a race start, the afternoon session will be explained. A series of very short races will be held. With an upwind start line and a single windward mark. Boats should jostle for the optimum starboard start position during the count down.
- Heading out on the water in double handers (Fevs) the sailors will practice a series of short races as explained in the shore-based briefing.

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.
- Larger Quest dinghies will be taken out and rigged with the help of the instructor.
- The instructor will 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 group on the return route. A fun race course will be set with a run to the boat start and ending in picking up a mooring by the boathouse.
- Once the race is complete the boats will head for shore.