



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 4 | Improvers

Day One | Morning

- An instructor will be assigned to the group of sailors who will be working to achieve the Stage 4 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 3 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.
- The instructor will ask the group to rig RS Favas and offer little help in extensional move to see what the sailing can remember.
- Once rigged the instructor will look over the boats and check there are no errors.
- The sailors will then be briefed on an upwind downwind course.
- The boats can be launched and can set off.
- The instructor will monitor the group from a rib and offer tips when needed. The instructor will take note of any mistakes which need addressing.

Day One | Afternoon

- The instructor will lead a theory session on the 5 Essentials asking the sailors to identify and offer a full explanation to the selected essential. This allows the instructor to really see what the sailors know. After the sailor's explanation the instructor will add more detail with drawings on the blackboard.
- The goal for the afternoon's session is to polish the tack and gybe technique. The instructor will lay a crosswind course around two marks. Sailors will take turns between helm or crew of the Feva.
- The instructor will hold off one mark in the rib and shout out tips and then a score out of 10 for each tack/gybe. The perfect manoeuvre will score 10.
- Towards the end of the session a capsize challenge can be set to capsize and completely turtle the boat. The instructor must ensure that the location is deep enough to prevent problems!
- The instructor will encourage helm and crew to work together as righting the boats from total inversion can be heavy work.

Day Two | Morning

- The day will start with a shore-based session covering weather forecasting and tides.
- A briefing will be given for sailing larger dinghies (Quests) with the goal of upwind sailing and using the tell tails for perfect course and sail setting.
- The sailors will rig and launch with the instructor checking for minor mistakes.
- An upwind course will be set and the instructor will follow in the rib with a whistle.
- Each blast of the whistle will mean the boat must be tacked where upon the sails and course must be reset for optimum performance based on the wind flow and tell tails.
- Towards the end of the morning the boats will be left on the mooring over lunch. Sails must be lowered and rudder blades lifted out the water.

Day Two | Afternoon

- The afternoon will start with a knot session. By this stage most sailors should be able to tie many of the required knots. However, the instructor can check all sailors can tie the full list and know when they should be used.
- The afternoons briefing will remind sailors of how to stop the boat by turning into the wind and how to push against the main sail to help stop or even sail backwards.
The goal will be to pick up and tie to a mooring, stop the boat along side the rib and finally have a go at man overboard. Confident sailors will be allowed to jump in, but it is not required.
- The sailors will be taken back to the boats on the moorings by the instructor in the rib.
- The boats will take turns at each picking up a mooring and coming alongside the rib. The instructor will look for accuracy on the procedures and not accept holding the mooring or rib to stop the dinghy.
- Towards the end of the session sailors will be encouraged to have a go at Man Overboard.

Day Three

- An adventure day!
The goal of the day will be to sail out of the bay and across to Inver Beach on Raasay.
Lunch will be taken with the group in the rib.
- Sailors will be briefed on the mission and encouraged to sail as a tight group, if one boat is falling behind the rest of the fleet must wait. The weather and tide will be looked at, and the distance will be measured on a chart. Safety at sea will be discussed and what should happen if the weather changes.
- Larger dinghies (Quests) will be rigged and launched by the sailors; the instructor will check for mistakes.
- Once ready the group will set off, followed by the instructor in the rib.
- At the beach the dinghies will be tied to the rib while at anchor.
- The group will explore the beach and then have lunch.
- Once ready the group will set off again for the return voyage to Portree.

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.