

Ventura Yacht Club

Youth Sailing Program Reference Guide



Providing young sailors with a safe, fun, educational learning environment through which they can develop their sailing skills to become life long sailors, dedicated to the Corinthian Spirit.

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Mission Statement

To provide young sailors with a safe, fun, educational learning environment through which they can develop their sailing skills to become life long sailors dedicated to the Corinthian Spirit.

Overview

Ventura Yacht Club is a full-service facility located on the west side of Ventura Harbor between the Ventura Harbor Village and the Channel Islands National Park headquarters. Nestled between the beach on the west, and the harbor on the east, the VYC facility offers a panoramic view of the Channel Islands and Ventura Harbor. Few yacht clubs on the west coast can boast of such a spectacular location! VYC maintains an active youth program and supports a wide variety of social activities and programs. The Ventura Yacht Club, originally known as the Ventura County Boat Club, was organized in 1938. The club was incorporated in 1940 as a non-profit organization, with an original membership of 60. The club has nurtured many youth sailing programs and has supported youths in regional and national sailing championships.

Ventura Yacht Club maintains a lively Juniors Program. In addition to the summer programs, Juniors Sundays are offered monthly to all who have graduated summer classes and are Junior Members. Racing, drills, and fun make up these Sundays and free bar-b-q lunches are always part of the routine. Regattas are also offered throughout the year, including the Optimist Fall Regatta (So Cal Opti Series). The summer sailing programs encompass a safe, educational, and fun environment. We want the kids to learn, and to have a great time while doing so. Learning sailing skills is supplemented with fun activities such as sailing to the beach or park, having picnics, going on treasure hunts, playing sponge tag, and having relay team competitions. The goal of the program is to promote good overall seamanship, racing and sailing skills, water safety, the Corinthian spirit, and have a great, fun time while doing so. While having fun, the kids will learn a wonderful sport in which they can participate for the rest of their lives. VYC maintains a quality fleet of Optimists, Sabots, Lasers, and FJs--the standard boats for youth sailing--and classes are taught by US Sailing certified instructors.

The summer classes have an average instructor-to-student ratio of 6:1, so the students receive the highest degree of attention and tailoring to their specific needs. The head instructors are US Sailing Certified Instructors, and are able to certify students through US Sailing. The program emphasizes a fun and safe learning environment. The goal of the instructors is to offer kids a safe class that is a fun, unique, and exciting way to spend the summer while learning good sailing techniques and skills. Each year we offer 4 two-week ½ day sessions: beginning sailors will meet from 8am to 12pm; intermediate/advanced will meet from 1pm to 5pm. The program is open to all sailors, ages eight to sixteen. Junior membership is required of all participants—either an Annual Membership (this includes VYC Youth Sailing Sundays as well as other events during the year) OR, for those who do not wish to participate on an annual basis or are visiting from out of town, a Two-Week Session Membership (good for 2-week Camp only). All students are required to pass a swim test on the first day of class which consists of swimming a lap across the guest dock (around 50 feet altogether), treading water for one minute, and putting on a life jacket while in the water.



Ventura Yacht Club Junior Membership

All students wishing to participate in the VYC Youth Sailing Program must have a Junior Membership. This entitles them to participate in Summer Sailing Classes as well as in all Juniors-sponsored activities, as long as the student's membership is active. A Two-Week session membership is available for a nominal fee and is good for two weeks only.

Levels

The Youth Sailing Program is open to sailors between the ages of eight and sixteen. Some exceptions may be made. We will accommodate beginners in the morning session and intermediate/advanced in the afternoon. However, "race week" is open only for sailors that have completed a minimum of two weeks during the summer session or who are at least at intermediate level.

Beginners

This class is designed for individuals who have little or no previous sailing experience. This course will focus on basic sailing skills. Students will be taught how to rig and sail US Sabots/Opties, how to tie basic knots, how to use basic sailing skills, and how to remain safe at all times on the water. It is not uncommon for individuals to take this course more than once.

Intermediate/ Advanced

This class is for individuals who have acquired good fundamental sailing skills and are interested in starting to race. This course will prepare students to compete in regattas hosted by VYC and by yacht clubs elsewhere throughout the nation. Students will learn racing tactics and techniques that will help them maximize their speed and competitive edge. Students will be taught in Sabots/Optimists, Lasers, and/or FJs, depending on the skill level of the group.

Level Determination

Each participant will be initially assigned to a group based on the information given to us by you at sign-ups. If it appears that the level seems inappropriate, the instructors will contact the parent/guardian and the sailor will be moved to the appropriate level. Each class is tailored to meet the needs and abilities of the individual students. If skills need to be refreshed (from the previous year), instructors have the right to move a student down to a lower level.

Instructors keep a filing system with the names and information (skills completed, certification dates, etc.) on all students who have attended a VYC Youth Sailing program. This enables instructors to place students in the appropriate class. It is solely up to the discretion of the instructors to place a student in a higher level without his or her having gone through the certification process. Skills may need to be reviewed if the student no longer recalls how to execute them. However, instructors will put in all possible effort to keep students in a comfortable, yet challenging learning environment.



Times

Beginning sailors start at 8am. Punctuality is extremely important. Upon arriving, students should store their gear and snacks on the designated table, gear up, and head down to the docks. Students are urged, as the week progresses, to be finished rigging by 9:45. Classes end at 12pm. We will have an assistant instructor to stay with the sailors on site during lunch for pick-up and drop off. Parents are strongly encouraged to pick up their children on time. Parents are welcome to watch their children throughout the morning from the yacht club.

Advanced/Intermediate sailors start at 1pm. Punctuality is extremely important. Upon arriving, students should store their gear and snacks on the designated table, gear up, and head down to the docks. Students are urged, as the week progresses, to be finished rigging as quickly as possible. Classes end at 5pm. Supervision is not guaranteed after this time, so parents are strongly encouraged to pick up their children on time. Parents may watch their children throughout the afternoon from the yacht club.

Certifications Offered

The Ventura Yacht Club's Juniors program is run by US Sailing Certified instructors; therefore, students may become certified via US Sailing's Small Boat Sailor Certification Record Book (a.k.a. "The Little Red Book") and the US Sailing Small Boat Performance Sailor Certification Book (a.k.a. "The Little Green Book"). US Sailing is the official National Governing Body of Sailing in the United States. It represents sailors in Olympic, government, and international organizations. The Small Boat Sailor Certification System was developed in cooperation with community sailing programs, sailing schools, sailing clubs, boat rental organizations, the sailing industry, and many US Sailing volunteers and staff. The certification provides a structured learning path for students to follow as they develop their sailing skills. By acquiring this certification, students have taken the first important step in documenting their sailing skills. US Sailing certification identifies one as having satisfactorily demonstrated certain nationally recognized basic sailing skills.

Once a student has met the requirements, he/she may obtain a validated *Official Logbook of Sailing* (through which he/she can document his/her accomplishments, certifications, and sailing experience). At the same time, a permanent record of accomplishments will be entered in the US Sailing certification data bank for future reference and safekeeping. A student may also choose, if deemed appropriate by the instructor (after having completed the Small Boat Certification), to become certified to the next level. The US Sailing Small Boat Performance Sailor Certification Book (a.k.a. "The Little Green Book") is also available for advanced students in order to obtain certification and documentation of their advanced skills. A follow-up to the popular Little Red Book, the Little Green Book allows more advanced sailors to chronicle their achievements in skills such as sailing a reach, spinnaker, sailing backwards and roll tacking. These are resources that the Ventura Yacht Club offers to students to document their achievements so that they can continue sailing throughout their lives.



Required Gear and Equipment

Students will need a US Coast Guard Certified PFD (Personal Flotation Device/ Life-jacket), sailing shoes (no flip-flops/ sandals), a towel, a change of clothes (clothes will get wet!), sunscreen, and a snack. A light jacket and swim attire are also recommended. A wetsuit may be worn during the swim test/ beach days.

Daily Preparation

For your child's safety and comfort on and off the water, the following must be brought to class every day. A cold, sunburned, hungry, tired and dehydrated child will not be having much fun. The following list should help.

What to wear or bring:

- Hat (full-brim with chin strap/tether)
- Sunglasses (with "Croakies" or other tethering system)
- Sun Block (waterproof, 30 SPF or higher)
- Closed-toed sailing shoes (Wetsuit Booties, Water Sox, and Sneakers.)
- US Coast Guard Approved Life-jacket (make sure the weight and size are appropriate)
- Swim Suit, Long Sleeve Lycra Rash Guard
- Extra pair of clothing (clothes will get wet)
- Towel
- Snack (make sure that snacks are in a seagull-safe container; i.e. cooler/zippered lunchbox)
- Plenty of Drinking water
- Any medications or health equipment (VYC instructors will not administer any medication to students unless the medication is 1) presented to the head instructor by the parent, 2) accompanied by written authorization for administration, and 3) accompanied by written directions for administration)
- Anything else you may feel necessary

Lost and Found

Please clearly mark all of your child's belongings. Many lunch and gear bags look similar. Please speak to your child about the importance of keeping track of his or her gear. All gear found from the Juniors programs will be placed in the lost and found, located in the VYC clubhouse, in the white racks, next to the postage boxes. It is solely the student's responsibility to keep track of his or her gear and lost gear is not guaranteed to be in the lost and found. Please check to make sure that your child has all of his or her belongings at the end of the day.



Juniors Sundays

Juniors Sundays take place one Sunday each month from 10 am to 3 pm. FREE lunch is served mid-day. Please bring a life jacket, appropriate clothing, and dock-safe shoes!!! Junior Sundays are offered to Annual Junior members (parents do not need to be club members), as long as they maintain an active membership. It is an excellent opportunity to have some extra practice (and fun!!!) during the summer and to keep up skills throughout the year. Summer graduates are encouraged to participate year-round.

Boat Usage Policy

Boat usage is limited to VYC Youth Sailing Committee members, VYC instructors, and VYC junior members during VYC youth sailing events/camps only. Parents are not permitted to sail boats or operate chase boats unless they are on the VYC Youth Sailing Committee. Some exceptions may be made by the Youth Sailing Chair or Head Instructor on a case-by-case basis.

Borrowing boats

Convertible, Trial, and Regular VYC Members are permitted to use designated juniors sailboats (*no power/chase boats*) provided that the members have been “checked out” by the Youth Sailing Chair or Fleet Captain. If the boat needs to be launched by the crane, the member must also be “checked out” on the crane. Boats may not be borrowed during Youth Sailing events such as regattas or during summer camp hours. Members of the Youth Sailing Team may request to **charter** boats and equipment to participate in regattas or to practice. Borrowers must agree to repair or replace any equipment that has been lost, damaged, or stolen. If you meet the above criteria and are on the Youth Sailing Committee, you may also use chase boats and/or non-designated boats for training and practice purposes. Persons under the age of 16 will never be permitted to use boats without adult supervision.

Assistant Instructor (.5's) Criteria

In order to participate as a Volunteer-Assistant Instructor, a.k.a. Point Fives, candidates must be advanced with basic racing skills and some knowledge of racing rules. They must also be active members of the VYC Youth Sailing Team. Position and responsibilities will be determined by the Juniors Chair and Head Instructor.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

(From parents)

Q: Is it all right if I pick up my child early?

A: Yes, as long as you let the Head Sailing Instructor know at the beginning of the day before class, and checks your child out with the Head Instructor.

Q: Can I go out with my child on one of the Juniors boats during Camp?

A: No—if your child is not ready to try and sail alone, he/she is not ready for Camp.

Q: Can I go on the chase boat with one of the instructors?

A: No--due to legal and safety issues, parents cannot go out on the chase boats with instructors during sessions. Parents may ask where their children will be sailing, and where the best place to view their children would be. Generally, the upper floor of the yacht club, Harbor Village, Marina Park, and the Park Service observation floor are the best spots to observe.

Q: Can my child sail with ___? Can my child be moved into this level? Can my child sail a ___?

A: VYC Instructors evaluate the abilities of the young sailors, and determine the best level, boat, and person with whom your child should sail. If there is a legitimate issue with who, what, or where your child is sailing, please bring it to the attention of the instructors. If not, please leave it to the best judgment of the instructors.

Q: Can I be on the docks helping my child rig up the boat?

A: It is best to leave your child to the care of the instructors. You can stay and watch your child, but it is requested that you allow your child to learn for his or herself.

Q: Are assignments or projects from the program mandatory?

A: No, but they do greatly aid in skill development and understanding. Therefore, it is requested that the students complete given assignments or projects.

Q: What's "Fun Friday"?

A: This is a day when the sailors get to enjoy the skills that they have learned over the past few days or weeks. It normally consists of sailing throughout the harbor, ocean, or possibly even out to the Ventura Pier or Channel Islands Harbor (for the advanced sailors). Extra activities may be provided at the discretion of the instructors which may include: ice cream at the Harbor Village, relay sailing races, scavenger hunts, sponge tag, competitions, races, swimming, etc. The goal is to give the students a good, fun, lasting impression of sailing.