

Barrington Yacht Club

Jr. Sailing Racing Guide

RACING IN OPTIMISTS, 420'S AND LASERS AT BYC

Sailing offers a competitive side that teaches many unique skills. Sailboat racing involves sportsmanship, tactical decision making, athleticism, care of equipment, and learning about wind and weather. Kids who race become better sailors, master a lifetime sport at an early age, and develop a close circle of friends.

Optimist Novice Racing or “Green Fleet” at BYC

With the right environment, instructor and approach we feel that many of the kids who have achieved a basic level of competency and maturity in previous classes would enjoy this next step. The International Optimist Dinghy is the boat that is raced by kids age 6-15 all over the world. Green Fleet is an introduction to racing with FUN and learning as primary objectives. Instructors will teach how to rig, care for and sail the Optimist. Fun games and activities will focus on learning skills and just enjoying being out in their boats with no pressure on a race result. Green Fleet Opti sailors may not necessarily have much experience with sailing in a wide range of wind conditions, however, the expectation is that they want to go out and give it a try, and are ready to be appropriately challenged by new experiences.

Opti Racing: Ages and Sizes

Children as young as 8 and as old as 15 years old race Optimists at all levels. Typically children start racing after they have taken a Beginner/Intermediate class and can sail the boat by themselves on all points of sail. At this point they are ready for the Optimist

Entry Level Racing Class (“Green Fleet”) where they learn how to rig an Optimist, care for their equipment, the proper body position in the boat, sail trim and basics about the “game” we play in sailboats. We encourage children up to age 15 to continue racing their Optimists since there is good competition on Narragansett Bay and beyond in the Optimist Class. As children improve their skills in the boat they find they can master very windy conditions and learn advanced techniques in a boat that is sized just right for them.

Can my child be too big to sail an Optimist?

Size can be a limiting factor when learning to sail and race in an Optimist. Generally speaking, we recommend that all children 12 and under learn how to sail in the Optimist. For children approaching 115 lbs., a first time sailing experience in an Opti is a little more challenging since the boat is small. For children who have been racing in an Optimist, we recommend that they stay in the boat until they reach 115 lbs. When racers stay in the boat for several years, they develop skills to move around comfortably in the boat, and can make it go fast even when it is windy. A child 12 or older who still races their Optimist may also want to take a class held in 420’s to start learning about the next boat they may sail. Please consult the Junior Sailing Chair or Program Director with regard to a recommendation for your child.

Optimist Green Fleet Regattas

The Green Fleet course is separate from the Red, White and Blue age divisions of Optimist Racing. The Green Fleet sailors stay on shore after the skipper’s meeting for their own skipper’s meeting with the Race Committee that will run their races. The Race Committee will spend extra time with the sailors on shore to make sure they understand the race course, what the marks will look like, what the sound signals will be like, etc. Coaches are always allowed to help the sailors in between races and are also

encouraged to help the sailors who need it during racing. The goal of Green Fleet is to encourage all the children and to help when necessary. Sailors may stay in Green Fleet year after year if they wish. There is no requirement to move to the next level. Sailors who clearly master the race course normally will move to the next level. The BYC coach(es) will be close by in a motorboat. Typically during lunch the BYC coach anchors and ties all the sailors up behind. All sailors receive participation awards at Green Fleet regattas, but scores are not kept, so there is no actual winner.

Optimist White, Blue and Red Fleets (Championship Fleet)

Once your child is no longer a Green Fleet sailor they will race in one big fleet with sailors ranging up to age 15. Your child will be registered in the fleet appropriate to their age but they will all race together. Sailors age 10 and under are in the White Fleet. Age 11 and 12 is Blue Fleet. Ages 13,14,15 compete in Red Fleet. Results will be recorded overall and by each Fleet (age grouping).

Optimist Team Racing

The Advanced Opti Racers occasionally team race in Optimists against other clubs on the Bay. Team Racing involves teams of 4 boats and offers the chance for the most experienced sailors to develop advanced skills. The NBYA team racing championship has not as yet been scheduled for 2012. There will be additional team racing opportunities planned by the Optimist Racing Coaches.

420 Racing at BYC

Learning to race a 420 at BYC is a great introduction to sailing a two-person dinghy with spinnaker and trapeze. 420's are used extensively in High School and College Sailing Programs. Many kids sailing at BYC in the summer have the opportunity to participate in High School sailing programs in the spring and fall and look forward to attending a college that may have a sailing team. To be a 420 racer the sailor should weigh at least 100lbs. Spinnakers and trapezes will be used at all 420 regattas. In the Fundamentals 420 class, sailors will be taught how to sail a 420 using spinnakers and trapezes. Thus, by the time a sailor reaches the 420 Race Class, they will be comfortable racing with a spinnaker and a trapeze. Coaches will match up teams of skipper and crew. NBYA regattas are good "starter" regattas for those new to the 420. There is a younger age division (both divisions start together) scored separately for sailors 14 and under. The NBYA girls' regatta is an excellent opportunity for girl only teams to have a unique learning and racing opportunity.

The BYC 420 coach will accompany sailors to the NBYA regattas. BYC owns a 420 trailer that transports up to 6 boats. Parents will be asked to assist with transporting sailors to events.

Team Racing in 420s is done with 3 boat teams and competitors do not use spinnakers or trapeze. There is an annual NBYA Team Race Championship, to which BYC sends at least one team. Participants in this event are chosen by the 420 coach.

Laser Racing at BYC

BYC does not currently have a Laser fleet, but would welcome members of the class to our program. Resources prevent us from having Lasers at this point, but if members of the program acquire

a Laser, we would make arrangements to assist a junior in participating in regattas on the bay.

The Laser Radial is based upon the same hull and equipment as the full rig Laser. The combination of a 19% smaller sail and a shorter, more flexible mast Create an excellent medium-sized rig. Everything else is unchanged. The Laser Radial is popular for women and youth sailors and is raced at club, national, and international levels. The Laser 4.7 rig features the same hull as the Laser and Laser Radial, but with a smaller sail plan that is more manageable for lighter sailors.

Mugwumps

BYC runs a junior sailing series on Wednesday nights during the sailing season. This is a perfect way to introduce a young sailor to racing before they enter the NBYA arena. This is a friendly, teaching environment where parents are able to come out and watch their children. Instructors are available to assist and encourage the sailors. Fun prizes are awarded at the end of the evening. We encourage participation and perpetual trophies are awarded at the end of the season.