

A skippers guide - For taking first timers sailing

Thanks for registering to take first timers sailing. No doubt you have taken first timers sailing before, however this guide is to help you make their first day of sailing as positive an experience as possible. By providing a great first experience there is more chance of newcomers becoming regular participants in the sport.

Greeting

- Try and be as warm and welcoming as possible when the participants arrive at the boat. Many participants will be very nervous and we need to make them feel at ease. Their assessment of the sport will be greatly influenced by the way you and your crew conduct yourselves.
- Introduce yourself and all crew, explain who will do what and who to listen to from the crew.
- Explain that phones, keys etc can fall out of pockets and offer to stow these items safely below decks until the day finishes.
- Ask if anyone has had any experience. Stress the importance that they give you an accurate account of their experience "Everyone will get a go however we need to understand everyone's experience so we know who we have to teach".
- Explain that they can do as little or as much as they want. They can get involved or sit back and watch how things work.
- Explain policies of drinks/food etc if needed.
- Basic info of the boat/interesting facts – is anything about it special, how much do sails cost, does/has your boat done the Sydney to Hobart, what racing do you participate in, normal crew numbers etc, these are all things that the participants are interested in.
- Don't yell – explain manoeuvres fully with plenty of advance notice and get regular crew to supervise everything.

Safety

- Make sure everyone is listening. "Sailing is a safe sport however things can happen very quickly and there can be very high loads involved on the boats equipment".
- Explain that the boat heels over with the force of the wind and that this is normal. Keep one hand for yourselves and one for the boat.
- Explain where and where not to hold on to, sit on the high side.
- Ask if people can swim - tell them hopefully it won't be required!
- Show them the lifejackets and where they are stored. Ask if anyone would like to wear one, encourage them if

they are a bit wary. If they say no let them know they can at any time and to let a crew person know if they want to.

- You may be racing but remember we are here for the first timers and without them the sport will not grow. Keep clear of other boats and keep tension on the boat low.

Skills

- Show the participants how to load a winch and tail etc. Try to get them to do as much as possible with a crew person supervising.
- Show the crew how to grind winches, haul sails and halyards etc as well - GET THEM INVOLVED.
- Tell the participants in general terms how a sail works and how it propels the boat forward.
- Explain the basic names of things on a boat and what they do. It will be a lot for new crew to take in, however if you keep it in terms they can understand you will maintain their interest.

Post Sailing

This is one of the most important parts of the day. If first timers are made to feel welcome they will return. If you are personally not looking for crew another boat may, so please think of these first timers as future members of your club.

- Include them in post sailing activities.
- Introduce them to other skippers who may be looking for crew.
- Do not leave them on their own.
- Ask if they have any questions.
- Provide them with as much information as possible on how to come back.
- Give them club information brochures.
- Sign them up for your clubs crew register.
- Introduce them to the Club Crew Liaison if possible.

Once again thanks for taking the time to introduce new people to our fantastic sport. If you have any questions regarding how to attract or retain crew, please contact your club sailing office or Yachting NSW.