

# HOW TO GET LOCAL ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN YOUR JUNIOR SAILING PROGRAM

Report by Gillian Thomson, Central Okanagan Sailing Association

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## Background Information

The Central Okanagan Sailing Association has been offering sailing lessons through the local school system for 13 years. This program was originally pursued due to need - COSA needed instructors! We had a couple of local sailors with CYA instructor certification who were interested in teaching sailing for our summer program, but these two young fellows were unable to make a commitment to only eight weeks of employment. They both needed to generate enough income in May, June, July, and August to pay for the following year at University. In February, 1989, rather than advertise across the country for someone who would be prepared to take the job, I decided to try and extend our program length and hire local talent. Although expanding the adult evening program to include the month of June made a lot of sense, I couldn't imagine finding enough daytime clientele while kids were still in school. There was only one obvious solution - get the kids while they're still in school.

## The First Year

The first year was designed as a pilot program - I didn't know if the idea was even feasible, and I had no models to emulate. I approached the principals of two elementary schools within bicycling distance of our club and offered them some possibilities for their students. Their response was overwhelmingly positive. I arranged an "Introduction to Sailing" for all their Grade 6 and 7 students (ages 11 and 12). The program operated as a school Field Trip, which gave the school some flexibility without looking for District Administration approval. This is not to say that Safety was not an issue; it was major.

I was able to satisfy the teacher's concerns about safety by demonstrating that we had been operating a summer program for students of the same age for many years, using two Boston Whaler Coach boats, using training boats with a proven record of success in junior programs (Flying Juniors), having two certified instructors, providing life jackets for everyone, and holding class size at 20 students per session. It was no surprise to find out that they were very impressed by the pre-requisites required for sailing instructors - lifeguard training, first aid, and National Coaching certification were strong persuaders.

A schedule was made available as follows:

- Monday to Friday - 2 sessions per day
- 9:00 am - 12:00 noon and/or 12:30 - 3:30 pm (3 hours each)
- cost \$ 10.00 per student

*The solution to providing employment for two full time instructors for three months also turned out to be the best way of promoting sailing lessons!*

In the first year, Bellevue Creek Elementary School sent 44 students for two sessions each on a trial basis, and has continued to offer this program to their students.

One other participant in our first year was Dorothea Walker Elementary School . They sent 112 Grade 6 students, and 108 Grade 7 students for a half day each. They also sent along a cheque for \$2200.00!!

The schools:

- circulated information to the parents
- registered the students and collected the money
- assigned a teacher to chaperone the students

The club:

- provided an instructor for a noon hour orientation prior to the first lesson
- arranged for the head instructor to develop a workable curriculum for the introduction to sailing
- provided excellent quality sailing lessons
- made safety a number one priority

As you can see this type of program generates a good profit while giving instructors an extended opportunity to work. It also extends awareness of the LTS program into the community. We were able to send brochures and a letter of introduction about our summer lesson program home with each student.

Feedback from the teachers involved was extremely positive. They indicated that students found the opportunity to sail a boat exciting and interesting. Typically their concept of sailing was based on pictures of large sailboats manned by many sailors. The instructors were praised, and the concept of sailing during school time was recommended by students, parents, teachers, and principals.

### **Recommendations for getting started:**

- 1) Find a contact in the school system who has a supportive attitude.
- 2) Start small - work with one or two schools while you develop your program.
- 3) Start planning as early as February or March.
- 4) Safety is a BIG issue - be prepared to deal with school concerns. Make sure a teacher always accompanies the students. In fact the best method we have found is to include the teacher in the class. Make sure a registration form is filled out and signed, but offer the teacher a complementary lesson.
- 5) Instructor flexibility and quality is important - this is a very demanding program to teach - new students every day, changing weather conditions, etc. (this is like teaching the first day of White Sail 1 to a group of 11 and 12 year olds twice a day for 2 or 3 weeks).
- 6) Liability is also an important issue. I recommend hiring only CYA certified instructors (you cannot afford to run a program of this nature without adequate liability coverage).

- 7) Allow some time for repairs before the regular summer program begins - unfortunately the lesson boats do take a bit of a beating in program of this nature.
- 8) Be sure to have students fill out evaluations forms at the end of the class. You will be surprised at the comments. I have used copies of the evaluations to promote the program to other schools.

### **Surviving the Board of School Trustees**

After such a successful beginning, I offered the program to there more elementary schools the following year. Again the response was positive and the students were registered. The third year was a turning point - I distributed information about the program to all 40 elementary schools in the School District (with permission from the Communications Department). Again the response was terrific and kids arrived at the club by bus, car, or bicycle twice a day for the month of June. A few of the high schools had heard about the program and called to request information. We had a couple of *Recreation leadership* classes participate as well a *Math* class, and a group of *ESL (English as a Second Language)* students. Things were going so well that the only problem on the horizon was *instructor burnout!*

*Wrong* - a week before the first lesson of year four, a well meaning parent called a School Trustee to ask about the appropriateness of sailing lessons during classroom time. Of course the Trustee, had never heard of the program. I received a phone call the next day!

The good news is that our program survived, and came out with flying colors, even when subjected to the scrutiny of the School District Administration and the Board of School Trustees.

The Director of Instruction believed the program was very valuable - he phoned a number of the schools who had participated over the past three years for feed-back, and had personally been aware of our successes (ie William Abbot Sr. Award for Sail Training Excellence). These things were in our favor, however we had to convince the Board that sailing lessons related to the curriculum being taught at school. (Curriculum in B.C. is composed of academic development, social and emotional development and Career Development.) I enlisted some help from my friends in the school district and was able to present an acceptable package.

The other issues to be discussed were safety and liability. Without the CYA structure and support I don't believe we would have fared so well on this one. The instructor development program and the five million dollar liability package supplied by CYA were satisfactory for our school district - and boy was I happy to have them to fall back on! Hurray!! I now keep a copy of the *CYA Insurance Policy* on hand as well as a copy of our instructor's current certification levels - copies of both these documents are also sent to the School Board Office, every year.

If you are planning to get involved with a school program you will probably need to go through the process similar to the one that I just described. I don't know if you will find it possible to start by sliding in at the sidelines as we did - it will depend a lot on the structure of your school system and the decision making power of the school principal involved. It worked well for us, but I believe we could have initiated the program either way - as the Memo attached indicated, *"the program introduces students in this school district to an environmentally friendly, lifetime sport which complements our water sport*

*tourist oriented town. The broad base of practical experiences will help our young citizens to make good choices. "*

## **Program Development**

### Mobile Sailing School

At the request of one of the outlying school principals, I arranged to take our sailing school on a road trip. Six Flying Juniors and two coach boats were transported 20 miles for a week of community programming (the last week of May, prior to the start of our regular school program). I loved the idea. Three schools could have daytime lessons for their students (saving a 40 - 45 minute bus ride for each class) and evening lessons would be available for the adults in the community. A local campground had offered complementary beach and storage facilities. Basically I was to provide the sailing school and my contact in the community was to notify the other schools and arrange promotion for the evening lessons.

### My recommendations:

Be careful - I survived but:

- I abused all the club members badly by asking for volunteers to move all the boats (all day Sunday prior to the event and all day the following Saturday)
- only half the school time was booked and we weren't in a position to fill the empty spots (I should have contacted all the schools myself)
- Make sure you do your own promotion, or be sure that it has been looked after properly (the evening lessons will be something new in the area and need extra attention)

## **Class Sizes**

Due to changes in the teaching contract for our School District we are not able to take only 20 students out of one class. *We must accommodate the whole class.* This requirement caused some changes for us, but fortunately we were in a good position to make the adjustment. It is now possible at the elementary level to accommodate groups of up to 30 students at one time. We have three coach boats and three instructors available and, as well as the nine Flying Junior sailboats, we have added six Sabots to the program. Fortunately the group size at the secondary level is not as large. Generally those groups range from 12 - 18 students. 13 to 17 year olds do not appear to enjoy the Sabots the way the little guys do!!

## **Additional Programs**

### Windsurfing

In the school program last year we offered Windsurfing lessons as well as sailing lessons. This was a very popular move and offered more variety as well as an opportunity to promote our summer windsurfing program. We found we had significantly more interest from the high school (PE classes, etc.). The fee structure was the same as the sailing program. Recommendations following the first year of this new addition include:

- no more than 6 students per instructor
- encourage classes to return for more than one lesson as one three hour session on a sailboard can leave a student feeling quite frustrated
- try to rotate schedules so students can try sailing and windsurfing

### Disabled Sailing

Our club now houses a *Sunbird*- a sailboat that is specially designed to allow physically challenged sailors to sail independently. As our School District has fully integrated physically and mentally handicapped students into the regular education stream it is not unusual to find that a student in a wheelchair is part of a visiting class. We can offer that student the same *Introduction to Sailing* that we offer his/her peers.

### Rowing Lessons

We have offered Rowing Lessons as well as windsurfing and sailing for the high schools. Again, this proved to be a very popular move but required some interesting logistics. It worked best when a group of students came for more than one session. However if a group had only one session booked, the students would have to make a choice.

### **CYA Standards**

The students participating in this program currently do not achieve any CYA levels as the program is designed as an introduction only. However, I am interested in developing an option to offer White Sail 1 either in full or half day sessions. The first step is to find out what kind of interest there may be in the schools and then work out a schedule that will accommodate their needs.

### **Some Final Comments**

Our introductory program for school students has met the need for which it was established. We have been able to offer an extra month and a half of work to the sailing instructors employed by our club.

However, the other "fringe" benefits of the program are also worthy of consideration.

- increased exposure for the summer program in the community (many parents come down to watch and assist the teacher with chaperone duties)
- more opportunities for students who would typically be excluded from a sailing program (ie students without the resources to pay for a summer program, students whose parents are working and cannot arrange travel to and program a summer program)
- an opportunity for goodwill within the community (I always offer a complementary lesson if the class has a student who would be prevented from attending because of finances)
- many of the students return for the summer lessons

We have found it helpful to:

- encourage classes to come back for more than one session

- encourage teachers and/or parents to drop down and tour the facility anytime (they are naturally concerned about their children and need an opportunity to have as much information as possible)
- offer an opportunity for groups to stay and have a picnic (before or after their lesson)
- include a Rainy Day Policy (you must decide if lessons will be re-scheduled in the event that the weather conditions are poor - we were flexible initially but found that we needed to have a rain or shine commitment)
  - book an orientation session at the school a couple of days prior to the lessons (this is beneficial if a number of classes are participating from one school, but not very practical for one class only).

### **Current Situation**

We now offer full day (9am-320pm) introductions for \$15 per student, and we also take a full class of 30 students- using three instructors and three coach

### **Current Statistics**

On average our Introduction to Sailing and Windsurfing for Schools involves 700students and generates approximately \$7000in a little over five weeks - we leave 3 or 4 days open for boat repairs and preparation before the start of the summer program.

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Email [cosa@okanagan.net](mailto:cosa@okanagan.net)

**STUDENT REGISTRATION**

**Introduction to Sailing**

**Student Registration Form – 2002**

**Central Okanagan Sailing Association**

4220 Hobson Road, Kelowna, BC V1W 1Y3

Phone 250-764-2203 Fax 250-764-5162

Email [cosa@okanagan.net](mailto:cosa@okanagan.net) Website [www.cosa.bc.ca](http://www.cosa.bc.ca)

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
Medical Problems: \_\_\_\_\_ Care Card: \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction to Sailing**

- Cost is \$10 per student for a half day (3 hours); \$15 per student for a full day (5 hours)
- Taught by Canadian Yachting Association certified instructors
- All equipment is supplied (2-3 person sailboats, lifejackets, etc.)
- Students should be in Grade 5 or older
- A teacher must accompany the students
- All classes run “rain or shine”
- The COSA facility is located on the City of Kelowna bus route
- Students must bring: shoes that can get wet (not sandals); extra set of dry clothes; a warm jacket

**Educational Suitability**

- The knowledge, skills, and lifetime learning experiences taught in this “Introduction to Sailing” are consistent with those offered in P.E., Recreation Leadership, and Lifetime Sports courses.
- Students will learn about the importance of water safety and the need to work together while learning to rig and sail a small sailboat.
- Information will be shared about wind, water conditions, and weather systems.
- Specific skills introduced include knot tying, boat rigging, tacking, gybing, docking, sail folding.
- The program introduces students in this School District to an environmentally friendly lifetime sport that complements our water sport/tourism oriented town. A broad base of practical experiences will help our young citizens to make good lifestyle choices.

**RELEASE**

In consideration of acceptance of this application for my son/daughter being able to take part in this course, I agree to save harmless and keep indemnified the Central Okanagan Sailing Association and the Board of School trustees of SD23 (Central Okanagan), its organizers, and their respective agents, officials, servants, and representatives from and against all claims, actions, costs, expenses, and demands in respect to death, injury, loss, or damage to his/her person or property, howsoever caused, arising out of or in connection with his/her taking part in this course notwithstanding that the same may have been contributed to or caused or occasioned by the negligence of the same bodies, or any of them, or their agents, officials, servants, or representatives. I further understand that this release is binding upon myself, my heirs, executors, and assigns, excepting, however, any and all suits and claims arising out the independent negligence of the Central Okanagan Sailing Association.

I acknowledge also that this course is a field trip within the meaning of the Field Trip Authorization that I have previously given to the School District. I have read the above release and agree to abide by those conditions.

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction to Sailing/Windsurfing Student Registration Form - 2000

Central Okanagan Sailing Association  
4220 Hobson Road, Kelowna, BC V1W 1Y3  
Phone 764-2203 Fax 764-5162

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School: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
Medical Problems: \_\_\_\_\_ Care Card: \_\_\_\_\_

### Introduction to Sailing

- Cost is \$10 per student for a half day (3 hours); \$15 per student for a full day (5 hours)
- Taught by Canadian Yachting Association certified instructors
- All equipment is supplied (2-3 person sailboats, lifejackets, etc)
- Students should be in Grade 5 or older
- A teacher must accompany the students
- All classes run "rain or shine"
- The COSA facility is located on the City of Kelowna bus route
- Students must bring: shoes that can get wet (not sandals); extra set of dry clothes; a warm jacket

### Educational Suitability

- The knowledge, skills, and lifetime learning experiences taught in this "Introduction to Sailing" are consistent with those offered in P.E., Recreation Leadership, and Lifetime Sports programs.
- Students will learn about the importance of water safety and the need to work together while learning to rig and sail a small sailboat.
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In consideration of acceptance of this application for my son/daughter being able to take part in this course, I agree to save harmless and keep indemnified the Central Okanagan Sailing Association and the Board of School Trustees of SD23 (Central Okanagan), its organizers, and their respective agents, officials, servants, and representatives from and against all claims, actions, costs, expenses, and demands in respect to death, injury, loss, or damage to his/her person or property, howsoever caused, arising out of or in connection with his/her taking part in this course notwithstanding that the same may have been contributed to or caused or occasioned by the negligence of the same bodies, or any of them, or their agents, officials, servants, or representatives. I further understand that this release is binding upon myself, my heirs, executors, and assigns, excepting, however, any and all suits and claims arising out of the independent negligence of the Central Okanagan Sailing Association.

*I acknowledge also that this course is a field trip within the meaning of the Field Trip Authorization that I have previously given to the School District. **I have read the above release and agree to abide by those conditions.***

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Introduction to Sailing/Windsurfing

## Class Registration Form/Invoice - 2000

### Central Okanagan Sailing Association

4220 Hobson Road, Kelowna, BC V1W 1Y3

Phone 764-2203 Fax 764-5162

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School: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Scheduled Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Students for Sailing: \_\_\_\_\_ /30 Windsurfing: \_\_\_\_\_ /8

**Total cost:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Registration

- Cost is \$10 per student for a half day (3 hours); \$15 per student for a full day (5 hours)
- Students should be in Grade 5 or older
- A teacher must accompany the students
- Completed student registration forms are required for all participants. Students without a completed form will be unable to sail.
- Questions can be directed to Gillian Thomson 764-1104 or the Head Instr. at COSA 764-2203

### Introduction to Sailing

- Sailing - 2-3 person sailboats (30 students max.)
- Windsurfing – available only as arranged with the Head Instructor (8 students max.)
- All classes run “rain or shine”
- Taught by Canadian Yachting Association certified instructors
- Lifejackets provided. Changerooms available.
- The COSA facility is located on the City of Kelowna bus route
- Students must bring: shoes that can get wet (not sandals); extra set of dry clothes; a warm jacket

### Educational Suitability

- The knowledge, skills, and lifetime learning experiences taught in this “Introduction to Sailing” are consistent with those offered in P.E., Recreation Leadership, Lifetime Sports, and CAPP.
- Students will learn about the importance of water safety and the need to work together while learning to rig and sail a small sailboat.
- Information will be shared about wind, water conditions, and weather systems.
- Specific skills introduced include knot-tying, boat rigging, tacking, gybing, docking, sail folding.
- This program introduces students in this school district to an environmentally friendly lifetime sport that complements our water sport/tourism oriented town. A broad base of practical experiences will help our young citizens to make good lifestyle choices.

Important Reminder -- Students must bring shoes that can get wet (not sandals), an extra set of dry clothes, a warm jacket