

## 2020 Junior Sailing Frequently Asked Questions

For those of you who have ventured to the “junior sailing program” tab on the Yacht Club web site may have noticed that the summer sailing program’s class descriptions look a little different this year. We have worked hard to make changes that we hope will provide our junior sailors with more opportunity to maximize sailing time, learn the fundamentals, and of course have fun. I am very proud of the work we’ve done and the opportunities we have created for our sailors in 2020. We have put together a question and answer forum to help everyone choose what class is right for their sailor. If you have further questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me at [juniorsail@tayc.com](mailto:juniorsail@tayc.com).

*Q: I notice that all of the Sail School class titles have changed, how do I know what to sign my sailor up for?*

A: Yes, we have updated our courses, their content, the sessions, and the titles to reflect the changing nature of busy schedules and youth sports while still delivering a solid product which will maximize learning sailing fundamentals, fun, and time on the water. To put it simply...

**Sea Squirts** (ages 6-7) Goal: Maximize fun, learn the basics, love the water, want to return to learn more- smile and laugh often.

**Overboard Optis** aka Beginner Opti (age 8-10) Goal: Learn the fundamentals, be able to sail “out and back”- smile and laugh often.

**Junior Jibers** aka Intermediate Opti (age 10-13) Goal: Expand on the fundamentals, be able to sail “out and back” with confidence and style- smile and laugh often.

*Q: Last year Opti Green Fleet was the only option after Sailors in Motion (beginner Opti), what happened to that?*

A: Only having Green Fleet racing presented a conundrum for parents, sailors, and instructors. Some sailors wanted to race, some did not. Some parents wanted to travel to events, some did not. The instructors tried to balance all the needs, but sometimes fell short. In response, we created Junior Jibers which is a non-racing focused class. This class will focus on the fundamentals of sailing and having fun. It is a place where racers and non-racers alike can go to improve upon what they learned in “beginner” Opti and apply these new skills to whatever type of sailing they choose. However, for the week leading up to the Tred Avon Junior Regatta, July 21<sup>st</sup>, there will be a racing focus and our hope is that everyone enrolled will join the Green Fleet and race in that event in order to give racing a try.

*Q: Okay, so you have Junior Jibers which is non-racing, but my sailor wants to race and is not ready for the Opti Race Team, what should I do?*

A: The plan is that you would enroll your sailor in Junior Jibers to get the skills needed for boat handling and sail trim, and additionally sign them up for Opti Green Fleet Racing which is an “add on” to Junior Jibers. In addition to Junior Jibers which is Monday – Thursday we will have one racing practice a week on Friday mornings and will receive coaching during the evening summer series. The evening summer series is a racing series running once a week for the whole

summer. Then toward the end of the summer when confidence and skills are at their highest, there will be three regattas the team will attend. Both TAYC regattas and one away regatta in August will be on the schedule. By combining Junior Jibers and Green Fleet the sailor will get plenty of the fundamentals and an introduction to racing with practice and coaching.

*Q: Last year Opti Green Fleet went to seven regattas, this year there are three, why the big change?*

A: This is a good but complicated question. First, Tred Avon has one of the best spots on the bay to sail. We want to spend time here taking advantage of that! After a review of the program last year, it was found that The Green Fleet was spending at least a day a week, sometimes more loading and unloading boats to go to events where often times they only had a few hours of racing. Rather than spending valuable practice time loading and unloading boats, we will be sailing and building skills. I would argue that our sailors will be sailing more than the clubs that travel to every event. Further, by taking advantage of the summer series and practicing each Friday sailors will be racing often in the comfort of our own back yard. Long story short, more time on the water means better sailors! Second, Green Fleet racing is not meant to be a place where sailors spend years. It is meant to be a place where they get their feet wet, learn the ropes, and move on to Red White and Blue. We realize that everyone doesn't necessarily adhere to this philosophy but in the long run, we feel it is better for our sailors.

*Q: Okay, my sailor was in Opti Green Fleet last year and wants to do all the regattas, what should I do?*

A: If your sailor did Green Fleet last year, loves racing and can't get enough then they should join the Opti Race Team. They will practice every day and do many regattas. The team is even going Opti Nationals for a week in Virginia this summer! But, if your sailor is on the fence, likes racing but doesn't want to focus on it all the time, or struggles to maintain the focus needed to engage in the racing team 100%, then Junior Jibers / Opti Green Fleet or 420 Green Fleet is the place for them. Also, if you really want your sailor to race but they are hesitant or resistant, this might be a great compromise!

*Q: I notice that you have a 420 Green Fleet in addition to Optis, what is this all about?*

A: The 420 Green Fleet is for those Opti sailors that might be thinking about moving up into a doublehanded boat, or for sailors that feel they have outgrown an Opti but aren't ready to join the 420 Race Team. If your sailor is over 100 pounds, has 3 years of sailing, and a desire to compete- this might be the right class. The class will run concurrently with the Opti Green Fleet so you can't sign up for both. It is totally appropriate for a sailor to do Junior Jibers and 420 Green Fleet as long as they fit the requirements above. It is also appropriate for a sailor on the Opti Race Team who wants some exposure to 420s to enroll in 420 Green Fleet, though there might be some scheduling conflicts for your family to work through.

*Q: Why are the Sea Squirts sailing in 420s and not in Optis or Ideals?*

A: The truth is six and seven-year-olds aren't really appropriate to sail in Optis by themselves. Sailing has many abstract concepts. For example, wind is an invisible force that moves all the time at different velocities and directions and if we position our boats and sails just so, then they will move in a direction not necessarily in the same direction of the wind. This concept is difficult for young sailors to understand and has flustered many adults as well! Six and seven-year-olds are concrete thinkers and learners. We need to steer clear of the abstract. Trying to start sailing an Opti too soon is frustrating and can even lead to avoidance, which is the last thing we want. Not to mention the sitting and waiting time needed for your turn to sail in the Opti. On the other hand, Ideals are too big and unresponsive, with not enough to do. To a six-year-old they are boring! 420s are the perfect boat, they are fast and exciting. Four to five kids and an instructor can easily rig and sail the boat. Sailors can trim the jib, or main, steer, or hang from the trapeze. They can learn and have fun on this exciting boat while exploring the river and learning. Our instructors' goal is for the kids to have so much fun they beg to come back and sail the Opti when the time is right.

*Q: My seven-year-old is a fast learner and has sailed before, can I make the decision to have them in Overboard Optis?*

A: Every child is different, but the Tred Avon Yacht club is going to stick to the policy that the minimum age requirement of the class should be reached by the first day of that class. For Overboard Optis that age is 8. Abstract concepts aside, there is a big difference between a kindergartener and first grader compared to a second grader in regard to attention span, ability to take direction and work within a group, their social interactions with other kids, and skill readiness and acquisition. To help all classes run smoothly on and off the water please stick to the age requirements. If you would like your kids to get a head start, there is always the option of private lessons, see Scott or your Sea Squirt instructor to set those up!

*Q: I notice that you have maximum numbers of students per class per session, why is that?*

A: US Sailing recommends a certain student to instructor ratio. Really it is fundamental to ensure that each class is as safe as possible. By keeping the instructor to student ratio low it maximizes safety and learning which we can all agree is most important. It may mean that certain sessions will fill up faster than in the past, so make sure you register early and have a second session as a backup.

*Q: What is the Summer Racing Series?*

A: The Summer Racing Series is open to all Green Fleet and Racing Team participants. It is going to be a series of races in the evenings that will serve as practice for the Opti and 420 Green Fleet (coaching on the water) and as a supplement to our other racing fleets summer events. Participants will only need to compete in 50% of the races during the whole summer to qualify to win a trophy at the awards banquet in August. Only needing to compete in 50% of the races will allow flexibility in family scheduling for an already hectic summer. This is a replacement of the

previous Monday night racing. While free, we are requiring an advanced registration to determine commitment. There will be a skipper's meeting on the first night of the series.

*Q: My sailor is 14, too old for Optis, and doesn't want to race, what should I do?*

A: Over the last several seasons, classes for older recreational sailors haven't filled and had to be cancelled due to low enrollment. We are brainstorming on how to restart this class in the future. We realize that we need to nurture both racing and recreational sailing. If you are interested in having a session available for high school aged kids this year, please e mail Katlin at the yacht club. If we have enough interest and our instructor availability allows it, we will run a class later this summer. We feel that it is important to have a non-racing option for older kids but haven't had the interest to pull it off. If there is interest, please let us know.

Having said that, please only enroll your sailor on the race team if they truly want to practice hard 3-4 days a week, compete at a high level 1-2 days a week, and if you are able to help them travel to local events. This year we will not be running classes at TAYC if the race team is at an away regatta, it is expected all racers will attend all the regattas. Both the 420 and Opti teams will be attending National level events for 3+ days this summer.

Please register early as we expect the classes to fill up. Also please note that every registration includes a shirt for your sailor. We must have the shirt size and registration prior to May 1 to guarantee a shirt for your sailor.

We hope this forum helped answer your questions. If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to ask! We can't wait for summer and look forward to seeing you on the water!