

# YMCA of Canberra Sailing Club



## JUNIOR SAILING PATHWAY

### Introduction

The YMCA Sailing Club's primary focus for junior sailors is on crewed (2 or 3 person boats). Our training boat is the Pacer (2 persons) and our senior boat is the Lightweight Sharpie (3 persons). Our junior sailing pathway is designed to give junior sailors the training and experience needed to allow them to become competent crewmen (and skippers) on senior boats such as the Sharpie without having to buy expensive boats.

Juniors showing great potential can easily move off our pathway onto the Australian Sailing Youth High Performance Pathway (for more information go to <https://www.discoversailing.org.au/sailing-pathways/> )

### YMCA Sailing Club Pathway

Step	Activity/Course	Squad	Boat
1	Level 2 certificate		Pacer
2	Build skills and experience – become a good seaman	Silver	Pacer/Bic
3	Better Sailing (Level 3) certificate		Pacer
4	More experience with spinnaker (and trapeze)	Silver	Pacer/125
5	Start Racing 1 and 2 (Coached rather than a course)	Gold	125/Sharpie

### Three Major Milestones

Below we describe three major milestones that most keen junior sailors pass by. These milestones are:

- Joining a coaching squad;
- Becoming an Instructor; and
- Buying a boat.

### Joining a Coaching Squad

The structure of our coaching squad changes from year to year depending on numbers of sailors and the experience and skill levels of sailors. However, the guiding principles do not change. They are:

1. Have Fun
2. Be Safe
3. Improve Your Sailing

When numbers allow we have two coaching squads, a Silver squad for junior sailors who have completed their level 2 certificate (initial sailing course) and a Gold squad for more competent sailors who wish to further develop their skills.

### *Silver Squad*

The object of the Silver Squad is to give novice sailors the skills and experience they need to be competent and polished boat handlers. Skills include skippering and crewing, spinnaker handling, boat handling in light, medium and strong winds and trapezing. Also included is basic racing tactics. Members of the Silver squad are strongly encouraged to participate in club races and the ACT Youth Championships. Sailing will be fun and one of their favourite activities.

## ***Gold Squad***

The object of the Gold Squad is give sailors the skills, experience and knowledge to perform at a high level in State and National Championships. Skills include race tactics, boat and sail controls, race and regatta campaign management and high level performance management. Members of the Gold squad will be participating in club races, boat class State and National competitions and, if possible, international competitions. Sailing will be one of their passions and they will seize every chance to sail.

## **Becoming an Instructor**

One of the rites of passage of a junior sailor is becoming an instructor. Australian Sailing requires all Registered Training Centres to employ qualified sailing instructors. It supports Training Centres by running instructor courses, which like all Australian Sailing courses, are competency based courses. That is, to become an instructor or assistant instructor a sailor must demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and experience. We believe that this is an important part of the personal development of a junior sailor.

## **Buying a Boat**

### ***Why?***

A key part of most junior sailor's development pathway is getting their own boat. The ideal first boat should be fun to sail but should challenge the sailor(s) and lead to the development of new skills. Ideally, there should be a number of other boats of the same class sailing locally, so that the sailor(s) can measure their performance. Finally, it should not cost a fortune. Note: Owning a boat is not essential to being a member of our coaching squad!

### ***When?***

We suggest that junior sailors should complete at least a year in a coaching squad and obtain their Better Sailing (level 3) certificate before buying their first boat. By this stage they will have fully explored the development opportunities of Pacers (our training boats) and have confirmed their commitment to sailing.

### ***What?***

Our Pacers have been built as training boats. Accordingly they are as simple as possible, which eventually limits development possibilities.

We believe that a first boat should meet the following criteria:

1. It should be a 2 person boat (our Club focus is on crewed boats);
2. It should have a full range of sail controls (to allow sailors to develop their skills);
3. The forward hand should be on a trapeze (to lead into Sharpies and the Australian Sailing Junior High Performance Pathway);
4. It should be sailed in sufficient numbers to offer good competition;
5. It should not be too large for smaller juniors;
6. It should not cost a fortune; and
7. It should be easy to maintain.

Any boat that meets criterion 1 and 2 would be acceptable. Our recommended boat is the 125.  
[www.125assoc.com/](http://www.125assoc.com/)