

Windsurfing with juniors

With an increase in youth participation due to initiatives such as T15 and Onboard, the information we relay to qualified and trainee instructors is imperative to keep the momentum going.

Manufacturers are researching, developing and producing more youth equipment than ever before, making it is even easier to teach and enthuse young windsurfers. Most manufacturers have an impressive range of boards, covering everything from the first experience to wave sailing, freestyle, slalom and freeride. Sails have the same construction and durability as the adult ranges, but start from just 0.8m!

Watching a young child struggle to pull a sail up with the boom way overhead, pulling them off at the slightest puff of wind, should be a scene of the past.

So how can we cater for a child's first



go at windsurfing? There are a range of options and adaptations enabling them to learn about the equipment and the wind in an enjoyable environment:

Rigging sticks

Mentioning rigging sticks to some instructors prompts a rather vague look. Very simply, they are a rectangular piece of

material and two sticks - cheap to make and incredibly effective for that initial experience or a strong wind alternative. They are easy to use, fun for all and a great way to introduce wind awareness and the basics of how a board works.

If adult equipment is your only option, ensure it is adapted to teach children. Cut down the fins to enable the board to turn more effectively with smaller sails, and use lighter materials to rig sails etc.

Check out the manufacturers' websites or speak to your equipment suppliers about their ranges of boards and rigs. The options are incredible with many being great value for money (see our feature on new equipment for 2008).

A few pearls of wisdom

Mike Roberts, an RYA Windsurfing Trainer and T15 Coordinator, shares his approach to raising awareness when teaching the junior scheme. *'It is important for instructors to understand the difference between teaching adults and children. You need a basic understanding of how people learn and therefore what*

approach is best for them. Create a hands-on experience in a fun environment. Remember, above all it's got to be safe.'

Safety considerations

When working with juniors always consider instructor responsibilities, child protection issues, and practical issues such as the increased heat loss in children when compared to adults.

Staff development

Devote time to staff training and develop several activities (on and off the water) to support the youth scheme. Try them out yourselves by becoming children for the afternoon, using rigging sticks or any other available equipment suitable for juniors. Set up various scenarios using role play or discussion.

For further information and leaflets on the RYA Youth Windsurfing Scheme or our initiatives such as T15 and Onboard please contact us

General windsurfing scheme enquiries: training@rya.org.uk
OnBoard: onboard@rya.org.uk
T15: Team15@rya.org.uk

2•4•15

The RYA is seeking to support T15 clubs by identifying more windsurfing instructors who could volunteer their time as a T15 coach to their local club.



2•hours
per week/month is the commitment we are asking for. Two hours as a volunteer will allow clubs to expand; waiting lists can be catered for whilst working within instructor/pupil ratios.



4•coaches
per club is the target. Four coaches per club will ensure sustainability; with only one coach the club's future is fragile. More coaches mean responsibility can be shared or pooled and if one coach leaves, the club can still continue.



15•team15
a UK-wide programme with opportunity to put something back into the sport you love. As an RYA windsurfing instructor you could help deliver windsurfing to the next generation in an environment that is as rewarding for the coach as it is the club member.

If you would like to get involved, then you need to let us know. Training opportunities will be organised according to demand. Our aim is to keep training local. The two-day course costs £30; grants may be available. Register your interest via email: team15@rya.org.uk For information about local T15 clubs or the T15 programme in general, visit team15.org.uk Opportunities also exist for non-instructors to get involved; qualify locally as an assistant instructor.

2•4•15
Two hours • Four coaches • Team15



www.team15.org.uk

T15 coach courses – book your place now!

If you are a Start Windsurfing Instructor or higher and looking to get involved in T15, you need to get yourself onto a T15 Coach-Red course.

This is a two-day course, heavily subsidised by the RYA to enable as many instructors to access it as possible. The cost of the course, including a manual is just £30. Courses are organised based on areas of demand, so if you are interested make sure you get your name on the waiting list.

T15 Coach-Freestyle courses are also available to instructors looking to get involved with their local T15 club and expand the type of windsurfing on offer. They are run over two days and cost £30 including a manual. You don't have to hold the T15 Coach-Red qualification to take this award, but you must be an instructor.



Every T15 club must have at least one T15 Coach-Red present when running T15 club sessions.

To book a place on either course, or to add your name to the waiting list, please email gina.lindholm@rya.org.uk.