



# Annual Report

## 2020-21



# Chairperson's Report

On behalf of the RYANI it gives me great pleasure to present this years annual report.

This has been another challenging year, as I took on the role of Chair we saw ourselves enter another period of pandemic induced lockdowns and having to continue to adapt to new ways of working. For the first time our AGM was held virtually and although different we all embraced this new way of working which has produced its own opportunities allowing individuals from further a field to be involved and we welcomed the attendance of the RYA Chair and RYA CEO.

In January the RYANI held its first virtual conference. The Cruising Conference organised by the Cruising and Environment committee was a great success running over 3 evenings for 3 weeks with some fascinating speakers. By virtue of being on line allowed the participants from across Northern Ireland and the wider UK to attend. Thank you to both Roy Totten, David Williams and Jackie Patton for all their hard work in putting this together.

The New Year saw the beginning of Brexit and all the challenges that has brought for us. Words like 'Northern Ireland protocol' have become common words in our vocabulary and both the Northern Ireland team and wider RYA team in Hamble have worked tirelessly behind the scenes lobbying both local and Westminster politicians and departments seeking clarity and extensions for many the issues that with that have come with the new legislation and the implications that brings for all our members and those in the wider boating community. I have to thank them for all their hard work they have done and continue to do.

Over the winter we continued to develop on going programmes such as the Youth Forum pilot project which despite having resort to "zoom" for their meetings was very successful and culminated in a "Night of Celebration" attended by the RYANI Board, Chris Preston RYA Chair and the participants families where the young people involved fed back on the work they had done. Following a positive evaluation of the programme the RYANI board has supported taking the Youth Forum forward and a new group of participants for 2021 -22 have just recently had their induction.

The "Women on Water" programme continued to expand with development of the Women on Water personal pathway programme. This has been developed to answer the needs of women in our sport, to open up opportunities for developing skills and training with support through mentorship. Over the winter webinars have been held on growing skills and a Race Officer course led by Robin Gray to encourage more women to become race officers was very successful. We are looking forward to more exciting opportunities opening up with in this programme in the forth coming year.

As we neared the start of the sailing season we hoped and planned for a return to the water and cautiously we got there working our way through increasingly confusing advice and regulations issued to us.

We saw "Push the Boat Out" from former years turn to "Rediscover Sailing" and clubs returned gradually to a summer of boating with many clubs seeing a rise in membership. We saw some sailing championships go ahead others postponed and others sadly cancelled as regulations at that time made it impossible for them to be run safely.

The "Women on Water" festival returned this year hosted by Carrickfergus Sailing Club. The event was a great success and was even honoured by a totally coincidental Red Arrows fly past.

The summer saw the Tokyo 2020 Olympics as our elite athletes continued to campaign for their place success was not always theirs and we saw a few of them bring their journey to an end. We congratulate them on all they have achieved as we still support and encourage those who continue to strive for the Olympic goal.

As the season started to come to a close the RYANI was able to hold their annual Youth Championships at Carrick Sailing Club. We saw another successful event with over 120 participants from the whole of Ireland.

The RYANI board has continued to work to represent and ensure the interests of the members are always at the forefront of their business. This year we have seen our updated articles adopted and the close and integrated working with the RYANI staff continue. Their continued support it very much appreciated and has certainly made my first year in office a very smooth one. As

come to the end of their term and thank them for their hard work and dedication while other new members are volunteering to take up positions bringing new ideas and a vibrancy to the organisation, we welcome them and the value they will bring.

We continue to work closely with our colleagues in the other RYA regions and while we have not been able to meet in person we continue to build relationships through on line meetings. This summer the RYA CEO Sarah Treseder has moved onto a new position and I just want to acknowledge and thank her for her support for RYANI over her years in office.

We now look forward to next year with excitement as hopefully life returns to a new normal. As the RYANI look at new developments we are continuing to work at supporting our membership and building on club en-

gagement helping them move forward and maintain the momentum they have gained this year. After a year of having an interim strategy we are now developing our next 4year strategy and look forward to what that brings for the organisation. Over the last year we have developed new ways of working and we now embrace those as we move in 2022.

**Susan McKnight, Chair RYANI**





# COO Report

Our Annual Report covers the year to the end of March 2021. Without doubt, the Covid 19 pandemic was front and centre over this period with lengthy periods of restrictions that affected clubs, training centres, marinas and individuals to various degrees. It would be difficult to argue any other period of time that had such direct and adverse ramifications for our activities. This, combined with the outcomes of the Northern Ireland protocol, has made for a testing period, elements of which will remain with us for the foreseeable future.

This report will cover areas of focus during the year, albeit where RYA Northern Ireland had to try and adapt our ways of engagement according to the latest guidance. We were continuously looking at engaging with various departments to lobby on affiliates and members' behalf, interpreted ever changing legislation and guidance, delivered the SportNI Sports Sustainability fund in addition to addressing ways and means to keep clubs and centres engaged. I am glad that our efforts regarding Covid and working alongside other sports, saw the sports sector as one of the first to open up following all lockdown periods

I would like to thank all our staff, volunteers, stakeholders and, above all, our clubs, centres and RYA personal members for your ongoing support. The past year has been a hugely challenging period for everyone involved, but all with the desire to get back to activity and support the wider boating community to get back on the water.

## **Guidance to help keep participants safe**

Working with the Department, SportNI officials, the RYA Legal Department and other relevant departments in Hamble, RYANI produced over 31 separate guidance updates to the boating community over the course of 12 months to the end of March 2021. This was not inclusive of the club, training, mixed household guidance documents and FAQs that were produced as frameworks in addition to the specific guidance. These were backed up with webinars at various points to help discuss matters, raise areas of concern and ultimately to allow as safe as possible a return to activity.

The volume of changes reflects the extent to which the

NI Executive were easing various restrictions but also the extent to which our activity was impacted as not all guidance was solely supplied through Return to Sport protocols and included travel (within and outside NI), the hospitality sector and education guidance.

Although we were not always satisfied with the level of advice or guidance we were able to supply at points, RYANI made the decision to provide information as swiftly and effectively as possible in order to keep everyone informed of what could be undertaken. We made the conscious decision to not apply additional restrictions above what was legislated or in guidance from Government and keep within the spirit of that guidance.

## **SportNI funding**

We were fortunate early on in 2021 that SportNI agreed to extend funding for a further year. I would like to thank SportNI for their support and engagement as we looked to steady the sport and continue to support activities in a very restricted environment. This funding equates to over 60% of our income each year and helped us provide consistency during uncertain times.

## **Sports Sustainability Fund**

RYANI provided support and mechanisms to allow affiliated organisations to apply for the SportNI Sports Sustainability Fund in January 2021. Following ongoing engagement and expressions of interest, 7 clubs ultimately applied. An appeal regarding one application had to be undertaken, resulting in a prolonged delay to releasing of funds by SportNI as this process was completed.

Further funding opportunities (e.g. Sports Hardship Fund) were also shared with affiliated clubs since the start of the pandemic to help balance the financial hardships faced by organisations due to closures and restrictions.

## **Representing boating interests**

Aside from the Covid pandemic, a number of areas of representation were undertaken on behalf of members. These included:

- BT Cable Laying consultation and proposals in conjunction with RYA Scotland.

- Abuse of Trust legislation in NI, working with the NSPCC.
- Living with Water Consultation for (inner) Belfast Lough by NI Water
- Club rates revaluations
- Prohibition of red diesel for private pleasure craft
- Brexit
- PWC use in Strangford, in conjunction with Strangford and Lecale.

Brexit in particular has had a vast number of well documented issues faced by UK boaters and some more specific to Northern Ireland. RYA External Affairs department has worked closely with RYANI on matters surrounding Brexit and the NI Protocol, particularly looking to get answers on VAT status of boats and the sudden announcement that purchase of red diesel for private pleasure craft would be prohibited from June 2021. On the latter, we were glad to have successfully lobbied HMRC and Government to delay this until 1 October, making a strong case that supply would simply not be possible and working alongside some current suppliers on agreeing a more realistic timeline. This area remains a concern, however Government has made it clear that the EU ruling in 2018 had to be implemented in NI with immediate effect and was not reversible despite ongoing efforts and representation.

### **Strategic Plan**

At the start of 2020, we had embarked on consulting for our next 4 year Strategic Plan. The pandemic had put a stop to this, but not before we had a reasonable picture of what long term challenges and opportunities faced the sport. Covid 19 resulted in much wider, immediate priorities and, as such, we set out to implement a 1 year interim plan that looked to address 3 main areas:

#### **1. To support the sport**

The ongoing changes across 2020-21 meant flexibility and adaptation was needed at every corner. Often plans were developed but had to be shelved as the environment changed for clubs and centres. Final plans as restrictions eased were able to be implemented and adapted to help support a return to water and recover activity.

#### **2. To recovery RYANI**

This included how we could keep RYA personal members engaged, adapt to new ways of working, look to cost savings and other grant opportunities.

#### **3. To Maintain Momentum**

3 key areas were looked at from longer term areas that had been affecting the sport, including the sustainability agenda, developing equality and diversity and digital transformation.

As we move into 2022, we will be focussing once again on more long-term objectives and in the knowledge that some of the effects of the pandemic on the sport (both good and bad) will remain for the foreseeable future. Already some of these plans are being implemented and initiatives introduced or revised to adapt to the new environment.

### **RYA Personal Members and Affiliates**

RYA personal membership dropped by 5% in Northern Ireland over the course of 2020-21, in line with that seen in the UK overall and mainly due to lack of participation. A greater drop had been anticipated and the RYA NI welcomes members and affiliates who have remained with RYA through what has been a difficult year. Our affiliated clubs increased to 41, with Silvery Lights and Safer Waters affiliating to RYA in 2021. We very much welcome these new additions to Northern Ireland.

The restrictions and new ways of working did allow RYANI to engage with nearly 90% of affiliated clubs throughout the year, up by around 20% in a normal year. Although we expect to get back to some level of normality, it has highlighted opportunities for meaningful engagement with a wider audience through technology.

### **RYANI Sustainability Action Plan**

The RYANI Cruising and Environment Committee introduced a Sustainability Action Plan in 2021. This plan has a number of key points in line with the RYA's plan to zero. Already inroads have been made with a Sustainability Champion in place and policy reviews to help reduce plastic and consider CO2 emissions as part of our day to day operations.

### **Communication and PR**

Communication and PR continued to grow over the course of 2020-21. Facebook alone saw an increase by 28% as more individuals looked to engage with content from RYANI, a lot of which has been to keep abreast of restrictions and to find out about activity in Northern Ireland.

As part of the communications plan, RYANI reviewed its communication platforms and content, with monthly ezines reinvigorated alongside the RDO blog to help the boating community keep up to speed on general operations. Our ezine closed the year with 2,422 subscribers. 22 mainstream media publications were recorded to have shared RYANI stories with 49 individual articles published.

As more events and activity start to take place into 2022, we anticipate figures for wider media publication to increase once again.

### Cruising Conference

171 participants took part in the 2021 Cruising Conference this year, showcasing some of the benefits of online engagement. Sessions were held across three evenings with talks including *Sailing around Ireland*, Norman Kean, *What does the RYA ever do for us?*, Howard Pridding and Stuart Carruthers and *Sailing from Panama to New Zealand* by Pat Murphy. Short sessions were also delivered by Ocean signal each evening. All were very positively received with thanks to the Cruising and Environment Committee members, Roy Totten, David Williams and Jackie Patton, for organizing.

### Staff, Board and Volunteers

In September 2020, we were delighted to appoint Andrew Baker as the new Performance Manager. A previous member of the RYANI Youth Squads, Andrew was also selected for the British Keelboat Academy. He went on to compete in two Solitaire de Figaro events

and worked with team Artemis, as well as competing in numerous offshore events.

I would like to thank James Farrell, who stepped in as the interim Performance Manager and led the Performance Programmes as Covid first hit. Originally only planned to be in the role very temporarily, James helped to support the team and keep some consistency during a difficult time and is much appreciated.

Mary Martin went on maternity leave in October 2020 and Gordon Reid once again took up the reins in development to help maintain and support the progress of instructors, officials and volunteers.

Jackie Patton stood down as Chair of the organization following her 3 year tenure. Jackie helped promote a number of initiatives and supported staff, particularly during the outbreak of the pandemic. She took a particular interest in progressing youth engagement that has resulted in the creation of the RYANI Youth Forum, which she will continue to engage with going forward.

Thank you to all our volunteers on the various committees and Board; our Regional Race Management Coordinator, Robin Gray, Rules Advisor, Denis Todd and Sailability Coordinator, Bob Harper. It is only with such a wide range of input that the organization is able to progress and develop.

Finally, thank you to all the staff team, who adapted to the new ways of working and continued to plan, develop and deliver during very difficult times.

**Richard Honeyford, COO**



## Active Clubs

2020/21 was a frustrating year for participation, club membership and development.

### Participation Programmes

Renaming Push the Boat Out to Discover Sailing and aiming to run it across the sailing season rather than the month of May saw 15 clubs registering. Unfortunately Covid-19 prevented clubs opening up for the 2020 season for new participants and therefore unable to run a Discover Sailing event.

The unknown stopped clubs fully preparing to take on new members and provide the 'normal' support that new members need. After multiple postponements of the Discover Sailing campaign RYA sadly had to cancel the 2020 Discover Sailing programme.

The usual RYANI supported participation programmes including Women on Water, Bright Night Sailing and Crewing programmes were also unable to take place due to activity being halted mainly due to new participants being unable to sail alone and number limitations.

### E Sailing

A new participation opportunity arose in 2020 and that was the launch of eSailing.

Many of our clubs ran eSailing club championships very successfully and promoted on social media. RYANI hosted a Spring and Winter Championships with 72 and 43 respectively competing to claim the title of RYA Northern Ireland eSailing Champion. The NI champion went on to compete against the other UK nations and proudly both Luke McIlwaine (Spring Champ) and Cavan Evans (Winter Champ) performed exceptionally in these championships.

### Club Membership

We were pleased to have another high return rate in the Club census. 86% of clubs submitted the census giving us a more accurate representation of our affiliated clubs.

Total club membership reported was 9071 down from 9624 in 2019. Although we had 450 new members reported it is a significant decrease from previous years – 818 in 2019 and 829 in 2018. This highlights the value of running participation programmes like Discover Sailing,

Bright Night Sailing, Onboard, Women on Water and more.

The churn rate (memberships lost/not renewed) of club membership has risen by 1.4 percentage points to 8.4% (4.1% lower than UK average). Leavers remained consistent with previous years 665 in 2020, 657 in 2019 and 667 in 2018.

### Women on Water

After much discussion the WOW Leader group sadly decided to cancel the 2020 WOW festival that was to be held at Carrickfergus Sailing Club. An online festival was held in June with 18 participants taking part in an online quiz and allowed RYANI staff to promote further opportunities for participants, including RYA qualifications, the WOW Personal Pathway programme and more.

RYANI launched a WoW survey to find out if there was a need for further development on the programme. The WoW Personal Pathway was introduced which supports WOW members to develop their boating skills, increase their RYA qualifications and follow up with their new skills at their local club. Over 20 participants registered their interest in this programme. After a very inspiring workshop from international official Chris Lindsay, RYANI ran their first WOW Race Officer Course which was led by RYANI regional Race Management Co-ordinator Robin Gray in March 2020. 13 WOW Personal Pathway members attended a Regional RO qualification

### OnBoard

The Onboard programme, a huge success in England is making an impact here in NI. We now have 3 Onboard Centres ready to run activities when restrictions ease. Unfortunately no programmes were able to run in 2020.



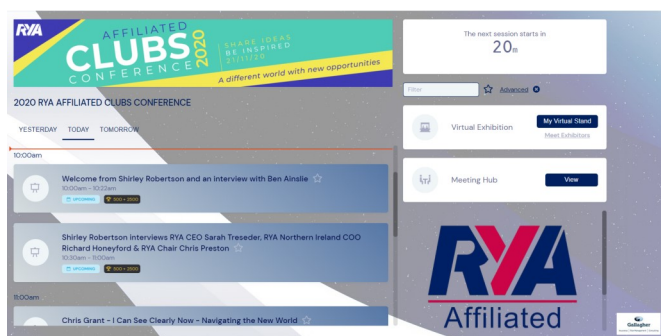


## Volunteering

RYANI launched the Volunteers on the Rise programme in Feb 2021. This provided RYANI with valuable insight into our club volunteers and will better help the development of this programme to suit the needs of the clubs. 20 clubs completed the survey. This survey will provide the Sporting Clubs staff with information on club volunteers, roles, AGM dates, role terms, needs/areas of support within volunteering and more. 4 webinars have been organised for club volunteers including Volunteer Now - *The New Environment*, NICVA - *Good Governance*, The Green Blue - *Sustainable, Healthier, Cleaner Waters* and Disability Sport NI - *Disability Inclusion Course for Sport*.

## Affiliated Club Conference

The 4 Home Nations joined forces for the annual Affiliated Club Conference in 2020. The main online event ran in November 2020 had over 1,100 delegates registered with 35 delegates representing Northern Ireland affiliated clubs. This was a very successful event that allowed club representatives to attend who may not have had the opportunity in previous years either due to travel restrictions or other barriers.



## Club Development Forums

33 virtual club development forums, webinars and workshops were delivered over 2020 to support clubs, coaches, and participants during Covid-19. These attracted a total of 676 attendees representing 89% of NI Clubs.

The Club Development Forums provided attendees with guidance updates, return to boating guidance, club development related workshops, and many more. We are keen on continuing these online session throughout the 2021 season as they allow many to attend in the comfort of their own home and without travel restrictions. We still believe that running a few in person is still essential

as it allows clubs to network and learn from each other.

Overall, despite not being able to run participation programmes, the loyalty and commitment of our club volunteers showed that nothing would stop them from continuing to develop their club. They worked tirelessly to find ways to adapt and allow their members to continue to do the limited sailing that was allowed and to continue to increase awareness of the boating community throughout Northern Ireland.





# Coach Instructor and Race Management

Demand has continued across sailing, powerboating and shore-based disciplines. In particular, centres have been struggling to find Senior Instructors to run courses or to take responsibility as Chief Instructors or Principals.

## Instructor training

Covid-19 has prevented delivery of instructor training for most of the year, with several courses arranged and then cancelled. Lists of those interested are growing, but often those interested are not yet fully ready, with pre-requisite courses hard to access. 2 DI courses have been held, each being in the temporary singer handed format. Online preparation sessions have proven valuable. We were ready to run a Senior Instructor Course but found that most of those signed up were unfortunately missing essential pre-requisites.

Senior Instructor Kate Pounder of Ballyholme YC was presented with the Sport NI Sportmaker Young Coach of the Year 2020, and got the extra surprise of a RYA Volunteer Award in the Youth category, which is a well deserved UK award.

## Coach Assessors

Our trainers have been busy not just with delivery post lockdown, but with centre inspections, and with centre or work commitments. It has been necessary to look to other home countries for courses and Trainers, and some progress has been possible from this.

We have a list of Aspiring Trainers, and plans for more practical sessions for them in the very near future.

## Race Coach Development

Race Coach development has been a little easier, with 1 course held and 2 more imminent. Race Coach Tutor roles were changed, and we are now pleased to have 2 Tutors in place: James Farrell and Chris Penney.

## Powerboat Instructors

Powerboat Instructor training has taken a back seat also during lockdown and the recovery period, as delivery of skills courses has been more of a priority for some. 3 new Power instructors were qualified, and retention has been fairly strong.

In the background there is always the revalidation process which leads to a reduction in the number of quali-

fied instructors generally. The solution as always is to retain more of those qualified, and to recruit and train more than we lose.

Shorebased Instructor numbers have remained healthy, but opportunities to recruit new instructors have been very limited.

## Race Management Team

Robin Gray has been busy as Race Management Coordinator for NI. Regional Race Officer courses have been held online and 23 attendees are on record with 18 passed and awaiting race experience. It was impressive to see 13 female attendees at these courses through the RYANI Women on the Water Personal Pathway programme.

Chris Lindsay is an International Judge & Umpire, member of the World Sailing Team Racing Rules working party, and Video International Technical Official for Tokyo. His youtube videos have been known to attract up to 26k views, and he has kindly hosted webinars this year for us. Chris was announced as Sport NI Sportmaker Technical Official of the Year 2020.

Our Regional Rules Advisor, Denis Todd offers informal training to Club Rules Advisers on the use of Advisory and RYA Arbitration hearings, more immediate and accessible rules disputes resolution processes than protest hearings. An attendance certificate may be issued at the end of the Course that can also be endorsed by the attendee's Club.



# Performance

Andrew Baker was appointed in the role of Performance Manager in September 2020.

COVID 19 had an impact across all levels of performance and our objectives for the 2020 Season. Events and training camps were cancelled or postponed for our elite sailors and club level activity came to a halt as clubs had to close their gates.

Even outside of the full lockdown phases restrictions were such that sailing was only possible within a 'bubble' or single-handed and largely from public access, not clubs.

## Youth Performance Programme

Selections for the 2020/21 Performance Programme took place in early October 2020 with 22 Toppers and 15 ILCA's selected.

Due to a Period of Lockdown, it was not possible to run training weekends. Inductions were held remotely and use of ZOOM was utilised to maintain engagement with sailors, including online workshops and theory sessions. The practical session recommenced in April.

Adapting to the changing restrictions did present challenges however there have also been a lot of takeaways and learning to review for improving the quality and efficiency of future Performance Programme delivery.

## Performance Academy

As there were no indicator events and limited sessions possible over the season it was not possible to have an accurate or fair review of academy sailors and so the decision was made to allow all current members to remain and that no new sailors to be included.

An exception to this was made to invite Erin McIlwaine and Lauren McDowell to join the Academy. Due to their individual talents and efforts made campaigning/training in the 29er Class.

### Current Academy Members

Ellen Barbour, CAYC (ILCA 6)

Tom Coulter, CYC/EABC (ILCA 6)

Lucas Nixon, BYC/DSC (ILCA 6)

Hannah Dadley-Young, BYC (ILCA 5)

Zoe Whitford, EABC (ILCA 5)

Lewis Thompson, DSC (ILCA 6)

Lauren McDowell, RNIYC (29er)

Erin McIlwaine, NSC (29er)



## High Performance

All three sailors were engaged in a winter training plan ahead of final qualification events in Spring 2021.

To ensure the High Performance sailors were also prepared for the UK leaving the EU, a summary of relevant Brexit advice was shared with them pre-Christmas, this covered aspects such as travel, insurance and health.

Funding allowance for all three increased to match what was awarded last year future events and qualification opportunities.

### Ryan Seaton, 49er

The final major championship of the 2020 Quadrennial was held in Lanzarote from 21 - 26 March 2021.

Ryan achieved 12th in this event and despite a steady performance missed out on Olympic qualification to another Irish team who qualified the nation and finished this event in 3rd Overall.

### Oisin McClelland, Finn

Oisin had a well-structured training schedule ahead of his next two Major events:

2021 European Championship – Vilamoura 10 - 16 April

2021 Finn Gold Cup – Porto, Portugal – 4-12 May

This will be the final European and African qualifier for Tokyo

### Liam Glynn, ILCA Laser

Vilamoura International Championship 17 - 24 April

This will be the final European qualifier for Tokyo

Of Note:

None of our Elite Athletes were successful in qualifying for Tokyo. As the Finn is no longer an Olympic boat, Oisin's Olympic career has now ended and Ryan Seaton has decided to retire.

This will leave Liam as our sole campaigning athlete.

### Dan McGaughey

Dan continues as part of the British ILCA transition squad. He had missed some weekends before Christmas as he had chosen to train in Portugal due to the uncer-

tainty of the squad's ability to train due to COVID restriction.

It was agreed that Dan should receive funding to help in campaign costs incurred alongside University

## The Future

### Double Handed

A double-handed survey has been completed by over 50 of our past and present sailors and will now be shared with the wider audience to address the pros/cons and indeed what issues may be faced by those considering campaigning a two-man boat. With Olympic classes and sport in general leaning ever more towards equality, mixed gender and team classes it is vital we create a pathway forward with this in mind.

### Projects

A Tender process has been advertised in the role of Performance Lifestyle & Campaign Services. This role will be established to support sailors at various stages from Academy, Transition and Elite level where appropriate.

The goal of this project is to address the drop we see as sailors age out of Pathway squads, Support, education and accountability will help to ensure those who show the potential and will to move to the next stage can do so and not simply drop out. This will improve athlete development across the board and build upon Sailing, a sport for life ethos.

### Final thoughts...

The goal has to be in creating a clear pathway for those interested in coaching, performance racing and or furthering their sailing experience in the wider sport and culture of sailing and showing people the resources available and the opportunities out there.

It is evident we have 'drop-outs' at varying times in a person's sailing career, university, time commitments, affordability, losing interest in their current discipline. We must define the cause for these drop-offs and show people that sailing really is a sport for life that is so varied there is always something to suit everyone.



# Youth Championships 2020

More than 90 of Northern Ireland's Youth and Junior sailors have Taken part in the Youth Championships, at Ballyholme Yacht Club.

Racing took part of over two days on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 September and the fleets were split to reduce overall numbers on site each day to mitigate risk in accordance with COVID – 19 guidelines.

The ILCA 6 and 420s took to the water on Saturday for five races in perfect conditions of 15 knots and sunshine.

Ellen Barbour from County Antrim Yacht Club showed good form early on to lead the way in race one, only to fall foul of being over at the start. This gave Coleraine Yacht Club's Tom Coulter the win followed by Colin Crichton of Quoile Yacht Club in 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Race two saw Erin McIlwaine from Newcastle Yacht Club was fast out of the blocks and took the win for race two with Crichton again runner up and Coulter in 3<sup>rd</sup>.

By race three Coulter started to show some dominance with his second win of the event followed by Ballyholme's Oliver Haig.

The girls led the way in the fourth race with McIlwaine doing her best to close the gap to Coulter with another win and Barbour a close 2<sup>nd</sup> to prove her performance in race one was not a one off.

Joseph Karauzum from County Antrim Yacht Club secured a win in race five closely followed by the determined McIlwaine. However, a 7<sup>th</sup> place for Coulter in this race was enough to secure him first in the ILCA 6 overall and title of first youth in the event.

COVID restrictions put in place for Dublin unfortunately meant some sailors were unable to attend and race in 420 class but there were three pairings on the water to fight it out for what was also the class Northern Championships.

Ben Graf and crew Alexander Farrell from Lough Ree Yacht Club demonstrated great talent and slick crew-work to win three of the five races and be crowned this year's 420 Northern Champions.

On Sunday the dinghy park was full of activity as the colourful sails of the Topper classes and the youngest competitors readied themselves for the day's races.

Despite an optimistic start with a light breeze this soon became fickle and shifty which meant only two races were held with no discards available.

Ballyholme's Hugo Boyd was victorious in the Topper 4.2 Class.

Zoe Whitford from East Antrim Boat Club and Daniel Palmer from Ballyholme were tied first on points but after winning the last race, it was Whitford who emerged the winner of the Topper Class and also took home the prize of first Junior and First Junior Girl.

In the ILCA 4 fleet Hannah Dadley-Young from Ballyholme was dominate winning both races and subsequently first overall.

Ballyholme's Junior sailors were crowned winners of the Club Trophy while Larne Grammar secured the title of Schools Cup Champions for 2020.

RYA Northern Ireland's High Performance Manager Andrew Baker commented: "On behalf of the RYA Northern Ireland team I would like to thank all competitors and guests for helping us achieve this fantastic weekend of racing.

"In a year with a limited number of events I am pleased that we were able to run this event and I thank everyone for adhering to all COVID guidelines that were set in place. A special thank you has to go to Ballyholme Yacht Club, event organisers and race management team who ran a safe, fun event despite challenging circumstances."

He added: "I now look forward to the training and selection weekends in early October to see our youth and juniors in action as they bid for a place on our Performance Pathway Squads."



ILCA 6		ILCA 4	
1 <sup>st</sup> Overall	Tom Coulter	1 <sup>st</sup> Overall	Hannah Dadley-Young
1 <sup>st</sup> Boy	Tom Coulter	1 <sup>st</sup> Boy	Conor McVeigh
1 <sup>st</sup> Girl	Erin McIlwaine	1 <sup>st</sup> Girl	Hannah Dadley-Young
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Erin McIlwaine	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Eva Briggs
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Joseph Karauzum	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Conor McVeigh

420 – Northern Championship	
1 <sup>st</sup> Overall	Ben Graf & Alexander Farrell
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Jack McDowell & Harry Thomson
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Garrett Leech & Conor Paul

TOPPER		TOPPER 4.2	
1 <sup>st</sup> Overall	Zoe Whitford	1 <sup>st</sup> Overall	Hugo Boyd
1 <sup>st</sup> Boy	Dan Palmer	1 <sup>st</sup> Boy	Hugo Boyd
2 <sup>nd</sup> Boy	Max Killiner	1 <sup>st</sup> Girl	Jessica Dadley-Young
3 <sup>rd</sup> Boy	Charlie Patterson	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Freddie Doig
1 <sup>st</sup> Girl	Zoe Whitford	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Mateo Moore
2 <sup>nd</sup> Girl	Autumn Halliday		
3 <sup>rd</sup> Girl	Sophia Cahill		



## RYANI YOUTH FORUM

Youth engagement had been identified as a key area for RYANI and has been carried forward by former Chair of RYA Northern Ireland, Jackie Patton. The Forum began in 2019 as a pilot project and following its success, it has now been officially launched.

The first of its kind within RYA, youth representatives from clubs across Northern Ireland would work together as part of the organisation to help drive the sport forward whilst developing their leadership and personal skills.

In October 2019 over 20 young sailors and parents attended the first session in the RYANI offices. This was an opportunity to hear about the programme and ask questions. The second session was held at Ganaway Outdoor Activity centre, Millisle, the purpose of which was to begin to build the team. With the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic “restrictions”, meant the programme needed to be delivered virtually. Undeterred the group stayed together and regularly met online, with the support of the NIYF team, RYANI Staff and Jackie Patton.

A particular highlight included Abbie Brown, Autumn Halliday, Charlotte and Kaitlyn Eadie participating in round table discussions with the Permanent Secretary for N.Ireland Office, Madeline Alessandri arranged by the Northern Ireland Youth Forum on International Women’s Day 2020.

Later in the year, members of the Forum prepared and delivered a presentation for the RYANI AGM, which was to be held virtually. The group shared the concept of a Youth Forum, their learning and general experience.

Thank you to Kaitlyn and Charlotte Eadie, Charlie O’Malley, Autumn and Cody Halliday and Abbie Brown who planned, prepared and executed on the evening. During a following session the group evaluated their experience, looking at the challenges, changes for next time and so on. A final celebration was held in March with Chris Preston, Chair of RYA, Susan McKnight, Chair of RYANI and members of the RYANI Board in attendance.

The Youth Forum “pilot project” brought likeminded young sailors and their parents together. They continued to meet throughout the challenges faced, looking at how the next generation can contribute to the future of the sport, at all levels. It exposed the young participants to the formal structure of RYA, allowing them to contribute.

The project clearly outlined the need for a Youth Forum. The proposed purpose to act as a Youth Consultation panel, facilitating direct consultation with youth on RYA initiatives, enabling further support for youth in sailing whilst providing sport leadership and development training. We wish to acknowledge the support of the NI Youth Forum team throughout.

**Jackie Patton, RYANI Youth Forum Co-ordinator.**

