

RYA Northern Ireland

2025 Annual Awards



Harbour Commissioner's Office
25th April 2025

Evening Programme

1830 Drinks Reception.

1900 Welcome.

Young Powerboater of the Year.

Young Volunteer of the Year.

Instructor of the Year.

Club Race Coach of the Year.

Race Official of the Year.

Junior Sailor of the Year.

1950 Interval/refreshments.

2030 Women on Water Panel.

Youth Sailor of the Year.

Volunteer of the Year.

Club Project of the Year.

Chairs Award.

2115 Closing address.

Photos.



CEO & Chair's Welcome



We are delighted to welcome you to the 2025 RYA Northern Ireland Annual Awards. It has been a fantastic year for sailing and boating in Northern Ireland and we are proud to celebrate the achievements and contributions of all of the members of the Northern Irish sailing and boating community. Over the past year, we have celebrated 50 years of RYA Northern Ireland and are now officially two years through our five-year strategy, Navigating The Future, where there has been lots of exciting progress. In 2024 we saw the launch of the NI Sailing Team and subsequently the NI Sailing Team website, which help us to shine a light on the performance element of the sport and be a more attractive proposition for potential sponsors and partners. Thank you for joining us for this special night. We hope you have a fantastic evening and safe sailing in 2025!

Susan McKnight, RYANI Chair

Greg Yarnal, RYANI Chief Executive Officer

Young Powerboater of The Year



Hunter Reddy

Hunter is a dedicated young member of BYC, actively involved across the club. As his skills have grown, he's become a key volunteer in the rescue team and is always quick to offer support. Whether it's helping at club racing, national events, or supporting youth programmes like Dolphins and Sharks, Hunter brings energy and commitment to everything he does. A true role model, his generosity and enthusiasm make a lasting impact.

Young Volunteer of The Year



Joseph Robinson

Joseph has been an essential part of the Dolphins and Sharks programme at BYC, helping with everything from rigging boats to helming and answering parent queries. His energy brings a fun atmosphere to the sessions, and he's played a key role in developing young sailors' skills through focused Sharks race training. His commitment and passion help inspire the next generation.

Instructor of The Year

Hannah Archer



Hannah has been actively involved with the BYC Cadet programme, supporting the Dolphins on Friday nights and has played a key role in rescue duties during club racing. She has also been fully engaged with the Women on Water programme and has contributed across various summer courses. Her positive attitude, dedication, and unwavering commitment make her a truly cherished member of both the BYC team and the club community.

Emily Hill



Emily completed the Safety Boat certification in March 2024 and went on to deliver sail training in the spring with the club team of instructors on Friday evenings. She then made a commitment to complete the Senior Instructor course in Southampton, returning to the Club to deliver a one-week RYA Youth Sailing Scheme for Stage 1-2 young sailors. The feedback she has received from young sailors has been overwhelmingly positive.

Instructor of The Year

Nadia Bell



Nadia has been one of the Club's most senior sailing instructors, overseeing the running of RYA sailing courses and Sunday Sailing, as well as being a mentor and coach to upcoming instructors. She also recently took the responsibility for RYA Adult Learn to Sail courses, with all of these courses always getting very positive feedback.

Kaitlyn Eadie



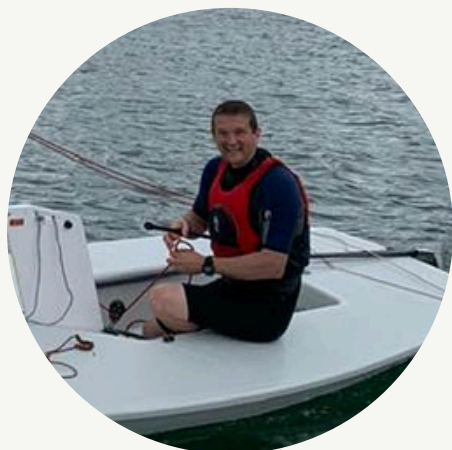
Kaitlyn have been responsible for managing and delivering multiple courses with efficiency and developing the instructor team throughout the summer. She has ensured a high standard of training is maintained and this is reflected in the positive feedback received from participants and the wider training team alike.

Club Race Coach of The Year



Jon Gunderson and Nick Cooke

Nick and Jon have pioneered the return of the Optimist class to SLYC, providing an entry point to sailing for our youngest and smallest members which has been hugely successful. Now with an enthusiastic group of young sailors and parents, they organise spring and autumn training for both beginners and intermediates, initially for Optimists but now extending to Toppers and Fevas.



Dan McGaughey

Dan has been providing class specific ILCA race training to small groups within the club, helping local sailors develop with their technical skills and on the water strategy. The feedback BYC has received from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, with many eager to implement what they have taken away within club racing and competition.



Race Official of The Year

Aidan Pounder



Aidan has consistently been at the forefront of creating new racing opportunities for the club. As club race officer, he supports both the Icebreaker Series on Sundays and the Late Points Series on Tuesdays/Sundays. He also played a significant role in bringing the ILCA 6 Youth Europeans to BYC.

Ian Bogie



Ian became a RYA Regional Race Officer in March 2023 and since then has officiated as Race Officer for the River Championships at SLYC, a Topper Traveller at SLYC, and the Impala Irish Nationals. He has also recently qualified as a Sail Measurer and has measured sails on over 40 boats.

Denis Todd



Denis participates in various events at club, regional, national, and international levels as an on the water judge or protest chair. He was also involved as part of the jury for the ILCA 6 Youth Europeans. Additionally, he frequently gives talks on rules, updates on rule changes, and assists with any rules queries.

Previous Winners

RYANI Race Official of the Year

2024 – CAYC Ladies team
2023 – Sheela Lewis CAYC

RYANI Young Powerboater of the Year

2023 – Dan Cooke SLYC
2019 – Sam Corbett CAYC
& Josh Reddy BYC
2017 – Joshua Kane EABC
2016 – Hannah Blair BLS/ CSC
2015 – Finlay McLees BYC
2014 – Scott Hagan SLYC

RYANI Club Race Coach of the Year

2024 – Joseph Karauzum – QUBSC
2023 – Cody Halliday SLYC
2019 – Jess Winton BYC
2018 – Tom Purdon SLYC
2017 – Katie Kane EABC
2016 – Jocelyn Hill & Andrew Mitchell
CAYC
2015 – Alistair McCarlie CAYC
2014 – Jennifer Whittaker LEYC

RYANI Instructor of the Year

2024 – Luke McIlwaine – NYC
2023 – Sarah Cushley SLYC
2019 – Kate Pounder BYC
2018 – Jack Kennedy SLYC
2017 – Colin de Fleury BLS
2016 – Kieran Loader KOEC
2015 – James Campbell CYC
2014 – Alice McWatters BYC
2012 – Catherine Vaughan
RNIYC

RYANI Young Volunteer of the Year

2024 – Isabel Nixon & Emily Dickson DSC
2023 – Max Robinson SLYC
2019 – Amy Armstrong
& James Corbett CAYC
2018 – Abbie Brown DSC
2017 – Katie Shivers & Joshua Reddy BYC
2016 – Tori Blair BLS/CSC
2015 – Cameron Date CSC
2013 – Sara Parkinson DSC

Previous Winners

RYANI Volunteer of the Year

2023 – Sam Rutherford HYC
2019 – Lindsay McCarty Nolan RNIYC
2018 – David Nelson BYC
2017 – Aidan Pounder BYC
2016 – Ali Boyd & Ian Danklefensen DSC
2015 – James Ogg DSC
2014 – Tom Robinson BLS
2013 – Nick Butler DSC
2012 – Mike Meharg RNIYC

RYANI Club of the Year

2019 – Strangford Lough Yacht Club
2018 – Ballyholme Yacht Club & Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club – Joint award
2017 – Carrickfergus Sailing Club
2016 – Quoile Yacht Club
2015 – Belfast Lough Sailability
2014 – Ballyholme Yacht Club
2013 – County Antrim Yacht Club
2012 – Coleraine Yacht Club

RYANI Chairs Award

2023 – Graham Chambers KYC

Junior Female Sailor of the Year

2024 – Emily McAfee BYC

Junior Male Sailor of the Year

2024 – Luke Simpson – CAYC

Youth Female Sailor of the Year

2024 – Erin Mcilwaine NYC

Youth Male Sailor of the Year

2024 – Tom Coulter CYC/EABC

RYANI Young Sailor of the Year

2023 – Bobby Driscoll BYC
2019 – Ethan McCormick CSBC
2017 – Sally Bell RNIYC
2016 – Liam Glynn BYC
2015 – Liam Glynn BYC
2014 – Sarah Eames SLYC
2013 – Liam Glynn BYC
2012 – Robbie Gilmore SLYC

Junior Female Sailor of The Year



Emily Macafee

- 4th overall at the Topper Winter Championships
- 3rd overall and 2nd girl Irish Topper Nationals
- 6th Leinster ILCA 4 Championships
- 4th Ulster ILCA 4 Championships



Emily and Annabel Ridout

- World championships, Netherlands – 6th Female boat overall
- UK Nationals – 3rd Female boat overall
- Ireland – Irish National Champions
- Northern Ireland – RS Feva Northern Champions
- RYANI Youth Champs – Overall Female Junior Champions 2024 and 1st overall in the Feva class

Junior Male Sailor of The Year



Leo West-Hurst

- Topper Traveller 1 – Ballyholme YC 2nd 4.2
- Topper Traveller 2 – WHSC 2nd 4.2
- Topper Southernns – NYC 2nd 4.2
- Irish Topper Nationals – WHBC 2nd 4.2
- Topper Worlds 2024 – Mar Menor 4th 4.2
- RYA Youth Championships 2024 – SLYC 1st 4.2



Adam Green

- 1st Overall Winter Championships
- 1st Overall Topper Traveller 1
- 1st Overall Topper Traveller 3
- 1st Overall Southern Championships
- 1st Overall Irish Nationals
- 13th World Championships, Spain
- 1st Overall Northern Championship
- Jr Male Sports Personality for ABC Council
- Awarded full colours at Banbridge Academy.

Youth Female Sailor of The Year



Ellen Barbour and Erin McIlwaine

- 8th Female 49er FX Team (1st Irish) – Kieler Woche, Germany, 2024
- Top 20 Junior World Championships 2024 (1st Irish)
- 9th UK Nationals, 49er FX, WPNSA 2024
- 23rd overall, Vilamoura Grand Prix, 2025
- Irish Olympic Development 49erFX team



Charlotte Eadie

- Irish Olympic Development 49erFX Team
- 1st Portugal Grand Prix
- 27th Under 23 World Championships



Zoe Whitford

- 12th at Irish Sailing Youth Nationals
- 4th at Ulster Championships
- 23rd at European Youth Championships/114
- 8th Girl at UK nationals
- 3rd Girl at Irish Nationals

Youth Male Sailor of The Year



Bobby Driscoll

- RYA NI Performance Academy
- 7th Europa Cup
- 1st Munster Championships
- 1st Irish Sailing Youth Nationals
- Selected to represent Ireland at the World Sailing Youth World Championships where he placed 19th



Daniel Palmer

- RYA NI Performance Academy
- Leinster Championships 3rd
- Connaught Championships 2nd
- Ulster Championships 3rd
- EurILCA Youth Europeans 122 of 227
- RYA NI Youth Championships 1st and Overall RYA NI Youth Champion



Tom Coulter

- 39th U21 European Championships
- 1st ILCA 6 Connaughts
- 1st ILCA Munster Championships
- 2nd Ulster Championships
- 17th UKLA British National Championships
- 3rd Irish National Championships

Volunteer of The Year

Derek Stockdale



Derek has supported BLS activities for over 15 years, still volunteering his time. During 2024, BLS members asked to develop their sailing skills to compete against other sailors Lough Foyle Sailability and Lough Erne Sailability. As volunteer coordinator, Derek ensured BLS had skilled and competent people in place to deliver all its activities.

Heather Foster-Sharpe



Last year, Heather was a key leader in delivering two PBL2 courses and a Safety Boat course which was critical to enable two of the Club Dinghy Instructors to later qualify as Senior Instructors. She has also volunteered her personal time, waiving an instructor fee along with the other PBIs which has substantially contributed the purchase of a new RIB engine

Colin Cushley



Colin has acted as Safety Captain for SLYC since February 2017. He is responsible for co-ordinating the needs of the Sailing and Training Captains and their requirements for suitably qualified powerboat and safety drivers and club rescue boats. Colin also takes care of clubhouse security and as Deputy-Welfare Officer he ensures SLYC is a safe place for people to be.

Club Project of The Year

Gemma & Lex McCoubrey

Gemma and Lex are our Sailability and Powerability Logbook Co-ordinators who volunteer at Belfast Lough Sailability Centre, allowing individuals of all abilities to acquire new knowledge and skills. They have shared their approach to coordinating Sailability sessions with other local Sailability centres and as far afield as Annapolis, Maryland, USA. Together they have made a difference to the life skills of members, boosting their self-esteem immeasurably.



Ballyholme Yacht Club

In July 2024, BYC hosted the ILCA 6 Youth European Championships. The event had 368 participants and required a large number of volunteers at BYC to make the event happen. The event was also recognised as a “Clean Regatta” with BYC receiving the “Sailors for the Sea” Platinum Award for its commitment to environmental sustainability.



Club Project of The Year

Paul Green & BLS Team



A small, committed team of volunteers provide enjoyable sailing and motor boating experiences for individuals from special needs schools and adult centres across Northern Ireland.

From June to September, they welcomed 178 participants and 56 carers, offering safe, supported access in addition to regular training, regattas and open days. Leading to a 30% rise in participation in one year. Their work fosters true inclusion and community spirit.

Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club



Following on from hosting the Woman on Water Festival 2024, RNIYC organised a special event in May 2024 for families of children affected by cancer, as well as for bereaved children and their families were welcomed to the club. Attendees were given the chance to get out on the water and enjoy afternoon tea ashore. It also had the highest number of volunteers at a RNIYC event.

Chair's Award

Roger Chamberlain



Roger has been a committee member at SLYC for 19 years but decided last December to step down from his post as Sailing Captain. Overlapping with his tenure as Sailing Captain, Roger was the Regatta Secretary to the Lough Conference continuously since joining the Committee in 2005. For years, Roger has also organised the SLYC annual regatta and Frostie Series. Roger was also instrumental in attracting the British Flying Fifteen Championships to SLYC in 2024.

Gerry Reilly



He has been a member of SSC for over fifty years and has provided loyal and distinguished service, including helping more than 200 children of all abilities learn to sail. He has had an impact on the development of sailing across the county with 'The Gerry Reilly High Points System' used as to not adversely impact those clubs that have a limited number of junior sailors. He is well respected by all at Strangford Sailing Club and is an asset to the SSC committee supporting the annual sailing programme.

Chair's Award

BYC Europeans Team



The entire organisation of the EurILCA Youth Europeans was managed by a dedicated volunteer committee made up entirely of BYC members. The event attracted 368 young sailors from 38 nations which required complex regulations and guidelines, culminating in a comprehensive 340-page document reviewed by a Safety Advisory Group, local authorities, emergency services and various government departments. This ensured every aspect of the event's delivery was thoroughly vetted.

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