



SEA MASTERS ACADEMY PANAMA

OPTI Sailing Program - Parents Short Guide (Youth Sailing Development)





2019 S.M.A Opti Sailing Program Directors

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S.M.A. Youth Sailing Program Advisory Committee - *TBA*

Sailing Resources Directory

S.M.A. Youth Sailing

<https://www.seamasterspty.com/youthprogram>

US SAILING

<https://www.ussailing.org/>

S.M.A YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2SY3pZLGKLtoD63-C7q6-Q>

S.M.A Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/seamasterspty/>

S.M.A. Instagram

[@seamasterspty](https://www.instagram.com/seamasterspty)



Why should your Child Spend Time Sailing? Sailing provides a wealth of experiences, positive friendships over a wide age range, and a close and cooperative relationship with nature. Sailing builds maturity and self-confidence. When a child learns to move an OPTI (small sailboat) in the direction they intend, they know they have accomplished it on their own. They are alone on the boat, making decisions that directly affect the success or failure of their efforts. They engage in these efforts in a safe, supportive, and beautiful environment.

They make lifelong friends and learn to love an activity that will provide them with challenges for as long as they live. It is not a sport where you play for an hour and go home. It is far more encompassing an activity than that. A sailor interacts with individuals from their home club and other clubs for the day, or the weekend, or the summer, or the year, or over a range of many years. At the advanced levels of sailing these friendships become national and then international.

Sailing can become much more than a sport, it often becomes a challenging and wholesome lifestyle. It is the nature of sailing that the greatest success occurs when the sailor is working most harmoniously with nature, not attempting to dominate it. There is a good lesson to be learned by that experience.

Finally, it is a sport that allows girls and boys a level playing field, with equal chances of success; thereby creating an environment of mutual respect and healthy competition. There might be nothing in the world that packs as many life lessons as sailing does. It teaches *teamwork, engineering, history, patience, oceanography, ecology...* all in one fell swoop.

Where Can Sailing take your children?

From learning to sail on a small 7 feet sailboat, to racing internationally, sailing provides a wide spectrum of opportunities for growth within the sport, including a possible career on college sailing teams in the U.S.



Sea Masters Academy as an affiliated organization to US SAILING

As the National Governing Body for the sport of sailing, US Sailing's mission is to provide leadership for the sport in the United States. With over 120 years of experience supporting the sport, US SAILING has become one of the top sailing organizations serving as a training and educational platform. US Sailing's commitment to the highest standards in training and education means that all sailors can start by building solid fundamental skills, progressively advance their skill-set and ultimately fine-tune advanced practices to master the time-honored principles of true seamanship. Sea Masters Academy as an affiliated organization to US SAILING, shares the same mission as well as same core values: respect, integrity, excellence, collective success, clarity, transparency, and sustainability.

What is the OPTIMIST?

The Optimist (or "Opti" for short) is an International Class small, single-handed (solo crew) dinghy with a fiberglass hull, a rig consisting of a set of spars (a mast, boom, and sprit), and a set of blades (rudder and daggerboard), is excellent for learning basic sailing skills. It's stable and can accommodate a wide range of child sizes and sailing abilities. It is one of the most popular class of dinghies in the world, with over 150,000 registered vessels, and ideal for young sailors who are just starting to sail and more advanced sailors interested in racing competitively.

The Opti Sailing Program

The program is specifically geared toward younger sailors (ages 7-15) and is organized into summer camps and an introductory Green Fleet and advanced Red, White, and Blue "RWB" Fleets. The children are taught the basics of sailing in an environment that focuses on fun and boating safety. Participants will learn sailing skills, terminology, and knots by means of games and activities, both on and off the water. This program is part of Sea Masters Academy's Long-Term Sailor Development Strategy to keep sailors engaged and continue their involvement in sailing throughout life, with dinghies and keelboats, racing and cruising. All kids must be able to swim and tread water comfortably, in order to participate in our activities.



The Opti Sailing Program follows the **US SAILING Youth Development Model**, a model comprised of five stages designed to create a healthy sport experience and support an athlete's advancement based on their physical, mental and emotional level, and potential for growth.

Sailor For The Sea

Sailors for the Sea is non-profit organization that unites boaters to protect the ocean through different programs such as "Clean Regattas" and "KELP". It collaborates with leading marine research and education institutions to create dynamic and relevant lesson plans that address important ocean health issues including plastic pollution, overfishing and climate change. Sea Masters Academy, as an organization affiliated to Sailors For Sea, uses the Clean Regatta and KELP Programs in all its activities.

Delivering the Program

The Opti Sailing Program will be delivered through Summer Camps and year-round programs based on four fleets.

1. Opti Weekly Camps

The Summer Sailing Camp is available to youths and is an ideal introduction to the basics of sailing as well as to our year-round programs. More importantly we utilize sailing as an educational platform, that challenges young sailors to explore a love of learning and delve deeper into the Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Math. We do this using "Kids Environmental Lesson" (KELP). KELP are marine science activities that encourage curiosity in kids and help them explore their surroundings whilst enhancing the importance of ocean conservation and caring for the environment in general.

We hope that the sailors who learn to sail during the Summer Camp will continue as members of the Sea Masters Academy Junior Squad Club. The camp runs on a weekly-basis, on weekdays from 10:00am until 3:00pm and include lunch, morning and afternoon instructional meetings, followed by sailing practice, lots of play time in the pool and other fun activities.

Requirements for Participation in the S.M.A. OPTI Weekly Camps

Participants must:

- Be a child between 7 and 15 years old of age
- Complete a swim check administered the first day. The child must be able to comfortably swim 25 yards and tread water comfortably for 45 seconds.



- Wear a USCG-approved personal flotation device (PFD) with a whistle at all times while on the water (this includes while on the shore boat) and while on docks. We provide the PFDs for the Green Fleet (beginners).

2. Year-round Programs

Green, Red, White, & Blue Fleets

Fleets

Green Fleet

The Optimist Green Fleet program is intended to be an introduction to sailing for sailors ages 7-15 who have either completed one or more two-week sessions at a SMA summer camp, or a similar program, or are beginner sailors. In the Green Fleet program, young sailors are taught the basics of sailing, boat handling, sail trim, sailboat racing, rules, tactics, and basic strategies. As an introduction to sailing, Green Fleet is somewhat more relaxed and includes fun trips to PUNTA CHAME, fun days, "Big Boat" days, and many other water related activities.

Stage 1: Learn To Sail Program

Learn the basics of sailing while developing skills to prepare for sailing with others at SMA. Although no experience is necessary, sailors must be comfortable in the water while wearing a life jacket. The program has two levels, to be completed on separate courses: **Level 1 Beginner Course** and **Level 2 Intermediate course**.

Duration of each course:

- **Level 1:** 10 weeks, 1 day per week training , 2 - 3 hrs sessions.
- **Level 2:** 4 weeks, 1 day per week training, 2 - 3 hrs sessions

This class does not compete in regattas or regatta training

Stage 2: Learn To Race Program

For sailors who have successfully completed level 1 and level 2 of the Learn To Sail program and want to move on into racing.

Duration: 10 weeks, 1 day per week training, 3 hrs sessions.

This class only competes in regatta training



SMA Opti Race Team - Red, White, & Blue Fleets - (Club Members Only)

Optimist RWB Fleets are age group fleets that Green Fleet sailors graduate to after proving proficiency at sailing and racing. The RWB Fleets are based solely on the sailor's age as follows:

- **White Fleet** is for skippers who are 10 and under
- **Blue Fleet** is for skippers who are 11 or 12
- **Red Fleet** is for skippers who are 13, 14 or 15

Duration: typically 2 days of training per week, 3 hrs sessions.

Sailors receive world class racing instruction from top coaches in small groups and are supported with coaches and motorboats at designated regattas. The program emphasizes focus, personal responsibility and the principles of Corinthian yachting excellence. SMA aims for their team racers to be renowned for being among the best prepared and highest achieving young sailors in the nation.

These skills are highly valued at the best Southeastern to Northeastern Colleges and Universities in the United States of America. The students with a sailing background have an advantage when applying to colleges and universities in the U.S, with competitive sailing programs. These institutions have a priority to recruit new freshmen with sailing skills for their COED and WOMEN teams, such as: Stanford, Georgetown, Brown, South Florida, Eckerd College, Jacksonville, Yale, College of Charleston, University of Miami, MIT, among others.

Club Annual Membership

Membership Benefits:

- Free official SMA OPTI RACE TEAM long-sleeve UV-tech shirt
- Free official SMA OPTI RACE TEAM sticker
- Discounts on sailing instruction & clinics (group and private)
- Discounts on summer camp and sailing programs
- Discount on all gear and equipment from our ProShop (including boats)
- Discount on all SMA OPTI RACE TEAM gear (shorts, t-shirts, sweaters, hats)



- Discount on Storage & Maintenance fee
- Entry fees for local club regattas
- Fees waived for guests who accompany you sailing
- Invitations to special social events for members, and notices on sailing opportunities, programs and regattas
- Eligibility to participate on international regattas with the SMA OPTI RACE TEAM (Orange Bowl International Regatta, Opti Worlds, etc)

Location

Punta Chame's beautiful, all-inclusive Ma'alaea Hotel & Resort. Transportation from the Panama City back and forth is available at an extra cost. The weather and wind conditions in Punta Chame are generally very favorable for sailing and the host hotel will be an excellent spot for you to enjoy along with your children, as they progress in the Opti Sailing Programs. The area is great for kids to learn how to sail in calm and sheltered waters.

The Racing

The International Sailing Federation, as the leading authority for the sport, dictates the Racing Rules of Sailing to keep boats safe and provide fair competition. Sailing is a complex sport and therefore it should be taken with a building-block approach, progression. The Opti sailor moves up through a series of fleets as they improve and learn to race.

Requirements for Participation in the S.M.A. OPTI SAILING PROGRAM

Participants must:

- Be a child between 7 and 15 years old of age
- Complete a swim check administered the first day. The child must be able to comfortably swim 25 yards and tread water comfortably for 45 seconds.
- Wear a USCG-approved personal flotation device (PFD) with a whistle at all times while on the water (this includes while on the shore boat) and while on docks. We provide the for the Green Fleet (beginners). All Opti Race Team sailors must have their own PFD. We sell them at our ProShop.
- Abide by the rules of SMA and this manual, and follow the direction of the instructors. The participant must always represent SMA in an appropriate manner and at all times is responsible for what he or she says or does.



Parents and Guardians must:

- Provide their sailor with the proper personal equipment necessary for sailing activities, and maintain privately owned boats (if you have one) in safe operating condition.
- Accept financial responsibility for any damage or loss of property by their child that occurs during SMA activities

Calendar 2019

Summer Camps

Space is limited in the summer camp sailing program. Please complete the online application and paperwork with full payment to reserve a spot. In the event of cancellation prior to the start of a session, fees will be refunded less a \$50 administrative charge. There will be no refunds after the start of the session. Sessions are for one week.

Summer 2019 Session Dates

Session #1 June 17 - 21

Session #2 June 24 - 28

Session #3 July 01 - 05

Session #4 July 08 - 12

Session #5 July 15 - 19

Session #6 July 22 - 26

Session #7 July 29 - Aug 02

Parent orientation meeting: TBA

Includes:

- Personal Accident insurance
- Official Sailing Camp UV-TEC Shirt
- Lunch & beverages
- Sailing lessons
- Media (video & photos)
- PFD (lifevest)

Activities:

Sailing games
Sailing drills
Swimming pool games
Kids Environmental Lessons (KELP) & Science

OPTI SUMMER CAMP / LEARN TO SAIL - FAQ



Safety

"Safety, Fun and Learning" are the three words that sum up our teaching and coaching philosophy. Students learn through a building-block approach, following a safe and logical progression from previously acquired skills to newer ones. Other aspects emphasized during classes are a positive attitude, courtesy, respect for nature, and navigation rules. All sailors must wear a life-jacket and must be able to swim comfortably, wearing clothes and a properly fitting life-jacket. A safety motorboat accompanies students and is present during all classes.

What to bring/wear?

- US Coast Guard approved life jacket. We have some for when you forget one, but all sailors will need to purchase their own when becoming a sailor of the Opti Race Team. PFD/LifeJackets should be a proper fit for the student. It should reach at or above the waist so it does not ride up. And should be adjustable on the sides.
- Wear a rash guard UV proof and have a spray gear for unexpected showers.
- Footwear should be appropriate sailing boots.
- A towel, hat, sunglasses, and change of clothes are helpful.
- Sunscreen
- Water bottle and snacks

All the sailing gear needed for dinghy sailing is available at our ProShop with special pricing for students and race team sailors.

What will be taught in the Learn to Sail classes?

- Capsizing and righting a boat. Basic safety and sailing skills
- Boat handling, team work
- Proper upwind sailing and tacking
- Sailing downwind, gybing
- Basic right-of-way rules



- Boat speed, boat handling and knot tying.

What kind of boats are the kids sailing?

Beginning sailors learn to sail in Optimists. An Optimist (Opti) is a small pram with a gaff type rig. It is the world's most popular boat with over 150,000 of them sold. One can go almost anywhere there is water and find a fleet of Optis. An Opti is easier for young children to handle and right, should it flip over.

What is an Optimist?

- Often referred to as an "Opti"
- Single design, one person sailboat designed for beginner sailors under 16
- Small pram with a gaff type rig; smaller than an El Toro and easier for young children to handle and right, should it flip over
- More than 150,000 kids in more than 110 countries worldwide sail Optis.
- Largest and fastest growing dinghy class in the world
- World's most popular boat with over 100,000 sold
- Best way for kids to learn to sail - over 85% of the sailing medal winners in the last Olympics were former Optimist sailors

We distribute and sell the MCLAUGHLIN Optimist, one of the best Opti manufactures in the world!

How many sailors per boat?

The Optimist is a single-handed boat. Each sailor will skipper his/her own boat.

How many sailors in the learn to sail class?

Each class will have 6 to 12- kids.



Will you have safety boats?

Yes, there will be safety motorboats. Safety and personal instruction are important.

Reminders

- Bring sunscreen, sunglasses, hat, long sleeved shirt/rash guard, etc.
- All sailors must wear dinghy sailing boots, no flip-flops, bare feet or exposed toes allowed.
- We have lifejackets for those that do not own their own. But having your own is advised (for comfort, fit, etc)
- Kids will be both on land, and on the water. They should bring a change of clothes so they are comfortable when doing land drills.
- Day 1 all students will be doing a swim test where the instructors will make sure the kids are comfortable in the water, and in their lifejackets. They will not need to swim a distance without their lifejackets on.
- In the case of Summer Camps, there will be a lunch break in the middle of the day, and some kids like to have a snack while on land.
- Having a windbreaker, spray top, etc is advisable for the afternoons when it is windier and the kids will be getting sprayed. Some kids like to wear wetsuits as well. I suggest short legs and arms, to aide in mobility. These are available for sale at our ProShop as well.
- For Summer Camps, Drop-off CANNOT be before 9:50am, as the instructors are elsewhere retrieving motorboats and preparing for the day.
- Pick-up is at 4pm. If a child is picked up beyond 4:30pm there is a \$20 charge per 30 minute window. Please plan accordingly.



THIS COULD BE YOUR CHILD SAILING!



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