

Email From Hank Reffner to I-LYA Junior Program Reps May 8, 2012

Hello Everyone,

High school sailing is the fastest growing sport in the US. Ohio area schools are the exception. Just as rowing has exploded over recent years in this area, sailing opportunities need to be expanded. This is what will keep kids involved in the sport.

I feel we have the obligation, as the "local" organized body for the sport, to exercise leadership in this area.

If we don't do it, who will?

As the best sailors know, no amount of coaching regardless of the level can substitute for TILLER TIME.

Sailors in other areas of the country are sailing 3 times as much as we do in this area through h

igh school sailing programs.....and making lots of new friends and having fun in the process. I-LYA junior sailors typically sail 8 or 10 weeks, from June through Junior Bay Week or a week or two beyond. High school sailing seasons are March to June, and then late August to early November. These are typically "low use" times in clubs, so there shouldn't be a lot of resistance to some type of club support. In towns with community sailing centers this is not an issue.

I attended a Michigan high school state team racing regatta at Crescent Sail Yacht Club in Grosse Pointe April 28-29. The description is at <http://missa.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Michigan-Team-Race-Regatta-report.pdf> . It was an EXCITING spectator sport, with 10 high school teams completing 45 races on Saturday alone. Teams were from as far north as Traverse City, a 4 hour drive.

HS sailing has become so popular in the MISSA, (midwest area), that there are two major regattas held at different location on some of the same weekends in the Midwest area. The Chicago area hosted a major regatta on the same weekend as the event I attended. The Chicago Yacht Club alone supports over 80 HS sailors and there are over 500 in the Chicago area.

High school race teams do both fleet racing and team racing. High school match racing is also on the upswing in some locations. If any of your sailors have any intention of sailing in college, HS sailing is a must.

Just as the Traveler series provides summer opportunities within a reasonable drive, a separate league of MISSA can be developed for the Cleveland, Erie, Columbus and Toledo area schools. There are many public, private and parochial high schools already represented in the yacht/sailing club teams in those areas. Several high schools are represented within the Edgewater race team alone.

With your assistance in coordinating with the schools, experienced club sailors need to exercise leadership in their schools by signing up and involving their non-sailing school friends in the sport. They are the only ones who can make this happen.

MISSA is looking for visible indications of interest. I have arranged with Whiskey Island/Wendy Park in Cleveland to serve as a location for a Fall HS regatta, if teams are signed up with MISSA **soon**.

The regatta will be fully supported by MISSA.

A team can be as small as one sailor and one parent. At least in the beginning years, middle school kids can also be in the program.

Please review the enclosure(s) and consider getting this off the ground by signing up with your school and MISSA. More information, including signup, is available from Matt Dubois and at <http://missa.net/> .

Email Response from Matt Dubois

May 8, 2012

Parents and Coaches,

Hank is correct. If your high school age kids are not doing high school sailing, they are falling behind the kids in I-LYA who are. High school sailing provides another entire season (or two if they race spring and fall) of racing for your kids to gain experience, knowledge and skills, and as Hank pointed out, make a lot of new friends in venues they may have never sailed in before.

Please look at the attachments that Hank included - they provide a lot of good information, and answer many of the questions you may have about our sport.

The Cleveland area is long overdue, and ripe for a strong high school presence - I hope to encourage you to join us. If anyone would like more information, please contact me. If you would like, I can make the trip to Cleveland and make a presentation to your group to learn more about the benefits of high school sailing.

Hope to see you soon.

Matt Dubois
President, MISSA
Coach, Grosse Ile High School Varsity Sailing Team