

Teaching Beginning Sailors

Confidence and "Mechanics"

On the first "outside" day, perform these tasks in order.

1. In the cleanest and warmest water available, preferably a pool, have each sailor perform the swim test, ending by treading water and putting on their lifejacket.
2. Have the sailors perform all remaining exercises with their lifejackets on.
3. Place an Opti in the water, making sure the air bags are completely inflated. Leave the rig, daggerboard and rudder off the boat.
4. Turn the Opti over. Play the "Telephone Game". Send an instructor under the capsized boat with a secret phrase to be repeated to the next sailor to enter the boat. Have the first sailor swim to the boat, go under it and get the secret phrase from the instructor. The instructor then leaves the capsized boat, and the first sailor stays under it. Have the next sailor swim under the boat and get the phrase from the first sailor. The second sailor remains under the boat and sends the first sailor out. Repeat until all sailors have been through the "Telephone Game". Test by asking the last sailor what the secret phrase was.
5. Right the boat.
6. Place the daggerboard in the boat. With the boat tethered, have the sailor swim to the boat, climb in and capsize the boat. Have the sailor right the boat using the daggerboard, climb back in and bail about 20 strokes of water out, demonstrating the proper technique. Repeat until all sailors have done the exercise.
7. Insert the rudder. With lines attached to both ends of the boat, have each sailor steer the boat while being towed forward and backward and being given steering directions.
8. Now they are ready for the sail.....and some wind.