

Skill Development Strategy 2019-2024

DRAFT

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this Strategy is to outline a framework and direction for growing sustained participation at SBSC through the development of sailing and on-water skills in a structured yet flexible way that can be adapted to suit changing circumstances.

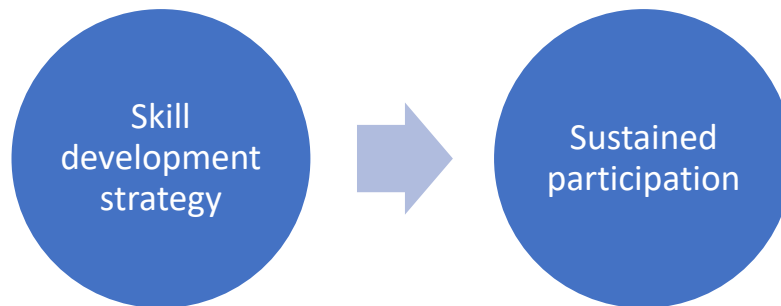


Figure 1 The goal of the SBSC Skill Development Pathway

This document outlines the rationale for the framework, and steps that can be undertaken over time.

This strategy has been prepared as a whole-of-club strategy that can be owned and used by all members and volunteers. It also informs planning by the Management Committee, Commodore, Learn to Sail Manager, Rear Commodore to underpin long term strategies regarding the club's sailing assets and learn to sail programs.

It creates a forward direction for the club that can help to guide decision making on a season by season or year by year basis and does not bind the club or its programs to any specific financial or resource commitments.

This document draws from two source documents (below) in addition to experience and knowledge of long-standing members of the Club.

- “Growing Sailing A Framework for Sailing Clubs’ Success in Australia (2014)”, by Nicola Tyre, Dr Daisy Brooke and Ross Kilborn Produced of Yachting Australia, with support from the Australian Sports Commission and
- Structured Learning Methodology: Brisbane Clubs Training Facility Report to South Brisbane Sailing Club by Don Elks.

2. Background

Learn to Sail at South Brisbane Sailing Club

Since its formation in 1903, the South Brisbane Sailing Club has a proud tradition of training of people of all ages to sail dinghies. Many of these sailors have gone on to participate and win State and National Championships. In 1995 a basic Learn to Sail program was initiated with the ambition of building club membership, which continues to this day in an evolved form by building on experience over the past three decades. The intake of this program was adults and juniors, with most participants being adults. The program was delivered using a combination of Pacers and Herons.

In 2018 SBSC has also introduced a Transition to Racing (TTR) program to assist the transition of learn to sail school graduates into club racing, and to assist in developing racing skills of novice and intermediate sailors. This TTR program was phased out in 2020 with adoption of a four-level - program outlined in this document below.

Sailing clubs in Brisbane and other parts of Australia use a wide array of training systems and classes to teach basic sailing skills, and to improve their sailing skills. Informal training and high-level coaching complement these formal sailing classes.

Australian Sailing Training Courses

The National sailing organisation, Australian Sailing have developed Sailing Pathway that is used as a guide to sailors and sailing clubs to nurture the growth of sailors' experience, skills and confidence. The first 3 steps in this pathway are outlined below.

Table 1. Australian Sailing steps in growing dinghy skills¹

Step	Course	Overview	Areas Covered
Step 1	Start Sailing 1	Fundamental skills of sailing in a safe and supportive environment	Basic clothing and equipment selection, sailing terminology, boat launch and recovery, capsized recovery in shallow water
	Start Sailing 2	Master the fundamental dinghy sailing skills.	Rigging of the boat, capsized recovery in deeper water, sail a triangular course, basic sailing rules and theory
Step 2	Better Sailing	Sailing in stronger winds and develop the skills required to get maximum speed from a dinghy.	Towing, capsized recovery of inverted boat, (use of spinnakers and trapeze), understand and identify weather and environmental conditions
Step 3	Start Racing	Learn the basics of racing.	Basic racing rules, perform basic racing skills, gunwale capsized recovery
	Better Racing	Improve performance and compete at a higher level with a greater understanding of tactics, wind patterns and boat tuning techniques	Develop a training plan, maximise performance for racing, develop race tactics based on the course

¹ Adapted from <https://www.discoversailing.org.au/course/dinghycourse/>.

Australian Sailing promote a games-based version of the Start Sailing courses for kids aged 7-12 years called Tackers.

Table 2. Australian Sailing steps in growing dinghy skills for Juniors²

Step	Overview	Areas Covered
Tackers 1	Having Fun. Kids sail in pairs in small boats.	Basic clothing and equipment selection, sailing terminology, boat launch and recovery, capsize recovery in shallow water
Tackers 2	Tricks & Techniques. If kids are confident, they can sail a boat on their own with lots of support, supervision and encouragement from the Instructor and Assistant Instructors.	Rigging of the boat, capsize recovery in deeper water, sail a triangular course, basic sailing rules and theory
Tackers 3	Sailing Fast! This is a chance for the kids to sail boats on their own, learning how to make the boat go faster and playing more games, all whilst still under the guidance and supervision of the Instructor and Assistant Instructors	Towing, capsize recovery of inverted boat, (use of spinnakers and trapeze), understand and identify weather and environmental conditions Basic racing rules, perform basic racing skills, gunwale capsize recovery

Structured Learning Methodology

In December 2018 SBSC joined other Brisbane sailing clubs to review its Learn to Sail strategy through a series of workshops with Don Elks from WA, who has developed a Structured Learning Methodology (SLM) to teaching sailing at the club level.

The focus of the Don Elks SLM methodology is to draw from an intake of children aged 7-10 years from the local community. Key to retention is about delivering value through quality in the development of junior sailors through to youth and higher levels of performance (e.g. National or Olympic).

The SLM Program uses scales-of-economy to deliver marginal cost and membership growth benefits by comparison with orthodox Programs used at most clubs today. The aim of the SLM approach is to build a loyal sailor membership base that is replenished each year.

3. Challenges and Opportunities

This part of the strategy document summarises some of the challenges faced by SBSC and other sailing clubs.

Declining participation

In the 1970's, the South Brisbane Sailing Club boasted afternoon fleets of 50 boats racing every weekend, with up to 100 boats registered. This number has dropped to a stable 15 to 20 boats in the 2018-19 sailing season. This decline in the number of boats sailed at South Brisbane contrasts in the number of people in Brisbane which has more than doubled from approximately 1.07 million in 1980 to 2.32 million in 2018.

² Adapted from <https://www.discoversailing.org.au/course/dinghycourse/>.

This pattern in declining participation at the South Brisbane Sailing Club has been mirrored at most sailing clubs in Australia and is also reflected in similarly declining levels of participation levels in most competitive sports.

One of the biggest impacts on declining participation in sailing and other sports is that more and more people are now participating in non-club leisure activities such as gym workouts, gym classes, cycling and walking.

Perception of elitism

Sporting clubs, including sailing clubs, are also viewed by many people as being exclusive or 'elitist'; there is a perception that they are only interested in more competent participants that are better performers.

This perception is also exacerbated by media representations of sailing as being a sport for the rich and famous. While Wild Oats and Comanche are almost household names known through the Sydney to Hobart yacht races, only very few Australians think it is possible that sailing is accessible or affordable.

National research also shows that some people do not find sailing clubs to be welcoming, or open to new members. This research also suggests many people do not know how to enquire or have the confidence to do so.

Member retention

After floods which severely impacted SBSC in 1974 and 2011, by 2018-19 membership and sailing participation rates had returned to viable levels, while lower than it was in the 1970s in absolute numbers and especially when viewed as a percentage of the local or Brisbane population.

In the years from 1975 to 2019 SBSC put many people through Learn to Sail classes, with a relatively small percentage continuing past the year they learnt.

Other clubs across Australia report had similar issues:

"We ... know that we have over 10,000 people a year in a recognised introductory sailing experience or courses. And who knows how many thousands more outside these recognised programs. Both the anecdotal feedback from clubs, and the statistics tell us most don't continue and stay.

We already attract a lot of people to sailing, but it's like there is a hole in the bucket. As quickly as we pour new participants in there is leakage out the bottom.' (Yachting Australia).

Development pathway

The problem of low retention has been exacerbated by the absence of a transparent and committed development pathway that attracts people likely to continue sailing and retains them as active sailors and club members.

Too many options

Sailing is more challenging than other sports in this regard because of the high number of options and relatively high demand for skills as sailors progress in size, enthusiasm and competency. Many sailors drop out of the sport because they simply don't know where they fit in. This is especially difficult for children, youth or adults who do not have family or friends who know their way around sailing.

Demand for convenience

Most members of the South Brisbane Sailing Club live within a relatively short distance of the club. This also accords with research from Australian Sailing which shows that most members of sailing clubs live or holiday within about 30 minutes' drive of their club.

Safety and Risk

Research by Australian Sailing indicates that people perceive that sailing is not a safe sport. While this is not borne by evidence, the issue of safety management is a key issue for Sailing Clubs, including all aspects of child safety.

4. A way forward

These challenges present opportunities for progression of sailing skills and participation to ensure ongoing success for SBSC in growing skills and participation.

Learning by doing

Sailing has been identified as being suited to a teaching strategy commonly referred to as Learning Beyond the Classroom (Ballantyne and Packer 2008). Some key aspects of this teaching approach are:

- Learning by doing- Physical doing of the skill rather than observing or passive participation
- Real Life- Rather than learning about a skill set the student is immersed
- Hands on Learning- students do the task or skill themselves
- Disequilibrium – recognising that the experiences and tasks create a level of anxiety within the student. It is the balance and so release into the unknown where learning is heightened.

Starting with juniors and their families

Australian Sailing proposes that the most effective long-term strategy to grow club participation is to attract and retain larger number of young kids, and to develop their skills and confidence appropriately to maximise their long-term participation in sailing.

It is as juniors that most people develop an affinity for a sport or are likely to decide about what they will play as a youth, and for the rest of their life.

In the case of sailing, it increases the likelihood of them returning as a participant later in life. Unlike some sports who pursue juniors to build their long-term fan base, sailing has the additional opportunity for future participation.

The other reason that juniors are so important to sailing is that they come with families. It's the demographic group that is sailing's second priority.

Secondary age children

Youth sailors are a second target demographic group especially if conducted via a school.

Women and girls

Research by Australian Sailing indicates that females are a significant growth opportunity youth and adult age groups. Women and girls prefer a more inclusive and structured pathway than males.

Young mums are a key target group for learning to sail.

Key principles

Eight key principles emerge from the challenges discussed in the preceding sections (Figure 2).

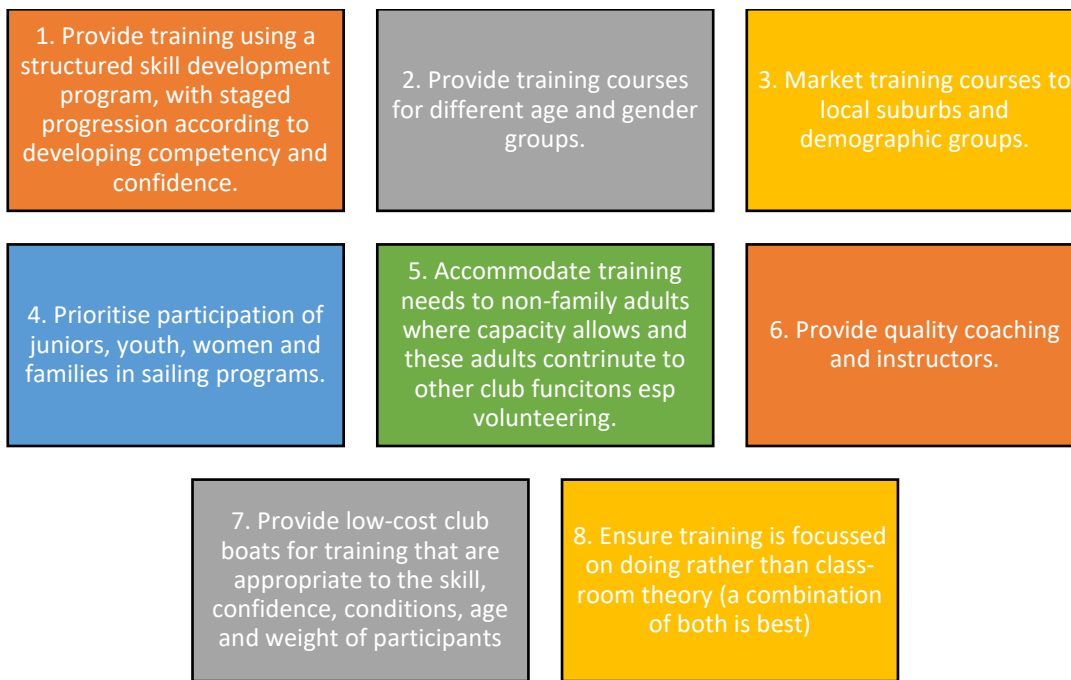


Figure 2. Key principles for the design of an LTS Training Program

Priorities for design of a LTS training program,

Research by Australian Sailing shows the following priorities motivations for continued participation, esp. juniors and youth.

1. Social engagement and interaction.

- Present a welcoming facility and environment to juniors and youth.
- Support social engagement for these groups.
- Provide opportunities to participate and sail with friends.

2. Keep costs reasonable

- Cost is important, especially for non-sailing families.
- Mitigate the cost of sailing through programs such as:
 - i. concessional membership fees for juniors and youth, and their families, especially non-sailing families?
 - ii. provide club boats for ongoing use (either free or for an ongoing fee for lease)
 - iii. scholarships for ongoing coaching support and programs
 - iv. grants for travel costs to major events
 - v. provide opportunities for young people to become qualified and paid assistant instructors or instructors

3. A pathway for advancement

- Create a Novice Fleet and a Club Coaching Program to nurture sailors at intermediate levels
- Encourage Instructors and Club Coaches to support juniors and youth, inspire and encourage them.
- Ensure learn to sail participants have opportunities to people to sail with about the same level of ability and experience. This relies on the club having enough participants to suitably match people. Youth sailors experience drops in confidence in teenage years and are prone to drop out if they don't have people of the same level as them to participate with.

4. Range of times and days of the week

- Offer an after-school time or alternative to weekly club activity, for example fortnightly sessions. Having the flexibility of options in the club's activity will give participants a greater sense of being able to choose how much time they can commit.

Factors relevant to program design

Considerations important to the design of SBSC Learn to Sail programs include:

- Each demographic group has different needs – courses and participation should be aligned to support participation and confidence in each group.
- Keep the length of each learning step short
- Communicate and practice that progression is not guaranteed and is skills based, not duration based.
- A pedagogical approach which will shift learning from directed instruction to hands on doing (on the water instructional support).

Other teaching strategies commonly referred to as Learning Beyond the Classroom (Ballantyne and Packer 2002) can help to move the teaching of sailing into high gear. These strategies include:

- Learning by doing - physical doing of the skill rather than observing or passive participation
- Real Life - rather than learning about a skill set the student is immersed
- Hands on Learning- students do the task or skill themselves
- Disequilibrium – recognising that the experiences and tasks create a level of anxiety within the student. It is the balance and so release into the unknown where learning is heightened.

5. Skill levels

Since 2020, SBSC has introduced 4 four levels of training. These are Level 1 (Beginner), Level 2 (Intermediate), Level 3 (Learn to Race) and Level 4 (Better Racing) (Figure 3).



Figure 3. SBSC Skills Levels

Core competencies for each skill level should be developed and applied by instructors involved in design and delivery of the SBSC LTS Program.

6. Classes of boat

Training fleet

SBSC has four classes of sailing dinghy available for Learn to Sail in the river conditions of SBSC – Open Skiffs, Herons, Pacers and Lasers. SBSC will provide sufficient number of boats in each class to support training in levels 1-3.



Open Skiff: Suited to training of juniors 8-14 years



Hérons: Suited to training of early teens 13+ through to adults



Pacers: Suited to adult training



Lasers: 4.7 and radial rig for youth to adult training

Racing fleet

The above classes are suitable for club racing, plus the Laser Standard Rig, Tasar and NS14. It is expected that the majority of sailors will purchase their own boat when progressing to Level 4.



Lasers: 4.7 standard rig for racing by adults



Tasar: Suited to racing by 2 adults



NS14: Suited for racing by skilled teens, adult and teen, or 2 adults

7. Sailing Pathways

The alignment of classes sailed at SBSC and training skill levels is illustrated in the SBSC Skill Development Framework as depicted in Figure 4 and Typical Adult and Junior Pathways in Figure 5. Some of the pathways that sailors can progress through this framework are outlined below:

- Adult sailors would usually start in Herons or Pacers (L1) and progress in these classes to Level 2 or Level 3. When progressing to Level 3 sailors may be encouraged to progress to Herons. When progressing to Level 4 either Herons, Tasars or NS14s are suited depending on agility, fitness, skills and sailing goals. Sailors would not normally be encouraged to progress to L 4 training in Pacers as SBSC does not have skills needed to support Pacer training at this level.
- Adults may also progress to Level 3 and Level 4 training in Lasers once they are competent in Herons or Pacers.
- Youth sailors can start in herons (double hander pathway) and proceed to Levels 2, 3 and 4 in Herons or to Laser 4.7s via L 2, 3 and 4.
- Junior sailors would usually start in O'Pen Skiffs (L1) and progress to Levels 2, 3 and 4 in the same class. On reaching about 15 years, juniors can progress into Laser 4.7s or Herons in levels 3 or 4, or in some cases NS14s if they have adequate fitness and skill.

Figure 4. SBSC Skill Development Framework

<i>Able to compete in</i>		<i>Sailing between marks</i>		<i>Sailing between marks</i>		<i>Supervised Club Racing</i>		<i>Club, State and Regatta Racing</i>
(a) Double-hander Pathway		L1		L2		L3		L4
ADULT (18+ yrs)	NS14 / Tasar							LTS 4
	Heron	LTS 1	▶▶▶▶	LTS 2	▶▶▶▶	LTS 3	▶▶▶▶	LTS 4
	Pacer	LTS 1	▶▶▶▶	LTS 2	▶▶▶▶	LTS 3		
YOUTH (15-18 yrs)	NS14 / Tasar					LTS 3	▶▶▶▶	LTS 4
	Heron	LTS 1	▶▶▶▶	LTS 2	▶▶▶▶	LTS 3	▶▶▶▶	LTS 4
(b) Single-hander Pathway		L1		L2 (2a, 2b)		L3		L4 (or L3)
ADULT (18+ yrs)	Laser Radial / Std					LTS 3	▶▶▶▶	LTS 4
YOUTH (15-18 yrs)	Laser 4.7			LTS 2	▶▶▶▶	LTS 3	▶▶▶▶	LTS 4
JUNIOR (8-15 yrs)	O'pen Skiff	LTS 1	▶▶▶▶	LTS 2	▶▶▶▶	LTS 3	▶▶▶▶	LTS 4

Figure 5. SBSC Skill Development Framework showing ► Typical Adult Pathways and ► Typical Junior Pathways

