Adult Intro to Sailing Clinic

Instructor Guidelines and Outline for Teaching

DRAFT

What: Weeknight 3-hour intro to sailing clinic for adults on a keelboat

Why: Provide an exposure to sailing opportunity

When: Tuesdays all summer

Where: Cherry Creek Reservoir

Boat: Sonar and/or Ensign

Crew: 5-6 adults max + instructor

Overview:

Day Before

- Send an email to your students with your picture to introduce yourself
- Remind them of the location and that class starts promptly at 5:00
- Ensure they have completed the waiver – if not send them the link (linked also through the QR code on the boat)

Day of Clinic

- Arrive 30 minutes
- Wash the boat; it will have bird poo on it
- Check for lifejackets
- Grab a radio from the office
- Check bilge for water on Ensign – bail or pump out as necessary
- Uncover Ensign before students arrive
- Start promptly at 5:00
- Introduce yourself to students as they arrive
- Use their names throughout the clinic; make it fun/make it a game – everyone should aim to get to know everyone else's names – sailing is a team sport – and doing it well is about good communication

Clinic Intro

- Start on-time

- Have students take 60 seconds or less to introduce themselves including sharing any sailing experience and why they are there/what they hope to learn or get out of the clinic
- Take 60 seconds to introduce yourself again
    - highlight why you sail
    - your sailing background including what and where you've sailed
    - how you'll run the class ("going to start with a 15-20 minute chalk talk; we'll talk about safety, parts of the boat, positions on the boat
    - And then we'll go rig the boat and head out for a sail
- Preview how you will run the class so they know what to expect:
    - 15 minutes to do a chalk talk and introduce some basics about sailing
        - Safety
        - Parts of the boat (diagram)
        - How sailing works
        - Points of sail
        - Review parts of the boat (next to the boat – will quiz you on the parts we talk about from the whiteboard diagram)
        - Positions on the boat
        - Hands-on sailing!
            - Will talk about how we will leave the dock and head out of the marina
            - Will rotate positions so everyone that wants to can have a turn helming the boat, trimming jib and main
            - Will start by sailing on all points of sale
            - Will quiz you as we go along
            - Will answer your questions – ask them anytime

SAFETY

- Everyone must wear a lifejacket while underway – instructors included – this is an insurance requirement and it's just good safety
- Talk about the boom and why it's called that (sound it makes when it hits you in the head)

PARTS OF THE BOAT

- Keep it simple – but introduce key terminology and use it/review it during the on-the-water portion
- Draw a basic sailboat and diagram the parts:
    - Bow, stern, starboard, port

- Forward, aft
- Beam
- Mast, boom
- Shrouds
- Stays
- Keel
- Rudder
- Tiller
- Mainsail
- Foresail

How Sailing Works (whiteboard)

- I start with a drawing of a basic airplane profile with emphasis on the wing and its shape
- I draw airflow lines and describe what happens when the plane starts moving – review Bernoulli's principle
- "Airplanes get sucked off the ground"…
- Talk about wing shape – flaps down = big curve on passenger jets – maximum lift but low efficiency
- Compare to fighter jet wings – nearly flat – very efficient but requires high speed to generate lift
- Draw examples of each
- Then relate wings to a sail on a sailboat – it's the same physics
- Draw arrows showing direction of lift
- Quiz your students with an open-ended question: *If the direction of power is this way (draw arrows from your boat diagram) then why is the boat able to move in this direction?* (upwind – always use an arrow to indicate direction of wind) – let them think on it
- Talk about forward power/direction of the boat as well as heeling force and dual purpose of the keel
- Re-explain: sailboats are pulled through the water/sucked upwind and pushed down wind (we'll come back to that)
- Explain the keel and rudder – i.e. resistance to leeway; the keel provides lift through the water and resists leeway; the rudder allows course changes
- Talk about movement of water over the rudder, i.e. no steering if the boat isn't moving through the water – so you need to have sails up or the motor pushing the boat in order to steer it; explain steering response is proportional to speed through the water – slower boat speed = slower steering response (also depends

on rudder size – compare and contrast rudder size and shape on Ensign vs. Sonar

Points of Sail

- Draw arrow – draw boat sailing:
    - Close reach
    - Beam reach
    - Broad reach
    - Run
- Be sure to show exaggerated position of sails on each point
- Talk about no go zone – and why a boat can't sail into the wind (sails go from foils to flags – no lift)
- Talk about how we sail from point A to point B when B is upwind (describing tacking)
- Talk about gybing

Parts of the Boat

- Walk them over to the boat
- Review the parts you diagramed earlier – quiz them – get them involved

Lifejackets

- Hand out lifejackets – show them how to adjust

Outboard

- Show them how to start and operate (exposure level is fine – you will drive the boat out)

Positions

- Talk about positions on the boat and where everyone sits
- Jib trimmers
- Crew
- Main trimmer
- Helm

Leaving the slip

- Discuss wind direction and velocity
- Are puffs cycling? How often?
- Motor out?
- Sail out?

- If motor out – why we have the mainsail ready to hoist
- If sail out – why we have the motor warmed up and ready
- Weather
- Do friends or family or the marina have a float plan from you? Expected return time? While not necessarily needed at CC, good to mention it. Safety first!

Best Practices

- Motor in and out of the marina with sails down.
- Always have a backup plan
- Always explain things first – then do – then have students try
- Watch the weather
- Head in if skies darken or temps drop quickly
- Head in if wind is dying – or at least sail towards the marina so paddling in is an option
- If no wind, have a plan to keep teaching
    - Motor – have students take turns (don't forget to check your fuel level)
    - Discuss anchoring
    - Practice approaching dock and teach momentum and gauging approach speed
    - Practice backing out
- Monitor time on the helm – try to rotate through in 10 minute cycles depending on the number of students on the boat; if time allows cycle through again – or lengthen appropriately
- Always be teaching
- Quiz students as you sail
- Coach them; be encouraging – commend good efforts and good execution – and don't be afraid to point out mistakes – people want to learn and improve
- Tacking – teach them how to sight an object on land an estimate a new object approximately 90 degrees opposite – they keep their eye on that during the tack; keep eyes up; don't face backwards, etc.
- Have them try and try again until they get it – this is a huge confidence builder
- Lingo – try to use proper and seamanlike terms:
    - Prepare to tack
    - Ready about?
    - Tacking.
    - Bear away, head up (don't use "fall off")
    - Sheet in
    - Ease out

- Talk about rules of the road and stand-on and give-way vessel (there is no “right of way” in sailing and boating
- Keep teaching
- Keep the conversation sailing related. It’s not a sunset sail – it’s a clinic.
- Instructor should always sail out of and into the slip – unless you have a student that has a bit more skill – or if the wind is very light and boat speed is <1 knot
- Always plan ahead and discuss with the crew; talk about bail out option and contingencies if it’s windy
- Get crew into the correct positions for docking – lines, fenders
- Gybing – only if wind is light to medium- teach proper technique
- Running – only if wind is light to medium – teach risk of accidental gybe
- Keep it simple- there are always caveats and exceptions in sailing. Don’t get into the weeds unless the students are ready for it.