

DSSC/RYA Youth Sailing Course – August 2017

Well, we did it again! What a great week. Eight students were there for our usual Summer Sailing course, which included two boys from last summer doing their stage three and their Dad, (David) finishing off his Level Two Certificate, plus five complete beginners learning to sail!

We did of course, have an amazing team of people organising Safety, Catering, Instruction and Launch/Recovery, so that was a bonus. The weather forecast looked pretty grim on Sunday for the week ahead, strong winds and big waves but we went ahead with a flexible attitude and crossed our fingers several times!

Day One dawned with light winds in the morning and after the usual introductions and expectations for the course, rigged the Picos and began to sail across the bay and back to catchers. It was evident from the start that we had a very able group of students. No tears, no fears and big smiles on their faces! The big breeze came in of course but not before we had sailed for a good two hours and consolidated the earlier learning. Interestingly, the students were not fazed by the waves and actively enjoyed the thrill of sailing back to the beach, surfing as they came in!

Day Two was more of the same except that we managed almost three hours of practical stuff before the winds arrived. By now the students were tacking pretty well and sailing a shallow triangle following their figure of eights around two flag buoys. Loads of theory to learn as homework for Day Three and everyone went home pretty tired at the end of the day!

By the time we got to Wednesday morning, even Iris admitted that the students were pretty good at finding their way in and out of the sail locker, putting the boats together and launching them! Another big wind came in around one o'clock but by now we had done over seven hours of practical sailing! All the students were competently sailing a full triangular course tacking and gybing with a degree of skill which was astounding given that this was only day three!

Day Four arrived with a weather warning of strong winds arriving before noon! Not good news although we were well into the programme by now and they were all going to pass the course. The beginners were learning how to accept a tow and the other three were setting up to "come alongside" when a BIG gust came through from the South West and literally blew us off the water! No dramas though, a few capsizes for sure but the valiant Safety Team coped and we all arrived back to shore without mishap.

The final part of Thursday saw the students trying to paddle a couple of Picos across to Rod and myself and not succeeding because of a *little* bit of cheating (I am ashamed of admitting to!) Jenny decide to award ice creams to the winners, which was everyone and we ended the final day chilling out!

Certificates were awarded by Sue and thanks were given to all those who helped out during the course. My very special thanks to a GREAT Team. In no particular order...Iris, Sue, Jenny, Alan, Rod, Peter T, Pete H, Mike, Robert and all those behind the scenes who made this such a successful event! What a fantastic club we have!

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