Northeast Regional Symposium - Notes  
Cottage Park Yacht Club  
November 8, 2014

Topic #1: Youth Programs

- What are challenges in the Northeast region when it comes to various programs?
- Once students become instructors lose them to sailing and they focus more on instructing rather than sailing.
  - Others try and find a schedule that duck tails into another sailing schedule. All about balance.
  - If you just want to be a junior instructor than you will not move up in the instructor rankings.
  - Many people are losing more senior instructors to college internships.
    - Let them know how marketable their skills as sailing instructors are. Instructing is an incredibly marketable job opportunity, especially for employers.
  - There is a positive association with high school sailing and growth of them as instructors. They can instruct during the year.
- Competing with time. That includes parents time, kids time, etc.
  - Possibly develop a 3-hour block program in addition to a traditional 9AM-3PM program.
  - Encourage kids to try and go to different clubs for job interviews, actual jobs, etc.
  - Don’t want member kids to instruct at the beginning. If they do want to come back come back as instructors but with more experience.
  - Sometimes have to send kids away and make them come back with a killer reference for them to prove that they want to work there.
- Salaries for instructors/resources for retaining them:
  - If you want kids to stay as instructors at your program give them promotions, more responsibilities, pay raises.
  - Give them private lessons
  - Possibly have a longer season (10 weeks versus 8 weeks)
  - Give them access to all of the boats and resources.
  - Try and give them housing. Compensation tied to students program, give periodic raises if they stick around, etc.
  - Have a salary scale based on experience: years of sailing in High School, college, years that they have held their US Sailing certifications.
    - Make an internal rating system-this gives strength to justify pay scale to club leadership, board, parents, etc.
  - What do you pay different instructors? Head instructor, head race coach, head opti coach. Are the paid similar rates or is one worth more than the other?
Professional development opportunities? What do you offer?
  o Pay for an instructors educational programs? Level 1, Level 2, Level 3?
  o Safety programs? So they can learn other types of teaching techniques.
  o Use local EMS, fire, and police department as part of the training?
  o Special education training-for kids with identified (or not) special needs.
  o US Sailing should add special needs instructor component to Level 1; understanding of social issues, bullying, etc.
  o Consider part-time adult instructors who can bring experience and wisdom to programs. Guidance for young instructors (find retired or summering teachers) those would be ideal candidates.
  o You have to mentor your junior instructors in teaching experience (1-2 years of shadowing a certified instructor before being trained in Level 1); mentoring and practice on powerboats especially.
  o Make acquired skills from L1, L2 and Level 3 instructors more transparent to instructors, potential employers.

Powerboat courses combined with Level 1-many Level 1 instructor candidates are unprepared to pass the powerboat practical requirements.

Curriculum Development:
  o “Best Of” collected locally
  o US Sailing curriculum materials
  o Require written lesson plans
  o Formal testing to move kids through various levels of programs: both practical and written exams.

Registration Systems: what works for different programs.
  o Active.com Active Network-registration systems
  o Headway technologies.com (what they use up in Marblehead)

Discussion about fun/instruction/racing balance; creating variety of opportunities to meet kids different interests.

Reach and STEM program
  o 1 day course, $150 course
  o Geared towards sailing instructors, classroom teachers, anyone that is implementing the program
  o In the Reach Educator course you’re introduced to the book. The IT teaches one module you’re broken up into pairs and teach the rest of the modules.
  o No time limit for teaching any of these modules. It could be an hour it could be a week. Just depends on the program and what you want.

Junior Big Boat
  o New emerging product that we offer
  o Teaching kids how to sail bigger boats.
  o It is not a course it just a product with guidelines for the program.
  o Program is designed to be universal.
  o Great way to get kids more invested in big boat sailing.
For Nantucket: 2 instructors for every 5 students.

**Topic #2: Hiring the right staff for your program**

- What are some of the hiring challenges that you are facing now? How are you getting the best quality instructor?
- What's the best ratio for your club?
  - Depends on the Level of the class. For younger kids 4 students for every instructor.
  - More experience, fewer instructors.
- What are the qualities for a good instructor?
  - Not about where they previously worked, it’s about the person themselves.
  - Hire the passion above the resume.
  - You meet kids at regattas, clinics, circuits and you hire them without any references and they end up messing up, sometimes very badly.
  - Always call references. All about liability.
  - You don’t have to have all college sailors but definitely want some. Branching out from that when you got excellent references on a kid. Had fantastic coaches who were not college sailors. Have a fresher perspective and enjoy beginner/intermediate references.
  - How do you find the college kids?
  - Any sort of more personal outreach is better.
  - When you look at an applicant’s resume use a reference from somewhere they taught.
  - Always give the option of if they want to speak or not when calling a reference. Do not put them in a corner.
  - Get Instructors hooked by November. Thanksgiving is huge but it doesn’t always happen during that time.
    - Always hiring kids generally from November up until May.
  - Don’t completely rely on references.
  - The background check. US Sailing’s background check works nationally.
  - Do you background check your international employees?
    - Not necessarily but you can go through other routes.
  - Discipline. Problems with instructors and alcohol. Showing up at events as Instructors where they are intoxicated.
  - Also issues with commitments. I have family vacation here. Something else here. How to get kids to whip them into shape.
    - Ginger Lieb: There’s an hourly wage and then she takes $.50 out of each hour and then they add that up and get a huge bonus at the end of the summer.
    - Ask in the interview process: ask for dates that they might be away.
- Sometimes you have to overstaff for things to happen. They want the instructors to go and do sailing events.
- If they're under 18 have a chat with the parents.
  - You're training these kids how to be an employee. The skills you teach them will be applicable for the rest of their lives.
  - Make sure the people that are working with the instructors are part of the hiring committee
  - What does a program director get paid at different types of programs?
  - You can partner up with another program to lease boats so it keeps kids out on the water.
- Are there resources at US Sailing that we can use to find employees?
  - Make sure that your website is very clear. You need a landing page for anyone that is looking for something.
  - Program Director or Head Instructor that has the resources to get someone who is super qualified.
  - Sail One Design, Scuttlebut Sailing, etc.
  - How you treat employees is key for how you get employees.
  - Grab the left overs from other sailing programs. Have communication with other programs and if they had people that applied late, etc contact those people!

**Topic #3: Finding Funding**

- Where do you get the money?
- You could donate to a program and get a plaques, name a boat, get a burgee, it raised a TON of money.
  - One program raised $6000 and bought incredibly old boats. Once the program became successful parents started contributing more money.
- Just doing raffles, pancakes, and bingo nights. Just standard fundraisers stuff.
- They did some wood carving, teak plaques, that they put around the boat house.
- Had a contest with the kids and the kids got to design the burgee.
- A lot of word of mouth numbers.
- Have club Pizza Nights. On racing nights they go and sell pizza after the racing. Any club that has a race night you can do that easily.
- Do a Thursday night family night and everyone brings a pot luck dinner. Great time together.
- Buy a little block for space on a T-Shirt
- For boat disrepair—different marine stores give different parts.
- You can get a lot of money just for asking people for it.
- You can do grant writing for money especially for community boating.
- People just like asking for money that's definitely easy
- Process of educating people of what sailing is about and why these programs are assets (specifically community boating)
- Always know what Board Members are the ones that know what are going on to bring in the dollars.
- Always go for grants because the money has to go back to the water basically.
- If you’re registering a boat the state has money to give back to you.
- Census and enrollment issues?
  - People are getting taken away from sailing with paddle boarding, kayaking, other things
  - What are people competing with? Over scheduled kids. You can’t just sorta play hockey, you have to play year round (just an example).
  - There’s the sampler mind set so kids try equestrian one week, tennis one week, sailing one week
  - Knowing what the programs are in your area
  - Half day classes-a lot of parents work and they need that time.
  - CPYC charges an extra fee so that they have extra time and the kids just stay down there.
- There’s a thin line of camp versus sailing lessons.
- What works in Adventure Sailing?
  - Have to pick the right boat for Adventure Sailing.
  - They have a chart and people can pick where they want to go and then do what they want to do there.
  - The type of boat that you use is key. And a variety of boats.
  - Just do fun type things so it does not matter who won it just matters about the experience.
  - To succeed you have to have a plan, you have to have an activity every single day.
  - Visit to the Coast Guard, a big boat sailing day, different activities.
  - One day where the big boats take them out.
  - Dress up as a pirate day and they bury treasure and the find out. Also have sailing Olympics.
- How to incorporate windsurfing into their programs.
- To hire a windsurfer program you have to hire someone who wants to learn how to windsurf and then teach them.
- US Sailing just updated the resource center so we have new information on how to do stuff.
  - Find it useful to have the Resource Center have a focus on “Venture Sailing” or “Adventure Sailing”.