

“Back to Basics”

JUNIOR CRUISE

Background

Summer 2011 the junior sailing program at American Yacht Club was almost over, but the sailors still wanted a final sailing event without a racing component. Jr. Commodore Becca Quirke and Peter Becker designed a simple one night cruise to Calf Island in CT. They had six (owner aboard) boats and 37 junior sailors who simply wanted more.

Objective

The objective of the cruise is to introduce junior sailors to the fun of big boat cruising. A “Back to the Basics” seamanship and boat handling theme overlaid with lots of fun. Through the AYC Big Boat program most of the juniors have already been exposed to big boat operations, specifically as it relates to racing but many may not had not been exposed to all those other wonderful tidbits of knowledge and activities that make up the rest of the big boat experience.

The outline below is offered as a guide or framework to assist each boat and crew in developing as many learning moments and fun challenges as possible. Read the template, pick things of interest that look challenging, experiment, and have fun.

Preparation to sail

The golden rule is that there is only one time to prepare for a voyage no matter how long or short and that is; ***one must prepare before departing***. The junior cruise should be no different; each boat should be prepared by the juniors with the assistance of the boat owner. The following are some guidelines:

1. Assignments, who is crewing on what boat?
2. Choose a Junior Captain for each boat. The captain should be responsible for coordination and crew preparation. Assign a junior Navigation captain for each boat
3. Introductions to Boat Owner (the “real” captain)
4. Discuss with Owner what equipment, provisions and supplies will be needed
 - a. Food stuffs (talk about menu and cooking arrangements on the boat)
 - b. Icebox / refrigeration (iceboxes maybe brought down to temperature before departing)
 - c. Sleeping (who, where, need sleeping bags etc)
 - d. Fuel – determine the motoring range under power and the vessels fuel capacity
 - e. Sail inventory
 - f. Safety gear- check security and operation of all hatches – tool box location
 - g. Personal gear – and required documentation for the vessel
 - h. Stowage plan
 - i. Describe winch types and proper operation, and the procedure for clearing a fouled winch
 - j. Operate the stove and its controls and shut off valves
 - k. Head. properly operate a head, and its controls and valves
 - l. Locate first aid kit identify its content and use
5. Weather forecast – recognize and forecast basic local weather conditions, prepare to change plans...
6. Cleaning boat, adding gear and removing unnecessary gear

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7. Developing a Float Plan and tell someone so they will know when to expect you back (a Float Plan is communicating when you are departing, where you are expecting to go and when you should be expected back)

Navigation

Everyone can be the navigator or alternatively assign one or two juniors to be the navigator for each boat. Fun navigational things to do might include:

1. Get a current weather forecast and advise the rest of the crew with a weather briefing
2. Lookup the tide and currents and post for all to see
3. Plot the courses and possible courses
4. Calculate a “predicted log” estimating when you will be where and then see how well you guessed. There is such a thing as a Predicted Log Race and two or more boats could decide to compete in a predicted log race.
5. Start and keep a logbook (ship’s log)
6. Keep a running Dead Reckoning position and periodic fixes. Compare how close the DR positions are to the Fixes. Boats could choose to have contests between boats or between crewmembers on each boat as to who can keep the most accurate running DR
7. Use a hand bearing compass to take bearings and plot fixes
8. See if you can do the same by taking bearings using the main steering compass. Which is easier to use?
9. Take bearings on crossing traffic, who is crossing who?
10. Learn how to operate the GPS
11. Input Waypoints into the GPS and create a route to a waypoint
12. Challenge the helmsman to see how close he/she can stay on course
13. See if you can learn from the GPS what the current set and drift is?
14. Can you calculate the leeway of the boat while sailing?
15. Plot the intended anchoring spot and calculate how much anchor scope will be needed for the water depth and weather conditions
16. Calculate and plot danger bearings to keep you off rocks or other obstructions on your approach and departure from the anchorage.
17. When at anchor; learn how to set the GPS drift alarm (if one is equipped) and how to take bearing to determine if the anchor is dragging.
18. Locate vessels after dark operating with their navigation lights on, what can you tell about their direction of travel?
19. Locate a tug and tow, what does two mast lights indicate and what does three mast lights indicate. Can you see the navigation lights on the barge and or other flashing amber lights?

Seamanship

This is a really fun topic because it is so broad and covers almost everything we do on the boat. Proper seamanship impacts the safety and the fun for everyone. The more you know about the “proper” way to do something the more confident and comfortable you and the rest of the crew will be, and more confidence the more fun. Also the more you know and the more confident you are in any given situation the better will be your

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decision making, which in turn leads to safe and fun sailing. Let's consider experimenting with some fun seamanship situations;

1. Use of a Bosun's Chair or climbing harness (owner approved)
 - a. Learn how to attach a bosun's chair/harness to a halyard
 - b. Get in the bosun's chair and swing around just off the deck to get used to it
 - c. What is the difference between a proper bosun's chair and a climbing harness?
 - d. Learn proper winch use and halyard management when hoisting someone aloft (safety safety safety)
 - i. One person looks aloft and constantly checks on the person aloft
 - ii. One person only focuses on the halyard around the winch and makes sure that there are no wraps etc
 - iii. One person grinds the winch
 - e. Talk about safety issues of having someone aloft and getting them down safely.
 - i. Before lowering make sure the halyard is flaked out and that no one is at risk of stepping into the flaked halyard.
 - ii. Maybe take a wrap or two off the winch and lower at a slow constant pace
 - iii. Person looking aloft continually communicates with the person on the winch and makes it clear when the person aloft is passing spreaders etc.
 - iv. Talk about the importance of not dropping anything from aloft. All tools and other items should be attached with a lanyard
 - f. Hoist someone up to the top of the mast – or don't (think about the sea conditions and consider how safe it is aloft in the conditions)
 - g. Maybe someone will like it so much on the top of the mast that they will want to eat breakfast on the top of the mast. Often early in the morning when the wind and waves are calm and the sun is just getting up the best and most scenic place to be is at the top of the mast. You might even get breakfast sent up to you (in a bucket, but no eating utensils)
 - h. Talk about and rig up a safety line so that the person aloft can secure themselves to the mast to prevent swinging away and smashing back
2. Line handling
 - a. First thing – all ropes on a boat are called “lines” with only one exception which is the bolt-rope on the luff of a mainsail.
 - b. Practice coiling halyards, sheets and dock lines. Experiment with the different ways to end a coil
 - c. Have a competition to see who can heave a line the farthest
 - d. Have a competition to see who can throw a clove hitch over a piling the best
 - e. Have a competition to see who can tie a bowline the fastest or behind their back or with their eyes closed...
 - f. Can you tie a bowline on a bite? Can you make a bosun's chair from a bowline?
 - g. What is the proper way to cleat a line? When do you use a hitch on a cleat? When do you not use a hitch and why?

Marlinespike Seamanship

1. Splicing three strand line
2. Splicing 12 & 8 plait braided line

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3. Make a rope shackle out of some spectra line
4. Whip a splice and the bitter end of a line with needle and thread
5. Learn some fancy rope work (references such as Annapolis Book of knots or Ashley’s Book of Knots)
6. Make a Turks head on your buddy’s wrist or on the king post of the ship’s wheel

Vessel Handling

1. Docking & Mooring lines
 - a. Practice making an approach to another boat or float for docking.
 - b. Learn how the engine controls work and how the boat behaves when forward and reverse gear. Get a feel for how “grippy” or not the propeller is, especially when going into reverse when you are trying to stop your headway.
 - c. Learn how to steer the boat in reverse. How much speed is needed to have steerageway? Maybe you need more speed than you thought!
 - d. Prepare four (4) dock lines; two (2) breast lines (one at the bow and one at the stern) and two (2) spring lines.
 - e. Proper Breast lines will ideally attach to whatever you are tying up to with the breast line going perpendicular to the centerline of the boat. Breast lines are always kept slightly loose.
 - f. Proper Spring lines will ideally attach as far forward and as far aft as possible on the boat. They should be run as far forward and as far aft in the opposite direction attaching to what you are tied up to. Spring lines should always be as long as possible and adjusted to be very tight. Which one is called the “forward spring” and which one is called the “aft spring” line?
 - g. Setup fenders and learn how to best tie them to the lifelines or the other locations on the boat. Talk about the pros and cons of attaching the fenders to your boat or to what you are tied up to.
 - h. When rafting alongside another sailboat check to make sure the spreaders are not in a line with each other less they may hit when the boats roll.
 - i. Talk about the issues of tying up to a fixed pier
 - ii. How do you setup the fenders to keep the boat off the piles? What is a fender board? How is it used?
 - iii. What do you do if you in an area with extreme tide range? In the Bay of Fundy the tide range can be as much as 40 feet!!!!
2. Do any of the boats have a dinghy with oars? Learn how to row a dinghy, how fast can you go?
3. Do any of the boats have a dinghy with an O/B motor?

Safety Gear

1. Jack lines and safety harnesses
 - a. Rig the jack lines, demonstrate correct use during heavy weather conditions
 - b. Locate the safety harnesses and put them on
 - c. Experiment with working on deck with the tethers attached to the jack lines
2. Life raft
 - a. Where is it located
 - b. How long does it take to get on deck and ready to deploy?
 - c. How many persons is it rated for?

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- d. Know what the first thing you do before inflating the raft – **tie the life raft painter to the boat**
 - e. Know that the next thing you do is deploy the life raft into the water, the painter will be pulled which will cause the raft to inflate. Know the second most important things – **before you jump into the water or the raft attach your safety harness tether to the life raft painter.**
 - f. Describe a plan of action and deployment procedure if your vessel was in danger of sinking
3. Have a plan of action in the event of a dismasting in heavy wind and sea conditions
 4. Practice proper reefing techniques, change a roller or furling headsail.
 5. Try swimming with a full set of foul weather gear and your lifejacket or inflatable safety harness. You will be surprised how much you will learn.
 6. Try hoisting the swimmer with wet foul weather gear out of the water and onto the boat. Use techniques that you learned at the Safety at Sea course. Do they work?
 7. Perform a safety gear check of the boat.
 - a. Locate all safety gear required by the USCG
 - b. Locate all the safety gear required by the racing rules (JSA check sheet attached)
 8. What is the MOM and how do you deploy it?
 9. Learn the location of the battery switch and why it should be positioned only on Battery 1 or Battery 2 and never on “Both”. When would you put to the “Both” position?
 10. Do you know how to turn on the navigation lights? When do you use the mast light (steaming light)?
 11. Make a call on the VHF to hail the launch or to speak with another AYC vessel. What channel is used for Calling and Distress? Which channel for Vessel Calling and which one is used for Bridge to Bridge and security calls? Listen to Ch 13 and see if you can’t hear a Security call, what was announced and why is that important? When in the proximity of commercial traffic such as a tug and tow, call them on Ch 13 and “negotiate” your crossing with the other vessel.

Nautical Terminology

1. Who can Google the most nautical terms?
2. Who can use the most nautical terms and conversely how many of your friends can you catch using non-nautical terms i.e. “I’m going down stairs” instead of “going below”
3. What is the ceiling?
4. What is the sole?
5. What is the companion way?

Fun Things to Do

1. Steer the boat with sails and weight only
2. Hang your feet over the rail on the leeward side while sailing, can you get your feet wet?
3. Climb out to the end of the boom and ease boom over the water. See how far you can increase the heel of the boat. This is a good technique for reducing draft in an attempt of re-float after a light grounding. This is a common recovery method after going aground
4. Swing from a halyard in a bosun’s chair or harness while underway just above the water on the leeward side (see above)
5. Go up the mast maybe even while sailing (see above)

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6. Get towed behind the boat at slow speed (2 kts or less) and see how hard it is to keep your head above water. Try it on your back with your arms over your head
7. If the boat has a dinghy, tow it behind with you in the dinghy
8. Have a “real” man over board drill... (owner approved only....)
9. Make a raft up with all the boats on the cruise
10. Take a dinghy out for a baby cruise across the harbor and explore
11. Look up sunset and sunrise. Fire a cannon at colors’ (the exact the time of sunset) and have all the boats take their colors down at the same time. Question: where do you find the time of sunset/sunrise?
12. Make sure all boat put up their colors at exactly 8:00 AM (no cannon on Sundays)
13. See which crew member or boat on the cruise can accomplish the most items listed in this document

Sample Schedule

Destination: (for example west side of Calf Island)

Who is involved: Laser and 420 JAYC Sailors. Sailor must be 14 years old (JSA 14)

What to bring: Life Jacket & Sleeping Bag

When:

0000 hrs.	Meet at the Clubhouse
0000 hrs.	Junior Captains and crew muster and meet with owners
0000 hrs.	Departure
0000 hrs.	Anchor at agreed anchoring location

Organize dinner by sunset

Cannon at colors

Decide if the raft up will be broken up for the night with each boat anchoring on their own

Up at sunrise, Start breakfast

Colors made at 8:00 sharp

Clean up boat from the night activities and organize boat for the sail home

Back to the yacht club, clean boat (leave in better shape than the way you got the boat)