

To: Parents of Returning Opti Sailors

From: Tim Clarke & Alison Lew

Date: January 25, 2009

As we head into registration season, we wanted to offer additional information on what to expect in terms of class placement and boat options for your Opti sailor(s).

Following registration PYC will group students based on parent request and instructor input. After the Novice year, the Opti program basically breaks down into two broad groups, each with its own commitment in terms of time and boating equipment:

Classes: 1) Opti Racing (8 weeks)
 2) Opti Intermediate

Boat Type: Optimist

Class 1 Description: The Opti Racing class is geared for sailors wanting to participate in the full compliment of Long Island Sound regattas (see schedule below). As such this class will focus on developing racing skills. The age group is typically 11 to 12. The 13 to 15 year age group may continue to compete in Optis in what's known as the Red Fleet, or move up to a double handed boat known as the Pixel.

Class 2 Description: The Opti Intermediate class is geared for returning 2nd or 3rd year optimist sailors. This class emphasizes basic competency over racing skills. Participation at regattas is the exception, not the rule, but certainly an available option. The age group is typically 10-11.

Boat Description: The Optimist is JSA's designated learn-to-sail / learn-to-race training boat. The optimist is the biggest dinghy class in the world. It is sailed by 150,000 kids in over 100 countries.

At 7'7" in length and 77lbs, the Optimist is easily transportable via car top rack or inside any large SUV.

Sailors weighing more than 110lbs will have difficulty being competitive in the prevailing light winds of Long Island Sound and should consider stepping up to a bigger boat.

Rent vs. Own: A new Optimist is priced at approximately \$3,700 including sails and dolly. A used Optimist can range between \$1,500 and \$3,000 depending on age and condition. The Boat Locker hosts an annual "Opti swap" at which several dozen used boats are sold off by private owners (see dates below).

Chartering from the Club or a private owner at PYC is another popular option. Club boats are unavailable to take to regattas, however.

Most sailors will stay in the Optimist class for about 4 years. An investment in a good hull and then upgrading sails and spars as needed is the most flexible approach.

Most boat builders have a basic line (“club racer”) and an advanced line (“pro racer”) of hulls. There are different grades of sails and spars as well. To be competitive at regattas your sailor should have one practice set and one racing set of sails and spars.

Where to find a boat: The Junior Sailing Association (JSA) web site is a good starting point to view a listing of used boats for sale or charter. You can find this site at:

www.jsalis.org

Under “Resources” (left hand side) select “Classifieds”

Also, many of the top sailboat dealers in the area offer new or used Optimists. These retailers include:

The Dinghy Locker @ Landfall

151 Harvard Ave.

Stamford, CT

(800) 941-2219

www.dinghylocker.com

The Boat Locker

1543 Post Road

Westport, CT

(203) 259-7808

www.boatlocker.com

This year’s annual “Opti Swap” will take place on April 25 at 10am at the Boat Locker. You will find a wide range of pre-owned boats available for sale at this event.

The International Optimist Association has much more on boat builders, sail makers and suppliers and can be found at:

<http://www.optiworld.org/>

Parent Coordinator: Alison Lew will be our liaison to Opti sailors and parents this year. Please feel free to contact her with any Opti related questions at:

(203) 259-9200
Mayfly1959@yahoo.com

Regatta Schedule:

July 5 & 6	Opti Team Race (Indian Harbor YC)
July 10	Opti Rumble (Pequot YC)
July 12	Girls Opti Clinic & Regatta (Noroton YC)
July 15	Larchmont Area B&C (Larchmont YC)
July 21	Optimist Open (Horseshoe Harbor YC)
July 27	Milford Area C (Milford YC)
July 29	Cedar Point Area B&C (Cedar Point YC)
Aug 3-5	Opti New Englands (Newport, RI)
Aug 9	Opti Area C Green Fleet (Cedar Point YC)
Aug 13-14	Opti Championships (Larchmont YC) ¹

Bold type indicates an event that is open to Green Fleet sailors.

Optimist regattas and racers are organized into different age groups as shown below (age is as of an event's first day):

Novice.....	Green Fleet (15 & under; never raced in any of below)
10 and under.....	White Fleet
11 and 12.....	Blue Fleet
13, 15 and 15.....	Red Fleet

¹ This event is a qualifier. An Opti competitor must place in the top 40% in any of the preceding regattas in order to qualify for Champs.