

A Simple Plan for a Successful Windsurfing Program at Sailing Centers, Yacht Clubs, and Clubs

What:

Here is a formula for incorporating and engraining windsurfing into sailing centers. It is a five- year plan involving lessons for kids and adults, instructor development, gear purchase, dedicated sailing center windsurfing organizing team, and active windsurfing participants.

Do the math:

Sailing on a windsurfer is different than normal sailing craft....no rudder/tiller/tiller extension/wheel, no stays or mast step, smallest of hulls, and no seats. A windsurfer pivots on a dime and is clearly the sailboat that jumps most often. Windsurfing is all stand-up sailing and the rig (mast/sail/boom) falls down all the time on a universal joint (UJ) if not balanced and handled just right.

Windsurfing is unquestionably sailing! Windsurfing is sailing in light to heavy wind, in good to gnarly weather, from schlogging to incredible planing or foiling speeds, and at spots/launches thought impossible to sail. Windsurfing has the freestyle element, too!

Who are the fittest of sailors? Windsurfers! “Here I am sailing along having a great day because every day of sailing is great!”

Windsurfing Guru Andy Brandt’s mantra.

How To Do A Successful Windsurfing Program:

First, each sailing center creates a windsurfing organizational team. The windsurf team for your program that will organize, get educated, learn to windsurf, and lead the program into producing

real windsurfers who become future instructors, race, travel, and love it.

Each of the non-existent windsurfing elements are addressed initially, continually, and annually until a fun, successful total windsurfing program is second nature at the sailing center. Fun events, regattas, freestyle, and travel are part of each members windsurfing. Windsurfing is not misunderstood as a sailing sport but rather embraced and seen as an integral part of the of the sailing world. A successful windsurfing program at a sailing center or sailing center:

- Has trained experienced windsurfing instructor(s).
- Has adult member sailors who can windsurf and love it.
- Has an understanding that men's and women's windsurfing is 20% of Olympic Sailing.
- Knows regatta windsurfing racing is huge in Europe and other parts of the world.
- Knows what other countries are doing and that the USA is way behind.
- Has the best of windsurfing boards and sailing rigs for beginners and local conditions.
- Has kids and adult lessons via private and group lessons.
- Has a sailing center windsurfing organizational team.
- Has established short term, midway, or long-term windsurfing goals.

- Has great, simple storage for boards and rigs
- Does an assessment of windsurfing strengths and weaknesses before, during, and after initiation of program using a windsurfing consultant.
- Has a windsurfing safety plan exists known as an emergency action plan (EAP)
- Shows participation in fun events, local regattas, regional regattas, and national events
- Does fundamentals, light wind free style windsurfing as a fantastic alternate for non-regatta goal minded windsurfers.

The initial kids and adults who do it for 3 seasons with lessons will share it with other kids, junior instructors will emerge from within, and eventually home-grown windsurfers will become instructors from the sailing center itself. Parents who windsurf and do fun races and events will enhance the whole effort.

Planning Phase:

- Can be short or long in duration, simple or complex.
- Getting educated and seeing the whole 5-year picture and goals is key.
- Selling the plan to the powers that run the organization.
- Get assessment of windsurfing pros and cons of the site for your site. Work with an outside windsurfing consultant who can assess the site.

- Plan program details like time, costs of privates, group for adults and kids.

Yearly Goals for 5 Year Plan:

1. First Year

- Buy boards and rigs and have ready to go early in the season.
- Train your best sailors to become windsurfers and beginning windsurfing instructors. Use an Instructor Trainer-Examiner from www.windsurfingipa.com to do this.
- Teach privates, group lessons to adults and kids.
- Teach all the windsurfing fundamentals, fun activities, simple races, team races locally.
- Really celebrate those whose try.

2. Second Year

- Second year students return to improve, review, and learn planing, harness, beach, waterstarting, bigger sails, more speed, etc. Simple race course regattas are held.
- Another set of first year students begin, slow learners repeat the first-year programs.
- Some adults and kids serve as junior instructors.

3. Third Year

- Third year students are going to regional regattas, looking for big winds, sharing the love with others, going for speed, and doing freestyle tricks.
- A third, first year group begins and model the windsurfers who show it.

4. Fourth Year

- Some travel to regattas, travel to high wind windsurfing hot spots, and the Nationals and Worlds

5. Fifth Year

- Full blown windsurfing program exists like the Opti's, Laser's, Pixel's, 420's. Some go on windsurfing trips, some got to Nationals or Worlds.
- Some original adults and kids are now instructing..
- Windsurfing is sailing and sailing is windsurfing. Both are melted together and all is good. Appreciation of all sailing and desire to do it abounds.

When:

- Some places windsurfing can could be year-round but in most places the windsurfing can be 4-6 months. With modern wetsuits and gear, 6 months of participation is achievable. It can be weekends, weekdays, and evenings for junior and adult programs.

Where:

- Many sailing centers have excellent docks, beaches, coves, low tide, and good bays to teach windsurfing. Each sailing center is different. Some clubs are endowed with incredible great shore terrain and windsurfing potential and they do not know that. This is why getting a windsurfing consultant to help assess the potential is part of the initiation process of getting windsurfing engrained and the 5-year process is key.

DON'TS:

Do not just buy windsurfing gear and throw sit- down sailors at it and expect success! Do it as it is suggested above! Why? When sailing on a windsurfer is introduced to a sailing center, remember the following do not exist:

- Trained windsurfing instructor(s)
- Sailors who can windsurf
- Parents who can sail a windsurfer
- Windsurfing bias, passion, tradition and history as opposed to sailing bias, passion, tradition, and history.
- An understanding that men's and women's windsurfing is an Olympic sport and regatta racing is huge in Europe and other parts of the world
- Knowing that Windsurfing is 20% of the Olympic Sailing Classes

- Knowing what other countries are doing and that the USA is way behind
- Knowledge of windsurfing boards and rigs with sails
- A plan for kids and adult lessons via private and group lessons
- A sailing center adult windsurfing organization team
- Established short term, midway, or long term windsurfing goals.
- Storage for boards and rigs
- Assessment of windsurfing strengths and weaknesses before, during, and after initiation of program specific to the club using a windsurfing consultant
- A windsurfing understanding of safety and a safety plan for a specific club
- A fun regatta, a local regatta, a regional regatta plan

Sailing on a Windsurfer is great for your sailing center, but you got to do it right! It is not a “filler” program. A “filler” program is a side show with no results and very low quality. Fundamentals done right equal a windsurfer, fundamentals done wrong equal a “wind sufferer!”