

SS&S Introduction

How long does it take to learn how to sail? The answer is one day. However, it takes the rest of your life to learn how to sail well. This cliché is true and very appropriate to start a discussion on what material should be included in a basic sailing course. We suggest that the following be assessed prior to each course offering.

The scope of the SS&S textbook is quite broad. It caters to the beginner who has never even been in a small day-sailor. It also covers material appropriate for the skilled sailor with experience in racing sailboats or large ocean rated sailboats. One course covering all subjects will not please the majority of students.

There must be a minimum of two hours of instruction including Chapters 1 through 10 to qualify for being NASBLA approved. There is no scheduled time limit or a Course Completion Certificate for teaching the remaining chapters.

The flotilla may choose to survey the students in advance to determine their sailing experience to guide in selecting the appropriate material to present—or more importantly, what to leave out. This requires a lot of pre-planning before each course. Alternately, the flotilla can define a given level of instruction, and include that information in their course announcements. (BASIC ONLY, BASIC & ADVANCED, ADVANCED ONLY, and all these with or without NASBLA APPROVAL) as appropriate.

A balanced sailing course would include academic instruction followed by time on the water to get the experience and “boat feel” for this instruction. This course has no “on the water time”, which makes the instruction more difficult. The instructor should assure that the novice students will have adequate instruction to describe and to visualize these characteristics such as “tiller feel”.

The highly experienced sailing instructor is likely to be quite enthusiastic and anxious to share all their sailing knowledge, but they must be cautious not to teach basic students too much detail or subtleties that are beyond their grasp. Chapter 11 is where these subtleties can be covered.

This guide will include minimal technical guidance in teaching the course. The instructor should be well-grounded in sailing experience to explain all the material. Instructor feedback