

Basic Keelboat Instruction – 2013 Summary

Sail Chicago's Basic Keelboat Instruction program enjoyed another extremely successful season. In addition to sustaining the significant increase in enrollment we enjoyed in 2012, we were able to:

- Complete the transition to teaching all Basic Keelboat classes on the Colgate 26
- Launch a new Wednesday evening racing program on the Colgate 26
- Reintroduce instruction on spinnaker (through Colgate 26 racing)
- Train skippers in single-handed sailing (Ideal 18)
- Qualify existing skippers to sail the Colgate 26
- Train a new group of instructors

The Sail into Summer program, launched in 2012, continues to attract new sailors to Sail Chicago. This year we expanded access to Intermediate and Skipper classes and enjoyed modest enrollment in those classes by Sail into Summer students.

All of this happened while we continued to qualify substantial numbers of new skippers. We added almost 40 new Colgate skippers and qualified 9 skippers to sail the Ideal 18. This is very close to last year's record. We now have over 130 qualified Colgate skippers, an impressive accomplishment since we began acquiring Colgates in the 2011 sailing season. Note also that we have been successful in identifying capable students at the Intermediate level and have issued them skippercards if they were able to meet our skipper standards.

While the overall number of students was slightly less than 2012 (174 in 2013 vs. 186 in 2012), this was 'planned', in the sense that boats and instructors were assigned to the new racing program. The racing program had a significant educational component and was quite successful in its own right. New sailors were attracted to Sail Chicago as a result of this program. 45 sailors participated in 9 races and 8 on-the-water training sessions over the course of the summer. The racers included a good mix of instructors, long-time members, and new sailors. We entered the first-ever fleet of Colgates in the Verve Cup in August as well.

Overall, revenue exceeded budget projections by a healthy margin, generating almost \$45,000. Of that, \$5600 was generated by the new racing program.

Here are the numbers. The "members" category includes new members, returning members, and new members who signed up for more than one class. The numbers shown are based on initial registration. At some point in the summer, over a dozen Sail into Summer sailors joined Sail Chicago. Total new members for 2013 were 75, down slightly from 2012. However, 40% of our 2012 new members rejoined in 2013, a significant increase over previous years. The ongoing fleet renewal project certainly was a significant factor in the high rate of member retention.

2013 students	Sail into Summer	Members	Total
Basic	61	40	101
Intermediate	11	36	47
Skipper	5	21	26
Total	77	97	174

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Breakdown of new skippers:

New Colgate skippers*	28
Fast track skippers**	4
Colgate qualifications***	11
Total new Colgate skippers	39

* Sailors new to Sail Chicago who have earned their skippercard on the Colgate

** Experienced sailors new to Sail Chicago who earned dual qualification on Hunter and Colgate

*** Current R19 skippercard holders not previously qualified on Colgate

Our instructor ranks continue to grow. We added a half dozen new instructors this year. Our instructor group has grown by 40% since 2011 and now stands at 45 active instructors.

Despite our best efforts, we were unable to meet all of the demand for sailing education. Our classes filled for the season by early May. Sail Chicago was forced to post a 'Sold Out' notice on our website at the very beginning of the summer. We kept a substantial waiting list and used it to fill vacancies, until it became apparent that there was no chance people would be able to get in a class. A proposal to augment our dedicated volunteer instructor group by hiring one part-time paid instructor was submitted to the April Board meeting, to take advantage of this significant uptick in interest in sailing education. The Board declined to act on the proposal at that time.

We were also plagued by out of service boats early in the summer, nearly causing us to cancel classes. The racing program was significantly impacted by this as well. The addition of the fifth Colgate mid-summer eased the situation somewhat.

We also concluded that we need to find a different vendor for our online class registration. Constant Contact works well for large, one-off events like seminars and picnics but is ill-suited to manage registration of large numbers of students for small classes that meet at specific times and days. The amount of volunteer time required to hand-schedule students and instructors is unacceptable and is a deterrent to continued smooth functioning and growth of our program.

All of this would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of our volunteer instructors and the support team—Pre-Sail coordinators, schedulers, skippercard coordinator, and many others.

John Lemon
Lead Instructor
October 2013

Here's a recap of our enrollment going back to 2011, shortly after we began our fleet renewal project.

	2011	2012	2013
Basic Sailing	53	126	101
Intermediate Sailing	35	28	47
Skipper Training	27	32	26
Total students	115	186	174
Colgate 26 racing			45