

Working With Today's Youth in Sailing

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Have you ever asked yourself any of the following questions in when thinking about your Sailing program?

- * Does puberty completely suppress any notion of responsibility in teenagers?
- * Did my entire sailing school staff neglect to take their medication this morning?
- * Do the police show up this routinely at other sailing schools?
- * Why is that coaches mother attending our staff meeting? Is she taking notes?
- * Is it cool to be 'flamed' by the coaches on your sailing schools Facebook page?
- * Did that instructor just tell me to 'F**K OFF'?

If you answered 'yes', you are not alone.



What has always been true about the adolescent stage of life:

- * Adolescence is a time of **seeking status as an individual.**
- * Adolescence is a time when **group relationships become of major importance.**
- * Adolescence is a time of **rapid physical development and growth.**
- * Adolescence seems to be a **time for complex intellectual and cognitive development.**
- * Adolescence is a time for the **re-evaluation of societal values, customs and morality: i.e. rebelliousness**

Where today's teenager's coming from?

- * More liberal society with fewer boundaries
- * Neurological changes are greater than physical
- * Heavily connected the virtual world
- * Diversity of family dynamics
- * Encouraged to question + Lower levels of deference = A generation of negotiators.
- * The entitlement generation: kids who've always been told they're smart, and never pushed too hard
- * Not equipped to deal with constructive criticism*

What issues have you experienced with your staff?



What does all this mean for Youth Sailing Programs?

- * We need to understand the transition from youth sailor to sailing school instructor
- * We need to be prepared to create and manage an environment nurtures young coaches
- * We need to give them the sport specific tools so they can become successful sailing instructors

Sailors to coaches:

- * Prerequisites
- * Training
- * Responsibility
- * Application Process
- * Experienced coaches
- * Mentoring
- * On going club based training

Managing your coaches:

- * Have senior and guest coaches act as role models.*
- * Discuss. Don't lecture . Be patient.
- * Run a tight ship. Keep them busy. EMPOWER THEM.
- * Openly and thoroughly discuss what kind of behavior is unacceptable and set consequences up front.
- * Avoid bargaining. Ask for their input, shape the results.
- * You cannot buy experience. Give them chances to fail.
- * Provide opportunities for regular 'two-way' feedback sessions. Praise and positivity.

Engaging your coaches:

- * Help them to become better sailors
- * Embrace technology
- * Encourage creativity
- * Help your staff make the connection between professionalism and profitability
- * Provide the equipment that will ensure success
- * Understand and support their professional development
- * Encourage creativity. Ask for input. Praise success.

Sailing Director Success

- * Develop a formal hiring process
- * **Have incredibly detailed contracts. Pre-negotiate everything**
- * Establish the tone for the level of discipline and professionalism
- * **Emphasize the importance of safety training**
- * Establish the idea that the coaches are living advertisements for the sport and for your program
- * **Insist upon ongoing evaluation and performance feedback**
- * Encourage creativity. Ask for input. Praise success.
- * **Hire creative problem solvers and balance your staff**
- * Understand all elements of the CANSail Program

Credits

Inside the entitlement generation. Margret Wentz
Making sense of today's teenager. Dr. John R. Morella
Why punishment based systems don't work. Kathie F. Nunley
The Education Issue: New York Times Magazine. Sept. 16, 2011

