

## Portland Yacht Club Suggested Classes for progression of Tackers, Better Sailing and Green Fleet Sailors

The purpose of this document is to aid PYC members to identify which class of sailboat will suit your skill level. There are many types of off the beach classes available in Australia, each with their good and bad points. The class of boat you sail will affect how you develop your sailing skills and the progress you make. If the class is not challenging enough, you won't refine your skills or learn new techniques required for higher performance boats. If the boat is too challenging, you may lose confidence and halt progression.

As a sailor, I always prefer to sail against others in the same type of boat. It will show the skill of the sailor, not the boat. It will directly show your strengths and weaknesses in comparison to the other sailors and point out where you need to improve. From a coaching point of view, it is much easier to teach when everyone is sailing the same class.

The PYC recommends the following classes for good progression. Most of the boats listed are available for sale and actively used in our area. Most will hold their value if they are maintained well, which means you can trade up when your skills improve for minimal outlay.

### Single handed

#### - Optimist



- Entry level boat for juniors of around 35-55 KG
- Very basic to rig and transport
- ISAF approved class with strong fleets and support locally and overseas
- Further training and coaching programs available if willing to travel to capital cities
- Mainly available in fibreglass but also plans available to build your own
- AS Yardstick is 170 \*\*
- Second hand boats range from \$1,000 to \$2,000
- New race boats cost around \$2,900 to \$4,500 depending on fit out

- Minnow



- Entry level boat for juniors of around 35-55 KG
- Very basic to rig and transport
- Strong fleets and support locally
- Further training and coaching programs available if willing to travel to capital cities
- Plenty of good entry level and racing timber boats at reasonable prices
- AS Yardstick is 168.5 \*\*
- Starter boats range from \$0 to \$1,000
- Racing boats range from \$1,000 to \$2,500
- New boats cost around \$6,600

- Sabre



- Intermediate boat for a wide range of sailor weights of 45-85 KG
- Wide range of ages actively involved in class from 14 to 80 yrs.
- Popular class for female sailors
- Very basic to rig and transport
- Strong fleets locally
- Further training and coaching programs available if willing to travel to capital cities
- Second hand boat market can be limited due to its popularity in Victoria
- AS Yardstick is 127 \*\*
- Starter boats range from \$500 to \$1,000
- Racing boats range from \$1,500 to \$5,000
- New boats cost around \$11,00

- Impulse



- Intermediate boat with a sailor weight range 50-90 KG
- Easy to transport
- Intermediate rigging process
- Some boats racing in our region
- Second hand boat market can be limited
- AS Yardstick is 118 \*\*
- Starter boats range from \$1,000 to \$3,000
- Racing boats range from \$6,000 to \$12,000
- New boats cost around \$16,500

- Laser



- Intermediate boat for a wide range of sailor weights
- Three size rigs available to cater for most sailor weights
- Caters for a wide range of ages due to rig flexibility.
- One of the largest off the beach class worldwide and has held Olympic selection for many years
- Preferred single hander class for Australian Sailing pathways
- Very basic to rig and transport
- Strong fleet at PYC
- Further training and coaching programs available if willing to travel to capital cities
- Lots of options on the second hand boat market due to the number of boats produced
- AS Yardstick is 114 \*\*
- Starter boats range from \$1,000 to \$2,000
- Racing boats range from \$5,000 to \$8,000
- New boats cost around \$12,500

## Double handed

### - International Cadet



- Entry level boat to suit a crew weight range of 85-110kg
- Perfect for parent and child, or juniors
- Can be sailed with or without spinnaker
- Basic to rig and transport
- Strong fleet in Geelong with pathway opportunities
- AS Yardstick 153 \*\*
- Starter boats range from \$1,000 to \$2,500
- Racing boats range from \$2,000 to \$5,000
- New boats start at \$8,000

### - Pacer



- Entry level boat to suit a wide range of crew weights
- Good for mixed crew or adult with junior
- Often used as training boats due to their stability and clean layout.
- Can be sailed with or without spinnaker
- Basic to rig and transport
- Good numbers at PYC
- Boats hold their value well although can be hard to find good examples second hand
- AS Yardstick 127.5 \*\*
- Starter boats range from \$1,000 to \$2,500
- Racing boats range from \$3,000 to \$6,000
- New boats cost around \$13,000

- Tasar



- Intermediate boat to suit a crew weight of 120 -160 Kg
- Good for mixed crews
- Raced at very high standard locally and internationally
- No spinnaker or trapeze
- Basic to rig and transport
- Very large community in Vic, very popular at Sandringham Yacht Club
- Boats hold their value
- AS Yardstick 108 \*\*
- Starter boats range from \$500 to \$1,500
- Racing boats range from \$4,000 to \$8,000
- New boats cost around \$14,000

- NS 14 / MG 14



- Intermediate boat to suit a crew weight of 120 -140
- Good for mixed crew
- Can be sailed with or without kite and trapeze
- Very basic to transport
- Intermediate rigging process
- Fleet numbers limited
- Good value for money for second hand boats

- AS Yardstick is 108 (NS 14) \*\*
- Starter boats range from \$1,500 to \$3,000
- Racing boats range from \$3,000 to \$7,000
- New boats cost around \$22,000 (Mark Thorpe Boats)

- 29er



- High performance boat to suit crews ranging from 120 – 145 kg
- Good for experienced juniors, mixed crews or adult with junior
- Preferred double hander class for Australian Sailing pathways
- Single trapeze and spinnaker
- Complex to rig and transport
- Limited numbers in our region but good number and lots of coaching available in capital cities
- Boats hold their value well
- AS Yardstick 96.5 \*\*
- Starter boats range from \$1,500 to \$2,500
- Racing boats range from \$3,000 to \$8,000
- New boats cost around \$TBA

\*\* Australian Sailing Yardsticks are used to compare the performance of different classes of Off the beach boats. Generally speaking, the lower the number the faster the boat.

### General notes for purchasing a boat

#### **Boat Construction**

Boats are generally timber hulls and deck, Fiberglass hulls and deck or fiberglass hull with timber deck. Modern fiberglass boats require less maintenance than wooden boats. Wooden boats tend to require repainting and varnishing every few years. There are usually some full fiberglass boats on the secondhand market, although they tend to be more expensive. If you are hands on and are happy to perform maintenance work yourself, a timber boat may be a good cost effective option for you. If you are time poor and don't have the space, resources or skills to do the required maintenance on a timber boat yourself, you may have to pay someone else to do the work and it may be more cost effective to pay a bit more for a fiberglass boat. Of course no boat is indestructible. When a fiberglass boat is damaged it might require more specialized skills to repair than a wooden boat does. As a result it may not be a wise choice for a first year sailor when collisions tend to happen more often.



### **Assessing the Condition of a Used Boat**

Obviously price is going to reflect condition, but there are a few things to check for while looking over a prospective boat which include:

- the condition of the paint and the varnish of the hull
- whether there is any visible damage to the hull or evidence of poor repairs
- the condition of the foils (centerboard and rudder)
- does the hull have a self bailer and can it be opened and closed fairly easily?
- condition of the ropes (main and halyard) and stays. Ropes are easy to replace, stays are a bit harder.
- condition of the all fittings, do they operate like they should?
- how used or worn does the sail look?
- what is the condition of the mast and boom?
- check the condition of the trolley and cover

### **How competitive (fast) is it?**

If you will participate in club racing, particularly in open fleet racing, you may want to consider how competitive or fast the boat is. The difference in speed between the mid level wooden boats and the fastest fibreglass boats generally isn't much, the difference in a sailors ability is a far bigger factor in how fast they can get around a course. However you do tend to find that the best sailors tend to be the ones sailing the mid to high range boats at the front of the fleet.

### **How much does it weigh?**

Lighter weight is usually better. From a practical handling point of view to enable the kids to pull it around on a trolley easily and adults to lift it onto roof racks for transport. Also lighter is usually better for boat speed, although sometimes this is at the expense of downwind stability in heavy winds.

### **Accessories**

Does it come with useful accessories such as a boat cover, spare sail, spare foils, foil cover, or beach trolley? Do you have a need for all these accessories? If not, you may be able to negotiate price to only get what you need.

Purchasing your first boat can seem like a big commitment. You will need to tow a trailer to transport it and you will need to maintain it. You may also need advice when it comes time to sell. Keep in mind there will always be a large pool of knowledge in your local Yacht/Sailing Club which you can draw on. You will always find club members who will go out of their way to help you, and others, to get more boats on the water. If you are unsure of anything, all you have to do is ask.