

Team 15 Parents guide

Introduction

This guide has been produced by Philip Winfield, the Regional Club Coach for Windsurfing (Eastern Region). It is designed to support parents, especially those of new Team 15 members. This guide will cover commonly asked questions, explain how T15 works, your role in the process and demystify the whole process by explaining more about T15 and attending interclub events. This guide does not replace discussions between parents and their coaches at local clubs nor does it cover every eventuality or piece of information you may want or need, but I hope it helps you in supporting your T15er. Some of the contents are my observations and are not RYA policy or guidelines. For more detailed information on T15 please visit the website shown below.

<http://www.rya.org.uk/programmes/team15/Pages/default.aspx>

What is T15?

T15 is a Royal Yachting Association (RYA) initiative.

Extract from the RYA Team 15 website.

A nationwide network of windsurfing clubs where young people aged 15 and under can get together every week to learn new windsurfing skills and have a laugh with definitely make new friends as well.

Whatever your skill level, regular windsurfing sessions will improve your windsurfing ability very quickly. If you've never tried it before, you'll have the basics mastered in no time. From first time windsurfer to a relative expert, Team15 clubs welcome all levels.

Team15 offers young people two opportunities; to be part of the weekly club sessions plus participate in the inter-club challenges. It's your call whether you take part in one or both. But it's the challenges that give Team15 its name. Each club can enter the inter-club challenges with a team of up to 15 people aged 15 and under; Team15!



Proud parents!



4.5 class start

Source RYA Team 15 website

Team 15 is about young people getting together and having fun whilst enjoying and improving their windsurfing skills.

Parents Role

This is a 'how long is a piece of string' question as your role can be many things but I am only going to mention a few! Your role is to provide support to your son or daughter to enable them to gain the benefits of being an active T15 member. What does this mean in reality? You will usually transport your T15er to the venue whether it is your local windsurfing venue or an inter regional venue. You may also take their windsurfing kit with you as well. Most centres, however, do have equipment for hire which is usually very heavily discounted for T15. Skills can be learnt on most types of kit.

Sometimes your role may be to help rig the kit up but you should encourage your T15er to set the kit up themselves so that they get an understanding of tailoring the kit to their ability and the conditions. Generally, you will be there as background support particularly at first club meetings or interclub events

until confidence grows, when you will be told to “stop fussing and leave them alone” or words to that effect.

If your T15er chooses to take part in racing and represent their club at interclub events your role will be all of the above plus sideline supporter. Here is where I make a confession and it is a ‘do as I say’ moment not a ‘do as I did’ moment. In your enthusiasm for your son or daughter to do well you may be tempted to shout a few instructions from the sideline and get angry when your words of wisdom are ignored. My experience tells me that unless you are asked for help or guidance, refrain from touchline commentary. Many years later my son told me that my well intentioned advice and guidance did not help and increased his tension at the event which caused him to not do as well as he was capable of. If you feel some advice is needed, please ask your coach or another impartial person who has the right knowledge to support your son or daughter.

There are many other roles you will have but providing money and food always comes up at every event whether it be a local club night or an inter club event. One much underrated role is supporting parents of new members and helping them find their way around at the club and if you have the experience, telling them about interclub events.

Age limits for T15’ers.

As the title suggests T15 is aimed at youngsters up to the age of 16. Age should not be a barrier to windsurfing as long as the equipment chosen is appropriate to the physical size of the participants. After the age of 15 young people should consider staying on at their club and supporting the coaches with the next cohort of young people coming through. This peer support is greatly appreciated by the Team 15ers.

Interclub T15 events.

More information can be found on the T15 website link below

<http://www.rya.org.uk/programmes/team15/about/Pages/interclubchallenges.aspx#>

Interclub events take place around the region and bring all T15 clubs together to take part in racing, representing their clubs to win the regional trophy for the best club. I always think that defining this



The briefing prior to the event.

activity as racing puts some people off and they feel under pressure. Without doubt, racing against others is the very best way to improve your windsurfing as you can watch what others do and learn from them. The club and interclub events are structured in a way to support new entrants and get them over any fears they may have.

So what happens at an event after you have arrived and your kit is ready? The first thing, normally, is that you have to fill in a form that states your name, address and other details for the records. This is then given to the competition organiser to enter onto a results spreadsheet. When this is complete



Prizegiving

there is usually a briefing where everyone is welcomed and the organisers introduced to everyone. The programme of activities for the day is usually set out at this stage. The courses for the various categories of racers are discussed and any particular instructions on safety etc are also mentioned.

The various race categories are then split up and each category goes to their race coach for further detailed instructions. The categories of events are determined by the size of sail the competitor is using, not age. The

3.5 and the 4.5 classes usually go together and race around a smaller course than the 5.8 and the 6.8 classes. The 3.5 and 4.5 classes usually have a start line and a buoy set up across the wind a short distance from the start line. On the start signal the participants set off and race to the mark, go around it and return to the start. For the 3.5 class this is the end of the race. The 4.5 class race is sometimes a little longer and may involve going around two marks before returning to the start.

The 5.8 and 6.8 fleets have a more formal and longer course to race around. They also use the recognised international racing board and sail. This is the BIC Techno. At this level, competitors understand the rules of windsurfing a little better and they will more closely follow a format for racing that they may see at a national event. Points are awarded to competitors as they cross the line and they build up a personal score and a team score. At the end of the event the person with the least score wins. Points are awarded in line with the finishing place, for example, 1 point for 1st, 2 points for 2nd and so on. Depending on the number of races sailed, discards apply. This means that you can discount one or more of your results before your points are added up.

At the end of the event prizes are given for 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each class, sometimes a merit award for someone who has competed well or improved over the event and a Techno award for the first Techno sailor in a fleet. The scores of the individual team members are added up to arrive at a best team score. The best team receives an award as well as all the members. The best regional team is also able to represent the region at the Champions Cup event. T15'ers can also enter the zone championships. This is an open event to help select T15'ers for the Zone squad who get supported additional training.



Team prizegiving

Individual scores, team results and a race report are posted onto the T15 website shortly after the event. The link below should take you to the website to find out your results. Please click on Eastern Region for our results.

<http://www.rya.org.uk/programmes/team15/events/Pages/default.aspx>

More information on the rules and more details for racing can be found on the link below.

<http://www.rya.org.uk/programmes/team15/events/Pages/sailinginstructors.aspx>

The Competition Coach at the event will try to ensure that all competitors have fun, feel secure and enjoy themselves. The club coaches also support young people and in some instances also run the races. There is much more detail about team sizes and the running of events on the T15 website.



6.8 fleet in action

Club activity

T15 centres are clubs for young people where they meet and learn to improve their windsurfing skills. Most clubs offer either weekly or fortnightly sessions where the focus will be on skills development for all levels of ability. Again, the key to this activity is having fun. Many centres offer other club activities such as barbeques and watersports games. Some also do mini camps on site and invite coaches to attend to deliver master classes and windsurfing development. Some clubs also team up and run joint fun days at each other's windsurfing venues. The club activities are usually organised by the club coach. There is no one set format for club sessions and each centre will have its own methods of operating. The one thing they do have in common is that they try to ensure that the sessions are fun.

Volunteering

The RYA, as the recognised governing body for sailing and windsurfing are very keen to support the development of our sport. Much of the activity at centres is offered on a voluntary basis. Parent volunteers are always welcomed if they put their names forward to assist the club coaches.

Volunteering to help does not require you to be a windsurfer as many tasks are land based, however, for parents who wish to develop their windsurfing skills the RYA currently has some funding given by Sport England to encourage adults to participate in Windsurfing. What better way could there be to support your club than learning to windsurf yourself.

If you would like to support your coach you may consider offering support to lay out the courses for the event, offer safety cover (training could be provided by the centre), input the results into the computer, collect entrance fees, do some minor admin ie collecting entrance forms, supporting newcomers and their parents/guardians etc. The club coach will welcome your offer of support and this will allow them to focus more on the actual activity whether it is a race or a club fun session.

If you feel that volunteering could be for you please contact your club coach and ask how you can help. If formal training is required , ie. gaining your powerboat qualification or upskilling your windsurfing, the coach will be able to advise you on the next step, possibly with support from the RYA regional club coach in organising your training.

Contacts

Each centre (full list available on the RYA T15 website) will have someone who takes responsibility for the T15 activity. For this person's name please contact the centre. The RYA regional website has more details. http://www.ryaeast.org/new_site/home.shtml

This website also has contact information for T15 club coaches and other RYA staff in the region. It has a windsurfing section for news and events particularly relevant to the Eastern Region. The site also has other sections of interest such as news and other events. I hope you found this information useful and if you need any further information please contact me, your club coach or centre for further information.

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Your Regional Competition Coach is Graham Colam grumsurf@gmail.com

Happy Windsurfing!!!!