

Running a joint Community Sailing Center / Yacht Club 420 Racing Program

Your Presenters



- **Mark Zagol**, Sailing Program Director, New England Science & Sailing (NESS)
 - 5 Years at NESS
 - 11 Years of Collegiate and Clinic Coaching



- **Nick Ewenson**, Assistant Sailing Director New England Science & Sailing (NESS)
 - First year at NESS
 - 8 Years of Collegiate and Clinic Coaching

Rules for the Audience

- Please ask questions
 - Try to stay on topic but still please ask questions
- Share ideas
 - Someone in the room might benefit from your thoughts so please share
- Lets have an open discussion
 - Don't let us do all the talking....

A bit of History

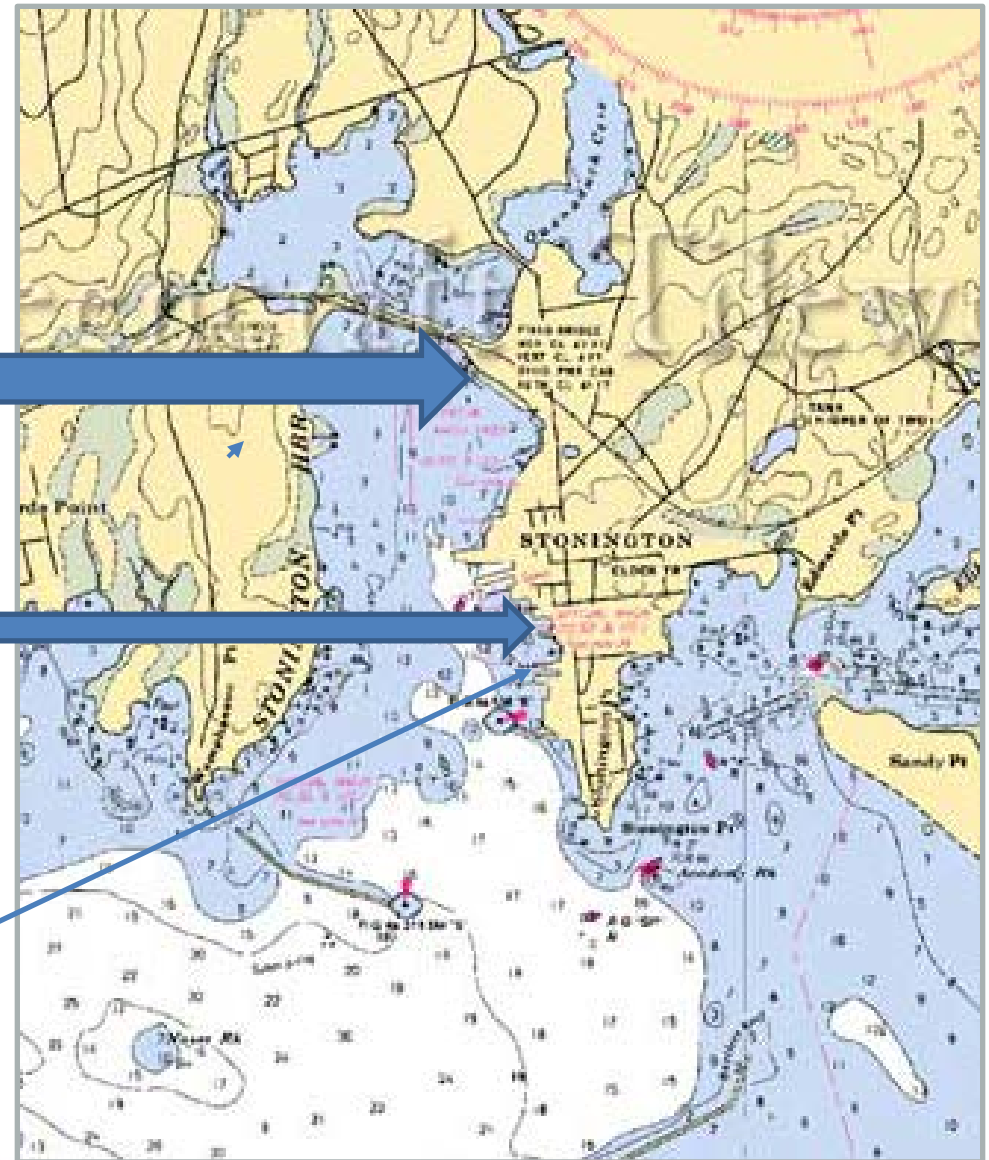
- Junior racing programs in our area were getting younger and smaller at the top end
- Other attempts have been made and are ongoing to help expand junior racing in our area from high-end clinics to establishing shoulder season programs
- Three local organizations got together for a beer to discuss the potential of a combined race program, one Yacht Club with an established junior sailing program, one Yacht Club with a new junior sailing program, one Community Sailing Center
- Initial talks were with influential parties at all 3 venues
- Information was brought back to each individual's boards for moving forward or not

Stonington Harbor

Wadawanuck Club

New England Science
& Sailing

Stonington Harbor
Yacht Club



A bit of History cont.

- Two of the three decided to move forward with further discussions while one chose not to participate
- The next step was to develop a plan moving forward
- Things that were discussed included simply meeting up on the water to establishing another non-profit separate of both organizations
- Critical mass is important for any program to sustain itself
- For the first year it was decided to try a combined program that rotated between the two venues
- We ultimately had 17 total students participate and are moving forward with year 2
- So the rest is about how we kind of made all this happen

So how did this all come together?

- Start with a program self assessment
 - Identify your individual goals
- How do your goals align and or differ?
 - Identify potential issues
 - Identify positive outcomes
 - Logistics / the nitty gritty
- Execution, the summer months
 - Post program debrief

Program Self Assessment

- How does our program currently function?
 - Typically 6-12 students (wide range = tough to plan for)
 - Our coach was from ECSA with no College experience
 - How strong is our game plan/curriculum?
 - What were our costs
 - Staff/Equipment (power and sail)/Facility
 - Feedback from parents
 - Feedback from students
 - Weekday only racing, no weekend culture

What are the Goals for your program?

- Getting more kids out on the water together
- Finding a top notch coach/year-round employee
- Higher quality practices
- Keeping kids engaged past the age of 15
- Making sure kids are having fun
- Enhancing our instructor/coaching pool
- Experiencing National-Level Competition
- Revenue covers all associated costs

How do our goals Align and or Differ?

Shared Goals

- More kids on water
- Higher quality practices
- Access to more resources
- Higher quality coaching
- Improving coaching pool
- Exposure outside the ECSA
- Make it better, not worse
- One team mentality

Individual Goals

- Exposure to membership
- Money
- Location
- Fun Fridays
- Year round staff
- Different types of boats

Identify Potential Issues

- Pushback from members
 - But we have done it this way for years....
 - Why are non-members at the club?
- Money
 - Pricing
 - How many coaches and who pays?
- Registration, who takes care of this?
- Equipment differences, 420's and powerboats
- Public perception (super team)
- Program Cultures (safety / rules / day to day)
 - Member/guest rules for example
- State Camp regulations

Identify Positive Outcomes

- Stronger coaching and mentoring
- More kids interacting and practicing together
- Kids wanting to keep sailing beyond age 15
- Positive exposure for both programs within community
- Raising the bar locally
- Stronger and more excited sailors will make stronger instructors
- Something for younger sailors to aspire towards

Logistics / The nitty gritty

(an assortment of questions and issues)

- We started conversations early and often when coming up with our plan, communication was so important.
- How does it work with shared staff?
- How are employees paid? hourly, salary, overtime?
- Integrating old vs new boats vs privately owned boats
 - Which boats get used
- Balancing two different cultures
 - Friday fun days
 - Close toed shoes
- Creating a new innovative culture amongst the new team
 - Getting the kids to buy into it
 - Getting the parents to buy into it
- Insurance implications / liability implications

Execution, The Summer Months

- 8 week program with 12-17 students
- Program rotated between venues every other week
 - This had its pluses and minuses and we are changing to every 2 weeks this year
 - Classroom spaces varied greatly
 - Launching and storage varied greatly
- Kids were rotated around between boats and pairings
 - After initial pushback this was well received and the kids understood the importance of learning from others
 - After a few weeks of sailing with different partners the notion of what club you were from went away as the team became its own entity
- A solid curriculum including lesson plans was implemented
 - Kids saw significant improvements in overall sailing ability
 - Practices were organized, more competitive, and ultimately more fun
 - *an overview is attached to this slideshow*

Post Program Debrief

- What did we learn
- What can we do better
- What can we improve upon
- Feedback from parents
- Feedback from students
- Final presentation to the board

Summary Points/Takeaways

- Try to remember that we are all in it for the kids
- Be flexible, organizations have different rules and regulations so a little give here and there can go a long way to a great relationship
- Good communication is key, when issues would come up make them known, lack of communication was always recognized while too much was never seen as a negative
- Each organization is different so get to know each others' bylaws and learn about the culture.
- Don't be afraid to try new things
- Sailing should be a fun learning experience

Questions?

Your Opinion Matters

Please open the **NSPS app** and complete the **session survey** found in the **menu bar**.

Thank you for attending this session!