



Sail Nova Scotia

SAIL NOVA SCOTIA PERFORMANCE PATHWAY HANDBOOK

2026



About This Handbook

Welcome to the Nova Scotia Sailing Team (NSST) Performance Pathway Handbook.

This handbook aims to assist athletes, coaches, club programs, and parents understand the NSST values, program goals, and structure of the Nova Scotia Sailing Team.

Our hope is that it assists young sailors and parents navigate their way along the pathway and to make the most of opportunities in sailing.

Sail Nova Scotia

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In this guide, you will find...



Mission, Vision, & Values

Mission

Sailing excellence through training and competition.

Vision

To be the national leader consistently developing world class athletes and coaches through coach driven, athlete centred programs.

Values

Sail Nova Scotia believes in these values when it comes to the High-Performance Program. They compliment Sail Nova Scotia's First Principles of Open-Safe-Fair-United-Supportive.

- Excellence
Committing to the pursuit of podium performances at all levels of the HP program.
- Teamwork
Collaborating with clubs, Canadian Sport Institute Atlantic, provincial and national teams to develop potential podium athletes. Athletes supporting each other and sharing their networks.
- Initiative
Being ready to adapt to the rapidly changing sailing competition landscape.
- Community
Committing to foster a community of dedicated athletes, clubs, sailors and programs that create an environment where our dedicated athletes can thrive, develop and succeed.



High Performance Committee

The High-Performance program is overseen by the Sail Nova Scotia High Performance Committee and meets at least twice per year.

This group is made up of former national team sailing athletes, coaches at the provincial level and national team level, and a representative of the Canadian Sport Institute Atlantic. A member of the Sail Nova Scotia Board is encouraged to Chair the high performance committee.

Its role is:

- To provide leadership and advice to the Executive Director regarding Sail NS' High-Performance Programs and related activities.
- To ensure the High-Performance Plan and Programs are well aligned with the Sail Canada High Performance Plan.
- To review and update performance targets annually.





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Funding opportunities

Funding opportunities for all athletes in Nova Scotia are administered by Sport Nova Scotia and the Canadian Sport Institute Atlantic. All of the information can be found below, including the CSIA Tier Guide for athlete funding to ensure you are eligible before submitting an application.

[Sportnovascotia.ca/funding-programs-and-eligibility](https://sportnovascotia.ca/funding-programs-and-eligibility)

If you have any questions about athlete funding, please direct them to the Sail Nova Scotia Executive Director.

From the [Sport Nova Scotia Website](#):

The purpose of the Nova Scotia Athlete Assistance Program (NSAAP) is to provide direct financial assistance to Nova Scotia athletes who have achieved significant results at the national and/or international level in their pursuit of excellence. The NSAAP recognizes the significant financial commitment associated with the pursuit of excellence and is pleased to support Nova Scotia athletes in their quest to be the best. A significant portion of the NSAAP is supported through the Support4Sport Program of the Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation.

To be considered, ATHLETES must:

- *be members in good standing with their Provincial Sport Organization (PSO). PSOs must be members of Sport Nova Scotia*
- *fall within the Nova Scotia Athlete Assistance Program Tier Guide*
- *Note: Masters program athletes are not eligible for Tier 1 to Tier 5 funding. Masters athletes may be eligible for Tier 6 (PSO Card) funding at the discretion of their respective PSO.*

Athletes can apply at any time. Applications must be completed and submitted by the applicant and endorsed by the PSO by the 15th of the month to be reviewed by the Support4Sport Committee the end of the month. Please allow for a reasonable timeline for the PSO to endorse the application. Any applications received after the 15th of the month will be automatically moved and reviewed the next month.

SUPPORTED SAIL NOVA SCOTIA CLASSES

The Sail Nova Scotia Provincial Team Program is designed to support athletes who demonstrate the commitment, potential, and performance required to progress along Sail Canada's high-performance pathway, rather than focusing on specific sailing classes.

We recognize that clubs across Nova Scotia support a wide variety of competitive sailing opportunities, including foiling, double-handed, and other emerging or traditional classes.

While these classes play an important role in athlete development within the province, Sail Nova Scotia's support is focused on athletes whose training and goals align with the national high-performance system. The specific classes involved in that pathway may evolve over time in consultation with Sail Canada.

Athletes are free to sail, compete, and campaign in any class they choose. However, only athletes whose pathway aligns with the provincial and national high-performance development framework will receive support through the NSST program. This ensures that our resources are used effectively to provide the highest level of program quality and to best prepare athletes for national and international competition.

Athletes who are considering pursuing a campaign outside the supported pathway are encouraged to discuss their long-term sailing goals with the Provincial Sailing Coach and their club coach to determine the best route for their development.



Meaningful Competitions

Sail Nova Scotia is committed to supporting athletes in their participation at meaningful competitions; a competition that is appropriate for the athletes at their stage of development and serves a long-term developmental purpose.

Meaningful competitions lead to results that are relatively close and not predictable. Competitors are matched with others of a similar level of ability and are challenged to be the best they can be at that moment in time. They believe they have a chance for success and remain fully engaged throughout the competition.

When blowouts occur the stronger athlete isn't challenged and therefore doesn't have to perform at the highest level to succeed, which can result in complacency or disinterest; the weaker athlete, meanwhile, will be disheartened by a blowout, which can lead to dropout if they feel there is no point in continuing with competition in that sport.

In order to have meaningful competition, athletes of similar ability should compete together.

A cornerstone of meaningful competition is that individuals have the opportunity to participate in competition that encourages them to learn and improve both during and after the event. (Source: Sport for Life - The challenges around meaningful competitions.)

Sail Nova Scotia believes all sailing athletes, particularly those on the NS Sailing Team should attend events that offer them meaningful competition or are carefully chosen to push their experience base.



Sail Nova Scotia

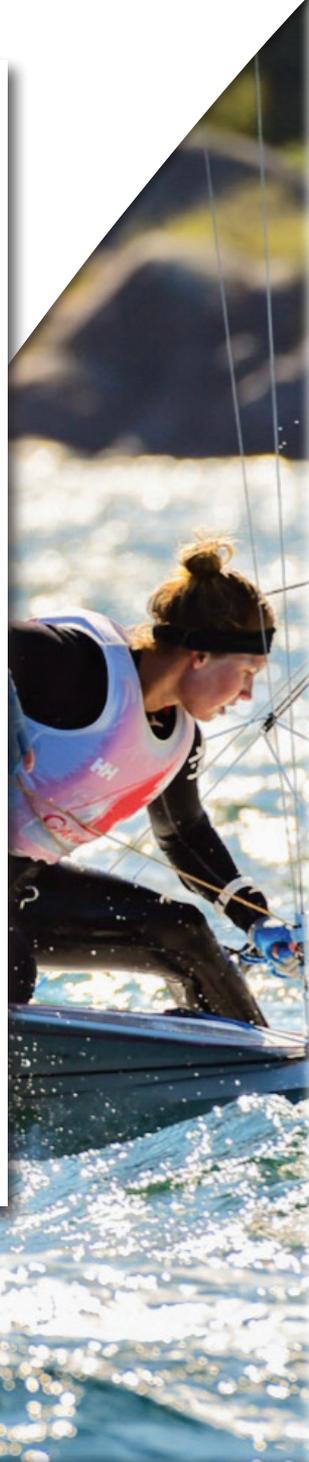
Provincial Championships

Annually Sail Nova Scotia will host the following Provincial Championships usually tied into an existing event such as Sail Fest, Bay Wind, or ARK.

Provincial Championships are held for

- Optimist Class
- U-16 Age Group
- U-19 Age Group
- ILCA 4, ILCA 6, ILCA 7 Classes
- 29er Class
- Women's Keelboat

NOTE: To be eligible for the age provincial championships ie. U-16 & U-19, you must meet the age requirement on December 31 of the year the championship will be held in.



Coach Mentorship

An important goal of the Nova Scotia Sailing Team program is coach mentorship – developing the next generation of race coaches.

Our Provincial Coaches will work regularly with Club Coaches and support and encourage them where possible. This will include time as an assistant coach, opportunities at training camps, and dryland support.

Performance Science Program

To compliment the on-water NSST program, Sail NS offers a comprehensive performance science program through services offered by the Canadian Sport Institute Atlantic.

This includes Nutrition Programs, Strength & Conditioning, Fitness Testing and Mental Performance sessions.

RACE TEAM LEVELS



RACE TEAM LEVELS

Club / Regional Race Teams

INTRODUCTION

Sail Nova Scotia supports clubs that have made a commitment to the development of youth sailing and racing in the province. These clubs offer a safe and effective environment for learning and developing your dinghy sailing skills.

AIMS AT THIS LEVEL

- Have FUN
- Introduction of tactics and strategy
- Higher level boat handling
- Introduction of speed techniques and balance
- Down Speed maneuvers
- Introduction to boat work
- Introduction to non-coached training and self coaching
- Strength and conditioning basics

SUGGESTED AGE 10-16

ON WATER DAYS Sail 2-4 months (40-60 days)

PRIMARY COACH Club Race Team Coach

TRAVEL & EVENTS

- Local Circuit
- CORK
- Sail East
- Sail Canada Youth Championships

SAIL NS RECOGNIZED CLASSES

- Optimist
- ILCA 4
- ILCA 6
- ILCA 7
- C420
- 29er

MOVING ON

Athletes show a level of talent and commitment to be selected to the NSST Prospect Group.



RACE TEAM LEVELS

NSST Prospect Group

INTRODUCTION

The NSST Prospect Group aims to introduce and prepare sailors to competition at the national and international levels. Ensuring sailors have the right balance of both technical and personal skills begins primarily with the regional club race teams. This sets the foundation for what then can be delivered at the NSST Prospect level, to ensure that sailors are prepared to compete are skilled enough to maximize the opportunities they will encounter in competition.

At this stage it is often less about the finishing position, but more about how the athletes enjoy, learn, grow and thrive from the competition experience.

AIMS AT THIS LEVEL

- Consistent use of tactics & strategy
- Execution of higher level boat handling
- 70% execution of starting strategy
- Execution of balance and speed technique
- Introduction of modes
- Introduction of nutrition, sports psychology concepts
- 20% self coached training sessions
- Strength and conditioning base 50% of national team standard

SUGGESTED AGE	12-18
ON WATER DAYS	60-100 days
PRIMARY COACH	Club Race Team Coach

TRAVEL & EVENTS

- Local & Regional events
- Class specific championship (Canadian Championship, North American Championship)
- CORK
- Canadian Youth Championships
- Introduction to a winter regatta

SAIL NS PROSPECT RECOGNIZED CLASSES

- Optimist
- ILCA 4
- ILCA 6
- ILCA 7
- C420
- 29er

MOVING ON

Athletes are preparing to be selected for the NS Sailing Team with a dedicated coach.



RACE TEAM LEVELS

NSST Performance Team

INTRODUCTION

To further develop sailors' foundations and athletic ethos within a culture of excellence and personal responsibility the NSST builds. Building on the established values and behaviors and aligns with the philosophy of "coach sailors to be their own coach".

Sailors are expected to optimize their equipment, themselves and their partnerships.

It is important at this level to gain insight and understanding into the commitments involved in being a member of the Canadian Sailing Team, for sailors looking to transition into Olympic Classes.

AIMS AT THIS LEVEL

- Fleet management using tactics and strategy
- Fine tuned boat handling
- Speed technique development at International level
- Execution of modes in racing
- 20-30% self coached sessions
- 80% execution of starting strategy
- Classroom based learning
- Strength and conditioning at 60-75% of National Team level
- Integration of IST into training program
- Professionalism (fundraising, logistics, planning and time management)
- Introduction of 'performance management' at major events

SUGGESTED AGE

17-21

ON WATER DAYS

7-10 Months / 100-150 days

PRIMARY COACH

Provincial Team Coach (80-100 days)

TRAVEL & EVENTS

- CORK
- Winter Events
- NA Events
- Youth Worlds
- Junior Worlds
- Senior Worlds

SAIL NS PROSPECT RECOGNIZED CLASSES

- ILCA 6
- ILCA 7
- 29er
- 49erFX
- 49er

MOVING ON

Athletes are training and competing and have a goal to be selected by the Canadian Sailing Team and are sailing in a Sail Canada supported Olympic Class.



PATHWAY CLASSES

Optimist

Type: Single-Handed

Weight Range: 83-120 lbs

Recommended Max Age: 15

The Optimist's size and forgiving nature makes it great for introducing sailors at a very early stage. Small, yet extremely technical, it engenders all the physical, technical and racing skills needed to succeed at both the youth and Olympic level. The class is among the most popular in the province, with most clubs offering training and racing programs. The class also offers a comprehensive national and international competition schedule.

ILCA 4

Type: Single-Handed

Weight Range: 120-155 lbs

Recommended Max Age: 16

The ILCA 4 is the feeder class to both the ILCA 6 and ILCA 7 classes, with a smaller yet still quite powerful sail, allowing for an easy transition. Very popular in Europe, and gaining popularity in North America, a season in the ILCA 4 helps transitioning sailors get used to the ILCA hull with a more forgiving rig. The ILCA 4 allows sailors to gain valuable experience and a taste of higher level competition in an appropriate environment.

C420

Type: Double-Handed

Weight Range: 240-290 lbs

Recommended Max Age: None

The 420 is a double-handed symmetric class sailed by youth sailors. Junior classes often feed the class, and after a number of years sailing the 420, sailors can progress to a variety of youth and Olympic classes.

29er

Type: Double-Handed

Weight Range: 240-290 lbs

Recommended Max Age: None

The 29er is the pathway asymmetric class sailed by youth sailors. Junior classes often feed the class, and after a number of years sailing the 29er, sailors can progress into, among other classes and disciplines, the 49erFX and 49er.

ILCA 6

Type: Single-Handed

Weight Range: 135-165 lbs

Recommended Max Age For Females: None

Rec. Max Age For Males: 18, with transition to ILCA 7 or appropriate boat

The ILCA 6 is the women's single-handed Olympic class and is the currently selected single-handed class for the World Sailing Youth Championships. It is also a pathway class for both boys and girls.

PATHWAY CLASSES

ILCA 7

Type: Single-Handed

Weight Range: 165-190 lbs

Recommended Max Age: None

The ILCA 7 is the natural progression for male single handed sailors and is an Olympic class. Competition in the ILCA 7 goes to the highest level, and is still the class for top level sailors to aspire to on the single-handed pathway.

49erFX

Type: Double-Handed

Weight Range: 265-310 lbs

Recommended Max Age: None

The 49erFX is the women's Olympic class and a pathway class for sailors transitioning from a variety of other classes. Also often sailed by male sailors looking to make the transition to the 49er.



Sail Nova Scotia

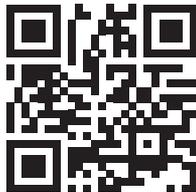


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Sail Nova Scotia