



# COLUMBIA SAILING SCHOOL

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## HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM FAQs

### **What if I've never sailed before? Can I still participate in High School Sailing?**

If you have never sailed before, we welcome you to join the Junior Varsity/Developmental Program. To join our Varsity High School Program, sailors must attend a JV/Developmental Practice season.

### **I have sailed in the JV/Developmental Program or at another program; can I join a Varsity Team?**

It's great to hear you have previous experience! To join a varsity team, sailors must be invited by the Head Coach, who has witnessed and assessed their ability level. If you have more questions, please contact [sail@colyc.org](mailto:sail@colyc.org) to learn about moving up.

### **What do my kids need to bring to practice?**

- Sunscreen, water bottle, lifejacket, sailing boots, gloves, spray gear, bailer, and most importantly, a good attitude and an open mind!
- Gear: Crowley's and West Marine are great places to shop and have almost everything you want.
- Bailer: don't spend money on a bailer. An Arizona Iced Tea jug or a big bottle of Tropicana Orange Juice with the bottom cut-off work perfectly. As you drink up, save the bottles, and "recycle" them to COLSS, as one can never have enough bailers. (Plastic jugs of bleach, milk, etc. work as well, but the rectangle shape of the juice bottles works well with the flat edge being flush with the floor of the boat)

### **Do I need to own a boat?**

No, if you are sailing in high school, we have boats to use for practice. If you are interested in the Opti Program, you need to own your boat or contact us at [sail@colyc.org](mailto:sail@colyc.org).

### **Is sailing safe, and how will safety be ensured?**

Like with all sports, there are inherent risks with participating. During the season, we have professional and certified sailing coaches who are always on the water to ensure and provide all the necessary up-to-date safety equipment.

### **What if I can't make all the High School practices?**

Many kids have scheduling conflicts with all the practices. We understand the challenge of attending every training. If you can't attend, please let the coaches and your team know beforehand if you can only participate in certain practices. Tuition for the semester is the same if you attend 1 or 3 days of training a week.

### **What is the difference between High School and Club Sailing?**

Sailors represent their school in High School Sailing, where the kids compete under the Columbia Sailing School name in Club Sailing. An analogy to Club Sailing is that it is like joining a travel soccer team. High School sailing is comprised of seven districts or conferences throughout the United States. Illinois is part of the

Midwest District (MISSA). MISSA has High School students from over 15 schools throughout the area who practice at different Sailing Schools. They then compete in regattas during the High School Racing Season (September through November and March through May). Boats used in High School Sailing are mainly 420s (without spinnakers or trapezes), but at some National events, they compete in Flying Juniors (FJs), Sonars, and even Lasers. Club Sailing is comprised of all Yacht Club and Sailing Center regattas around the country governed by US Sailing. Club Sailing racing courses tend to be longer, and sailors do not rotate boats within the fleet. Boats used in Club Regattas are extensive, including Optimists, FJs, C420s, Lasers, 29ers, etc. Club Racing occurs throughout the entire calendar year.

### **What regattas do MISSA sailors participate in, and what is the difference between them?**

A series of regattas hosted by MISSA and ISSA occur throughout the school year. The skipper and crew must be from the same school (with rare exceptions). High Schools sail as a combined team of two boats.

### **What High Schools sail out of COLSS?**

COLSS currently hosts six teams. We have sailors who attend the following schools: U of C Lab School, Jones College Prep, Lincoln Park, Lyons Township High School, Lane Tech High School, and Whitney Young High School. If you are interested in starting your team, please get in touch with us.

### **How do High School Sailing regattas work?**

All sailors will be sailing for their school. Each team is comprised of an A and B division. Each division has a skipper and crew, so four sailors are the minimum to fill a team. To encourage participation and set up a feeder program, we also have a Junior Varsity/Developmental Team that those not in high school can attend.

### **Where can I find information about high school sailing and the Midwest Interscholastic Sailing Association?**

[MISSA \(Midwest Interscholastic Sailing Association\)](#)

[ISSA \(Interscholastic Sailing Association\)](#)

### **During regattas, who sails vs. subbing in?**

When teams have four kids, the math is simple. Two kids per boat, two divisions need to be filled. Ideally, teams are larger than the minimum of four sailors. This allows for pairings based on weather, team chemistry, ability, etc.

### **How do coaches decide who sails when teams have extra sailors at regattas?**

How coaches decide who sails depends on ability, weather, attitudes, stamina, the chemistry between the people, etc. Some sailors may not sail at all or participate in only two races. Similar to other team sports, the coach decides what's best for the team as a whole. On paper, each team is trying to move up the "ladder" and qualify for the next event level (MISSA events lead to the district championship and top boats at district championships qualify for Nationals, etc.).

### **At a regatta, how come my sailor only sailed six races over two days?**

The weather plays a crucial role in dictating sailing; in extreme cases, regattas will see no races over two days, while others will see 18 for the weekend. Weather also plays a determining role in which sailors sails. The windier it gets, the heavier you need to be to counteract the weight of the sails. The best-case scenario is to have at least six kids at a two-division regatta. Four kids are sailing, and two are on land ready to go in at any

time. The current kid sailing might be physically tired or need to watch from land to figure out what the coach is talking about, etc.

### **Does my sailor learn anything by being on land if they're not sailing?**

Yes, this is a massive part of the weekend regattas. Watching a race from outside a boat is incredibly helpful, especially with a coach right there. Being a team player and catching your team's boat during a rotation, helping them bail, getting their next boat in the rotation ready, helping them shake off a bad race, and cheering when they win are all part of this.

### **How do the two-division regattas (MISSA events) work?**

At the beginning of the day, each team should check the rotation chart posted on [TechScore](#). Each team sails in a boat for two races and then rotates. The idea of rotation is to even out the playing field (if someone has a brand-new boat, while another team has a 10-year-old boat, it's not fair, so rotations make sure everyone gets to sail in each boat, so no one is advantaged/disadvantaged). Each school enters an A-division boat and a B-division boat. The two boats are scored separately within each division. The scores are then combined to determine the overall score for each school. (For example, U of C Lab Schools gets 5th in A-division and 15th in B-division. Their overall place would be around 10th, depending on the other schools' results).

### **How do I register for a regatta?**

It depends, Generally, the Team Captain will register for the regatta, but sometimes a parent takes care of everything. Each sailor will have to sign a waiver and contribute towards the cost of registering for the regatta and other event fees like housing and food.

### **How can I find out the schedule and details about the regatta?**

Every regatta has a "Notice of Race" or NOR, which outlines the schedule for the day, what meals will be provided, race course details, and more. Sailors, parents, and coaches should read the NOR for each regatta.

### **Do sailors stay overnight at some of the regattas?**

At regattas not in Chicago, sailors usually stay overnight in hotels or housing the event host provides. Teams are required to have a chaperone to stay overnight and supervise the sailors.

### **What do I need to bring to the regatta?**

The signed waiver, water bottle, sunscreen, sunglasses, hat, Sailing Gear—a lifejacket, sailing boots, gloves, spray gear, bailer, dry clothes, snacks, and a positive attitude.

### **What should a sailor wear to keep warm?**

Spray tops and bottoms are essential to help sailors stay dry and warm. Different sailors use different gear for "warm layers". Underneath the spray gear, sailors can wear layers like long underwear to keep warmer. When the weather gets colder, sailors must wear dry suits at specific regattas.

### **Do I need a pinnie?**

Yes, during High School sailing regattas, when sailors are competing, they are required to wear pinnies. This is for identification reasons and safety. If you need a pinnie, ask your Team Captain or your Coach before the regatta.

## OPTI PROGRAM FAQs

### **My sailor is interested in participating in the Spring and Fall Opti Program; how do I sign them up?**

Registration links will be posted on our website, and you can sign up via the link. Previous experience is required, so if your child has never sailed, please contact us at [sail@colyc.org](mailto:sail@colyc.org) to learn about different options.

### **Who participates in the Spring and Fall Opti Program?**

Generally, sailors who have previous experience sailing, like during the summer, join this program to keep their skills up.

### **What regattas do Opti sailors participate in?**

Regattas for Opti's during the Spring and Fall Program are based upon the USODA schedule. If you see a regatta you are interested in participating in, please email us at [sail@colyc.org](mailto:sail@colyc.org) to learn about coach availability and other arrangements.