

## CSC Keelboat Basic Instruction Program

This program is designed to get you going on keelboats after you have earned your Junior Skipper rating. You should know how to sail at this point in pretty strong winds, and moving to keelboats means applying these skills in larger boats with very different characteristics. But everything you've learned on dinghies applies on keelboats.

In the CSC rating system, a Senior Skipper rating allows you to take out our keelboats. We have high standards (but very low cost), so the path to Senior Skipper can be a long one, realistically a year or more. We realize that members may not be interested in this rating, but just learning skills on keelboats, either to be highly competent crew on our boats (and others) or to move on to other sailing experiences, such as cruising. Our basic instruction program is designed to move you along these paths.

To re-emphasize, you *must* be a Junior Dinghy Skipper in order to take keelboat lessons. While other sailing schools teach basic sailing on keelboats, we believe that you learn these skills best on smaller boats. On dinghies, you can "feel" the boat respond to what you're doing very easily, and so you can more easily tell whether you're handling the boat correctly. A heavier boat also talks to you, but in a much softer voice.

The Basic Instruction Program on keelboats is designed to make you a competent keelboat sailor in the kinds of winds we get here in the summer (15-25 knots), and to introduce you to more-advanced techniques, such as departing and docking under sail (which we do whenever possible). It will prepare you well for whatever sailing path you choose, and it is your entry to the more advanced instruction for the CSC Senior Skipper rating.

The program is structured like this. You start with an on-the-dock session to introduce you to the keelboats. You'll spend a few hours getting to know them, seeing what the differences are between them and the dinghies you've sailed, and doing the pre-sail inspection, selecting sail plan, raising the sails, reefing at the dock, and putting the boat away. You'll then take an online written test on this, which is your ticket into the instruction program of 5 levels. The first level is demonstrating what you've learned so far at the dock.

Now you're ready to go on the water. And there are four levels of on-the-water instruction described [here](#) (plus the Level 1 on the dock session mentioned above). Your progress will be tracked on your digital White Card, just like all of your other tests and ratings.

This is a new program, rolled out in March 2022. So the details and procedures will be changing as we adapt to its operation

## FAQs

1. I have been taking keelboat lessons for a while. Do I have to go back and go through all of the new levels?  
No. You should take the written test and get an instructor to sign you off at your level, based on your skills. You can then enter the program at that level.
2. I am a Senior instructor who has been teaching for more years than you've been alive, and I don't want to change the way I teach. Do I have to teach to this model?  
No. As a Senior, you can teach in whatever way works for you, but try not to confuse students when you do that. So when you announce lessons on the list, be clear about what you're going to teach and what pre-requisites you want. And we encourage you to do this, as it brings your expertise and experience to our students in the Cal Sailing way.