

# **DIRECTOR AND HEAD INSTRUCTOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**GSBYRA**  
Junior Sailing  
Spring 2001

## Key Duties for Program Director and Head Instructor

Key Duties for Program Director and Head Instructor are outlined below and then developed further in the matrix that follows. These are big jobs; the jobs get bigger as the program expands. It is somewhat analogous to running a business. It is a business! Just as the expansion of a business from a couple of people to several involves trauma and change so does the expansion of a sailing program. When the program expands from a couple of instructors to 4 or 5, this is a big jump. The jump from 4 to 5 instructors to the 8 to 10 range is gigantic. These jumps in size are jumps in complexity and require a lot more management. This is food for thought. The purpose of this document is to give GSBYRA Directors and Head Instructors a better idea of the scope of the responsibilities. It just simply is not sailing around in a boat. I wish it were.

<b>PROGRAM DIRECTOR</b>	<b>HEAD INSTRUCTOR</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Set objectives and mission</li> <li>✓ Develop risk management plan</li> <li>✓ Ensure that sufficient insurance exists</li> <li>✓ Assess safety hazards</li> <li>✓ Purchase equipment</li> <li>✓ Maintain equipment</li> <li>✓ Develop funding strategy</li> <li>✓ Establish policies and guidelines</li> <li>✓ Develop a long-range plan</li> <li>✓ Establish curriculum</li> <li>✓ Work with instructors to establish performance skill level standards</li> <li>✓ Develop instructor talent</li> <li>✓ Recruit qualified instructors</li> <li>✓ Design administrative systems</li> <li>✓ Establish an accounting system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Follow objectives and mission</li> <li>✓ Help director assess safety hazards</li> <li>✓ Help director establish an emergency plan</li> <li>✓ Monitor weather conditions and make weather-related decisions</li> <li>✓ Maintain equipment</li> <li>✓ Provide input to plan</li> <li>✓ Help establish curriculum</li> <li>✓ Work with other instructors to design lesson plans</li> <li>✓ Monitor skill development of participants</li> <li>✓ Help establish skill levels standards</li> <li>✓ Provide evaluation and feedback for instructors and participants</li> <li>✓ Help train instructors</li> <li>✓ Communicate               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With instructors</li> <li>With students</li> <li>With parents</li> <li>With other Clubs</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Keep up records               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swim test</li> <li>Medical forms</li> <li>Waiver forms</li> <li>Accident reports</li> <li>Evaluation and feedback</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## Junior Sailing: Director and Head Instructor Duties and Responsibilities

Duties and Responsibilities	Program Director	Head Instructor
Objectives and Mission	Primary: A program should be steered by the objectives. Think of the target audience and where the program should be. Objectives should be revisited periodically. For example, in addition to an introduction to recreational sailing, do you want to develop a racing program or start an environmental program? Do you want to provide adult lessons? Do you want to establish a community out-reach program? How will these decisions affect the program and its needs?	Secondary: The head instructor has the advantage of getting hands on experience with the program and from that vantage point he or she can make a valuable contribution to objective setting.
Risk Management	Primary: A big picture term – it means that there are many risks. The task is to identify the risks, control or partially control them and insure against the rest. See US Sailing: <i>Teaching and Coaching Fundamentals for Sailing</i> .	Primary: Ensure that instructors follow risk policy guidelines
Equipment (assets)	Primary: Capital expenditures for programs are very significant. Often overlooked is the need for an adequate number of safety boats. The rule of thumb is one safety boat for every six sailboats on the water. Replacements of major equipment items need to be budgeted for in advance. Spare parts for such major items such as sails, spars and masts should be viewed as capital items.	Secondary: Input about equipment needs from instructors is very valuable.
Equipment Maintenance	Secondary: Program directors need to periodically go over the boats with the head instructor. If a boat is broken down, it is a loss in revenue let alone a disappointment to the participants.	Primary: The head instructor needs to get the instructors in the program to do daily boat checks. Get the maintenance to be proactive and get items repaired before the next day. Make a chart or checklist.
Fund Raising	Primary: Financial resources need to be raised to support major equipment items. It is doubtful that a program can generate enough excess cash flow to support these major items.	
Insurance	Primary: A big problem area because even marine insurers have a tendency not to be able to understand what is up with a sailing program. US Sailing has a program and, if this is used, at least one US Sailing certified instructor is required to be eligible for the program. Director and officers insurance is also recommended.	

Pricing and Expense Management	Primary: A good accounting system is very useful particularly if the program is a large one. Pricing of lessons need to be considered, weighing the key inputs such as salaries, insurance and other operating expenses such as the cost of slips or trailer spaces, maintenance and capital allocations for future major expense items that need periodic replacement. A key driver is the student/instructor ratio. The mix of the program is also a factor, adult, beginning sailing, racing and advanced racing. Are you going to have any other special events like a wrap-up, awards dinner? Don't forget handbooks and other printed material. Are you going to participate in US Sailing's Golden Anchor program? Are you going to purchase other US Sailing materials?	
Marketing	Primary: Publicity to get children to register for the program. It is also important to build goodwill internally. Other Club members need to understand the program and the benefits to the Club overall. If your Club is community-based you need to build up the goodwill with the community.	Secondary: Any time there is interaction with the student, a parent, a Club member or a member of the community there is a marketing component. Smile. Get this point across to your other instructors.
Establish Policies and Rules	Primary: Rules should be thought out up front: attendance, discipline, instructional levels, safety, checks on safety equipment, maintenance, use of Club boats in non-sailing lesson events, feedback, evaluation, etc. Try to make it a policy to get youngsters to work together. Think about consequences of major infractions up front.	Secondary: Best to think things out ahead of time but use your instructors to critique your policies and rules. Unnecessary rules or meaningless regulations lead to a disrespect of rules in general (my 1960's mentality).
Implement Policies and Rules		Primary: The head instructor and the other instructors have to carry these rules and policies out.
Discipline		Primary: It is easier if guidelines are clear and reasonable from the beginning.
Planning	Primary: Given the objectives what steps are needed to achieve these objectives?	Secondary: What do the instructors think? They should be part of the process. Too often they are left out completely.
Implement Plans		Primary: Ultimately the head instructor needs to manage the day-to-day aspects but in the long run the day-to-day stuff gets you to some place else.

Program Design	Primary: Think about the target market – beginners, racers versus non-racers, advanced versus beginning racers – adults. Children have short attention spans but kids hooked on racing want to work hard. Different programs for different people. Also think of the availability of time. Teenagers do not always have a lot of time so maybe the program needs to be flexible dealing with this group.	Secondary: Depending on the instructor’s background, the head instructor may be the primary design person but this is the exception.
Training of Instructors	Primary: Well-trained and experienced instructors are not always available. On one level your objectives, if they include a desire to grow an advance of program, may require you to go outside of the Long Island area to recruit highly qualified instructors. This is commonly done in other regions of the country. Programs in Florida, NJ and Chicago often recruit outside their area for top talent. Such an approach means you will have to find housing. This is not easy. On the other hand, not all programs or all participants want this high level talent (80% of participants are not interested in advance racing.) Therefore, management needs to encourage local sailors to become trained instructors. It is the practice of most programs in the US to either partially or fully reimburse costs of US Sailing instructor courses upon completion of the course. You should note, however, that once you have completed the Level I course the instructor is not certified until they have completed CPR and First Aid. Re-certification is required for CPR and First Aid, every year for CPR and every three years for First Aid. It is also recommended that directors of sailing programs attend US Sailing’s annual junior sailing seminar.	Primary: A primary duty of all instructors, particularly the head instructor is to help develop instructor talent. Developing the instructor’s skill should be one of the primary responsibilities of the head instructor. The head instructor should map out an instructor development plan for the other instructors in the program in consultation with them.
Instructor Management	Primary: Set guidelines. Should be driven by program objectives.	Primary: Day-to-day management responsibility is entrusted to the head instructor.
Instructor Orientation	Secondary: Outline what should be covered. If the head instructor is new he or she will need to be oriented!	Primary: This is very important. In fact, Joni Palmer recommends three days to do this. The orientation includes, the facility, the safety plan, the equipment–familiarity with the safety boats, the sailboats and the waters. The orientation should also include the administrative aspects and responsibilities, rules and procedures. A handbook could be designed to save time here. Often such an orientation is not done at all. This is a mistake. It wastes time in the long term.

Curriculum	Primary: Curriculum is like a road map. Based on the program objectives and target audience – develop a logical building block approach – the curriculum is the first step – what do we cover? From there we can build course outlines and course content. From here lesson plans will flow.	Secondary: Get input from the people on the front line – particularly the head instructor. May be he or she can do this but don't expect that she or he can do it alone.
Lesson Plans	Secondary: More proactive planning needs to be done. Management needs to push here. Too often instructors seem to forget about land drills and any sequencing of instruction. Hit the books for this one.	Primary: Instructors do not like this. Although it may be foolish to think a week can be mapped out in detail, some plan or approach is need. See US Sailing Level I manual: (I have seen too much wasted time during bad weather days.)
Weather Conditions and Guidelines	Primary: The necessary equipment, such as radios having the capability to receive marine weather bulletins, must be made available so the weather conditions can be monitored. Management needs to establish guidelines for the program and to the head instructor. The ability to monitor weather is very important and radios with capability to monitor the weather are critical and should be available.	Primary: It is the head instructor's primary responsibility to monitor the weather. The head instructor must understand the guidelines established and make the call whether or not to go out on the water or to come in based on weather information.
Safety Equipment	Primary: The purchase of safety equipment: PFDs (for safety boats), extra lines, anchors, horns, whistles, first aid kits and other equipment are the primary responsibility of the organization running the program.	The head instructor has needs to check the safety boats to ensure that the safety equipment is on board. The use, availability and working condition is the primary responsibility of the head instructor. Guidelines for operating equipment such as a hoist need to be developed.
Emergency Plan	Primary: The organization is primarily responsible for drawing up an emergency plan. See US Sailing guidelines for the model of a plan.	Secondary: The head instructor is responsible for the dissemination of the plan and the readiness of the staff.
Liability Waivers	Primary: Form design.	
Statement of Understanding	Primary: Form design – used by the Bellport Bay Sailing, This is an outline of program requirements and behavioral expectation on the part of the participant.	
Medical Forms	Primary: Form design.	Primary: Records of key information should be filled out at registration and a copy should be at the site.
Accident Reports	Primary: management should design the form.	Primary: Responsibility is to be sure that all accidents are written up and documented.
Swim Test		Primary: A swim test should be given every year and dated.
Attendance		Primary: Attendance should be tracked.
Records of Skill Levels		Primary: What levels of competency do the students achieve? This is extremely important not only for feedback but to determine what level the student has reached.

Evaluation and Feedback	Primary: An evaluation form or checklist needs to be developed in line with input from instructors. See US Sailing little Red Book for ideas. Most instructors view the little Red Book as too complex – overkill.	Secondary: Primary responsibility possibility to use the form and secondary to ensure the form is usable.
Communication with Parents		Primary: Parents want to know what the program is about. It is a good idea that the head instructor helps communicate what the program is all about to the parents. He or she should also cover safety issues, forms, rules and regulations, and how feedback will be given to the students and to the parents.
Communications with Other Clubs	Secondary: Management needs to support these objectives because they most likely did not exist in the past and need some reinforcement and attention.	Primary: One of the objectives of the GSBYRA is to increase the working relationship between Clubs – create a collegial atmosphere.
Communication with Club Management		Primary: The Directors of the program need to be apprised what is up – issues, good things as well as where improvements need to be made.

Sources of Information: The following books address some of the issues, but the most useful is *Teaching and Coaching Fundamentals for Sailing*, US Sailing. No single source addresses everything.

*Teaching and Coaching Fundamentals for Sailing*, US Sailing  
*Small Boat Sailing Level 1 Instructor Manual*, US Sailing  
*Start Sailing Right*, US Sailing, American Red Cross  
*Basic Powerboating, Safety and Rescue*, US Sailing  
*Coaching a High School Sailing Team*, Interscholastic Sailing Association (ISSA)

May 17, 2001