

# Working With Today's Youth in Sailing

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Have you ever asked yourself any of the following questions in when thinking about your Sailing program?

- \* Does puberty completely suppress any notion of responsibility in teenagers?
- \* Did my entire sailing school staff neglect to take their medication this morning?
- \* Do the police show up this routinely at other sailing schools?
- \* Why is that coaches mother attending our staff meeting? Is she taking notes?
- \* Is it cool to be 'flamed' by the coaches on your sailing schools Facebook page?
- \* Did that instructor just tell me to 'F\*\*K OFF'?

If you answered 'yes', you are not alone.



What has always been true about the adolescent stage of life:

- \* Adolescence is a time of **seeking status as an individual.**
- \* Adolescence is a time when **group relationships become of major importance.**
- \* Adolescence is a time of **rapid physical development and growth.**
- \* Adolescence seems to be a **time for complex intellectual and cognitive development.**
- \* Adolescence is a time for the **re-evaluation of societal values, customs and morality: i.e. rebelliousness**

# Where today's teenager's coming from?

- \* More liberal society with fewer boundaries
- \* Neurological changes are greater than physical
- \* Heavily connected the virtual world
- \* Diversity of family dynamics
- \* Encouraged to question + Lower levels of deference = A generation of negotiators.
- \* The entitlement generation: kids who've always been told they're smart, and never pushed too hard
- \* Not equipped to deal with constructive criticism\*

What issues have you experienced with your staff?



# What does all this mean for Youth Sailing Programs?

- \* We need to understand the transition from youth sailor to sailing school instructor
- \* We need to be prepared to create and manage an environment nurtures young coaches
- \* We need to give them the sport specific tools so they can become successful sailing instructors

## Sailors to coaches:

- \* Prerequisites
- \* Training
- \* Responsibility
- \* Application Process
- \* Experienced coaches
- \* Mentoring
- \* On going club based training

## Managing your coaches:

- \* Have senior and guest coaches act as role models.\*
- \* Discuss. Don't lecture . Be patient.
- \* Run a tight ship. Keep them busy. EMPOWER THEM.
- \* Openly and thoroughly discuss what kind of behavior is unacceptable and set consequences up front.
- \* Avoid bargaining. Ask for their input, shape the results.
- \* You cannot buy experience. Give them chances to fail.
- \* Provide opportunities for regular 'two-way' feedback sessions. Praise and positivity.

## Engaging your coaches:

- \* Help them to become better sailors
- \* Embrace technology
- \* Encourage creativity
- \* Help your staff make the connection between professionalism and profitability
- \* Provide the equipment that will ensure success
- \* Understand and support their professional development
- \* Encourage creativity. Ask for input. Praise success.

# Sailing Director Success

- \* Develop a formal hiring process
- \* **Have incredibly detailed contracts. Pre-negotiate everything**
- \* Establish the tone for the level of discipline and professionalism
- \* **Emphasize the importance of safety training**
- \* Establish the idea that the coaches are living advertisements for the sport and for your program
- \* **Insist upon ongoing evaluation and performance feedback**
- \* Encourage creativity. Ask for input. Praise success.
- \* **Hire creative problem solvers and balance your staff**
- \* Understand all elements of the CANSail Program

# Credits

*Inside the entitlement generation. Margret Wentz*  
*Making sense of today's teenager. Dr. John R. Morella*  
*Why punishment based systems don't work. Kathie F. Nunley*  
*The Education Issue: New York Times Magazine. Sept. 16, 2011*

