



## **AFSS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER**

### **WEEK #1 – July 3-7, 2017**

Welcome to the 2017 AFSS sailing season! We had a wonderful week here at AFSS as we got the summer rolling with sunshine and good wind that prevailed through most of the week.

We enjoyed large classes in both the morning and the afternoon, with our largest expected class of 12 students joining us in our Intermediate sessions. Both sessions used a variety of boats, with the morning session utilizing Hunters and Opti's, while the afternoon students sailed our 420 racing boats, in addition to the Opti's and Hunters. Watching multiple boats of different varieties sail across Harpswell Sound was a beautiful sight to see on the sunny afternoons we saw Monday through Wednesday.



We saw a handful of repeat students, as well as new faces in our Beginner classes as we reviewed the basics of sailing in our classroom sessions. Students quickly picked up sailing basics such as parts of the boat, points of sail, tacking and jibing, etc. By the end of the week, all students were sailing on their own without the aid of any instructors in the boat.

Our Intermediate class came well-prepared to sail as all students quickly remembered their sailing basics in the classroom, and moved on to practicing their fundamentals repetitively and independently so as to cement the motions of small boat sailing in their minds. We were proud to see them take on some more advanced maneuvers as the week closed, and the two-week students will move on to learning racing tactics in their second week of learning.

Thursday saw heavy winds that would have frightened a less-prepared group, but our students were not put off by the howling winds and white-caps we faced. Even in the confusion of a crowded mooring field, the students held their own and continued to show that they were well-trained and calm in the face of a potentially dangerous situation.



We had our first ice cream party and awards session of the season on Friday, and though the weather could have been better, we saw smiling faces all around, even if that was probably just the sugar working. It was sad to see our one-week students go, but we know they're off to even more exciting summer adventures. We just hope they'll come back to visit once in a while.

With all the excitement of Week #1 behind us, the AFSS staff is thrilled that the season has started, and though we know that the summer will be behind us in the blink of an eye, we're excited to see where the next classes will take us.

***For more photos, check out and "Like" our Facebook page: Abbot Fletcher Sailing School***



# AFSS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER WEEK #2 – 7/10-7/14

*AFSS is a program of the Orr's-Bailey Yacht Club*

Welcome back newsletter readers! We can't believe our first two-week session is already over. It seems like just yesterday we were lugging empty hulls down to the dock in mid-June. We had a little more rain and a little less wind than the previous week, but nonetheless students thrived sailing around Harpswell Sound.

This week we welcomed long-time AFSS sailor Jack Theberge as a volunteer for a few weeks, and we're lucky to have him. He and our other volunteer, Mitch Lienert, spent most days sailing with Intermediate students in our 420's, while instructors Chelsea, Augie, and Ashley successfully worked through lesson plans both on and off the water. If there's one thing we've learned as instructors here, it is that sailing and teaching are both adaptive experiences. One must be able to adjust to a change in the classroom just as we adjust to change in wind direction.

The morning class enjoyed a good amount of one-on-one instruction as we only had four students accompanied by four instructors and two volunteers for the entire week. Each student had a chance to helm a Hunter, as well as single-occupant Opti's. We feel that each student came out of the week being able to rely more heavily on his or her own abilities. We were proud that they were all able to sail independently from instructor-help as they all continue to master the basics of sailing at an impressively young age.

The smaller class in the morning allowed our staff to rig up one of AFSS' Laser single-person racing boats, as well as the newly donated Howmar 12. The Howmar is very similar to our own Hunters, but with a little more space and racing potential. We're excited to see what we can do with these newly rigged additions in the coming weeks.



We were very impressed with our afternoon class as we quickly got into the basics of 420 and Opti racing this week. It's been 2 years since we last taught students to race at AFSS, and students and instructors alike seemed thrilled at the possibilities brought about by competitive junior sailing. We set up a few racecourses in which students practiced mark rounding and timed starts while honing their sailing abilities. We also went on a couple all-afternoon long sails throughout the Sound, racing to northern and southern green cans in the channel as the students learned more advanced facets of sailing as part

of a two-person team. On our last afternoon Chris Konner, grandson of OBYC members Charlie and Jean Johnson, baked special cupcakes to celebrate with his fellow students and instructors.

Overall, the week went very well, and we're looking forward to the next four weeks as the School continues to offer fun and learning to all students and instructors involved.

## SOME IMPORTANT REMINDERS

### PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (LIFE JACKETS):



*the life jacket.*

It is important that student life jackets NOT have straps and buckles across the chest. This is a safety issue because the straps may get caught on the tiller in a sailboat. Life jackets should have a front zipper; no over-the head models. LL Bean's Discovery Junior PFD (shown) is ideal example. *A whistle should be attached to*

**FOOTWEAR: Close-toed shoes** (this includes crocs, boat shoes, sneakers). NO flip-flops, please.

**MARK YOUR BELONGINGS:** Please be sure that you mark your life jacket, towel, etc. with a Sharpie. Each year we accumulate many items that go unclaimed!



# AFSS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER WEEK #3 – 7/17-7/21

*AFSS is a program of the Orr's-Bailey Yacht Club*

Hello again everyone! We can't believe that the season is already halfway through. We've enjoyed the past three weeks immensely, and we're looking forward to what the next three can bring.

Casco Bay was shrouded in a heavy, heavy fog for the first half of the week, reducing visibility to almost nothing. We couldn't even see Cook's Lobster House from the dock at times, and the fog brought with it a severe reduction in wind speed. The unexpected weather made sailing difficult for the first few days of the week, but nonetheless our classes prevailed.



Our morning class spent much of the week following the coach boat on the outskirts of the mooring field through the fog, practicing their sailing basics in relatively light wind. This gave them an opportunity to sail on their own, and we saw many students prosper at the helm. We took out Hunters, Optis, and even the new Howmar 12 to give students a chance to man different types of boats in their short time at the school. The weather turned better by the end of the week, and we enjoyed sunshine and solid wind Thursday and Friday. Most students left after their first week, and we hope to see them again in our intermediate classes next summer.

We quickly found that our Intermediate class was full of talented students who all had a vast range of experience at AFSS. We started them in 420's right away and began to practice racing tactics. We saw students who were brand new to racing boats practice full racing starts and triangle courses by mid-week. By Friday they were confidently in control of the 420's as we ran both short and long courses around Harpswell Sound. All students except one are returning for week 4, where we will continue their racing education and lessons on more advanced aspects of sailing.

We've heard a considerable amount of stir about the return of racing at AFSS in the past couple weeks as our intermediate students have gone above and beyond expectations. As





the season progresses, and we find more racing-capable candidates, instructors and parents alike have expressed interest in teaching more than the basics of sailing in the AFSS classroom. It's something that we continue to keep in mind looking toward the end of the season, and into next year.



# AFSS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER WEEK #4 – 7/24-7/28

*AFSS is a program of the Orr's-Bailey Yacht Club*



Four weeks down and two to go! The sailing season seems to grow shorter every year, as discussions of pulling boats out have already begun in the first few days of week 5. But before we look ahead to next week, let's look back at what we saw out on the water over the span of our fourth week of sailing.

It was a cold week, with the temperatures rarely rising above 70 degrees, limited sunshine, and rain on Monday and Thursday. We were happy to see nice weather on Friday, however, and we were treated to nice wind, and an even better ice cream and awards celebration.

We had evenly split classes in the morning and afternoon: about ten beginners and eight intermediate students throughout the week. We were pleased to see three of our beginner students from week 3 make the jump up to intermediate in week 4 after only one week of instruction; a solid testament to the strength of their sailing and the success of the program. We have always been a school that promotes rising skills from within. For example, all of our current staff has completed beginner, intermediate, and racing classes at AFSS in past summers, only to further volunteer and then work as Jr. or Head Instructors. It's a pleasure to see other students taking to the teachings so quickly as they rise through the sailing ranks, just as we have before them.

Most of our beginner students this week were completely new to sailing, or close to it. Subsequently, most of them sailed in Hunters all week, with most sailing completely on their own by Thursday and Friday. A few students tried their lot in Opti's, slowly tacking their way up the channel past Cook's, only to be brought back towards OBYC by wind



and current. Many of our students overcame fears of being alone on the water and being at the helm of a boat without an instructor around, and we were proud to see young students push their own limits to further their abilities on and off the water.



We had a mix of talent in our afternoon class, with half of the students having sailed for many years, or at least having some racing experience, and the other half with a scattered few weeks of sailing under their belts. Regardless, we found ways to come together both in the classroom and on the water. We took out every boat in the

arsenal in our afternoon sails, shedding some much-needed use on the Howmar 12 and our Laser. We took very long sails on multiple days, going as far South as Mackerel Cove and as far North as Beal's Cove. We found it was a great way for students to test their water navigation skills, as well as to get to know each other and make friends in their classes. We all have fond memories of meeting friends in the summers on Orr's Island, and it's a pleasure to watch other friendships being formed over the years.

Overall, we had a very successful week in both classes, and we're looking forward to see how the season wraps up!







# AFSS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER WEEK #5 – 7/31-8/4

*AFSS is a program of the Orr's-Bailey Yacht Club*



There's only one week left to go in the season for AFSS. While we're sad to see it go, we're also proud of all our students and staff have accomplished day in and day out through this beautiful summer spent sailing in Harpswell Sound.

Our beginner class was full of almost completely new sailors, save a few students sailing for their second week and one

second-year student. Accordingly, most of the students sailed with peers in Hunters throughout the week. Though the wind was light Monday and Tuesday, we saw beautiful weather take over Wednesday and Thursday before the fog rolled back in over the Island on Friday. A few students tried Opti's for the first time and took to them with excitement and vigor as they pleaded for more time on the water in their own solo sailboat. We also saw many students on Friday exchanging addresses and phone numbers so as to keep in touch with each other over the winter, another reminder of the community that sailing builds even at a young age.



We had a small class in the afternoon, made up entirely of a single family of siblings and cousins, save one other student. Some had sailed before, and some were completely new to the sport. The concentration with a fewer number of students allowed them to learn more in the classroom and on the water as they took to Opti's two days in. It was nice to see family members helping each other learn as they all entered at different ability levels and learned at their own pace.

The non-family member student was fairly experienced coming into the class, and had a chance at sailing Hunters, Opti's, and even a 420 by the end of the week. We're very lucky to have such a diverse fleet of boats! Friday brought with it heavy sheets of rolling fog. We found ourselves caught in the middle of the Sound surrounded by white walls and sky where we could see neither the shoreline nor OBYC. We safely kept the boats together and made it into shore after some careful navigating and planning, but a weather ordeal like that is always a memorable experience for both instructors and students alike.

I had mentioned at our celebration on Friday, and will again now, that it is truly a blessing to be able to spend this much time outside teaching what we love. It can be a taxing job, but there are moments throughout every week in which all the instructors agree that we could not imagine being anywhere else. Whether it is an afternoon watching new 420 racers complete their first triangle course, or spotting a pod of porpoises breaching near the shelf in Stover's Cove, there are many unique perks to the AFSS experience far beyond the sailing skills it teaches. As we grow older and the season ends, we're apt to remember the good times.





# AFSS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER WEEK #6 – 8/7-8/11

*AFSS is a program of the Orr's-Bailey Yacht Club*

Well the season is officially over. We had six successful weeks of sailing full of unpredictable weather, new racers on the sound, beginning students becoming friends, and lots and lots of ice cream. I had multiple conversations with parents and club members last week whose most common comment was, "You're taking the boats out already, I thought the season just started!" Indeed, the season seems to grow shorter every year. All the instructors will know, my favorite saying this summer was "The days are long and the weeks are short," which still feels true now. With the season over, and Fall just around the corner, we wish the weeks were longer, but that's not how sailing works. So for now we look back at the fun we had this summer, and begin planning as we look forward to the next one.



Week #6 held two of our busiest classes of the whole season, with 14 students in our beginning class and 8 in our afternoon. Our morning class spent much of the week in Hunters and the Howmar 12, learning how to effectively maneuver as both crew and skipper in a boat full of 3 or 4. We saw both light wind and heavy wind on separate

occasions throughout the week, and the weather often forced the instructors to adjust lesson plans accordingly. Nonetheless, the students persevered through all weather and wind conditions, focusing on the basics of tacking, jibing, upwind sailing, and most importantly, on-boat communication. A class that large was prone to get a little rowdy at times, but ultimately we had fun out on the water and playing games in the field while still learning a thing or two, and in the end that's the best result we could hope for.

Our afternoon class was full of a variety of different ability levels, and accordingly we took out a number of different boats. We took out 420's, Opti's, and Hunters throughout the week, often resorting to long sails across Harpswell Sound as students honed their abilities completely independent of anyone's choices but their





own. We saw a few students who had never sailed without instructors before shine as they were pushed into testing their own abilities. That independence is the beginning of a long relationship between sailor and water, and we're happy to have helped these students begin that journey.

We had a long but successful day on Friday with the season's last awards ceremony and boat haul-out. It was a tiring day, and the instructors and I did not leave OBYC much before 7:30 on Friday night, but nobody on the team was bitter towards the work. We received help from club member Chris Nichols and Paul Nadeau, a former OBYC member visiting from Norway, and we would like to express our gratitude to them. We could not have done it without them.

There are moments in life and on the water that remind us why we do what we do. Whether you have a successful Monday at work, a Bridge game where all the cards play in your favor, a family dinner full of laughs and good stories, or a long drive by yourself where the sighs of relief come as often as the road signs, there are moments where we simply appreciate where we are and who's around us. We had many of these moments this summer, as we're prone to do in a setting as beautiful as Orr's and Bailey Island. One in particular struck me last Friday night as the instructors and I sat on the porch, eating leftover ice cream and the sun set over the mooring field. I looked at the people I worked with laughing about memories of the summer we had created together. As the empty boat racks rose and fell with the waves I choked up a bit, just as I did during my speech on Friday afternoon.



Sailing is a beautiful sport that generates camaraderie and character all on its own, and it's a pleasure and an honor to begin that journey with so many young people. Abbot Fletcher Sailing School and Orr's Bailey Yacht Club are beautiful communities in their own right, one's that should be appreciated every day for the work that goes into them, and the good times that come out. We ran a 40-hour per week sailing school on volunteer work and the efforts of one college student, and 4 high school students all under the age of 18. Sometimes I may forget how hard the staff works day in and day out to provide this opportunity to so many young people, so I'd like to say now that I'm immensely proud of what we accomplished this summer. I can't express enough how grateful we are for Sue Baker, Bob Gill, and Nick Nichols, whom we could not have functioned without this summer. They put in more work than they'll ever give themselves credit for, and it was a pleasure to work with all of them. I'd also like to thank the many AFSS monitors who came by and helped out throughout the day. It was nice to see so many club members getting involved, and we were happy to have such pleasant people to help us out. Lastly, I'd like to thank the instructors, Chelsea Hartnett, John "Augie" Lienert, Ashley St. Louis, and our volunteers,



Mitch Lienert and Jack Theberge, who I saw put in professional-level effort every day, and made this school a memorable experience for dozens of kids at AFSS. Thank you to everyone who made the 2017 AFSS season possible. Your efforts don't go unnoticed, and you should all be proud of what we did together.

We can't know where we'll end up tomorrow, but until the next time we all see each other, take care, safe travels, and happy sailing!

