

Olcott Youth Sailing and Boating Program Q & A

Sponsored by Olcott Yacht Club

What is it?

On the water instruction in 1 and 2 person sailing dinghies, kayaks and canoes emphasizing safe, effective, and enjoyable operation on Lake Ontario and the waters of 18 Mile Creek; together with onshore activities/instruction. Classes are available in 1, 2, 4 or 6 week segments to suit the interests and needs of water loving youth. Our teaching will be separated by "Adventure Sail/Learn to Sail" or "Racing" (coach approved) this season. We have had participants go on to become competitive sailors on a national level or those just enjoying it for pleasure. Professionally, former students have been a first mate on the Pride of Baltimore, a Captain in the Merchant Marine, and another served as a guide on the USS Constitution while in the Navy. Participants form lifelong skills and friendships, coupled with teamwork, discipline and self-esteem.

Who is eligible to participate?

The program is open to any boy or girl from 7 - 18 yrs. of age. Membership in the yacht club is not required nor is ownership of a sail or motorboat. Many of our students have no experience with sailing or boating prior to their summer at OYC.

When does it start?

We offer three (3) two-week sessions. **The first session begins Monday July 6, 2026.** We also offer an option to take one week. Classes run from 9 AM to 4 PM, Monday through Friday.

Where is the program held?

The program is held at the Olcott Yacht Club, Foot of Van Buren St., Olcott, N.Y. Instruction is held in the harbor basin near the yacht club, on 18 mile creek, and out on Lake Ontario on either the east or west side of the harbor.

How do I enroll my child in the program?

Visit our website, OLCOTTYACHTCLUB.COM to complete an online registration form, then mail the appropriate fee owed. You may also register by mail. Simply print the registration, medical and emergency forms, and mail along with your check made out to "Olcott Yacht Club" to:

Olcott Yacht Club
c/o Youth Boating
P.O. Box 715
Olcott, NY 14126

Your child will be enrolled in the program on a first-come-first served basis. We will send a confirmation email (online registration) to you indicating that your child is enrolled in his/her chosen session.

Instructors

The program maintains a low student to instructor ratio. All instructors are US Sailing Level I certified and have current CPR certification. They are specialists in their sailing courses and are carefully selected for experience, reputation, and good judgment. They are also experienced for other on the water activities like ... kayaking and canoeing.

What program of instruction is used?

All sailing curriculum is U.S. Sailing Certified Curriculum

Class Size?

Typically, there are 8-10 students per instructor. Class sizes are limited so enroll early!

Life Jackets/PFD's

Each student is required to wear a Type III life jacket at all times on the water. It is required that each student have his/her own life jacket.

Inclement Weather

Water activity is always "weather permitting." The programs head instructor is in radio contact with the other instructors to notify them of any adverse conditions requiring them to return to shore. The Junior Sailing Building and pavilion are available for classroom sessions and the Olcott Harbor provides a safe location if Lake Ontario is rough.

What should my child bring to the program?

Each student is required to bring a Type III life jacket and wear appropriate clothing. All sailors need shoes that are closed toed, please no sandals. Sneakers which dry quickly, or water shoes are recommended. A change of clothes is also recommended as well as a towel. Remember it is cooler by the water and that the sailors are often wet. Rain gear is necessary for rainy days. Students need to bring a lunch, snacks, and drinks. A refrigerator is available.

Awards

At the end of each session, recognitions will be presented to highlight the progress of our students. An end of season event will take place to award Club perpetual awards. Date will be announced.

Who can I talk to about the program?

For further information and questions, email, or call:

Head Instructor Ella Thibault at 716-778-4347 (cell); ethibault24@gmail.com

Junior Program Chairman Mark Cassidy at 716-778-9028; (cell) 716-807-7915; rappareems@aol.com

Further information and application material is available at the club website: olcottyachtclub.com

2026 Fees & Scholarships:

Our 2026 Fees (including sales tax) are as follows:

Any 2-week Session Rate: \$725.00

Weekly rate: \$378.00 (Adventure Sailing only)

The Olcott Yacht Club's Women's Yachting Association offers several scholarships annually. Scholarships are available to students enrolled in the Barker, Newfane, or Wilson school districts and are not members of the yacht club. For application and information, call Linda Rosenbaum at 716-778-5153 or email at linda_p_rosenbaum@msn.com. Applications and information are also available in the guidance offices of the above schools by the middle of April annually. Island Yacht Club in Wilson also offers scholarships as well.

Enhancements - Racing

Interclub sailing regattas challenge racing skill development. The introduction of the "Racing" teaching will help to develop students for more challenging competition. There will be a possibility of 2-3 events outside Olcott this summer. For those interested in racing development, select that option when applying. Coach approval will be required.

For further information go to the Olcott Yacht Club website at olcottyachtclub.com