

# Boating for Disabled People in Scotland



## RYA Scotland's Development Programme

Boating is inspiring, challenging, enjoyable and fun. RYA Scotland offers a range of opportunities for people with disabilities to experience being on the water in a safe and supportive environment. Sailing for people with disabilities became popular during the 1980s and in 1988 the International Handicap Sailing Committee was formed. In 1991, the International Sailing Federation recognised the IHSC and the organisation was re-named the International Foundation for Disabled Sailing which remains the international organisation today.

Our overarching objective is to increase participation in all forms of boating which included: sailing and motor cruising, dinghy sailing, windsurfing, powerboating and personal watercraft. We work closely with clubs and training centres to ensure that they are accessible as possible for people with disabilities. However because of the location or the access to the water by pontoons and jetties some are more suited than others depending on the person's ability.

RYA Scotland is keen to encourage anybody with a physical or learning disability to sail. The sailing and windsurfing clubs generally have boats and boards that you can try without having to invest initially. Our clubs are inclusive but you might like to contact them in advance to tell them of any special needs that you have, and there are also Sailability Centres with adapted boats, access aids and other equipment to help those with greater needs to have a go at sailing.

## RYA Sailability

This is the title of the RYA and RYA Scotland's programme of activities for people with a disability.

We have a Sailability Regional Officer for Scotland who arranges a variety of events and regattas as well as acts as a hub for education and resources.

- Run Disability Awareness Courses
- Sailability Centres and a Centre of Excellence.

[www.Sailability.TV](http://www.Sailability.TV)

## Paralympic programme

Sailing has featured in the Summer Paralympic programme in since Sydney 2000.



## The Classifications

The classifications for the Paralympics are all physical disabilities and athletes with a visual impairment.

The [sailing classification](#) system is based on four factors:

- Stability
- Hand function
- Mobility
- Functionality

Three types of boat are used in the Paralympics:

- Single person keelboat (2.4mR)
- Two person keelboat (SKUD 18)
- Three person keelboat (Sonar)



At the Paralympic Games modifications are made to the equipment in order to suit the athlete's functional ability, these include adapted seats and adapted tillers for steering. With the exception of the SKUD, which must have at least one female on board, the crews are non-gender specific.

In Rio in 2016 the Paralympic event will be held at [Marina da Gloria](#).

## Recreational or competitive?

There are two aspects to participation, one being recreational boating and the second a more competitive pathway that might lead to Paralympic involvement at the top of the pinnacle. However everybody is likely to start in a recreational way first before starting racing.

	Recreational	Formal Competition	Paralympic
Dinghy	✓	✓	✓
Yacht	✓	✓	
Cruiser	✓		
Inland	✓		
Powerboat	✓	✓	
Windsurfer	✓	✓	
Personal watercraft	✓		

## Come and Try It

Our Sailability centres are particularly prepared and you can find your nearest one by going to:

<http://www.rya.org.uk/wheresmynearest/pages/directory.aspx#list/>.

You can also search by your disability so that you are going to a place that has special expertise to suit your needs.



## What to wear

People worry about what to wear. Depending on the kind of sailing you do, you are not necessarily going to get very wet (depending on both the type of boat and the weather!). Waterproofs, a fleece or a warm jumper and sensible footwear are the basic requirements. Hats and gloves would be necessary in colder weather.

Waterproofs might be available at the club or centre that you go to. Both clubs and centres would have buoyancy aids and /or life jackets they will provide you with.

## TYPES OF BOATING

### Dinghy Sailing

Dinghy sailing offers a huge range of opportunities to get out sailing. There are many sailing clubs and training centres across Scotland both on the coast and inland that offer introductory sessions and can advise on what's on offer long term.

Dinghies come in all shapes and sizes with something to suit everyone, and if you go to an RYA Sailability Centre they will have boats that are adapted and possibly hoists to give easier access.

### Yacht Cruising

Yachting is a very accessible sport with organisations like able2sail or Jubilee Sailing trust who offer sailing trips for people with disabilities.

## Windsurfing

There are a number of disciplines within windsurfing from sailing for fun, riding big waves, completing slalom, course racing, or freestyle which can provide for lots of thrills and spills.

Windsurfing may be considered less accessible to people with physical disabilities but adapted versions are being worked on and people with sensory impairments are regular participants. However people working in this area are convinced that its peoples' perception that prevents them from trying windsurfing, not their disability.

### Powerboating

Powerboating comes in a wide range of activity from cruising to top end racing. The most basic form of powerboating would be in a Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB) and there are also a variety of craft called Wheelyboats that have a drop down bow to allow easy access for wheelchair users and people with mobility difficulties.

### Inland waterways and canal boats

A great way to get afloat in a totally relaxing environment is to sail on a canal boat. The Seagull Trust offer trips for people with special needs in their fleet of canal boats from Falkirk, Kirkintilloch, Ratho and on the Caledonian Canal.



## Leading sailors you should know

In London 2012, GB sailor Helen Lucas won the gold in the 2.4mR, and Alexandra Rickham and Niki Birrell won the bronze in the SKUD 18.

In 2015, Laura Cammidge was part of the GBR Blind Sailing Team that participated in the Blind Sailing World and International Championships in Chicago. Laura, the sole Scottish member of the team, won a silver medal in the Class B3 event.

## The future

For 2016 we have introduced two new things, a Mini Traveller Series (events taking place at four venues), as well as a Class Academy programme for Hansa 303/2.4 sailors. This begins to put in place a pathway programme which allows them to progress from sailing to racing and into our academy programme and onwards into elite programmes. More and more opportunities will be created and we want every person with a disability to be able to access the sport and enjoy the experience of being on the water.

## Coach Education

The RYA runs a full programme of Instructor and Coach training programmes that has been emulated and used all over the world but not only by sailing governing bodies but also other sports.

RYA Scotland is proud to deliver these where an integral part is the educating coaches and instructors how to assist and coach students with a disability.

RYA Scotland also runs workshops to help coaches and instructors teach people with disabilities, helping them to be inclusive where possible, the use of some of the specialist equipment that might be required, giving them confidence and promoting how accessible our sport can be.

People with disabilities who have experience in sailing or windsurfing are also welcome to train as instructors or coaches and to find out more please contact the Coach Education and Development Manager, Nikki Stewart,

who will be able to advise of the requirements for each of the courses and where they are held.

[nikki.stewart@ryascotland.org.uk](mailto:nikki.stewart@ryascotland.org.uk)

## Helpful resources

Where's my nearest club

<http://www.rya.org.uk/wheresmynearest/page/s/directory.aspx#list/>

Sailability

[www.rya.org.uk/programmes/ryasailability/Pages/SailabilityTV.aspx](http://www.rya.org.uk/programmes/ryasailability/Pages/SailabilityTV.aspx)

Sailability Centres

<http://www.rya.org.uk/programmes/ryasailability/Pages/Wheretogosailing.aspx>

Paralympic information

[paralympics.org.uk/paralympicsports/sailing](http://paralympics.org.uk/paralympicsports/sailing)

Castle Semple RYA Sailability Centre of Excellence and education hub at Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

[www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk](http://www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk)

Able2Sail

[www.able2sail.org.uk](http://www.able2sail.org.uk)

Seagull Trust for canal boats

[www.seagulltrust.org.uk/welcome](http://www.seagulltrust.org.uk/welcome)

Jubilee Sailing Trust

[www.jst.org.uk](http://www.jst.org.uk)





## Key Contacts

RYA Scotland 0131 317 7388  
[admin@ryascotland.org.uk](mailto:admin@ryascotland.org.uk)  
[www.ryascotland.org.uk](http://www.ryascotland.org.uk)

Scottish Disability Sport 0131 317 1130  
[admin@scottishdisabilitysport.com](mailto:admin@scottishdisabilitysport.com)

Sailability Regional Officer RYA Scotland  
David Hill -  
[ryas.sailability@ryascotland.org.uk](mailto:ryas.sailability@ryascotland.org.uk)

## RYA Training Centres

<http://www.rya.org.uk/get-afloat/Pages/get-trained.aspx>

## RYAS Development Team

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## Sailability Centres in Scotland

(please check the [web site](#) for the most up to date list)

- Castle Semple Centre – Centre of Excellence
- Clyde Cruising Club
- Helensburgh Sailing Club
- Fife Sailability / Lochore Meadows Outdoor Education Centre
- Prestwick Sailing Club
- Sportscotland Cumbrae Centre
- Nairn Sailing Club

