



BUSA Beginner Engagement



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Introduction

Hi!

My name is Joe Penhaul Smith and I am the BUSA Development Officer for 2019-2020.

Social sailing and beginner training are vital parts of every University Sailing Club, but they have not classically been supported to the same extent that team racing has been.

This is changing as we work to create more resources and opportunities for social sailors, beginners and those who want to start competing. The document that follows is another part of this strategy.

BUSA would love to see University Sailing Clubs doing their bit to introduce newcomers to our sport. The BUSA Committee and I are here to help you with any questions or support that you may require. You can get in touch with us via email at busacommittee@gmail.com or through our social media channels, @busamedia.



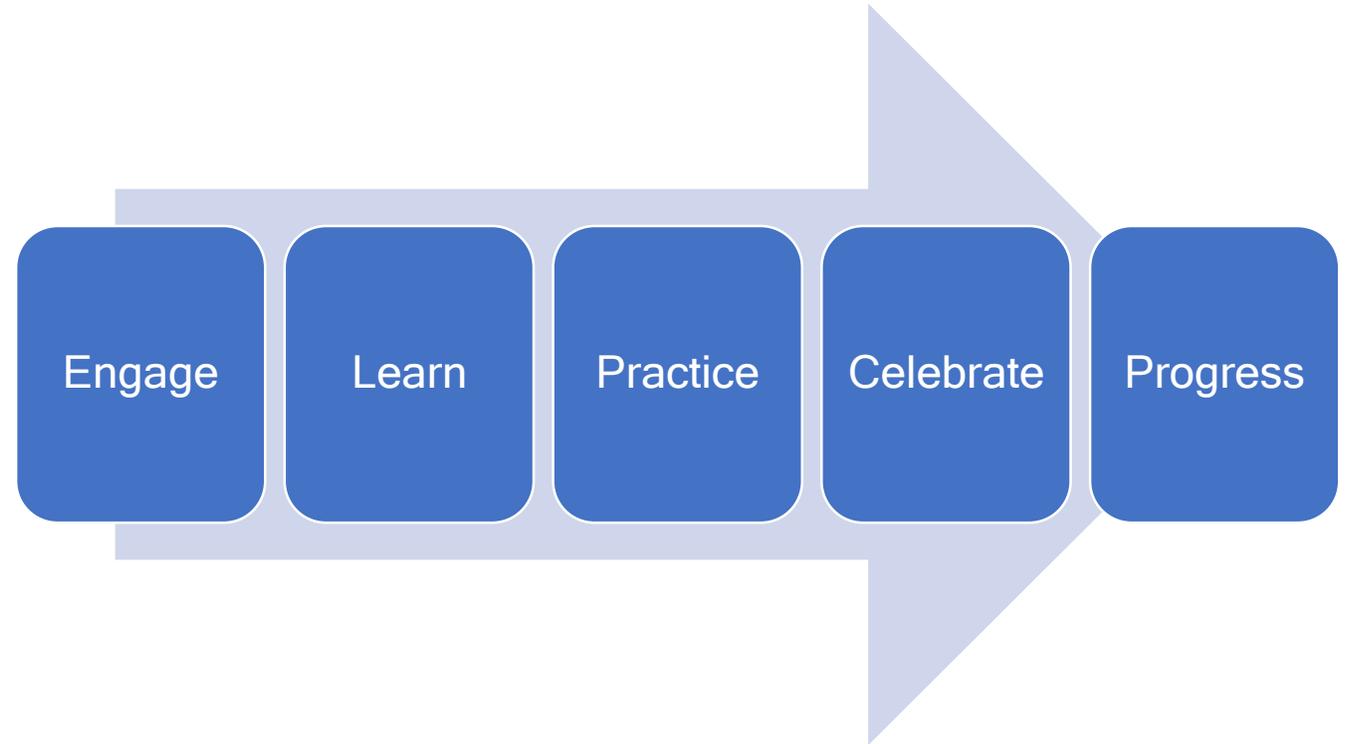


Support to Set Up a System

Whilst many University Sailing Clubs have well-established beginner or social sailing programmes, it isn't the case across the board and we are aware that some clubs would like some support to develop this area.

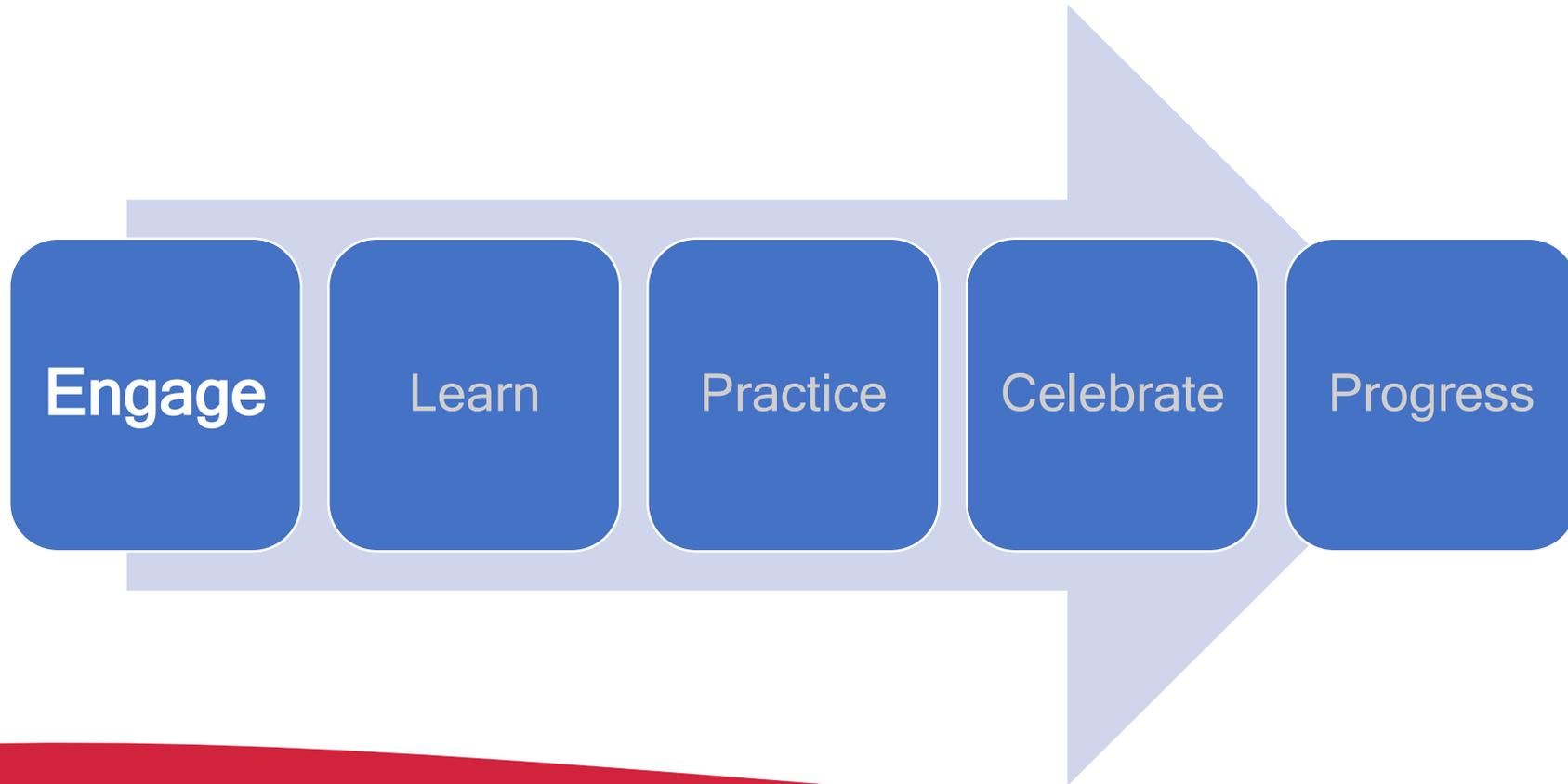
This guide is intended to support clubs to build and maintain provision for sailors that do not yet have the necessary experience or desire to compete in a race team, but would still like to get on the water on a regular basis.

This suggested programme is built upon a five-stage process that can be implemented across the academic year. Each stage is explained in more detail on the following pages.





Engage





Engage - *September/October*

Never sailed before? Just turned up at university and want to try something new? Maybe tried sailing at home and want to do more? There are many reasons why people want to join your club and one of the best ways to get them into sailing is to actually take them sailing.

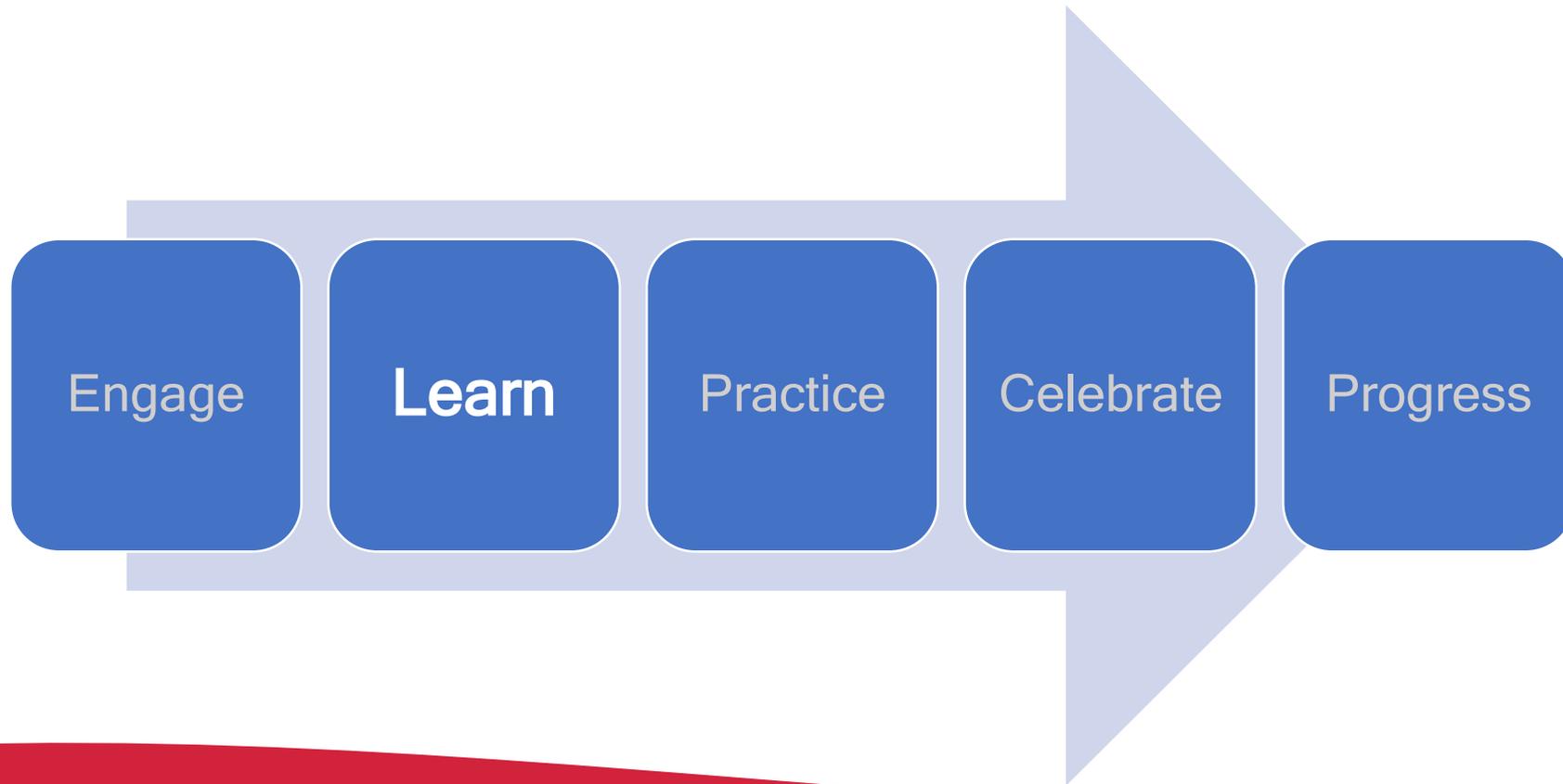
- This needs to happen early on in the year before everyone commits to the other clubs and societies universities have on offer.
- Maybe combine it with a social so all club members can get to know the new sailors better. A barbeque is a classic follow up for example.
- This is a nice simple session, preferably with experienced sailors in the boats with your potential new recruits, getting to know each other and finding out more about the club and why you're all great.
- Generally a low key session, this is a joyride primarily.

Taster Session

AIM:	Introduce newcomers to the sport in a safe, fun and relaxed setting. Encourage future participation.
LENGTH:	45-90 mins
RESOURCES:	Fireflies or appropriate training dinghies. Instructors/experienced helms. Safety Cover
PLAN:	Go sailing, with experienced sailors in the boats with new people where possible. For those on safety/session leads, a simple laid course is recommended so that sailors don't spread too far. Chat to newcomers whilst sailing and get to know them. Put them at ease and use it as an opportunity to sell the sport and your club.



Learn





Learn - *October/November*

The next step is to teach new social sailors the basics that will enable them to participate fully in the rest of the year's programme.

An RYA Level 1 course would be a great way to start. Speak to your host sailing club to find out if they are RYA affiliated and might be able to help you to organise and deliver this. A volunteer-run sailing club is often a very cheap way to offer this to your members, particularly if you have students with RYA Instructor qualifications that can support or lead the course for free.

If your host club is not able to provide an RYA Level 1 course, the alternative option is to look into commercial training providers.

BUSA-ASF Training Partnership (South/Midlands)

BUSA have partnered with the Andrew Simpson Foundation to provide discounted RYA training courses for members of BUSA-affiliated University Sailing Clubs. With centres in Portland, Portsmouth and Reading offering a 10% discount to individuals, 15% discount to groups of 6-12 and 20% discount or more to groups of 12+, a booking with the ASF could help your members to save money on courses.

BUSA Training Partnership (North/Midlands)

Progress is being made on expanding these training partnerships to the North and Scotland, but for now if you need to partner with a commercial training centre to provide qualifications, give Joe, the Development Officer, an email (busacommittee@gmail.com) and we can help.

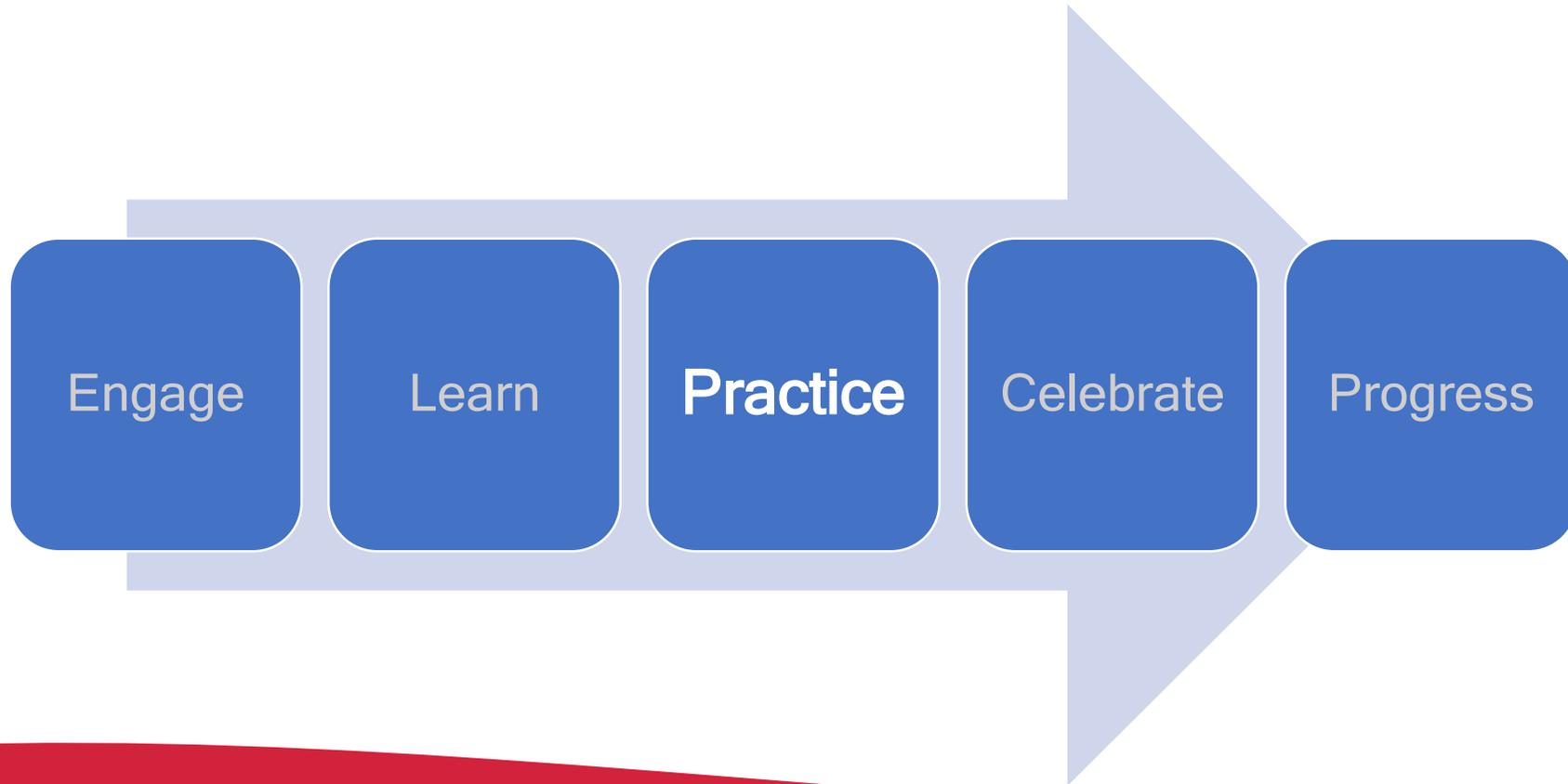
Alternatively, have a look at the RYA's "[Where's my nearest?](#)" page to help you to locate your closest commercial training provider. Not offering discounted courses for students? Email busacommittee@gmail.com and we will do our best to negotiate on your behalf.



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Practice





Practice - *December-April*

Once they've mastered the basics, it's important to ensure that your new social sailors have regular opportunities to get out on the water practising their skills. Implementing a regular weekly/bi-weekly sailing session is a great way to do this. Here we present some example sessions to get you started. For more inspiration check the syllabus of the RYA courses.

Practice Level 2 Skills

AIM:	Practise the 5 Essentials
LENGTH:	60-90 minutes
RESOURCES:	Fireflies or appropriate training dinghies Safety Cover Buoys
PLAN:	One of the best ways to demonstrate how each of the 5 essentials work is to go sailing and deliberately muck around with them. So games such as Simon Says, while sailing around a triangle course, can demonstrate why it is so hard to go upwind with you daggerboard up etc.

Man Overboard skills

AIM:	Do the perfect Man Overboard Manoeuvre
LENGTH:	60-90 minutes, multiple sessions can build upon each other
RESOURCES:	Fireflies or appropriate training dinghies Safety Cover Buoys Man Overboard dummy/fender/float
PLAN:	Build up students to the perfect man overboard manoeuvre gently, so start by coming alongside a buoy, then build up to a powerboat, then finally a man overboard. This could progress nicely into a session to teach race starting skills.



Practice - *December-April*

If you sailors aren't all that bothered by racing, then seamanship can be a perfect way to keep them engaged. Maybe their skills might be vital for your club's yachting trip later in the year or helping out at a team racing event?

Reefing Afloat

AIM:	Be able to reef afloat
LENGTH:	60- 90 minutes
RESOURCES:	Dinghies you can reef afloat eg Fireflies with reefing points or Laser 2000s Safety Cover Buoys
PLAN:	Reefing afloat is an art form, so start with a chat about how we reef the boats we are sailing, each one is subtly different. Then maybe a triangle course and you could play reefing on the whistle? Give sailors time to get used to sailing with and without the reef.

Minimal Rudder Sailing

AIM:	Sail around a triangle course with the rudder lashed.
LENGTH:	60-90 minutes, may take all day
RESOURCES:	Double handed dinghies Safety Cover Buoys String/elastic to lash rudders
PLAN:	Rudderless sailing is challenging for all. So build up slowly, by lashing the rudder first. So maybe combine with a reefing afloat session Start gently with a beam reach course, then work up to a triangle course.
TOP TIPS:	poorly set up Fireflies will be extremely challenging so make sure the rig is well set up before you start (see the tuning guides for more information). Raising the daggerboard up about 1/3 rd of the way will also help.



Practice - *December-April*

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Anchoring

AIM:	Anchor, have lunch
LENGTH:	60-90 minutes, can be all day
RESOURCES:	Fireflies/appropriate dinghies Safety Cover Anchors and warps (ropes)
PLAN:	Sometimes you want a break, so why not have lunch on the water on a nice day? You will need to chat through the theory of anchoring before you start, plus warn people to bring lunches with them. Also consider toilet availability, you may need to run shuttles back to the club house. Works well in sailing locations where you can make an adventure out of it.

Sailing Backwards

AIM:	Master the art of sailing backwards
LENGTH:	60-90 minutes, may take all day
RESOURCES:	Fireflies/Appropriate dinghies Safety Cover Buoys
PLAN:	Sailing a boat backwards can be challenging for new sailors. Introduce the theory ashore first and combine with a demonstration if possible. Set up a triangle course and get the sailors to sail the windward leg backwards - reverse from the windward to leeward, then sail normally out round a wing mark and back to the windward. This session translates well into race starting skills.



Practice - *December-April*

Teaching advanced sessions is a lot of fun and can be a great way to keep those running social sailing sessions enthused by seeing the progress your students have made

Introduction to Racing

AIM:	Introduce some basic racing skills
LENGTH:	60-90 minutes per session, use little and often around other sessions or spend a couple of days covering all the important points
RESOURCES:	Fireflies/appropriate dinghies Safety Cover Buoys (if relevant)
PLAN:	Start slowly, maybe introducing the concept of race starting with some rolling starts followed by a lap of a triangle course. Or sail from A-B if you are fortunate enough to have a sailing location which allows this. Anything can be turned in to a race with enough forethought, but be careful not to overuse this. Not everyone wants to race.

Introduction to Spinnakers

AIM:	Introduction to sailing with spinnakers
LENGTH:	60-90 minutes per session
RESOURCES:	Appropriate dinghies with spinnakers Safety Cover Buoys Instructors/competent helms (to go in boats ideally)
PLAN:	Hoists and drops can be a session on their own, then build in gybing. Remember to talk through the mechanics of how you do each thing and use a land drill before you start the session. Start with a longer course or one which requires no gybing, then reduce the size and increase the amount of gybes necessary.



Practice - *April-May*

Providing Incentives

The best way to keep people in a club is to give them something to keep coming back for. So, plan sessions ahead of time and let people know what they might be coming back to next.

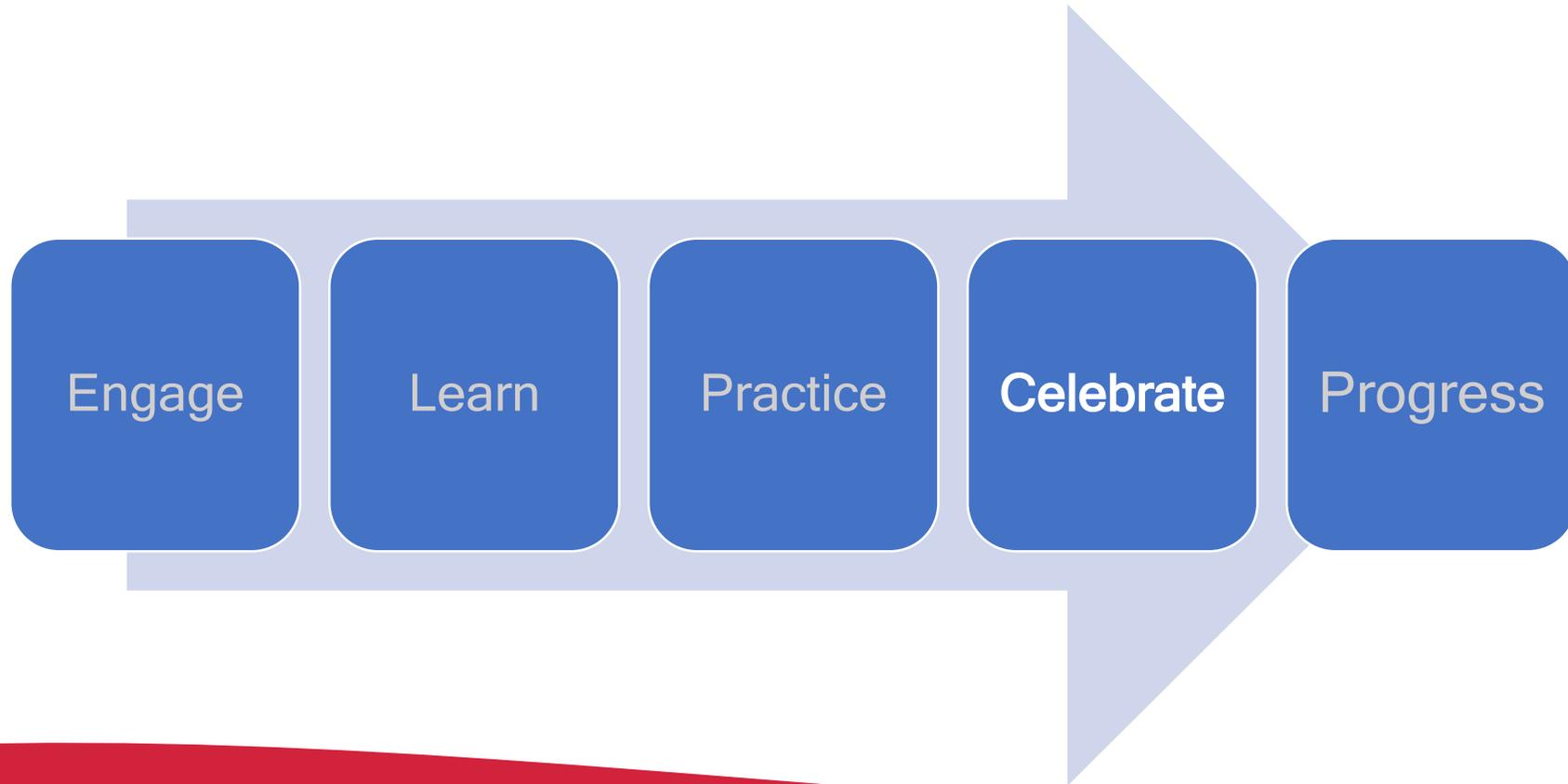
- If your affiliated club has a race series over the winter and you can get your social sailors participating this then this expands their social circle to other experienced sailors and gives them an incentive to sail beyond university.
- Can you offer a series of courses so that participants can work their way up a ladder of qualifications?
- Maybe there can be a prize for the most improved at the club awards this year? Or best attendance? Most spectacular wipe-out? Giving an incentive for continued participation is always useful.

Make your social sailors feel integrated within the club, too often different groups of sailors stick to themselves. A good way to help this is to get team sailors involved with helping out or even joining these sessions as participants and coaches. Or consider ways to integrate socials - are you doing a team activity where you could mix types of members within teams to help them get to know each other? The more integrated the club, the more likely people are to come back.





Celebrate





Celebrate - *April-May*

Perhaps one of the best incentives for participation is the opportunity to bring together all their new skills and represent the club. Regional social sailing events could be the perfect way to bring university clubs together, celebrate social sailing, make new friends and catch up with old ones. Events for 2019-20 to get your social sailors involved with:

- **Loughborough Luff Up:** Hosted by Loughborough and held at Burton SC on the 2nd of May 2020, this will be the perfect end of season celebration event both on and off the water for beginners, social sailors and sailors that like the social. Find the event page with all details [here](#).
- **Manchester Challenge:** Hosted by Manchester, held at West Kirby SC, this early season social sailing training event is open to all to improve the grassroots of university sailing. Contact Manchester [here](#).

Interested in organising your own social sailing event but not sure where to start? Get in touch with us - busacommittee@gmail.com





Progress





Progress - *April-June*

The most important part of this whole process. Where do these sailors go next?

Each club will have a slightly different set of pathways available and each individual will want to do different things. Maybe have a chat with people towards the end of the year about what might come next, both within your club if they are returning next year or within the wider sport if not. Having defined pathways that are publically available will help signpost people to their next steps.

- How do they get into team racing/race teams? Do your social sailors need to attend trials next year, for example?
- Do people want to do advanced module courses, maybe ones which you can't provide? Remember that the BUSA-ASF partnership is designed to help these needs (see above) and just let the Development Officer know if you have something in mind which you need help with.
- Are some of your sailors looking to develop into instructing and coaching roles, or help out with social sailing? Maybe they have ambitions to be the new Social Sailing Captain role? BUSA is running a Discover Coaching afternoon at Staunton Harold SC this year on the 12th of October. Full details [here](#). This is an afternoon to give people a taste for instructing and look at pathways to develop their skills.





Case Studies

The following slides contain some examples of universities that have built successful Social Sailing schemes, and some useful tips and ideas to help you do the same.

1. A successful Social Sailing model - University of Birmingham
2. Social Sailor to Team Sailor - University of Nottingham
3. Social Sailing celebration event - The Loughborough Luff Up





University of Birmingham Social Sailing

“At Birmingham we run a dedicated social sailing session every Wednesday afternoon. We offer RYA levels as well as running a Development squad meaning we can cater to a range of different abilities, from total novices to experienced fleet racers. In previous years we have also offered GoSail, allowing people with RYA levels to sail without team racing in these sessions.

Our social sessions are promoted by two tasters in first term and one in second term. Confident sailors can sail by themselves and for those who are less confident we ensure they sail with a competent sailor. We use these taster sessions to introduce people to sailing in a fun and relaxed environment, with as much time on the water as possible.

The most important and successful part of our social sailing program is having a strong link with the club's team members, from having team sailors helping run the sessions as instructors to coming to and mingling at our socials, which are aimed at all members of the club.”

Having a good relationship with your host club is so important and a huge part of social sailing.

We use our own Fireflies for the Development squad training sessions, but use Picos which are part of our host clubs fleet to teach RYA Levels.

Our main points of contact are with the **club's commodore** and the **Watersports Centre manager**, who manage the Picos we use. We work hard to maintain good relations with both as this maintains the trust for us to use the boats as well as making everyone's lives a lot easier!



Tips to kick start your beginner sailing section:

- Consistently run social sailing sessions which are run by dedicated committee members, a social sailing captain and a development squad captain.
- A good working relationship with our host club is very helpful.
- The most important part of our successful social sailing is ensuring integration of all social sailors into socials and events (both within the sailing club and further afield when our team compete away) which maintains the social sailors as a very important part of our club.



Social Sailor to Team Sailor

A recent graduate from Nottingham has summed up for BUSA how integrating your less confident members into the rest of the club is vital to supporting the transition of social sailor to team racer:

"I joined as a social sailor in my first term because I was nervous after not having been on the water regularly for years. However, everyone was really welcoming and friendly, and before long I had made some great friends. I had never even heard of team racing, nor had attended trials, but I was given every opportunity to learn! So when we were a man short for an event, I felt more than confident enough to try it out. That was all it took to become hooked on the team racing lifestyle!"

Progression Opportunities:

The "give it a shot" approach is a great way to show social sailors how enjoyable sailing events can be, especially if you're a small club.

As Nottingham's club has grown in recent years, they are now also planning to run 'try-it' sessions for those who are interested in team racing, encouraging them to attend trials for their second year.



Integrating the Club:

It's really important to make sure that non-team sailors still feel welcome in the club, even if team racing isn't for them! Just ask Nottingham's current social sailing secretary:

"Social sailing is a great way not only to advance your skills and work towards qualifications, but also to chill out on the lake with friends after a long week and have access to some amazing socials! Social sailing allows everyone the opportunity to sail and be part of the club whilst doing whichever park of sailing they enjoy most."



Social Sailing Celebration Event

An end-of-season celebration event can work well to incentivise continued participation from your social sailors over the winter. What's more, travelling to another university gives sailors the opportunity to represent your club, meet other university sailors and could act as a stepping stone into a race team for the next academic year.

In 2018, Loughborough set up a new regional social sailing event, the Loughborough Luff Up. Designed as an opportunity to bring together social sailors from the Midlands universities at the end of the season, the day combined on the water inter-university team challenges and coached racing with a BBQ and evening social to give non-team racers the experience of a university event. Set to return bigger and better in May 2020, the day is a perfect celebration of sailor development and a transition opportunity for sailors looking to join race teams in the next academic year.

Event Format:

The Luff Up in 2018 was based around the concept of friendly, inter-university social sailing whilst also providing an introduction to competition. Sailors were divided into groups containing a mixture of universities and rotated around several activities during the day running alongside each other, such as:

- General social sailing
- Short course fleet racing
- Introduction to team racing
- Double-handed time trial/orienteering course around the lake



Top Tips to deliver a successful social sailing event:

- The clue in the name – these sailors are not racers so the social is equally as important as the time on the water. Offering a BBQ or more friendly social (we ran a punch pong tournament) is a good way to give students the opportunity to get to know people from other universities.
- Use your host sailing club. What club boats do they have that you may be able to borrow or hire? Fireflies are tricky boats to sail if you are new to the sport. If your host club can't help, think outside the box. The Luff Up in 2018 was supported by Hartley Boats in Derby. In exchange for some publicity on our social media they were more than happy to loan us some demo training dinghies for the weekend for free.
- Provide the right environment. Delivering an event late in the season often means that your team sailors have more time available and are keen to get on the water. Use experienced members as coaches to support the social sailors during the day and make sure they get the most out of the event.
- Keep it cheap. It is unlikely that university clubs will pay entries for this kind of event, so we operated on a fee per sailor basis. Keeping it to £25 or under will help you to recruit participants.



Useful Links

There are plenty of useful resources that can help you to improve your club's social sailing offer:

- The BUSA website [Calendar](#) contains details of regional Social Sailing events coming up.
- [Andrew Simpson Watersports Centres](#) for discounted RYA training, from beginner level up to Instructor and Race Coach training.
- [RYA 'Find my Nearest'](#) to locate affiliated training providers near to your university.
- The [RYA YouTube](#) channel contains plenty of helpful coaching videos to give you ideas for your sessions.
- The RYA provide instructor and beginner sailing logbooks. These contain in depth descriptions of RYA stages and activities. Use them!



Want Further Support?

Social Sailing is a critical part of any sailing club and hopefully these slides give you somewhere to start in your role as a Social Sailing Officer. If you want any further help please let us know by emailing:

busacommittee@gmail.com.

Stay in touch! We love to hear about Social Sailing and we can give your club much needed publicity, just tag **@busamedia** in your social media efforts to keep us up to date with how you are getting on.

