



SHYC – Welcome to the GREEN RACE TEAM!!



Green Team and Green Fleet Regattas are where it all starts for the new Opti racer. Green Fleet regattas are just for beginners. Opti Green fleet was created to give younger sailors experience of regattas in a safe, supportive environment. These regattas are designed to be fun for the new racer. Remember when you go to a Green Fleet regatta that all the other sailors are in the same boat as you, everything is new to them as well. And just as important, remember that many of the parents are new too. Most have not been to a regatta before. Actually, USODA reports that, on average, 50% of the parents of Optimist sailors have no background in sailing.

Green Fleet has two purposes:

- 1) To encourage novices to attend their first Optimist Regatta**
- 2) To encourage their continued participation in Optimist racing.**

Is my child ready for green fleet? Consider the following questions when deciding if your son or daughter should try their hand at racing in green fleet at a local club/regatta. The goal is to have a good time, make new friends, and try to do well racing sailboats. And it should be pretty much in that order. The fact that a regatta organizer has a Green Fleet indicates that they will try to provide an environment that engenders this spirit. **If you and your sailor can answer yes to most or all of these questions, then your sailor is ready to give it a try.**

- Are they at least 8 years old?
- Can they rig their own Optimist?
- Can they sail solo upwind, reaching, and downwind?
- Do they understand the basic rule of “no crashing” and can do his/her part to avoid crashing?
- Can they identify a race course and marks (usually orange floating balls)?
- Do they have a basic understanding of what a start is (even if it means following oral directions and other sailors)?
- Do they want to give it a TRY (it is typically not a good idea to force a kid to race in a Green Fleet regatta, it often means they aren't ready, yet..)?
- Does their instructor think they are ready for a Green Fleet regatta?

Remember the goal is to have a good time. So if a half day is all that remains fun, stop sailing at lunch and come back another day for more fun! If you and your sailor think it is time to give it a try, go for it! **If you are not certain, ask your sailing instructor** - they know your sailor's skills, and are familiar with Optimist regattas. They can give you lots of help. Going to regattas is a lot of fun - you will have a chance to practice your sailing, sail in new places, and meet new people.

Preparing for an Opti Green Fleet Regatta

Registration: Regatta sign-up is almost always on-line (your coach will send you the sign-up link). You have to register in order to be able to race. Registration is likely to require a sail number and health information, as well as general information about the child and boat and emergency contact info. It is your responsibility to register your child. Check with your race team coach if you can't find the information you need. Also check our **TeamSnap** app for any updates, regatta information, etc.

Packing for a Regatta: You need to bring your own boat (and all your boat parts) to regattas! A dolly for launching makes everything much easier (your own is best, or share with a friend). Make sure to pack everything the night before and to double check your “Green-Race Team Check List” for all needed equipment and gear. **Plan ahead – know the directions of how to get to the regatta, how long it will take, and plan to arrive early.**

Boat Transportation: If you have a big car, you might be able to get an Opti inside; otherwise you will need roof-racks with pads to tie your boat on the roof. Sachem's Head has an Opti trailer that takes 6 boats, which we will use for some regattas. If you are “car-topping” your boat, you will need 2 tie-down straps, for the front and back of the boat - the type that can be tightened are the best. Don't forget anything (use your Green-Race Team Check List). Opti sailors are notorious for losing the little bits of line that hold the sail on - it's a big help to have an extra supply of line just in case.

Arriving at the Regatta:

When you arrive at the regatta site, ask where to drop your boat off. There will be plenty of people around to help. If boats are stored on a beach, make sure you put your boat above the high water mark. Next, even though you have already registered online, your child should go Check-In and get the regatta packet/info. When you

check in, double check your sailor's name, club, contact info and sail numbers are accurate.

You will be given a packet of information to read carefully with your sailor. It will include sailing instructions - these are the rules for the regatta. It may also include information about the regatta schedule, parties, food, special parking restrictions, and other things you need to know. You will receive a colored GREEN streamer to attach to your sprit.

Regattas normally run all day, from about 9-4pm (some Green Fleet regattas start later and end earlier). Sailors will be expected to arrive to the sailing venue at least one hour in advance of the Skipper's Meeting to allow enough time to rig and get ready for the day. After racing ends, which is typically around 2-3pm (however it varies widely in Green Fleet), sailors will return to shore to derig their opti, put it away, and attend the team "debrief" and awards ceremony. Parents should remain near-by and reachable at Green Fleet events in case your sailor needs to come in early or needs your help.

Getting Your Sailor Ready:

Make sure your sailor has proper sailing clothing on (quick dry shorts, rash guard, bathing suit, sun block, closed toed shoes, sunblock, windbreaker/spray top, hat, etc.) **Sailors have the most fun racing when they are dressed well for the weather (it is not fun to be too cold, too hot, too hungry, or too wet)!** Also, make sure they eat a good breakfast and drink a lot of water before going racing for the day.

Before the Skippers Meeting, you will need to help your sailor Rig Their Boat. Once your child is rigged, or if you have any trouble, ask your Green Coach to check the boat. The regatta will start with a Skippers Meeting, followed by a Harbor Start (the time all green kids leave the dock/beach). If you can't find something you need or have questions, ask your coach! It's important for all sailors to attend the Skippers Meeting and listen carefully – typically there is a Green Fleet special skippers meeting. Harbor Start means that a sound signal is made, and then you can launch your boat and sail out to the race course. Greenies usually wait until everyone else has launched before they go out. Your Green Coach will help direct the children to the Green Fleet race course (they will be towed if needed).

Lunch is normally included as part of the regatta entry fee. Opti Green Fleet sailors typically sail into shore to eat on land - and for a much needed break. After lunch, they will sail back out to the race-course to continue sailing. If your child has any food allergies or is a picky eater, it is encouraged to pack your child a lunch that they will eat to replenish their energy. If you sense your sailor has had enough and cannot handle more racing, sometimes it makes the best sense not to go back after lunch – we want the sailors to leave wanting more, not feeling like they were pushed over the edge.

After Racing. When your child comes in from racing, make sure they pull their boat out of the way promptly and tie it up, and/or get it up far on the beach. Your sailor should be involved in all aspects of de-rigging their boat and getting their boat and gear packed up and back to the car or boat trailer. Your coach will host a "debrief" after racing with all the sailors on the team, your child needs to attend this.

Coach's Role at Green fleet

The coach is there to provide support to your child on the water and help make sure they are safe, happy, and focused. The coach will make sure all sailors in their class get out on the water and know where to go, and that they reach the race area. Note that the organizing club will generally count all "Greenies" out onto the water. Sailors are responsible to check in with the race committee when they reach the race area (and make sure to let someone official know if they leave the race area as well). Opti sailors will usually tie up their boats to their coach's boat between races. The coach will make sure everyone knows where to go, give suggestions and feedback, and most importantly hand out snacks, drinks, smiles, encouragement, and candy.

If any child, regardless of which club they are with, is in trouble, green fleet coaches are responsible for helping them, for instance by righting or bailing their boat, or towing them back to shore. Parental help with this is appreciated too. After racing, the coach will help make sure everyone gets back to shore and derigs their boat properly. They will do a "Debrief" with the class and answer questions.

The coach is not responsible to transport boats or children to/from the regatta. The coach is not in charge of the children on the land (they need a parent/chaperon). Parents are NOT permitted to ride in the coach boat.

Parent Coaching for Green Fleet

Parent coaching during races is permitted for Green Fleet only, and is restricted to the bottom half of the fleet. If you are coaching, you are expected to coach all children in the bottom half of the race, not just your own child. Never get in the

way of boats that are racing. Once the race is over, you may give your child feedback or suggestions. However, if your child's coach is on the water, they should check in with the coach as well. On land, parents are there to help keep your sailor organized, happy, focused, and prepared. Make sure your sailor is on time, well behaved, and where they are supposed to be at all times.

From Green Fleet to Championship fleet

Once you feel comfortable sailing in green fleet, you can move up to championship fleet (Red, White, Blue). It is generally believed that you should only spend one year in green fleet. More typically, children will have one season in which they do one or two green fleet regattas just for experience, and then a second season where they sail several regattas. After that, it's usually time to move up. Championship fleet is divided into White, Blue and Red fleets, depending on age. Sailors are scored in their own fleet as well as overall. All fleets start at the same time.

The “coached” 2016 Green Regattas we will be attending as a SHYC green-team are:

- **Saturday, July 16th (8am-12): SHYC Saturday Morning Green Fleet Practice Race (SHYC, Guilford)**
- **Friday, July 22nd : Sachus Head Regatta (SHYC, Guilford)**
- **Sunday, July 24th : Pine Orchard Regatta (Branford, CT)**
- **Friday, July 29th : Mason's Island Fun Regatta (Mystic CT)**
- **Friday, August 12th : Madison Beach Club Regatta (Madison, CT)**

Opti Green Fleet Checklist

Items to put in your SHYC Racing Gear Bag:

- lifejacket
- sunscreen
- ice cold water bottle
- extra snack
- complete change of clothes
- fleece/sweatshirt
- towel
- close-toed shoes
- lunch and snack in a lunchbox with a cold pack
- spray top or light raincoat (this is important to block spray from waves getting the sailor wet)
- hat or visor
- sailing gloves
- whistle on lifejacket
- watch
- SHYC race team “pinnie”
- SHYC Race team shirt
- \$10-20

Items to pack related to the BOAT

- Optimist (make sure all lines, airbags, and tie downs are secure for the ride)
- Sailbag: with mast, sail, boom, and sprit-pole
- Rudder
- Dagger board
- Bailer
- Praddle
- Dolly