

Sailing a Gates course

The Gates course is ready to go.

Patrol boats are ready and waiting.

The children having just finished doing Painter Sailing, and will need a quick Gates demo first, so they know what is expected.

Use instructor, or a child you know who will do this correctly first time.

You need to cover the whole process; all the children need to watch and listen.



Instructor holds opti on the beam reach, beside the starter buoy, wind on their back.

Sailor hops in, centreboard in, rudder down, correct sitting position, holding mainsheet correctly, with the patrol boat close and ready.



Instructor reminds child what is expected of them, gives a little push. Patrol boat stays right beside opti.



Opti sails towards buoys, somewhere between them goes about.



Opti sails straight back to the waiting instructor.
Patrol boat staying close all the time.



When close, sailor drops the mainsheet, and slows down for instructor to catch and stop.



Sailor hops out feet on ground.
Done. Easy. Little clap.

Ready now for everyone to have a go.

The importance of the close presence of the patrol boat, quietly encouraging on a 1;1 ratio, making sure they have a short, **successful**, first sail on their own, so they can complete the course and safely hop out. Putting their feet on the ground, could make or break their sailing career.

Hoping they can go home tonight and say “ I sailed all by myself today and it was soo much fun”



Once the children have all had a go or 2, and are feeling more confident, and don't need 1;1 ratio, you could get another opti in the water ready to go, so when the instructor pushes off the child, and whilst that child is sailing you have time to get another child in the other opti and push it off, before the first opti arrives back. This saves time with the patrol boat hovering, waiting for the children to swap over. More than 1 instructor can be in the water doing push offs and catching, with another patrol boat to cover each instructor.

If you have time in this session and children keen to go further. You can add another buoy past the gates. In this case use a yellow buoy (with no flag) so the children can easily see it. Allowing children to go between the gates and as far as they like to but not past, or round the buoy, and if they want to keep sailing, they can go about again just before they get back to instructor.

Buoy rounding and gybing can be for another session