

COMMUNITY LEARN TO SAIL

Southern Idaho Sailing Outreach Newsletter | Spring 2026



Ready for Sailing Season

Temperatures gradually rising and flowers beginning to bloom are signs that spring is underway and summer will soon be here. School will be out. Kids will be sailing joyfully across the lake and the winter that never came will be a season in the past.

The changing of seasons signals the time for Southern Idaho Sailing Outreach (SISO) and the City of Boise to get ready for another summer of youth sailing and that is exactly what we have been doing. SISO and Boise Parks and Recreation are preparing for 80 young sailors to set sail, learn, explore, challenge themselves, connect with nature, and have fun with their peers.

The city has been busy finalizing the Summer Activity Guide, hiring new sailing instructors and new instructor assistants for this season. SISO is busy working on finalizing the schedule and will soon be getting the Sailing Center ready for camps.

We are excited to announce the schedule, which includes four basic sailing camps, an all-girls basic sailing camp, two intermediate sailing camps, and one racing camp.

Youth Sailing Classes begin June 1, 2026. All classes will take place at our Sailing Center at Spring Shores Marina in Lucky Peak State Park. Registration through Boise City Parks and Recreation opened the week of March 30, 2026. Classes are available on a first-come, first-served basis and fill up quickly. **As of the middle of April, we had a waitlist for eight of the ten camps.**

Help us get the word out to anyone you know that would like to give their kid(s) an opportunity of a lifetime. There are still a couple spots available. Visit [Learn To Sail | Southern Idaho Sailing Outreach](#) for details on youth sailing camps and registration.

Other news, SISO will be hosting US Sailing's three day in-person review for sailors working towards receiving their US Sailing Level 1 Small Boat Certification. This is a big opportunity for folks to stay local to complete their certification.



Crossing tacks in the afternoon breeze



Happy sailing camp graduates

2026 Camp Schedule

June 1-5: Intermediate Sailing Camp

July 6-10: Basic Sailing Camp

June 8-12: Girls Basic Sailing Camp

July 13-17: Intermediate Sailing Camp

June 15-18: Basic Sailing Camp

July 20-24: Basic Sail Camp

June 22-26: Racing Sailing Camp

July 27-31: Basic Sailing Camp



Focusing on new sailing skills

Welcome Aboard 2026 Sailing Instructor Assistants

SISO is pleased to announce that the 2026 Youth Sailing Camps will have four talented Sailing Instructor Assistants including Oliver Smith, Lila Hofeditz, Rylee Saba, and Liam Wardwell. All have participated in the sailing camps as youth sailors and some of the camps more than once. Oliver and Rylee also worked as sailing instructor assistants last summer. Their responsibilities will include assisting instructors and volunteers in ensuring safety, helping youth sailors rig boats, monitoring participants' well-being, sharing sailing knowledge with peers, aiding in the daily setup, teardown, and equipment maintenance.

The position of Sailing Instructor Assistant provides great opportunities for youth sailing graduates to work on leadership skills, boating skills, communication skills and provides a summer of employment in the great outdoors. **This position also provides excellent experience and knowledge for young sailors to become US Sailing Small Boat Certified Instructors.**



Oliver Smith



Lila Hofeditz



Rylee Saba



Liam Wardwell

Southern Idaho Sailing Association (SISA) Plans for Two Regattas for Small Boat Sailors

Based upon the overwhelming success of the Dinghy Thingy Regattas held at Luck Peak Reservoir, SISA has scheduled two Dinghy Thingy Regattas this year. Graduates of Boise Parks and Recreation Intermediate or Racing Sailing Camps and members of Southern Idaho Sailing Association (SISA) are welcome to compete in the regattas at Lucky Peak Reservoir. SISA will run the regattas. SISO will provide the race committee boat and the fleet of RS Zests and Lasers for sailors to participate.

Providing additional sailing opportunities for children beyond summer camps can benefit young sailors. This regatta aims to offer continued learning, increased time on the water, the chance to meet other sailors, interact with experienced lifelong sailors, and enjoy a meal after the final race. Mark your calendar for June 13 and June 27, 2026 at Spring Shores Marina for a morning event. Stay tuned for more details coming soon.

For more information about SISA and the 2026 regatta schedule visit idahosailing.org.



DINGHY THINGY REGATTA

June 13 and June 27, 2026

Sailboats 15' and Under | Spring Shores Marina, Lucky Peak ID



The Sailing Brain

By Lila Hofeditz - Sailing Instructor Assistant

Sailing is a sport that reveals how impressive the human brain is. No two days on the water are the same, meaning the mind is always working and always adapting. **Many people are aware of the benefits of sailing, such as improving mood and reducing stress, as well as promoting relaxation (US Sailing, 2024). These benefits are no doubt good for the brain.** However, what many are unaware of is how big a role the brain plays in even making sailing possible, and how the benefits of sailing go even beyond mental health improvements.

The Body on a Boat

Sailing relies on not only visual input from your eyes, but proprioception, or how the body perceives its orientation and position. According to the Cleveland Clinic, proprioception involves several body systems working together, including the brain, the inner ear, pressure-sensing cells in the skin, muscles, and joints. On a boat, all of them are working at once, constantly sending information to the brain about where the body is and how it is moving.

The brain applies proprioception and other functions to generate movement, and this process is called kinesthesia. Proprioception and kinesthesia together allow an experienced sailor to feel the tiller go heavy, or sense a gust building, before ever glancing at the sails. Because a boat responds to the smallest of movements, being aware of body positioning and boat trim is fundamental to sailing well.

Learning to Sail

When first learning to sail, these skills are surface-level, and it is common to need to actively think through each sail control. This can cause mental fatigue and stress. **As people become better sailors, though, they can handle these demands with much more ease. According to the Cleveland Clinic, "it takes conscious effort to practice and fine-tune these skills," noting that there are three phases involved in turning a skill into something automatic, a process commonly known as muscle memory.**

The first is the cognitive phase, where every movement requires deliberate work. A new sailor is consciously working through each step, processing which line to pull, when to tack, and how to respond to a shift in the wind, all at once. Another part of the brain, called the prefrontal cortex, is managing all of it, while the hippocampus works to store new memories by building entirely new pathways from scratch. It is the most mentally demanding phase for exactly that reason.

After the initial learning curve, sailors step into the second phase, called the associative phase. They can begin to recognize patterns and build confidence, learning what a wind shift feels like and how to correct mistakes before they compound. The brain begins insulating frequently used pathways in a fatty sheath that allows signals to travel faster. The prefrontal cortex is able to take a load off, so this is where the stress and fatigue of the first phase begin to resolve. **Responses get quicker, and errors get smaller.**

Finally, sailors go into the third step, called the autonomous phase. Movements that once required full concentration become automatic, and once again, different areas of the brain get involved. The cerebellum fine-tunes balance in real time, while the basal ganglia stores sequences of action as a motor program, so a sailor can execute a tack or a gybe without thinking through each step. The prefrontal cortex is largely off the hook. **The sailor simply sails!**

Anticipation and Decision-Making

What the autonomous phase ultimately does is free up mental space for more sophisticated skills and strategy. **According to a study published in the National Library of Medicine, sailors develop a uniquely heightened awareness of the environment and the ability to anticipate what is coming before it fully appears. This is an incredibly interesting, yet not often talked about, benefit of sailing. Experienced sailors have better problem solving skills, motor control, and adaptability. The sailing brain is always learning, which is a skill needed for people's entire lives.**



Enjoying a relaxed, stress free sail across the lake.



Brain at work focusing on wind direction, sail trim and sailing a steady course.



Gybing around the mark for this advanced sailor has become a simple sailing skill.



A good example of anticipation and decision-making for these two sailors.

Now is the Time for You to be Part of the Team



Don't let another year go by. Now is the time to join the SISO team, which is comprised of 10 US Sailing Certified Instructors and our partner, City of Boise Parks and Recreation. We teach kids the fun and rewarding experience of sailing.

Teaching the skills of sailing to Treasure Valley youth is an opportunity for you to share your passion for sailing with kids. **Teaching kids how to sail a small boat provides a lifetime of skills and adventure that we as a sailor have come to cherish.**

What is required from you?

Check out the US Sailing Level 1 course at: [Level 1 Instructor - US Sailing - Education](#) for specifics, including prerequisites and fee information. You will notice the Level 1 course is divided into two sections. The first is an online section and the second is an in-person evaluation.

Expectations

Never taught before? No worries. If you have some basic sailing skills under your belt, US Sailing will provide you with a basic understanding and methodology on how to teach the sport of sailing.

Good News - SISO Scholarship Are Available to You

SISO is proud to announce you are eligible to receive a scholarship. The scholarship will cover your US Sailing Level 1 Instructor registration fee, course materials, and a one-year membership to US Sailing as a reimbursable expense payable to you upon successful completion of the course. Certification travel expenses are not covered. In addition to successfully completing the course, SISO requires a commitment from you to teach a minimum of one youth sailing camp for two consecutive years. Each camp is one week long, Monday - Friday, 7:30 AM - 3:30 PM. After you have successfully completed your course, you will be eligible to be hired by the City of Boise. Once hired, you will be given your choice of camp(s) to participate in. Each camp has two instructors allowing you to be teamed up with a well-seasoned instructor colleague.

Time Frame

Other good news. No need to travel out of state for the three day in-person review. US Sailing is coming to Spring Shores Marina for you to complete your three day in-person review on June 29 – July 1. Your only requirement is to complete the online portion of the course prior to June 29. But don't procrastinate! There are only 10 spots available for the in-person review which is now available for sign up on the US Sailing website.

Once you receive your US Sailing Level 1 Small Boat Certification you will be eligible to be hired by the City of Boise. You will need to have your certification by February 2027 to be eligible to teach next summer. **In the meantime, feel free to volunteer this year. If you haven't seen youth sailing in action, volunteering provides a great opportunity to get hands on experience of what it's like seeing kids learning something new, out from under their devices, and having blast on sailboats in a beautiful setting.**



Identifying wind direction



On water coaching



Attaching the jib halyard

For information on becoming an instructor or a volunteer email us at: info@sailingoutreach.org



What's in a Name? - The SISO Fleet

Eleven of our 19 sailboats are sponsored. Looking over the dock often makes folks smile and wonder about their names – it's a diverse group (with fun graphics).

Historically, battleships were named after states, cruisers for cities, destroyers for naval heroes while submarines were fish. SISO however, hasn't followed traditional convention. Our coach and sailboats honor:

- People - **Doris D, Diane, Kate, Rabbit, Sue Biscuit III** and **Jack** (a first grandchild)
- Businesses – **Idaho Central Credit Union, The Pet Groomers** and **Lombard Conrad Architects**
- A favorite companion and related organizations – **Southern Idaho Sailing Association** and **CAF** (Challenged Athletes Foundation)

Perhaps our most interesting boat name to date is the **Bluenose**. She was a 1921 Nova Scotian 120' gaff rigged schooner. Reportedly, a very fast racing and fishing ship. Our donor's grandfather excelled in building model ships. A model of the **Bluenose**, hand-built by his grandfather in the mid 1900's is displayed proudly in his home.

We are extremely grateful of our boat name donors as their vision and generous gifts have helped make SISO possible. A huge thanks to Bob Moore at Golden West Signs for donating our boat name graphics and for their continued support.

Eight sailboat sponsorships are still available at \$10,000. A benefit is that once named, it's your remembrance forever (or at least until the little boats sink). Corporate Sponsorship of our two Boston Whaler coach boats (a lot more space for your company logo) are \$20,000 a piece (and.... they are unsinkable).

Please consider a SISO tax-deductible donation this season.

P.S. The dock picture below features early morning Boise Parks and Recreation sailing staff on dock cleaning patrol. Our low-profile docks make excellent overnight roosting accommodations for the resident geese. This is an every day occurrence. Donations enabled us to purchase a pump, cart and firehose to wash the low docks. Our prior buckets and brooms were brutal. Thank you for making the morning chores so much more enjoyable.



Basic Learn to Sail Exam Day

On last day of sailing camp, youth sailors take a sailing exam. The following are the Basic Learn to Sail Camp exam questions. Check your basic sailing knowledge by taking the exam to see how well you do.

Keep in mind, becoming a City of Boise Sailing Camp Volunteer is a great way to expand your sailing knowledge.



Basic Learn to Sail Camp Graduates are now ready for intermediate sailing.

1. What is the right and left side of the boat called when facing forward?
2. What sail controls pull the boom down and keeps it from lifting?
3. Lines for adjusting the mainsail position are called the?
4. Tie a bowline and state what this knot is good for.
5. What part of the boat is the beam?
6. Name the three corners of the sail.
7. Name the edge of the sail adjacent to the boom.
8. Name the edge of the sail adjacent to the mast.
9. What is the back edge of the sail called?
10. True or False: A port boat has right-of-way over a starboard boat.
11. Name the 5 points of sail.
12. What is the first thing you should do before you tack?
13. Describe a controlled gybe.
14. The side of the boat furthest from the wind is called?
15. The side of the boat closest to the wind is called?
16. What is the line called that controls the foot of the sail?
17. Describe how you put your boat into the safety position.
18. What is the slot?
19. True or False: In most cases a power boat has the right-of-way.
20. If a boat is pointed into the wind and not moving it is in the?
21. What is the difference between a tack and gybe?
22. What is the line called to raise (hoist) the jib?
23. The fin at the stern of the boat used for steering is called?
24. Tie a cleat hitch and identify two uses for this knot.
25. How can you tell a gust is on the water?
26. How do you de-power the boat when you come to dock?
27. What is the difference between the safety position and the no-go?
28. What happens to the boat when sailing up wind with the centerboard up?
29. What is the line called that trims the jib?
30. If your boat capsizes list three things you should do.

Nautical Knowledge

A sailboat can sail upwind by using its sails as aerodynamic foils, much like an airplane wing. When wind flows over the curved shape of a properly trimmed sail, it creates a pressure difference: lower pressure on the leeward side and higher pressure on the windward side. This generates lift perpendicular to the wind direction, similar to how an airplane wing generates lift. Instead of the wind pushing the boat backwards, this lift pulls the boat forward at an angle.

The keel or centerboard acts as an underwater foil, resisting sideways motion and converting that lift into forward progress. Sailboats cannot sail directly into the wind; instead they "tack" in a zigzag pattern at about a 45-degree angle into the wind. Modern sails have amazing power, and are truly a work of art and science!



Sailing Opportunities for All Kids



Everyone should have a chance to learn to sail. The City of Boise offers scholarship programs to support this goal. For more information about scholarship opportunities, call City of Boise Parks and Recreation at (208) 608-7680, or visit their scholarship page at: cityofboise.org/departments/parks-and-recreation/scholarships



Help Make Youth Sailing Possible

Through your generous donations, SISO is growing one step at a time. Our future is bright and youth sailing in the Treasure Valley is ALIVE!

Be part of our success!

SISO is a nonprofit organization that promotes a healthy, active lifestyle through youth sailing education.

Thank you for considering becoming a program advocate today by making a tax-deductible donation.

- ❑ **Online:** sailingoutreach.org

by credit card or PayPal

- ❑ **By check:** Payable to:

Southern Idaho Sailing Outreach Corporation

2117 N 14th Street Boise, Idaho 83702



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Effort

Noun

Meaning: Use of physical or mental energy; hard work

Example: It takes effort to right a capsized sailboat.

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