

*A guide to*  
***Optimist***  
*sailing in*  
***South Africa***



***It all starts here! A Guide for New Optimist Parents***  
***February 2022***

*Welcome to the best junior sailing class in the world.  
This publication is intended to provide a guide to the  
Optimist class in South Africa for parents who have had  
little previous contact with the class.*

*For further information visit:*

**[www.optimist.org.za](http://www.optimist.org.za)**

*for the class constitution, rules, history, etc  
and*

**[www.facebook.com/optimistsailingsa](https://www.facebook.com/optimistsailingsa)**

*for all the latest local and international Optimist news  
and*

**[www.revolutionise.com.au/optimistca/registration/](http://www.revolutionise.com.au/optimistca/registration/)  
for class membership and registration**

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Photographs by: Karen Slater, Craig Leslie, Axel Adelbert

## THE OPTIMIST

The International Optimist dinghy is simply the best dinghy for kids to learn to sail and to learn to race tactically. The class is sailed in over a 110 countries, with over 150 000 sailors and is the only dinghy approved by World Sailing exclusively for sailors under the age of 16 years of age.

The Optimist is very stable, light weight and easily maneuvered, which allows younger sailors to learn about tactics and how to handle the sail without having to overcome physically demanding boat-handling requirements. Optimists provide young sailors with the many competitive racing opportunities at the local, national and international levels.

Although many clubs have Optimists for hire or as training boats, it is preferable that your child acquires their own boat. This will encourage them to take responsibility for their equipment, and each sailor will develop his or her own preferences in how they like their boat set up. Although the Optimist is a one-design it is quite configurable.

A selection of second-hand boats can be found on your local club's notice board, the Facebook page or on Gumtree.





## TRAINING

The aim of Optimist training is to introduce children to sailing in a safe and fun environment. Most of the local clubs run courses during the sailing season - visit their websites for details.

First level of training introduces children to the basic theory such as: parts of the boat, rigging, safety, rules and capsizing drill. Then onto the water where they can put the theory into practice and get a feel for the boat.

The next level of training will introduce the novice to handling the boat in a variety of weather and water conditions. Progressing to the next level, the novice will begin to learn about racing and advanced boat handling. At this stage they will be able to participate in regattas as a "B fletcher".

## SAIL NUMBERS AND MEASUREMENT CERTIFICATES

The Optimist is a one-design dinghy, which is governed by a set of international class rules to ensure that every boat around the world remains identical. The class rules can be found on the class website.

Each boat has a unique plaque number allocated to it by the builder. When the boats are manufactured, they are issued with a measurement registration booklet that records all the hull measurements and the unique plaque number. This booklet must always accompany the boat when transferred to a new owner.

Every boat must be registered with South African Sailing who allocates a sail number linked to the boat's unique plaque number. South African Sailing will issue a measurement certificate with the sail number and the owner's details. On change of ownership a new measurement certificate will be issued. This can be done through the local SAS office.

In line with the class rules an Optimist sail must also carry a royalty label or button and be measured by an Optimist class measurer. The measurer will issue certificate and stamp the sail. Contact the class for the measurer's details.





## ORGANISATIONS

### IODA

The International Optimist Dinghy Association (IODA) is an international body in charge of regulation and development of Optimist sailing in each country. The objectives of the association are:

- to see that the class rules are observed
- to coordinate youth sailing between member countries
- to establish conditions for IODA World and Continental Championships and choose the venues

Website: **[www.optiworld.org](http://www.optiworld.org)**

### SAS

South African Sailing (SAS) administers sailing in South Africa. Every sailor who becomes a member of a yacht club pays a fee to the club to become affiliated to the federation. SAS in turn is affiliated to **World Sailing**, the world governing body for the sport of sailing.

Each sailor must register with South African Sailing on their website and will be allocated a membership number for life. This membership is activated when the sailor's fees are paid over annually by the club they are a member of.

Website: **[www.sailing.org.za](http://www.sailing.org.za)**

### OPTIMIST SAILING SA

Optimist Sailing South Africa administers Optimist sailing in South Africa. The Optimist sailor is required to be a member of the association to be eligible to race in SAS sanctioned events, be it a Grand Slam, Provincial or National Regatta. The membership form is available from the class secretary and the fees are due annually.

A sailor may only sail an Optimist until the end of the year they turn 15 years of age. Optimist Sailing South Africa is affiliated to the International Optimist Dinghy Association (IODA). Sailors may only race their boat if they are paid up members of their club, SAS and the Optimist class association.

Website: **[www.optimist.org.za](http://www.optimist.org.za)**



## CLASS STRUCTURE

Each region has a class representative on the Optimist executive committee. The class executive committee is headed up by the President of the class who is assisted by the class manager. Other members of the committee are made up of the treasurer and class secretary. These members are elected at the Annual General Meeting where the affairs of the class are reported on. This meeting is usually scheduled at the class National Championships. The minutes of this meeting are published on the website.

### Optimist Class Committee 2021    Regional Representatives 2021

#### PRESIDENT

David Booth  
sailopti@telkomsa.net  
082 460 6251

#### CHAIRMAN

Michael Kavanagh  
yachtrayoflight@gmail.com  
083 626 7597

#### TREASURER

Michael Kavanagh  
yachtrayoflight@gmail.com  
083 626 7597

#### SECRETARY

Kendal M del  
noordhoekchiropractor@gmail.com  
064 901 6100

#### WESTERN CAPE

Alistair Keytel  
keytel@outlook.com  
084 012 9177

#### EASTERN CAPE

Vacant

#### KWAZULU NATAL

Cornell Pretorius  
comell254@gmail.com  
079 528 1771

#### NORTHERN REGION

Pieter Rautenbach  
elshadaigh@gmail.com  
082 416 1335





## OPTIMIST RACING

The Optimist is raced at all levels in the country from local club regattas through to the Optimist World Championships and the African Continental Championships which teams are selected for.

### Club racing

There is list of clubs in each region on the SAS website. These clubs all have weekend club racing in conjunction with learn to sail programs.

### Regional racing and Regional Championships

Each region has regatta calendar that correlates all the club events during the season. This calendar is available from the Regional SAS office and your local club. The region will also arrange a Regional Championships which all the region's sailors are encouraged to attend.

Optimist sailors attend Regional Championships in other regions to complete their selection qualifier.

### National Championships

The Optimist class holds its National Championships annually in conjunction with the SAS Youth National Championships. This event is rotated to all the regions. During this event the Optimist class also holds an Inter-Regional Team race event which is strongly challenged for.

The National Championships are usually at the end of the year, held at a venue where all the youth classes can participate in one event.

### Regatta format (Optimists):

#### A Fleet

Categories:

- Red fleet (13,14,15yrs)
- Blue fleet (11 & 12 yrs)
- Yellow fleet (10 yrs)

A child needs to be turning 10yrs in the year of the National Championships to sail in the A fleet.

#### B Fleet

Novice fleet:

All ages that are participating in a National Championships for the first time. (Sailors may compete in the A fleet if they feel they are capable)



## Trophies awarded at the Optimist National Championships

SA Optimist National Championships Trophy	Overall Winner
ECYRA Trophy	Winner Race 1
Natal Trophy	Winner Race 2
Western Province Trophy	Winner Race 3
Lowveld National Trophy	Winner Race 4
President's Trophy	Winner Race 5
The Dabchick Trophy	Winner Race 6
SAYRA Knysna Trophy	Winner Race 7
Langhout Trophy	Winner Race 8
Robson Brothers Trophy	Winner Race 9
Tanner Trophy	Winner Race 10
Margeret van Reenen Trophy	Winner Race 11
Jones Cup	Winner Race 12
Reuvers Trophy	Winner Race 13
Swales Midmar Trophy	Winner Race 14
Len Heard Trophy	Winner Race 15
Optimist Nationals 1st U-12	11 Yrs and Under at the start of the event
Dave Bruce Trophy	Highest Placed Girl
Hans Thijssse Trophy	Winner of the Yellow Fleet (10yrs and under)
John Eloff Trophy	Winner of the Blue Fleet (11 & 12yrs)
Booth Memorial Trophy	Winner of the Red Fleet (13,14,15yrs)
Southern Transvaal Trophy	Winner of the B Fleet
RJ Norris Trophy	Highest Placed First Timer in Nationals A Fleet
Inter Provincial trophy (shield)	Lowest points of first 3 boats per region
Hulett Aluminium Trophy	Winner Inter Region Team Racing
Glynnis Baer President's Award	Sailor with the best International result (President & Manager's nomination)

## CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN OPTIMIST TEAM

### Objectives

Continued participation in international events assists in keeping Optimist Sailing South Africa and its members/skippers abreast of developments in the class, gives input on where South Africa stands in the Optimist world and serves as a motivational goal to skippers.

Recently the class took a decision that it was desirable to compete with our top sailors at the African Optimist Continental Championship, with the objective of winning the regatta and to provide substance to our application for funding from SASCOC (South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee). With this in mind the option of attending the African Optimist Continental Championship is to be offered firstly to the top five qualifying sailors.

Optimist Sailing South Africa will send a team to both the IODA World and African Championships each year.

### Selection Process of the National Optimist Squad

To be eligible for selection the sailor must attend two regional provincial championships and the South African National Championships of that year. The sailor must have entered and have been scored finishing in the qualifying events.

Sailors in the South African Optimist Worlds and African teams competing internationally at their selected events will be granted exemption for missing their regions provincial championships. They will be scored average points for those provincials.

A national ranking ladder will be scored with the 2 provincials.

A 'national squad' will be selected from the sailors who finish in the top 30 places at the South African Sailing Youth National Regatta, provided that they have completed the requirements of sailing two provincial championships in the same year. Or they have an exemption which has been afforded to the skipper for reasons that are covered in the Broken Leg Policy, and that it has been formally applied for and granted by the Optimist Sailing Executive by majority vote.



## OPTIMIST SELECTION REGATTA

The selection regatta should be held at an offshore location as far as possible. This is to mirror the fact that most African and World Championships are held on 'open water'.

The venue of the selection regatta event will be determined by the timing of the Optimist World Championships for the coming year. For practical, timing and economic reasons the following shall apply:

- Should the World Championships be held in the European summer season, the selection regatta event will be held in conjunction with the WC Provincial Championships in April of that year.
- Should the World Championships be held in the European winter season, the selection regatta event will be held in conjunction with the KZN Provincial Championships in June/July of that year.

If for some reason the WC/KZN Provincials are to be held at an inland venue or at a time which does not comply with the above clause, the Executive and by majority vote will determine where and when the selection regatta event will be held.

Sailors will qualify in accordance with the final results of the regional provincial regatta after day 3 of the regatta, provided that at least 5 races have been sailed. Otherwise the results on the final day of the provincial regatta will be taken to select the team (at the end of day three it would be desirable to have a separate prize giving event to honor the sailors).

Qualifying sailors will be selected in accordance with the gender qualifying requirements of the Optimist African Championship.

- 1.1 Gender Quota: Members entering teams of 6 or more competitors shall register a minimum number of competitors of the opposite gender, as follows:

Total number of competitors	Minimum of the opposite gender
5 or less	No restrictions
6	1
7 to 9	2
10	3
<b>Host Member Only</b>	<b>The above ratio repeated as follows</b>
10 to 15	3
16	4
17 to 19	5
20	6



A separate NOR (Notice of Race) will be published and included into the provincial regatta as an appendix. The regional Reps in whose jurisdiction the selection regatta will be held must engage with their SAS counterparts and request the course to be used to be the 'Optimist trapezoid' course as is used in IODA Championships. They must stress that it is an Optimist Selection Regatta. The RRS low point scoring system will be used to score all the events included in the selection process.

### **South African Optimist Worlds and Africans Team Selection**

The South African Optimist Team will be selected from 50% of the South African National Championships results and 50% of the Optimist Selection Regatta results.

The World Championships team will be the first 5 sailors. Should a Worlds skipper decline their right to attend the Worlds or African Championships, the next sailor in line will be allowed to enter provided that the gender equation of the African Championships as determined by IODA is met.

The Africans team shall be the first 10 sailors, which include the Worlds team plus an additional 5 sailors. Should the regatta allow more than ten sailors then the next in line according to rankings will be selected. Should a Africans skipper decline their right to attend the Worlds or African Championships, the next sailor in line will be allowed to enter provided that the gender equation of the African Championships as determined by IODA is met.

The participation in the Optimist World Championships and African Championships is self-funded by the participants. Funding of the South African Optimist team will be reviewed annually at the AGM.

### **Broken Leg Policy**

A sailor may apply for relaxation of the need to attend a second provincial if for a substantiated medical or family matter for which application is made prior or during a provincial qualifying regatta.

In the case of the Optimist Class Nationals there is no broken leg policy, other than a situation where an African or Optimist Worlds Regatta timing clashes with the Class Nationals of that year. In this case the sailors who represent their class would qualify for selections and will score a finish in accordance with their position at the selection regatta of the following year as a national score. The results for nationals would be adjusted accordingly,

Any relaxation of the need to attend Provincial Championships will be given by the Optimist Sailing Executive by majority vote. There will be no appeal considered.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### Yacht clubs offering Optimist training & sailing

#### EASTERN CAPE

Algoa Bay Yacht Club  
(041) 585 4085  
management@abyc.co.za

Redhouse Yacht Club  
(041) 463 1605  
secretary@ryc.co.za

#### KWAZULU NATAL

Henley Midmar Yacht Club \*

083 388 2267  
info@hmyc.org.za

Point Yacht Club  
(031) 301 4787  
sailing@pyc.co.za

Royal Natal Yacht Club  
(031) 301 5425  
club@myc.org.za

Zululand Yacht Club  
(035) 788 0256  
manager@zyc.co.za

#### NORTHERN REGION

Benoni Sailing Club \*

082 371 0304  
peterclayton@mweb.co.za

Boskop Yacht Club  
072 147 9919  
carin@excelprojects.co.za

Lake Deney's Yacht Club \*

(016) 371 1393  
ldyc@telkomsa.net

Pretoria Sailing Club  
(012) 660 2016  
admin@psc.co.za

Victoria Lake Club \*

083 626 7597  
shellee@sailingcentre.co.za

#### WESTERN CAPE

George Lakes Yacht Club \*

082 377 9217  
glyc@glyc.org.za

Hermanus Yacht Club  
(028) 314 1420  
manager@hyc.co.za

Imperial Yacht Club  
082 788 9000  
admin@imperialyachtclub.co.za

Milnerton Aquatic Club \*

(021) 557 7090  
mac@milnertonaquaticclub.co.za

Zeekoevlei Yacht Club \*

(021) 705 3373  
zvyc@iafrica.com

\* SAS accredited training centres

### Sailing apparel, equipment suppliers and sail makers

Beam Reach Sailing  
www.optiparts.co.za

Ullman Sails  
www.ullmansailsrsa.com

North Sails  
www.africa.northsails.com

Seaport Supply  
www.seaport.co.za

Manex Marine  
www.manex.co.za

Central Boating  
www.centralboating.co.za