

UKLA - Youth Sailing Pathway Opportunities

The ILCA is the largest dinghy class for sailors moving out of their first junior boat. ILCA sailors can sail off the beach on holiday or compete at the Olympic Games. The ILCA attracts a range of sailors, many of whom stay sailing the boat all the way through the Master's circuit.

The UKLA is one of the largest and most successful national class associations in the UK, but also within the global community of the ILCA, the boat is found in most dinghy parks around the World. For decades, we have benefitted from many experienced sailors passing on their knowledge and experiences to the next generation. Many may aspire to be the next Ben Ainslie, Shirley Robertson or Paul Goodison and win Olympic Gold. In the UK, we are fortunate to have the experience and knowledge to help a sailor achieve that. However only 1 male and 1 female, every 4 years, can win a Gold Medal in the ILCA, so what about everyone else....? Fortunately for all our sailors, there are many realistic and achievable goals to focus upon, for our broad church of ILCA sailors in the UK.

At the UKLA our primary focus is to introduce and improve the ILCA sailing skills of our Members, so they can sail and have fun in their ILCA's. They may opt to stay sailing at their Clubs, or they may aspire to winning major championships, we try to lay the foundations for these individual pathways. The RYA / British Youth Sailing also endorses a pathway across all areas of the sport of sailing. Their pathway includes the ILCA4, ILCA6 and ILCA7. Please refer to the RYA's *Performance Pathway Handbook*.

[rya-performance-pathway-handbook-a5-feb-2022-single-pages-march22-low-res](#)

The Sports Development Continuum

The UKLA supports the sports development continuum developed over time by Loughborough College and embraced by UK Sport. The aim is to provide links and opportunities for young people to progress with their sporting ability/participation. The sports development continuum is described as a 4-stage hierarchy, with the size of the section representing the numbers of participants:



Foundation stage

The base of the pyramid, with the majority of participants. This stage includes young people who have learnt the basics of sailing and are ready to progress onto basic racing skills. The activities carried out at this stage are primarily with sailing clubs and sailing schools, but with sports development options available from the UKLA. This level provides the acquisition of good skill habits from which a base can be formed for personal development and future participation in the sport. Basic skills are taught which can then be transferred into more specific areas of focus. The UKLA Grand Prix, UKLA Open Training and the UKLA Youth Series are all activities for the foundation stage youth sailors to take part.

Participation stage

This is the stage when sailors decide to participate in ILCA racing activities on a regular basis. Sports development contributes significantly to this level, which is the key focus of the UKLA Youth Sailing. Sailing clubs and UKLA activities become increasingly important at this stage, as they help make the link to the next stage of development. The UKLA Open Training, UKLA Skills Week and the UKLA Youth Series become core activities.

Performance stage

For ILCA sailors interested in developing their racing ability and concentrate on specific sailing skills and demonstrate they have talent. This stage sees sailors transition from elementary performance working toward high performance. Quality coaching is an essential part of a performer's development at this level, this is the stage where UKLA starts the journey, but begins to share with and handover to other coaching groups, including the RYA and British Youth Sailing for sailors with high performance ambitions.

Elementary Performance

- RYA Regional Training Groups (RTG) for ILCA4
- Club Training - usually parent-organised training with experienced ILCA coaches.
Club Open Meetings – a great opportunity to experience different venue conditions.
- UKLA Training - Open training, Skills Week (in collaboration with ASC Performance Academy).
UKLA Racing - Youth Series, Qualifiers, Nationals.
UKLA/ASCPA Event support
- International racing - ILCA Youth World & European Championships

High Performance

- RYA National Youth Squad Training for ILCA6.
BYS Event support
- Clubs - parent-organised high-performance weeks/weekends with experienced ILCA coaches
- UKLA Racing - Youth Series, Qualifiers, Nationals.
UKLA/ASCPA Event support
- International racing - ILCA Youth World & European Championships, Europa Cup circuit.

Some sailors also participate in independent training with organisations such as:

- ASC Performance Academy, Portland UK.
- GP Watercraft, UK.
- SailCoach, Malta.
- European Sailing Academy, Gran Canaria.
- Viana Sailing, Viana do Castelo, POR

Excellence stage

The excellence stage is the peak of the pyramid and demonstrates the level where individuals reach sporting excellence. The pyramid narrows here as the number of performers will reduce at this stage. The RYA are responsible for development at this level as performers pass into the British Youth Team, then when turning 19, the opportunity of the British Sailing Squad and the British Sailing Team. International racing - World Sailing Youth Worlds, World Sailing World Cup Olympic Classes, ILCA World & European Championships

ILCA4 rig

The smallest of the ILCA rigs, previously called “4.7”, this is a key Junior Class (U16) for the RYA British Youth Sailing Pathway. It is seen by many as a “transition” class, with sailors stepping into the ILCA for the first time in the ILCA4, before moving up a rig to the ILCA6. ILCA & EurILCA offer entry to their ILCA4 Youth Championships up to under 18 sailing age and there is huge attendance with over 400 entries regularly seen. In the UK, it is the under 16 age group that is most recognised and supported. However, there is also support for U17 girls in the ILCA4, if they are not yet ready to compete in the ILCA6. The RYA organise Regional Training Groups (RTGs) for the ILCA4. The competitive weight range for the ILCA4 is 50Kg - 65Kg

ILCA4 Pathways

ILCA 4											
Sailing Age	World Champ's		European Champ's		WS Champ's		RYA / BYS Pathway		UKLA Pathway		Clubs
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
12	U16	U16	U16	U16			U16	U16	U16	U16	Open
13	U16	U16	U16	U16			U16	U16	U16	U16	
14	U16	U16	U16	U16			U16	U16	U16	U16	
15	U16	U16	U16	U16			U16	U16	U16	U16	
16	U18	U18	U18	U18				U18	U18	U18	
17	U18	U18	U18	U18					U18	U18	
18								Open	Senior & Masters		
19											
20											
21+											

ILCA6 rig

The most popular of the 3 ILCA rigs and the Women’s Olympic Rig, previously called “Radial”. This is the recognised Youth Class of the RYA / BYS, it is also the recognised Youth Class of World Sailing and is the largest Class at the WS Youth World Championships. This is the RYA’s largest Youth Class and British Youth Sailing organises Youth Squad Training for both Boys and Girls in the ILCA6. The competitive weight range is 60Kg – 78Kg.

ILCA6 Pathways:

ILCA 6											
Sailing Age	ILCA Worlds		EurILCA Europeans		World Sailing		RYA / BYS Pathway		UKLA Pathway		Clubs
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	M & F
14	U17	U17	U17	U17					U17		Open
15	U17	U17	U17	U17			U17	U17	U17	U17	
16	U17	U17	U17	U17	U19	U19	U17	U17	U17	U17	
17	U19	U19 & U21	U19	U19 & U21	U19	U19	U19	U19	U19	U19	
18	U19	U19 & U21	U19	U19 & U21	U19	U19	U19	U19	U19	U19	
19	Senior	U21	Senior	U21				U21/BSS	Senior	U21	
20		U21		U21				U21/BSS		U21	
21+		Senior		Senior				BSS/BST		Senior	

ILCA7 rig

The largest of the 3 ILCA rigs, predominantly sailed by men, previously called “Standard” or “Full”. It is the Men’s Olympic Rig. The UKLA is working closely with the RYA / BYS, looking to encourage ILCA7 support for ILCA sailors from the age 17 upwards. Young sailors big enough to sail the ILCA7 aspire to join the British Sailing Squad. The competitive weight range is 73Kg – 90Kg

ILCA7 Pathways:

ILCA 7											
Sailing Age	ILCA Worlds		EurILCA Europeans		World Sailing		RYA / BYS Pathway		UKLA Pathway		Clubs
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	M & F
14									U17		Open
15									U17		
16									U17		
17	U19		U19				U19		U19		
18	U19		U19				U19		U19		
19	U21		U21				U21/BSS		U21		
20	U21		U21				U21/BSS		U21		
21+	Senior		Senior				BSS/BST		Senior		

The ILCA Pathway

Following the ILCA Pathway is only the recommended route if you aspire to race at the top end of the senior international circuit. As you will have seen from other articles on choosing which ILCA rig is best for you, this Pathway is not for everyone, there are often sailors taking a different route. If, however you are wanting to be the next Ben Ainslie or Shirley Robertson, a pathway close to this is recommended:

Sailing Age	ILCA Pathway					
	Male			Female		
12	U16			U16		
13	U16			U16		
14	U16			U16		
15	U16	U17		U16	U17	
16		U17		U18	U17	
17		U19	U19		U19	
18		U19	U19		U19	
19			U21		U21	
20			U21		U21	
21+			Senior		Senior	
	ILCA4	ILCA6	ILCA7	ILCA4	ILCA6	ILCA7

UKLA Racing for Youth sailors

Club Open Meetings – the largest Class in the UK is blessed with multiple Club Open Meetings throughout the year. The host Club is the Organising Authority. See the Events Page of our website.

UKLA Grand Prix - A long-running successful formula is where Clubs host a day of racing. The focus is to keep it regional and there are many regions organising their own Grand Prix circuit.

UKLA Super Grand Prix – Similar to the Grand Prix, but these are aimed at attracting larger fleets at inspiring venues for a fun weekend of ILCA training on day 1 and racing on day 2.

UKLA Youth Series – The Youth Series is a collection of individual events spread throughout the year. We aim to encourage all Sailors. The UKLA uses a rolling ranking score from this series to approve sailor's entries for EurILCA and ILCA International Championships.

Inland National Championship – Usually held in the late-Autumn, the last hurrah before the winter freeze... Attendance is normally very high, with a great array of prizes.

UKLA Qualifiers – We host 6 UKLA Qualifiers for all age groups every year, normally 3 in the Spring and 3 in the Autumn. These typically attract large entries, our best sailors are often part of the fleet. These usually form part of the UKLA Youth Series.

UKLA National Championship – The Nationals are one of the biggest events in the sailing calendar, a week of quality, fun racing. Always on the coast and it's usually sunny! There's lots of fun activities ashore in the evenings including mentoring from our top sailors, teach-in sessions, parties, BBQs, etc

Overseas ILCA Regattas – A key attraction of the ILCA Class is the massive number of Open events overseas. The UKLA always has large numbers of sailors attending the ILCA Youth World and EurILCA Youth European Championships. The ILCA4s often attract over 400 entries, the ILCA6's over 300 entries, the ILCA7s, over 200 entries. In addition, there are multiple Europa Cup and National Championship events in most countries throughout Europe.

World Sailing Youth Worlds – WS host the Youth Worlds once a year. 1 ILCA6 Girl (U19) and 1 ILCA6 Boy (U19) from each country is invited to race. GBR selection is managed by the RYA.



UKLA Training for Youth Sailors

Our Training Officer, **Tim Hulse**, has a lot of sailing experience. He came through the Junior and Youth Pathway sailing Toppers and ILCAs before competing at the highest level in the British Sailing Team, with top 10 results at major International competitions. Tim is the Deputy-Head of a school on the South Coast, when not teaching he is a family man and a fantastic sailing coach. He was previously the National Coach for Toppers at Junior level and ILCAs at Youth level. He is currently the UKLA's Training Officer. And one of the most respected ILCA coaches in the UK.

- **UKLA Open Training** is offered on the Events page of our website. This forms the core of the UKLA's offering. This caters for all levels and abilities of sailors who are wanting to learn more about how to race an ILCA.
- The **Andrew Simpson Centre Performance Academy** partners with UKLA with our training. The ASC-PA also offers ILCA Training and regatta support from time to time. We encourage you to support the **Andrew Simpson Foundation**, a charitable organization helping young sailors to go sailing. Andrew "Bart" Simpson was a very successful UKLA sailor before winning Olympic Gold.
- The RYA and **British Youth Sailing** offer ILCA Training starting with ILCA4 **Regional Training Group (RTG)** - sailors are invited to apply for places via the RYA website. They also offer higher level training at a National (Squad) level. Sailors are selected by BYS for this Training and need to apply via the RYA website. The RYA also select the **British Youth Team**, who train to represent GBR at the World Sailing Youth World Championships.

Volunteers also use the connections of the UKLA to put on additional Coaching opportunities. We have set-up UKLA WhatsApp Groups for our Members to aid this communication, including: ILCA4, ILCA6, ILCA7, Youth & Training. Larger Clubs often link up with other clubs through the UKLA to encourage groups of ILCA sailors to train together. Recently there has been some UKLA National Training to supplement the reduced RYA/BYS National Training scheme. UKLA National Training takes place one weekend a month throughout the Winter at WPNSA. It supplements Regional Open Training and provides the opportunity for sailors from all regions to meet together for a block of joint coaching. The relevant entry level is determined by the UKLA Training Officer and will be stated on the UKLA portal in advance of the sessions, alongside specific dates, generally commencing in November. These are not core offerings of the UKLA and like most of our activities, require additional volunteer support to help them succeed.

UKLA Volunteers

The UKLA Youth Sub-Committee draws upon an array of experience, both professional and volunteers. It is chaired by **Ben Nicholls**, UKLA's Vice Chairman, a former ILCA sailor himself, whose daughters have both recently passed through the ILCA Pathway. The forum is co-lead by **Tim Hulse**, UKLA's Training officer, an experienced ILCA campaigner as both sailor and coach. We include members of the UKLA Committee including the UKLA Chairman, UKLA Sailing Secretary, ILCA4 Rep, ILCA6 Rep, ILCA7 Rep, Safeguarding Officer & EDI Rep. The sub-Committee includes some parents of current sailors and also engages with multiple ILCA-experienced coaches, administrators and trade for support and advice.

If you have questions relating to Youth matters, please contact youth@ilca.uk