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BOOKS



Optimist Racing

by Steve Irish & Phil Slater

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A MANUAL FOR SAILORS, PARENTS & COACHES

The Optimist is the most popular junior sailing class worldwide, with thousands of young people actively racing them and hundreds attending the major events in the class. It has been the nursery for most of the top racing sailors in the world including all the Team GBR gold medallists at the last 2 Olympics (Sir Ben Ainslie, Hannah Mills, Saskia Clark and Giles Scott) – the same will be true for most other countries.

Optimist Racing is written for those sailors, parents and coaches who are looking for success in this competitive class. As former Optimist World Champion and gold medallist Hannah Mills writes

in the Foreword: “This book will show you how to sail an Optimist fast. It will teach you about techniques and tuning, boat handling and tactics – it will also give you a lot of guidance on the physical and mental side of being a great Optimist sailor. I would highly recommend it to any Optimist sailor, no matter what level you are at in your sailing career.”

Originally written by Ben Ainslie’s Optimist coach, Phil Slater, this new edition has been completely updated by top international racing coach, Steve Irish, who can be found coaching Optimist and other sailors worldwide.

Packed with over 200 photographs and 50 diagrams, this book is the up-to-date handbook for sailing an Optimist fast. As Sir Ben Ainslie said: “I used the techniques in this book to help me win the Oppie Nationals and compete in four Optimist Worlds. Later I used many of the same techniques to win the Laser Nationals, Europeans, Worlds and Olympics... The techniques in this book can make you a champion.”

The book will be launched by Steve Irish at the UK Optimist Late Summer Championships at Draycote Water Sailing Club on Saturday 31st August. Published by Fernhurst Books as part of their *Sail to Win* series, as a paperback and eBook, *Optimist Racing* will be available to buy from all good bookshops, websites and direct from www.fernhurstbooks.com.



About the authors

Steve Irish is a world-class professional sailing coach. He has worked for the British Sailing Team, Turkish Sailing Federation and Thailand's 49er team amongst others. He is a previous 420 World Champion and twice National Champion in the RS800 class. Since devoting himself to coaching full-time in 2003 he has coached teams to world championship success, including Hannah Mills. He coaches Optimist sailors regularly both in the UK and around the world.

Phil Slater was an RYA Optimist Racing Coach and has been the UK Optimist Team Coach at numerous championships. He was Ben Ainslie's first racing coach, training him to win the UK National Optimist Championships and compete in four Optimist World Championships. As a sailor himself he was Firefly National Champion.

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About Fernhurst Books

Fernhurst Books, founded in 1979, is an independent publisher of watersports books. After a period as Wiley Nautical, Fernhurst Books was re-established in 2013 and continues to publish books that instruct, inform and inspire those with a passion on, in or under the water. Its 140 titles range from how-to guides to coffee-table books and cover sailing, surfing, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, diving and fishing.

About *Sail to Win*

First launched in the 1980s by the original Fernhurst, this ground-breaking series of practical racing guides became tremendously popular amongst racing sailors across the globe. The *Sail to Win* philosophy was to take a fresh look at the complex subject of racing; creating leading books that gave sailors practical and experiential information, tips and advice in a concise and highly illustrated format, written by top sailors, coaches and experts.

Following the reincarnation of Fernhurst Books in 2013, this iconic series was re-launched in 2015 for the new generation of racing sailors, with the very same *Sail to Win* philosophy that has been guiding racers for over 30 years. The *Sail to Win* series supports the Andrew Simpson Sailing Foundation.

Other books in the series are:

[*Helming to Win*](#), by Nick Craig

[*Crewing to Win*](#), by Saskia Clark

[*Coach Yourself to Win*](#), by Jon Emmett

[*Tuning to Win*](#), by Ian Pinnell

[*Wind Strategy*](#), by David Houghton and Fiona Campbell

[*Tactics to Win*](#), by Nick Craig

[*Training to Win*](#), by Jon Emmett

[*Tactics Made Simple*](#), by Jon Emmett