

Telford Sailing Club chooses Miracles for Training Boats

Background:

After being founded in 1975 Telford Sailing Club grew steadily and numbers were boosted by a move to our present water, Priorslee Lake, which is just off junction 4 of the M54, in the mid 1980s. There were regular series of racing with good turnouts of up to 20 boats. We had links with other local Sailing Clubs – Dudley SC, Himley SC and Shropshire SC and held regular interclub races. In fact Telford SC prospered and membership grew to over 100. We became an RYA Training Centre and ran RYA Learn to Sail Courses for several years, which helped to boost membership further.

In recent years, our instructors moved on or became a little long in the tooth for running training courses and we lost our status as an RYA Training Centre. So there was little in the way of “new blood” to keep us going. Activity at the Club and membership declined and we were fast approaching the point where our income was not enough to cover costs. Something had to be done to re-grow the Club.

The Way Forward:

The decision was made to re-start a programme of training and with the help of our RYA Regional Development Officer, Gareth Brookes we have made a good start in 2012. With much promotion of the Club across Telford, a new website

(www.telfordsailingclub.co.uk) and a widely publicised Open Day in May, we have managed to double our membership! We now have a strong junior section to the Club and have completed a Level 1 & 2 Learn to Sail course for Adults, under the leadership of our Senior Instructor, Andy Felthouse, who was “bought in” to lead training. There is now also a successful Sailability Section to the Club.

Gareth also advised us to update our fleet of Club boats. We have two GRP Miracles which are approaching 20 years old, three Toppers and a couple of Oppies. Only having two dual handed Club boats meant we had to rely on being able to borrow members own boats for the training courses. Gareth suggested that we apply for a Sport England Small Grant (max £10K) to fund the purchase of two new boats, so we completed the application in March. The next decision was which boats to buy, should the grant application be successful.

We decided the boat should be no longer than 14ft, (Club rules, because of the small lake), low maintenance, so constructed in GRP/FRP, a dual hander, not too heavy to launch and recover, and relatively simple set up with an aft mainsheet and reasonably stable but still responsive.

We considered second hand GRP GP 14s. None available! New ones very expensive! They are a bit on the heavy side too.

The only Enterprises we could find were wooden boats, too much maintenance for Club boats.

We looked at new Wanderers. The new Wanderers are great but two new boats came in at well over the £10K with trolleys and covers. We felt the Graduate was too small.

We decided that the Miracle met all our requirements. The Sport England Small Grant application was successful and so we ordered two new FRP Miracles from Butler Boats in June. Dave Butler was most helpful in bringing the two boats in at our budget of £10k. This meant having

second hand spars and keeping the spec simple (no Spinnakers) but the boats will be used for Level 1 & 2 courses so no problem there. We may upgrade sometime in the future but they are ideal for now. The boats came with covers and launching trolleys. We have to save up for a road base now!

Our two new boats, 4048 and 4049, arrived on 5th October. We named them “Gold” and “Silver” in honour of the 2012 Olympics. The new boats are admired by all and will now play their part in the re-growth of Telford Sailing.

Phil Morris

