

Children's Games

These games were submitted in response to the recent competition in the RYA Instructor Newsletter.

The games are offered as a resource: it is left to the Instructor to decide how to run the games in different circumstances.

If you have any games which you think may be of interest to others, please submit them to dawn.seymour@rya.org.uk.

On the water games – with wind

Grabs

Collect 100 or so supermarket milk bottle tops (red & green). Alternatively use foam floats or ball pool balls from a toy shop. Chuck them in the water. Port and starboard teams to collect them and deliver them either to the shore or safety boat in charge. Or only have one colour and compete in individual basis.

Most suitable for an enclosed water with an onshore wind.

Variation: Port and starboard rules apply; if a collision occurs, both boats to do a penalty turn and do not pick up the bottle top they are both going to.

Ball collecting

Coloured balls (the sort used in small children's play pits are best) are scattered on the water. The children usually 2 or more up on boats have to either sail or paddle to collect as many as possible. Different colours can be used for balls scattered up wind of play area so can have a higher value. The winner is the boat with most points.

Netball

The ball is passed from boat to boat in teams, passing forwards; ball not to be carried towards the goal they are aiming at. Big ball is essential.

Have a safety boat at either end of a reach to reach course. 15 minutes either way. The boats are the nets.

Pass the ball to team members and score by tipping it into the safety boat. Port and starboard rules apply. The ball should not fall in the water; if it does, it has to be retrieved by the boat it was aimed at, or is fair game for the other team to intercept.

It does not take long for the intelligent to work out that there is a huge advantage in being the starboard team; hence 15 minutes each way.

Pirates of the Caribbean

We set up a race for adult beginners; but there are pirates on the water – the juniors. They are armed with cannon (tennis) balls. If a cannon ball hits an adult boat, it has to do a penalty turn. Adult boats are not allowed to retain the missiles. The juniors do far more boat handling than they can imagine. (Our adults are mostly in Enterprises and the juniors in Toppers).

Obstacle Race

Set a race course: On the beat: Do five tacks
 On the reach: Sail a perfect circle around an intermediate buoy
 On the run: Do five gybes
 On the reach: Come up alongside the safety boat.

etc

This is suitable for adaptation to local conditions with endless variations e.g. we have set 'Lower and hoist the mainsail' on a reach for double handers or 'approach a buoy and stop dead' etc.

Treasure Hunt

We have clues (sometimes cryptic) stuck to the buoys and at various points in the boat park, or they collect the letters of an anagram, or the words of a sailing rule e.g. 'Windward boat gives way' etc. This one requires a lot of setting up but is popular.

Relay

Red and green bottle tops, red in one safety boat, green in the other and the teams have to ferry them one at a time to the other boat. This involves a lot of boat handling as they have to avoid each other and take turns to come up alongside. This can be played across wind or upwind/downwind depending on the skill level; not suitable for too many boats because of congestion at the safety boats.

Skipper

A light wind game. A skipper is chosen randomly from the group. This can be done onshore by passing out (face down) a selection of cards (playing cards) with a joker in the pack, one to each member of the group.

Players should be told to look at their card without letting anyone else see it.

The player who gets the joker is now the 'Skipper', no-one except the skipper knows who it is.

The skipper recruits his crew by winking at them.

Mark off a square sailing area with a cross-wind/triangle course laid out within it.

Oppies: e.g. 12+ persons, 6 x Oppies. Persons doubled up in Oppies, one on the helm and the other as look-out. The skipper sails his/her boat just as the rest, following the set course.

When he/she passes another Oppie, he/she may wink at them, if this happens the receiver has now been recruited as a member of the skipper's crew. All crew members must now stand and continue sailing. As the game progresses, all members of the group will end up standing except for the skipper. Once all members are standing, they must salute their skipper as they should all now know who it is.

Wayfarers: minimum 3 Wayfarers, follow instructions as with Oppies.

Be aware that collisions can cause accidents if the crew are standing up.

Confidence builders

A number of games for improving enhancing confidence and nimbleness. These are good for boats such as Toppers.

1. Walk all the way around the edge of the boat, in front of the mast and also around the back of the boom.
2. Dry capsize boats around the rescue boat, keeping hold of the end of the mainsheet.
3. Climb as high as you can up the mast (unstayed masts only). Boats normally fall over very quickly.
4. Backwards races. A simple way of making this fair is to run a normal start and race to the windward mark, but then each boat needs to touch the windward mark, and then race home backwards through the line again.
5. Sailing a course standing on the edge of the boat or just standing up if the children are less confident.
6. Sail or race around a course running (or crawling) around the front of the mast each time you tack.

The Bomb

A ball or similar is needed. This will explode if not passed into someone else's boat within 10 seconds. If you miss on your throw, you must sail to it, pick it up and pass it on.

Football

A ball or similar is needed. Divide the children into two teams – boat/sail/helmet colour etc.

A point is scored when the ball is thrown into the goal (the rescue boat). You must try to pass the ball to a team mate within 10 seconds.

This is a good game to control the sailing area. The 'goal' can move upwind if the game is drifting downwind.

Fetch!

This can work from a pontoon or rescue boat. You need lots of objects to throw in the water e.g. balls, Frisbees, plastic ducks. The children have to pick up the objects and can score a point by getting them either in a rescue boat or in a bucket on the pontoon. You need to specify that each boat can only carry one object at once.

British Bulldog

You need something easy to identify boats. The best system is to use a plastic bottle tied on a piece of cord to the back of each boat. Each sailor should be able to pull the bottle back into their boat and also throw it back out. One boat starts with the bottle inside the boat, everyone else with it out. This sailor needs to tag other boats. When your boat is tagged you pull the bottle back in and also look to tag others. The game is over when everyone has been caught.

A variation on the above can be to have one boat tagging, making people pull the bottles back in, and the other untagged people going and freeing those who have been tagged. When they have been 'freed' they throw the bottle back out again.

Milk Delivery

You will need plastic milk containers with a little water in them to make them easier to handle, one buoy and any number of boats under sail. The aim is to deliver the 'milk' to the patrol boat and have the fewest containers left when the final whistle goes, or the first to empty their boat of containers.

The boats are issued with an equal number of containers whilst tied up at the jetty. The boats start sailing and the starting whistle goes when they are all roughly equidistant from the patrol boat. The boats then have to sail to the patrol boat, come alongside gently and hand over one 'milk bottle' at a time. If the landing is not gentle then the bottle is declared to be 'cracked' and will be rejected and put back in the sailing boat. Between delivery attempts the boats have to sail round a buoy placed a short distance from the patrol boat.

Whistle game

Use different numbers of whistle blasts to tell the students to do different things e.g. 1 = tack, 2 = gybe, 3 = walk to the front of the boat, 4 = sail backwards.

RYA Seamanship Race

A challenging one. Each lap involves a different skill from the syllabus. Set a small course!

- e.g.
1. Sail around the triangular course
 2. Sail around the triangular course rudderless.
 3. Sail to the windward mark. Return to leeward mark backwards.
 4. Tow another boat around the triangle.
 5. Reef and sail the triangle.
 6. Anchor with your bow on the start line exactly.

RYA Method Race

Set a short race course with two coach boats acting as umpires. Anything done imperfectly incurs a 360° or 720° penalty turn. Inflict penalties savagely and humorously at the slightest opportunity!

Bang-and-back Race

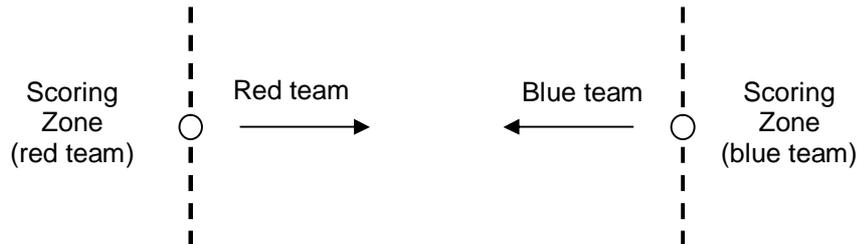
For a fleet of boats of unequal speed. Start all the boats together. When the first boat reaches the final line, blow a hooter to signal that everyone should turn around and reverse the course to the start line.

On the water games – with no wind

Ultimate Frisbee

This is a good paddling game for when there is no wind. If there is wind it is harder to throw the Frisbee and harder to keep the game fair.

Two buoys need to be laid out as a scoring zone:



To score the Frisbee needs to be caught by a boat inside the scoring zone. If it is dropped then no score. One team scores by going in one direction, the other the opposite. When you have the Frisbee you must stop paddling and then look for someone to pass to.

Paddle polo

You will need two teams of an equal number of boats without any rig, and three children in each boat. You will also need two single paddles per boat, two goals (parallel jetties or two pairs of buoys), buoys to define the playing area and one large ball. The aim is to propel the ball into the opponents goal using paddles only.

In each boat two children paddle, one child helms. Only the paddles, hull and rudder can come into contact with the ball. The ball must not be wedged between hull and paddle, but must be shoved, pushed etc towards and into the opponents goal. Reckless or deliberate collisions are considered fouls – the ball goes to the boat that has been rammed.

At the start of play the teams line up on their respective goal lines, the ball is released into the centre of the playing area, and when the whistle goes play can begin. The same procedure is applied every time a goal is scored.

Hare and Hounds

You will need any number of boats without rig, three children in each boat, two single paddles per boat, and for the hare you will need about two metres of rope with a small buoy or plastic container tied to each end. The aim is to become the hare by capturing the buoy which is trailed by the helm of the hare boat who has to give it up when it is tapped with a hound's paddle.

In each boat two children paddle and one child helms. The helm of the hare boat holds on to one buoy and trails the rope with the other buoy at its end. No hands in the water. The hounds have to catch up with the trailing buoy, tap it with a paddle and shout 'I have got you'. This is the signal for the hare helm to release the buoy, for a crew of the successful hound boat to fish the hare out of the water with a paddle and for all the boats other than the new hare to stop paddling. All the children then count to ten to give the new hare boat a chance to escape.

Relay Race

The aim is to win the relay race, clambering from one boat to the other along your team's line of boats. Two lines of boats are tied up alongside each other in two lines, preferably either side of one jetty. The members of each team take it in turns to clamber along the lines of boats, from boat to boat without going onto the jetty.

Hot Potato

You can use any number of boats under sail, or if sails are not to be used then any number of boats with three children in each. You will also need a large number of identical objects like balls, wooden blocks or plastic bottles, plus buoys to define a relatively small playing area.

Either all boats are under sail or each boat has two children paddling and one helming. The boats start off with an identical number of objects in the boat. When the whistle goes the players have to try and place (not throw) one object at a time into any other boat they come close enough to. The receiving boat must not return the same object but may place a different one into the other boat. A ten second count has to be made before boats can attack each other again.

If any object falls into the water the boat that threw or lost it gets two penalty points, equal to two objects in the boat to be delivered by the patrol boat. Nobody other than the patrol boat crew may pick up an object from the water. Rules of the road do not have to be observed but reasonable care should be taken to make this a minimum contact game.

Vertical races

If your lake is deeper enough you can have vertical 360° or 720° races. Great for practicing dry capsizes. Capsize it then pull it up the other side.

Shore Based Games

Rigging races

This is best in small teams.

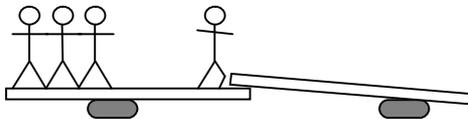
Rigging the boat blindfold

This could be done by one child but with the other looking on. Care must be taken that the child doesn't hurt him or herself on the trolley.

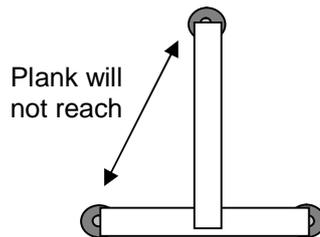
Crossing the swamp

There are two versions of this problem solving game. The children may enjoy drawing a chalk swamp to cross if the surface is suitable. These games require tyres and two planks of wood.

Version 1: The tyres are laid on the swamp just far enough apart that the planks do not reach. The children need to figure out how to balance one on top of the other and use their own weight to counterbalance it.



Version 2: In this version the planks are laid out in a system where the planks also don't reach between them.



Tyre race

Have the children in two teams. Each team has some tyres – the number of children plus one. The children need to move without touching the ground, passing the spare tyre from the back to the front until they get to the finish line. Check the tyres for metal shards before use.

Balancing on a plank

Get the children to work out how to pass each other without stepping off the plank. Get them to arrange themselves in height order, ages etc. Have two teams on the go at once and they have to race each other in these tasks.

Communication game

Get two children back to back. Give them each an identical set of card shapes. One of them makes a pattern out of his shapes. He then describes it and the other tries to copy it following the instructions. He cannot ask questions, only say when he has completed each stage. This works well with all the other children looking on. Each pair afterwards will improve their communication after watching the teams go before.

An alternative to get everyone involved is to get everybody into pairs back to back. One of each pair is given a pre-drawn picture, each one different. They then have to describe it while the other tries to draw it.

Pretzel knots

You will need access to cooking facilities and ingredients. The children learn to tie various knots. Then you have to make the dough or provide dough made before the session. It needs to be rolled into snakes and then tied into the knots, baked in the oven and eaten.

Pretzel recipe:

½ oz yeast
1 lb flour
3 fl oz tepid milk
7 fl oz tepid water
1 oz butter
1 tsp salt
Egg and milk mixture to glaze

Mix the yeast, flour, milk, water, butter and salt in a bowl. Once mixed thoroughly, knead the dough for 5 mins. Set the mixture aside in a covered bowl in a warm place for an hour to rise.

Knead for a further 5 mins.

Spilt the dough into smaller balls and roll these into snakes. Tie these into knots.

Cooking: Dunk each pretzel into a pan of boiling water, then fish out again as it floats. Glaze with the egg and milk mixture. Bake in a preheated oven at 200°C (Gas Mark 6) for 20-25 mins.

The dunking in boiling water can be missed out to save time but the pretzels will be harder.

The Fox, the Chicken and the Corn

This is a problem solving exercise involving getting the children to cross either an imaginary river or perhaps paddle between two pontoons, often working best with two teams trying to solve the problem and then a race to complete the puzzle.

The farmer has a fox, a chicken and some corn. He needs to get them all to the other side. He can't leave the fox and the chicken together because the fox will eat the chicken. He also can't leave the chicken and the corn together because the chicken will eat the corn. He can only carry one at a time.

Faulty Rigging Quiz

You will need boats, each with some rigging mistakes and numbered. The children look at each boat, which the instructor has 'vandalised' while they were not looking and have to note down what is wrong.

This game often works best if you tell the children how many mistakes to expect on each boat. Children can also work in pairs or teams.

Compass Course

This game is very good for teaching the use of a compass in a fun filled way.

You need a clear floor area, (the bigger the better), a large duvet, two compasses and a torch. Have teams of two or three people, one goes on all fours under the duvet with the torch and compass.

Once your "Sailor" is under the duvet, the other teams become stationary obstacles any where on the floor space. (being under the duvet, the "Sailor" does not know where they are). One of the other two team members with a compass shouts out compass directions to the "Sailor" who moves in the shouted direction towards small prizes distributed around the floor, (usually chocolate bars, sweeties etc).

If the Sailor bumps into any of the obstacles, one of the prizes is removed, if he is guided onto a prize, he keeps it for his/her team. The third team member is used to ensure that the Sailor always remains under the duvet and cannot sneak visual reference points. The winning team is the one that collects the most prizes

Port and Starboard Game

A boat shape is drawn out on the ground using either stones if it is on a beach or whatever is to hand if it is on grass. The size needs to be approx 10 m by 5 m. The children gather in the middle. The instructor then calls out either "Port" "Starboard" "Bow" or "Stern". The children must run to the appropriate area. Last one there or those rushing to the wrong area are out. The game can be made more simple or more elaborate depending on the age of the children. Add other calls for variety – "Captain's coming" (stand and salute), "Submarine attack" (lie down) etc.

Match the Card

This is an indoor game. A selection of items are hidden round the clubhouse/sailing centre. Cards with the names of each item are held by the instructor. A card is given to each child who has to find the item named on the card. Suitable items are as follows: shackle, shackle key, cleats (various), whistle, boats parts from model boats, pieces of rope tied in various knots.

Once the item has been found it is returned with the card to the instructor and the child is given another card. The winner is the one who finds most items.

Design and build a model sailing boat

Design

Depending on the ability of the children the instructor can give a challenge to design and race the model down wind or across the wind for between 50 –100m. The instructor can give a short talk about design of boats. Monohulls with ballasted keels versus cats or Tri, and can introduce concept of self-steering wind vane as fitted to many model boats before radio controls invented.

Materials:

Hull	4-6 empty 2lt drinks bottles
Spars & Beams	A number of sticks depending on availability. Flowerpot canes are available in garden centres in bags of 25 for less than £2. Or ask your local archery club if they have any broken arrows (strip flights off for safety).
Rigging & sheets	5m of string. A reel of kite string or, at the boat shows most rope manufactures offer bags of assorted cords for £5, a bag will be enough for hundreds of model boats.
Sails	Ask your local sail maker for off cuts of spinnaker material or plastic bags from cloths shops or dry cleaners can be a colourful alternative.
Rudders	An old estate agents plastic "for sale" board is a good find & can easily be cut to make rudders.
Other useful items	A length of stainless steel wire or galvanised fence wire can be useful for the more advanced designs. Some pieces of metal for keels. Double sided tape. The stuff sail makers use for gluing sails together before sewing. Available from any sail maker or RS components. Electrical tape. Tools Paper & pencils for planning. Scissors Stanley Knife Pliers or cutters for steel wire if provided.

Although the above will take a bit of effort to collect it should not cost the instructor more than a few pounds.

Memory Game

This game can accompany a lecture on safety equipment before going on a brief cruise. It runs along the lines of the old memory game which starts with someone saying 'When I went to the seaside I took a bucket' and the next child repeats the previous lists and adds something of their own.

E.g. 'The safety equipment I carry in my boat includes a first aid kit'...

Beaufort Charades

Teaches familiarity of the Beaufort scale - students tell you what force they are going to act out, they act it out (either what you would do in the boat, or what the water/trees would do) and everyone has to guess, like charades.

Extreme Knot Tying

Clove hitch one end of a rope to a child, and the other end to a post, then ask them to tie a knot e.g. a bowline. As they are attached they have to go everywhere the rope does.

Towline throwing

Can be played in a large room or outdoors. You can see who can make the line reach the furthest, then make the thrower stand on a plank on the floor whilst making the throw and eventually progress to throwing to another member of their team.

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RYA Method Race	David Ritchie
Bang-and-back Race	David Ritchie
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Rigging the boat blindfold	Angela Fraser
Crossing the swamp	Angela Fraser
Tyre race	Angela Fraser
Balancing on a plank	Angela Fraser
Communication game	Angela Fraser
Pretzel knots	Angela Fraser
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