



**SAIL·VOILE
CANADA**

Canada's CANSail Program

**World Sailing
Development
Series**





SAIL·VOILE CANADA

Canada at a Glance

- Second Largest Country in the World
- Longest Coastline in the World—243,000km
- Home to 2 Million Lakes—60% of the world's lakes by surface area.
- Sailing embedded in recreational and cultural life.
- Let's be honest—it's cold in Canada.

We have long winters and hot summers. Our seasons shift fast, and so must our approach to training and competing.





SAIL·VOILE CANADA

About Sail Canada

- Founded in 1931, recognized as the national governing body for the sport of sailing.
- Our mission is to promote excellence in sailing and foster lifelong participation in a safe, inclusive, and environmentally responsible way.
- We oversee sailing disciplines including dinghy, keelboat, offshore, para inclusive sailing, windsurfing, and kiteboarding.
- Lead national training & certification programs, coaching, officiating, and high performance sport.
- Over 350 member clubs and sailing schools across Canada.





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Canada on the World Stage

- Olympic Highlights:
 - Terry McLaughlin–1984 Olympic Silver Medallist, America’s Cup skipper
 - Lawrence Lemieux–Recognized for abandoning a medal-position race to rescue capsized competitors in distress–Seoul 1988
 - Ross MacDonald–5-time Olympian (1992–2008), Silver and Bronze Medalist.
 - Sarah Douglas–Ranked #1 ILCA 6 sailor in 2022. Top 10 in Tokyo and Paris
- A growing list of youth and development sailors earning top 10 finishes globally





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Canada on the World Stage

- Proud of our involvement in SailGP and partnership with WeCANFoil.
- Concord Pacific AC40 Program—allowing Canadians to compete in the Women and Youth America's Cup.
- Active offshore—Offshore Doublehanded Worlds, Caribbean 600, Class 40 and IMOCA 60.
- Peter Wickwire—Storm Match Racing Team placed 8th at the recent Congressional Cup.
- Canadian race officials, umpires, and judges are regularly selected for the Olympic Games, World Sailing Championships, and SailGP events.





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Where it all starts





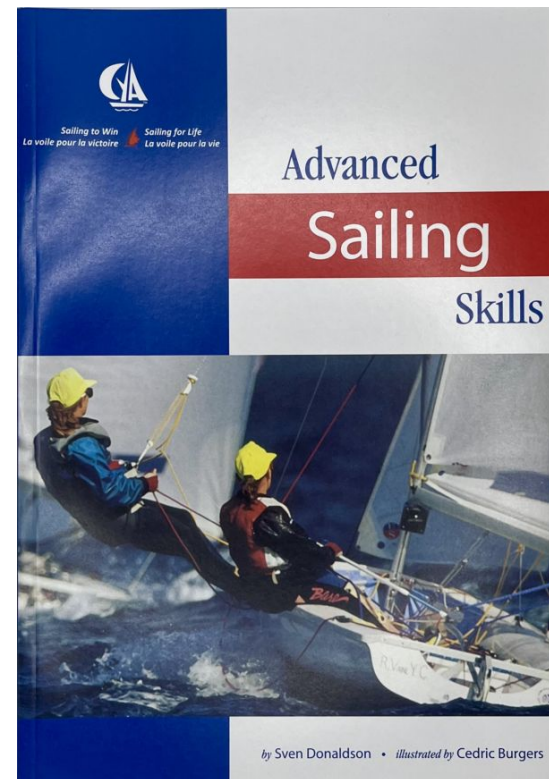
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CYA Learn to Sail (Pre-2012)

- Structured around White Sail, Bronze, Silver, Gold levels (Basic & Advanced Sailing, Basic Racing and Advanced Racing).
- Curriculum was outdated, not skill-progressive, and varied by region.
- Heavy focus on theory vs. active on-water learning.
- Instructor training varied significantly, with inconsistent assessment methods.
- Limited alignment with Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) principles.





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Why National Standards Matter

- Our goal is to provide safe training environment for all Canadians.
- CANSail assists with Risk Management & Compliance by aligning with provincial and federal safety legislation and insurance requirements.
- National standards mean consistent delivery from coast to coast.
- Allows for centralized updates, resource development, and checklists.
- CANSail levels are required prerequisites for entry into Sail Canada instructor training programs.



Skipper's
Plan



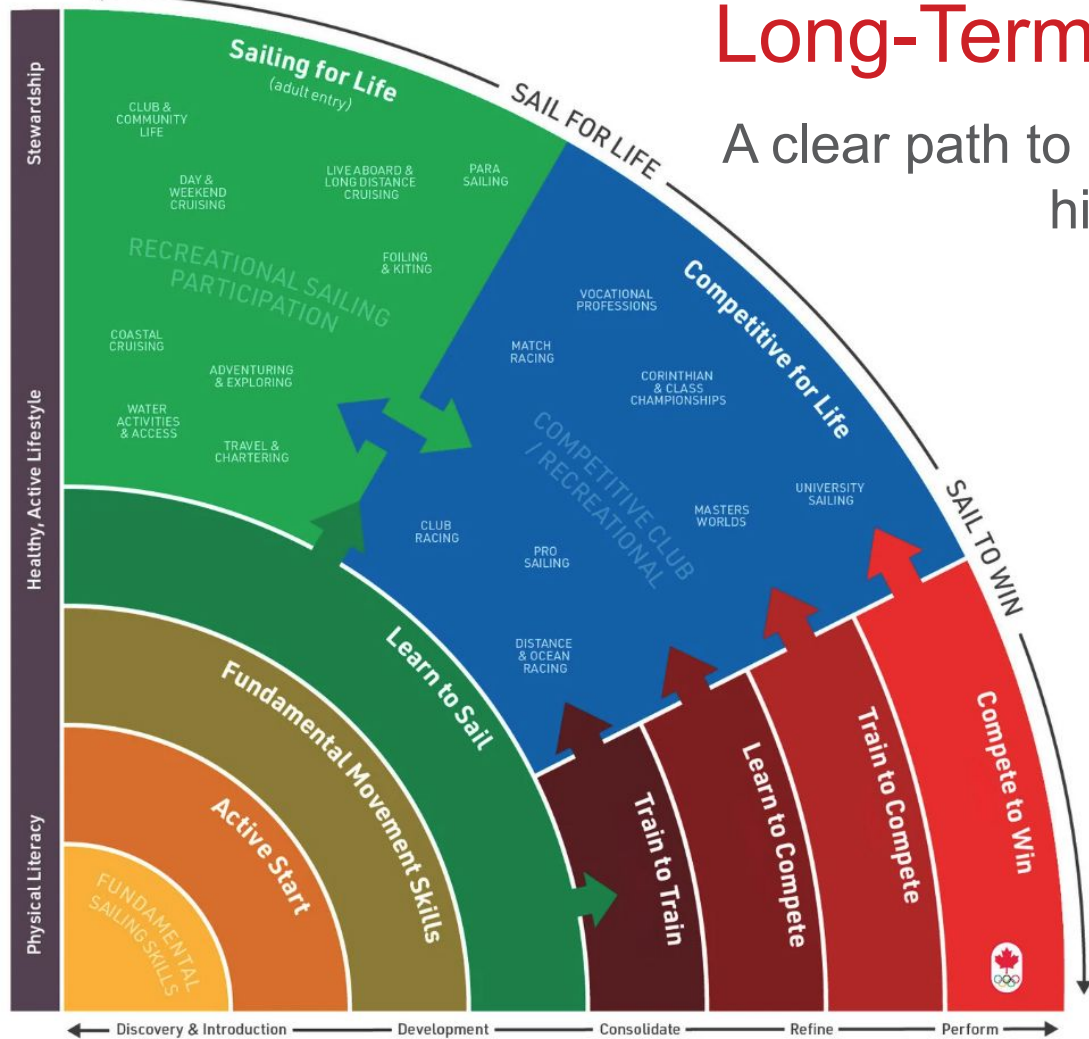
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Long-Term Athlete Development



Long-Term Development Stages

A clear path to better sport, greater health, and higher achievement



www.sailing.ca/ltd/



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CANSail

- The CANSail program was officially launched in 2012 to modernize and standardize Learn to Sail programming across Canada. A coach and sailor driven response to align with the LTAD and improve safety, skill progression and instructor training nationally.
- CANSail isn't just a program—it's the backbone of how we train sailors and build instructors across the country.



Erik Van der Pol



Steve McBride



Jennifer Braem



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CANSail

- 6 progressive skill levels (CANSail 1–6) for dinghy sailing.
- Emphasis on on-water, skill-based learning over theory.
- Supports both recreational and competitive pathways.
- Includes checklists, skill progression and assessment tools for consistent evaluation.
- CANSail levels are prerequisites for instructor training and certification.
- Embedded focus on safety, seamanship, and athlete-centred learning.





Skills at a glance

Core Skills In Each Level

- Balance
- Sail trim
- Direction
- Heading up
- Bearing off
- Tacking
- Gybing
- Stopping / slow down
- Go / accelerating
- Safety
- Seamanship
- Physical literacy
- Mental training

Early Level Skills

- Wind, Weather, & Waves (CS 1 - 3)

Later Level Skills

- Competition (CS 3 - 6)
- Tactics & Strategy (CS 4 - 6)



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CANSail Program Overview

Wet Feet

Fun introduction to sailing and water safety for sailors aged 5 to 8.

ICANSail

A first sailing experience for new participants focused on basic sailing concepts and water safety for first-time participants.

CANSail 1 & 2

Sailors understand the basics of wind direction and points of sail, sheet, steering and maneuvering. Participants can adapt to changes in wind speed and direction and perform basic skills in moderate conditions.

CANSail 3 & 4

Sailors continue to develop the fundamental skills of wind direction, sheeting, steering and maneuvering, beyond a basic understanding. Sailors begin to balance the platform more efficiently, anticipate changes in the wind, and sail in a wider variety of conditions.

CANSail 5 & 6

Sailors consolidate fundamental skills of wind direction, sheeting and steering in a wide variety of conditions. Sailors have strong maneuvering skills, can incorporate rig tuning and sail trim to increasingly balance the platform, and can anticipate and plan for changes in the wind around a course.



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CANSail Instructor Development

COMMUNITY

Community
Initiation

CANSail
Community
Instructor

INSTRUCTION

Instruction
Beginner

CANSail
1 & 2
Instructor

Instruction
Intermediate

CANSail
3 & 4
Instructor

COMPETITION

Competition
Introduction

CANSail
5 & 6
Instructor

Competition
Development

CANSail
Development
Coach

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Program Manager

Spinnaker & Trapeze

Wet Feet

*Coaching Athletes
with a Disability*

NCCP PD

*Sail Canada
sanctioned training
events (meetings,
seminars, training
modules, etc..)*



National **Coaching**
Certification Program



Stakeholder Feedback

1

**Level
progression has
skill cliffs**

2

**CANSail 4, 5, & 6
harder to pass**

3

**CANSail was
missing
information**

4

**Need for more
robust
resources for
new instructors**



Identified Needs:

- 1 Level achievability - sailor performance criteria and time to pass
- 2 Revisiting skills included in each level
- 3 Smoothing performance curve
- 4 Turn key resources for new coaches
- 5 Increase CANSail level utilization across venues and program sizes



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CANSail Subcommittee



CANSail Panel

Marc-Antoine Brassard
Nigel Crosscombe
Andrea Fitzgerald
Delani Hulme Lawrence
Sophia Josenhans
Amelia Leeksma
Steve McBride
Laurence Page
Mark Schippers
Kelsey Stroppel



Alex Byczko
Master Learning Facilitator
Ontario
CANSail Panel Member



Braden Gray
Learning Facilitator
Alberta
CANSail Panel Member



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Skills at a glance - Sail Trim

CANSail 1	Sailors can use double handed sheeting and use the “ When in doubt ” method to trim to proper angle.
CANSail 2	Sailors can sheet to keep ticklers streaming with assistance, while also being able to ease sail to keep boat flat
CANSail 3	Sailors can adjust sails to manage heel through puffs and lulls and adjust sail controls for upwind and downwind settings
CANSail 4	Sailors can adjust sail controls to move sail draft for flatter or fuller sails for a variety of conditions.
CANSail 5	Sailors can independently tune their boat for conditions, while also adjusting sail controls to power up and depower their sails in a variety of condition. Sailors begin to apply height, speed, and vmg modes while sailing around a course
CANSail 6	Sailors can independently tune their boat for conditions on land and with a partner on water before a training session. Sailors trim sails for changes in mode and apparent wind



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Checklists

CANSail 2			
Date:			
Sailor Name:			
Club/School:			
Training Boat:			
CANSail 2 - Skill List	Developing	Performing	Extending
Balance			
Adjust body position fore/aft to keep boat balanced			
Adjust bodyweight to manage heel			
Sit in correct starting position on each tack			
Sit in correct starting position on each gybe			
Sail Trim			
Trim sails accurately for all points of sail			
Trim sails to reduce heel			
Trim sails while steering (double handed sheeting) while sailing to a point for 2			
Trim sails to keep telltales flying			
Understand basic sail controls adjustments			
Direction			
Steer to keep telltales flying 50% of the time in prevailing conditions			
Adjust sail trim within 5 seconds of course change			
Identify and sail within 1 boat length of a point			
Manoeuvre to avoid boats and hazards			
Identify wind direction while sailing			
Heading Up			
Head up to close hauled from any point of sail			
Use two handed sheeting while heading up			
Trim Sails with minimal luffing through manoeuvre			
Keep boat flat while heading up			

Developing

- Performing **with** instructor assistance

Performing

- Consistently performing skill **without** instructor assistance

Extending

- Performing skill independently with confidence and application



CANSail 2

CANSail 2 Standard	Key Performance Indicators
Balance	
Adjust body position fore/aft	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Helm sits facing forward ahead of tiller and holding tiller extension- Crew sits forward of helm and not behind the mainsheet, facing forward- Sailors use reasonable communication if they need help with a tangle or other position related problem that they need help with
Adjust bodyweight to manage heel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Helm moves inboard or outboard on windward side of the boat to minimize heel- Crew moves from leeward side to centre to windward side to minimize heel- Sailors use communication to coordinate movements when necessary
Begin and end tack with correct body position	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Helm sits opposite the sail (on windward side)- Crew sits in position from side to side to balance the boat close to level- Sailors use recommended communication when starting a tack and to adjust body position if necessary
Begin and end gybe with correct body position	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Helm sits opposite the sail (on windward side)- Crew sits in position from side to side to balance the boat close to level- Sailors use recommended communication when starting a gybe and to adjust body position if necessary
Demonstrates the ability to hike in a training boat or on a hiking bench	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sailors hike out on a hiking bench or training boat- Sailors keep feet and knees together- Sailors waist is bent more than their knees, but sailors try to straighten both.- Sailors do not need to hold the position for more than a few seconds, but long enough that the instructor can correct poor form and verify good form
Sail Trim	
Trim sails while sailing close hauled, close reach, beam reach, broad reach and run	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sailors ease sails to sail further off the wind- Sailors sheet sails in to sail closer to the wind- When reaching, sailors adjust sails in /out while sailing to a point to achieve proper sail trim within approximately 10 seconds of a change- When sailing close hauled, sailors pull their sails all the way in, but can ease in gusts to avoid capsize- When sailing close hauled, sailors turn to windward until their sails luff and then turn to leeward until they stop- When on a run, sailors demonstrate the ability to identify a folding leech, loss of tension in the mainsheet, a backing jib or the crew feeling the boom start to come over as early warning signs for a gybe- Sailors demonstrate the ability to prevent an imminent gybe by heading up (and ducking just in case) or sailors safely allow the gybe when appropriate- In double handed boats on a run, sailors warn each other when the first notices an imminent gybe



CANSail 2 Instructor Pack

LESSON #4 – TACKING (CANSAIL 2)

Objective

Sailors will review what a tack is and the steps of a tack, focusing on pushing tiller towards the sail, moving after the boom crosses, and leading with the back foot. By the end of the lesson, Sailors will be performing the tack in the correct sequential order, while straightening the tiller as the boom crosses centreline to tack from close reach to a close reach with effective body position at a mark.

Skills

Balance

- Begin and end tack with correct body position

Tacking

- Shoulder check to sight new course to tack into

Tacking

- Perform all steps in correct sequential order

Tacking

- Boat is controlled and balanced throughout the tack

Tacking

- Correct body position is maintained through the tack

Tacking

- Helm sits on new side, maintains control of tiller and mainsheet through the tack

Tacking

- Crew switches jib as front 1/2 of sail backwinds

Tacking

- Helm steers to a pre-determined course on their new tack

Key Performance Indicators

- Helm sits opposite the sail (on windward side)
- Crew sits in position from side to side to balance the boat close to level
- Sailors use recommended communication when starting a tack and to adjust body position if necessary

- Sailors check for boats or hazards to windward before tacking hand exchange
- Crew sights new close-hauled course to tack into and communicates to helm prior to tack

- Sailor's complete steps to tack in the order laid out in the curriculum: Look, Countdown, Hail, Turn, Cross, Sail on
- Helm may tack at a slow pace at this level
- Sailors begin to use consistent language

- Sailor's movements are purposeful, and boat is controlled throughout tack
- Boat is not overpowered and does not have over approximately 15 degrees of heel after completing tack
- Tack is not started with excessive heel
- Sailors communicate for balance where necessary

- Sailors maintain posture and face forward during tack
- Sailors cross the boat leading with aft foot first
- Crew moves weight with the skipper to minimize heel during tack
- Sailors wait for the boom to cross centreline before moving in-board

- Helm completes tack sitting on the new side
- Helm does not drop the tiller or mainsheet
- Crew switches to the new jib sheet and brings it with them if they change sides

- Crew watches jib and switches it as front half backwinds

- Helm sights new close-hauled course before tack
- Helm stabilizes on new heading within 15 seconds of completing hand exchange
- Crew communicates new close-hauled course to tack into



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Land Portion

Skill Breakdown

A tack is when the bow of the boat crosses the wind and the sails switch sides. The helm will steer the tack by pushing the tiller toward the sail and the crew will help with balance and switching the jib sail. A key part of the tack is coordinating helm and crew movements, this is done through specific communication and some key visual cues to move.

A tack should always begin with proper body position. Instructors should observe these points on body position:

- Keep your feet together, and your knees should be facing forward
- Back straight, shoulders outside of the hips, and sitting forward in the boat
- Tiller extension should be like a microphone in your lap, with the mainsheet in the front hand, and knuckles facing upwards

Anatomy of a CANSail 2 Tack

WIND



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Tacking Skill Breakdown		
	HELM SKILLS	CREW SKILLS
LOOK	1. Shoulder check for hazards and other boats before tacking.	1. Shoulder check for hazards and other boats before tacking.
COUNT DOWN	2. Communicate tack with partner by saying: a. "Ready to tack" b. Wait for a "Copy" or "Ready" from the crew c. Begin Countdown by saying "3 – 2 – 1"	2. Confirm tack with sailing partner by saying "copy" or "ready"
HAIL	3. Helm yells "tacking!" after the countdown.	
TURN	4. Helm sits up straight while gently heading up by pushing the tiller towards the sail (move aft before steering, if sitting forward of the mainsheets or traveler bar)	3. Crew moves weight where needed to keep boat flat and holds jib sheet with aft hand
CROSS	5. As boom crosses the boat, Helm straightens tiller, steps across the boat with aft foot first (facing forward), and punches tiller hand across the boat to grab the other gunwale. 3 points of contact will ensure tack is stable! (two feet and one hand)	4. As jib begins to back, crew unclenches jib and lets go of sheet 5. Crew crosses boat with their aft foot making to step outside the hiking straps and brings new jib sheet to windward side with them
SAIL ON	6. Helm sits with tiller behind their back, shoulders facing the bow (perpendicular to the centerline) 7. Helm switches tiller by reaching back to tiller hand with mainsheet hand to hold both main and tiller extension in mainsheet hand. Then old tiller hand reaches around to take mainsheet. Finally, the tiller extension is flipped over the helm's shoulder so that it's in their lap.	6. Crew adjusts body weight to keep boat flat and allows helm to maintain position on the windward side and trims jib to point of sail.

To tighten up tacking angles at a CANSail 2 level (to prevent over tacking,) the helm should straighten the tiller as the boom crosses the centerline. This may result in some undertacking, this is an easier problem to fix than over tacking.

When sailors roleplay a tack in the demonstration boat (either on dock or on land), Watch for the following elements to detect and correct:

DETECT AND CORRECT – HELMING SKILLS	DETECT AND CORRECT – CREWING SKILLS
Shoulder check prior to communication	Shoulder check prior to communication
Waiting for crew ready before counting down tack	Crew says "copy" or "ready"
Cross the boat with aft foot first	Uncleat jib and prepare to release sheet
Punch tiller through to other side of the boat	Watch for the jib to backwind, then release the sheet
As boom crosses the boat, straighten out tiller and grab gunwale	Pickup new jibsheet, and sheet as quickly as possible
Sit down on new windward side	
Tiller switch motion	Sit in new position to balance out boat
3 points of contact will ensure tack is stable! (two feet and one hand)	



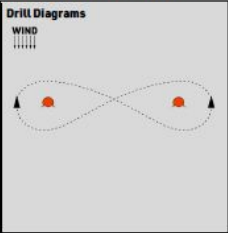


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Water Session

Collector - Wide Figure 8

Drill Diagrams



Drill Instructions:
Very simple collector that has sailors tacking at both marks of the course. Set this course wide (at least 10-15 boat lengths) to ensure sailors have lots of time to prepare for the tacking manoeuvre.

Key Points:

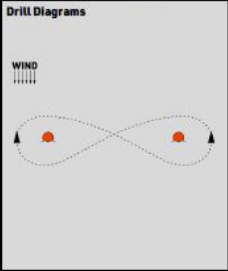
- Warm up
- Re-familiarize and practice at your own pace tacking
- Switch helm and crew

Resources:

- Two marks

Drill 1 - Narrow Figure 8

Drill Diagrams



Drill Instructions:
Using the same course, start to narrow the sailing course (4 boat lengths more than the size of your fleet) so the tacks become more and more frequent. Make sure to leave enough room so sailors don't hit each other in the middle.

Key Points:

- Helm and Crew do a shoulder check before tacking
- Helm counts down tack by saying "3-2-1 tacking"
- Helm pushes tiller towards the sail, Crew releases jib as it backwinds


Resources:

- 2 marks

34 | Page

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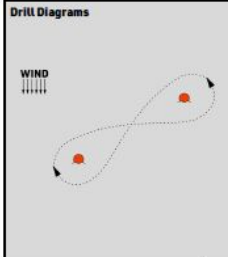
Lesson 4 - Day 2 - Tacking (CANSail 2)



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Drill 2 - Reaching Figure 8

Drill Diagrams



Drill Instructions:
Pick one of the marks and drag it upwind to create a close reach/broad reach course. The course remains a figure 8 but introduces elements of sail trim both upwind and downwind to challenge the sailor's tacks.

Key Points:

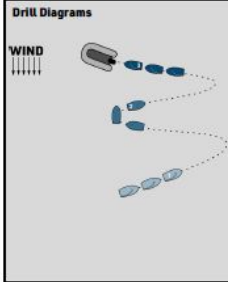
- Helm and crew tack facing forwards by step across the boat with aft foot.
- Use "When in doubt sheet out, pull in 'till it stops luffing" to trim sails after each mark rounding
- Control tack by keeping the tiller inside the gunwales

Resources:

- 2 Marks

Drill 3 - Follow the leader (close reach upwind)

Drill Diagrams



Drill Instructions:
Gather the fleet together by saying "Follow me" and driving a looping beam reach course until all your boats have started to follow you. Once all collected, begin to drive close reach courses with occasional tacks (Every 1:00 - 1:30 minutes)

Key Points:

- Wait for boom before moving across the boat
- Once boom crosses the centerline, helm straightens out tiller.
- Crew balances boat with body weight so helm can sit on windward side.
- Use "When in doubt sheet out, pull in 'till it stops luffing" to trim sails after each tack.

Resources:

- 2 Marks

35 | Page

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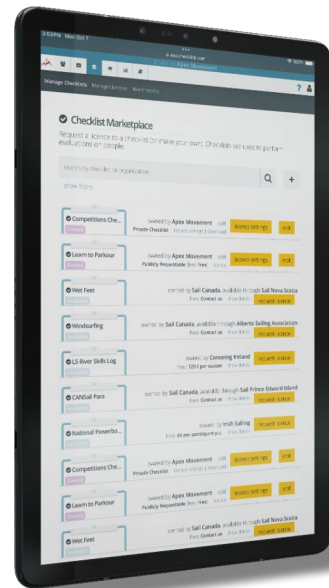
Lesson 4 - Day 2 - Tacking (CANSail 2)



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CANSail–Powered by Checklick

- Checklick is the official training and certification management platform used by Sail Canada to administer the CANSail program and other national training pathways.
- Stores sailor progress, certifications, instructor credentials, and course completions in one secure, cloud-based platform.
- Instructors track CANSail skills in real time, aligning with national standards and allowing for consistent delivery across Canada.
- When sailors change clubs/schools, their training records follow them—this reduces duplication of efforts and provides a baseline for their new coach/instructor.





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Launching Now



**CANsail
VoileCAN 2.0**





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CANSail 2.0—Evolving With Our Sport



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Questions?





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