

# Charity Sailing and Paddling Fun Day

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Sunday 7 August was Hong Kong Government's 'Sport for All Day' and to support this meaningful campaign, the Club's own RHKYC Charity Foundation held its 4<sup>th</sup> Charity Sailing and Paddling Fun Day at Middle Island for 34 underprivileged local students and their teachers.

The Bridge



1 and 3 demonstrated stroke technique in the water. On water training focused on timing, rotation, getting the A-frame right, start and race pieces. Each team spent about twenty minutes training and then it was time for the first race of the day.

It was perfect conditions on the water. The race format was a 50-stroke race. Team 2's investment on stroke technique paid off; they were quick off the block and kept their lead through all 50 strokes. Team 3 came in a distant second. All three teams regrouped after the race, discussed what went right, what went wrong and how to improve things. Exactly as a regular dragon boat team would do.

Soon it was time for the second race and yet again it was Team 2 taking the win. Race 3 was where the other two teams finally came good. Each and every student was focused and the desire to win had settled in deep. It was a neck and neck competition between Team 2 and Team 3 with the latter winning by a whisker and Team 1 finishing a very close third. Smiles, compliments and handshakes were traded among all three boats. It was a fantastic finish to the first half of a fun day. The session ended with a nice and light paddle back to the pontoons. Teams were tasked to get their boats out of water and place them securely in their racks, wash the

paddles and ensure all equipment was put back in the right place.

After lunch and the promised quick quiz, everyone enjoyed an interesting and educational talk by Plastic Free Seas on the effects of plastics on the environment and the oceans. Patrick Lam, the Club's Centre Manager then gave a brief introduction to sailing to the teachers and students.

For the sailing session scheduled in the afternoon, we had great support from the J/80 and J/70 class owners again this year; most of them for the second year running.

With the Hong Kong Observatory's Very Hot Weather Warning still in force and the temperature reaching 33C, it took a bit of an effort to tempt the teenagers away from the air conditioned room for more on-the-water activities. The wind condition has also changed since the morning, with the south westerly breeze significantly reduced in the area.

The nine J/80 and J/70 owners along side our sailing volunteers worked hard getting the rigging ready, and once the students were assigned to the boats and introduced to our sailors, they all set sail on what for many was their first sailing experience.

Patchy wind did not deter the enthusiasm of the participants, and there were a lot of smiley

It was a brilliantly bright day. The sky was a clear blue, temperatures soaring into the high thirties and calm waters all around Middle Island.

We started the day with a brief history of dragon boating and how it has developed to become an international sport. The students were asked to pay particular attention as at the end of the session there would be a quiz with prizes. They were divided into three teams, each with six volunteers who would coach, demonstrate and steer the boats. A sense of competition was established by the coaches immediately. All three teams got organised very quickly; seating arrangements were finalised and the coaches launched into warm-ups straight away. Stoke technique coaching varied for each team. Team 2 decided to spend a little more time on land to demonstrate stroke technique whereas Teams



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faces among the youngsters. The initial idea of a race around Round Island (which was a success the year before), was forced to be abandoned and the team on the safety RIB set a short leeward / windward course with

a downwind start towards Deep Water Bay beach, rounding a nice blue yacht to port and back to the same line for finish. The staggered 'start if you can' race was joined by most of the fleet, but a few boats opted to find more pressure for more exciting cruising near Ocean Park. The students were encouraged to try out different roles on the sailboats including taking the helm and our volunteers happily showed them the 'ropes'. After a little more than an hour on the water, an appealing breeze started to fill in, but it was also time to head back to the pontoon. The 'workout' of the afternoon turned out to be the de-rigging part and the students were efficient in packing up the boats before gathering around for a group photo session. The day was rounded



up with certificates presentation by our Vice Commodore John Woo and a sailing quiz by MI Sailing and Marine Manager Jono Rankine.

The volunteers and students were absolutely delighted with the event. We believe the students had an amazingly fun experience and also learnt some important life lessons like organisation, discipline and team work.

Many thanks to our rowing and sailing staff, as well as our volunteer members of the Club for making this yet another fun and meaningful event for all. ☺

