



Diamond Fleet Sunset 2021

Hi Everyone.

Apologies for the delay in coming back to everyone formally but there has been quite a bit to reorganise.

In summary

We are heavily over-subscribed in Diamond Fleet but we have found solutions that will enable us to get everyone sailing from May onwards. However, we need to make changes to session timing and we are going to run **all the Diamond Fleet sessions at the Mersea Boating Lake during May**. There will be an additional cost per sailor for this. Details are set out below.

Please read the following carefully to ensure that you understand the changes.

The Numbers

On the closure of Sunset applications on 31 March 2021, we have 35 new sailors aged 8/9 years all wanting to join Diamond Fleet. With a coaching capacity for just 24 sailors, we have, therefore, found ourselves significantly over subscribed. However, we are very grateful that three new instructors have volunteered to support the Diamond Fleet. We now have seven great sailing instructors for Diamond Fleet giving us the coaching capacity to cater for all of the 35 new sailors.

We are very grateful to Lucy Milgate, Jane Richardson, Liz Simpson and Gary Powell for agreeing to continue to coach Diamond again this year and also to Lee Child, Chris Hopkins and Ifor Bielecki for stepping forward as the new additional instructors.

The volunteer instructors are working hard to plan how we can manage the larger numbers safely and effectively.

Diamond Lake Weekend (CHANGE OF DATE AND OF VENUE)

As in previous years, our original plan was to start with a two-day **Diamond Lake Weekend** at the Blackwater Sailing Club's lake. The Black Water SC was planned and booked for the **15th/16th May**. However, due to a recent necessary change in the COVID policy at Blackwater SC, that weekend is no longer available to us. Thankfully, despite the short notice, we have been able to arrange alternative lake weekend at the new **Mersea Boating Lake**. However, this will now be on the earlier weekend of **8th/9th May**. **The sessions will be run each day from 9:30am until 5pm**. After assessing this new venue and taking account of the COVID restrictions, we have concluded that we cannot accommodate all 35 sailors at the lake on both days. We will therefore coach half the fleet on the Saturday and half on the Sunday.

Our experience is that the '**Diamond Lake Weekend**' provides the best sheltered and non-tidal environment to start our new sailors safely and to get them sailing quickly and effectively. It has always proved really enjoyable for the sailors and the parents. It is invaluable for introducing cadets to sailing, covering the basics and preparing them before progressing to sail on our tidal waters. For this reason, we do ask that **ALL new Diamond sailors must attend one day of the Diamond Lake Weekend (i.e., either Sat 8th or Sun 9th).**

As in previous years, there is a **separate application form** and a separate charge of £15 per sailor for the Diamond Lake Weekend. This will give us an exclusive use of the main part of the lake for the duration of the sessions.

Two application forms for the Diamond Lake Weekend will be available on the DSC website early next week. One form will be for the Saturday session and one form for the Sunday session. There will be a maximum number of sailors on each day of 18 and places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. You must complete ONE application form per child only! The form will provide further details, collect certain information and also the £15 payment from you. Please note that this £15 charge for the Diamond Lake Weekend is not a new charge this year as the Diamond Lake Weekend has always been subject to a separate charge.

Further information and instructions regarding the Diamond Lake Weekend will be provided via the Diamond Sunset 2021 WhatsApp group, so please do look out for those.

Diamond Sessions in May (CHANGE OF DATES AND OF VENUE)

Following completion of our **Diamond Lake Weekend** our original plan was to sail Diamond Fleet from the Mersea hard as one single fleet on Tuesday evenings from May onwards.

However, the significantly higher numbers of sailors in Diamond Fleet makes this difficult. Our challenge with Diamond fleet in the early sessions has always been finding sufficient sheltered safe water while the sailors are getting to grips with their boats. The issue is particularly difficult due to the lack of good tides on Tuesday evenings in May.

In the interests of better safety and more effective early coaching we will:

1. Move all our Diamond training sessions in May to the Mersea Boating Lake; and
2. Separate the Diamond Fleet into two equal fleets of 18 and 17 sailors that can sail at different times. Each fleet will comprise 3 pods of 6/5 boats with one dedicated coach.

The objective is to get the whole fleet sailing proficiently on the lake with the intention of bringing the whole fleet back to the Dabchicks/hard from the beginning of June.

The Sunset Diamond sessions at the Mersea Boating Lake in May are scheduled to be on **Weekends** as follows:

Day	Date	From - To	Hrs	Fleet
Sat	15 th May	2:00pm – 5:00pm	3hrs	Diamond Fleet 1
Sun	16 th May	2:00pm – 5:00pm	3hrs	Diamond Fleet 2
Sat	22 nd May	2pm - 5pm	3hrs	Diamond 1
Sun	23 rd May	2pm - 5pm	3hrs	Diamond 2

The allocation of who will be sailing in which fleet and at what time is currently being decided. The allocations we use at the lake are not permanent and may be different to those that we use for the rest of the series. We appreciate that parents and sailors will have preferences. We will do our best to sort these through discussion with parents during boat inspections. Therefore, please do not approach instructors with your preferences at this stage. Again, we will do our best to meet all reasonable preferences, although we may not be able to please everyone.

This is the only viable option for safe and effective introduction to sailing for so many Diamond beginners, given the larger number of new sailors that we have and the poor Tuesday evening tides in May.

By running The Diamond Lake Weekend at Mersea Boating Lake on 8th/9th May and following this up with further weekend sessions on 15th/16th and 22nd /23rd May, we think that this provides the best possible start to Sunset sailing and will allow us time to prepare sailors for tidal water sailing at the Hard from the beginning of June.

The May Sunset sessions at Mersea Boating Lake will come at an additional cost per child. This cost will be payable directly to Mersea Boating Lake.

The cost is £30 per sailor for one Month's Mersea Boating Lake membership. This will cover use of the lake for the Sunset Sessions on 15th, 16th, 22nd & 23rd May. Car and boat parking is included. You can leave your boat stored at the lake. They have CCTV but the boat parking is entirely at your own risk (as it is down at the hard).

The membership also enables you to book up other sessions independently in May for your child to sail or do other permitted activities at the lake using your own equipment at no extra cost. We would encourage you to do this. Time on the water doing anything fun can really help new sailors to develop their confidence. Note that, due to COVID restrictions, you will need to book in advance before attendance at the lake at other times. You can do this via their website on-line booking system.

We will forward full details on how and when to set up your child's Mersea Boating Lake membership for the month of May shortly. **(Please do not rush out and do this independently before we have advised this detail!).**

We must ask all Diamond sailors to attend the Diamond Lake Weekend and the subsequent May Sunset Sessions at the Lake. This is because it will not be possible to support sailors on our tidal water at the hard in June if they have missed the May Lake Sessions and not, therefore, acquired the core basic sailing skills that will be taught at the lake.

We appreciate that using the lake for the first month is a new approach compared to previous years and that this comes with an additional cost of £30 per sailor, However, we believe this is very reasonable, provides an excellent opportunity and is the only solution our volunteer coaches can reasonably offer to get so many Diamond sailors started in May.

Diamond Sessions from June onwards (CHANGE OF DATES)

Our aim is to have all Diamond Fleet sailors sailing from the Hard from the beginning of June.

However, given the size of the fleet and volunteer coach availabilities, half the fleet will sail on Tuesday evenings and half will sail on Saturdays/Sundays. The dates and timings are being worked on and we will advise these to parents as soon as we can. We appreciate that parents and sailors will also have preferences from June onwards too and, again, we will do our best to sort these through discussion with parents during boat inspections. Therefore, please do not approach instructors with your preferences for June at this stage. We will do our best to meet all reasonable preferences but may not be able to please everyone.

Boat Inspections for Diamond Fleet

All Boat inspections will need to be completed and issues resolved **BEFORE** the Diamond Lake Weekend on 8th/9th May.

Due to the current restrictions, and to avoid larger gatherings, boat inspections will be conducted one at a time or in small numbers. A Diamond instructor will be contacting you via Email/WhatsApp/Phone to agree a mutually convenient location and time for the inspection of your boat.

To help you prepare for you boat inspections, some helpful notes will be issued on the Diamond Sunset 2021 WhatsApp Group shortly , so do please look out for those.

Questions

Your instructors will be happy to help you with any queries that you have and an instructor will be in touch with you very shortly to arrange a boat inspection. There will also be a new Diamond Fleet WhatsApp group(s) in which you will be able to post comments and ask questions.

Here's to a great Sunset Series 2021

Chris Burr

DSC Sunset Series.