

Squad applications for the British Keelboat Academy now open

Aspiring young sailors who wish to further their skills, experience and knowledge of keelboat racing can now apply online for the British Keelboat Academy squad selections which take place across two weekends in September.

The joint keelboat racing initiative between the RYA and UKSA is now in its third year and is designed to support young people aged between 18 and 24 in developing the skills needed to take their keelboat racing to a professional level. Members of the BKA sail regularly on the Farr 45 'Kólga', kindly loaned by Niklas Zennström's Rán Racing team, David Aisher's J/109 'Yeoman of Wight' and UKSA's fleet of J80 keelboats.

In addition to competing in a range of events throughout the season, academy sailors receive top class coaching on the water from a variety of professional sailors and RYA qualified coaches. Squad members also receive training ashore in areas from campaign management, leadership and raising sponsorship to meteorology, racing rules and boat maintenance, with input from marine leaders and industry professionals.

BKA sailors are currently preparing for the Brewin Dolphin Commodore's Cup, one of the most prestigious events on the international yachting calendar, and two teams are attending the J80 World Championships being held in Dartmouth in June.

Luke McCarthy, British Keelboat Academy Head Coach, commented: "We're excited to be once again offering the opportunity for aspiring young sailors to get involved with the BKA. The BKA offers a unique training programme so are looking for individuals who have a passion for the sport, are determined and eager to learn and who have the right attributes to fit into the BKA squad.

"We continue to work with the Rán Racing team and others to provide input from world class professional sailors and also opportunities for selected squad members to gain experience working within these teams. Past squad sailors have gone on to compete in a range of top level events and boats including TP52, Class 40 and RC44, both as professional sailors and on an amateur basis."

Online applications for 2013 BKA squads are now being accepted with selection trials scheduled for 22/23 and 29/30 September 2012 at UKSA. Applications close at 12pm on Friday 31st August. To apply, please visit www.britishkeelboatacademy.org and click on '[Squad applications](#)'.

The BKA is also offering regional Keelboat training sessions which are taking place at Plas Menai, Port Edgar and UKSA throughout the summer. For a complete list of dates see the '[Regional Centres](#)' pages of the website, where you will also find the contact details for the centres to book places. The regional keelboat sessions are the preferred way of gaining a place at the selections, with sailors who have performed well at these being given priority places at the selections.

For more information about the British Keelboat Academy and how you can help with fundraising, please visit the BKA website at www.britishkeelboatacademy.org, or follow the BKA on Facebook at www.facebook.com/BritishKeelboatAcademy or on Twitter ([@tweetbka](https://twitter.com/tweetbka)).