

The 2019 British Laser 4.7 Qualifier season is approaching.....

The Laser 4.7 is a phenomenal success story of junior and youth one design dinghy sailing. In recent years it has consistently been the largest Junior/Youth fleet at a World Championships. The Class's first World Championships were held in 2002 in Holland, in 2018 there were 430 sailors competing in the Worlds in Poland and over 300 sailors competing in the Europeans in Greece. The universality of the Laser is no doubt a major part of the Class's success globally and just as with the Optimist Class, the Laser 4.7 has a huge following of sailors, parents, coaches and merchants invested in it's success.

Britain was the largest nation of competitors at both 2018 events with sailors up to the age of 17 competing. The RYA adopted the Laser 4.7 for their Olympic 'Pathway' some time ago and the prolific success of GBR across various Laser Fleets is in part due to the efforts put into Coaching the young sailors in the Laser 4.7.

The RYA's Laser 4.7 Head Coach in recent years, Martin Boatman, was recognised as "Coach of the Year" in 2016 following another successful year internationally. GBR sailors have enjoyed significant success in the Laser 4.7 at the highest level, with 5 U16 World or European Championship Podium positions from the last 3 seasons.

2015 RYA Laser 4.7 Squad at the Medemblik Worlds:



2016 RYA 4.7 Squad at the Kiel Worlds:



2017 RYA 4.7 Squad at the Nieuwpoort Worlds:



Sailors from the Optimist, Topper, RS Tera and Cadet Classes are the most likely graduates into the Laser 4.7. The sailors typically begin to move into the Laser 4.7 at approximately 45kg, but the 4.7 enjoys a very broad competitive weight range for the Club sailor (50-70kg), due to a larger hull being

paired with a smaller rig. Sailors typically begin to graduate from the 4.7 into the Radial rig at about 60kg onwards.

The Laser 4.7 has a huge, competitive circuit throughout Europe and for the Brits to travel to these major events is relatively easy given the ease of car-topping a Laser, or adding it to a stacking trailer. In Britain, the UKLA runs a successful Laser 4.7 Ladder Series sponsored by SailingFast and is designed to provide quality racing for the experienced Club sailor all the way up to the top RYA Squad sailors. While some events are Qualifiers for Championship participation, or Squads, other Ladder events have a more relaxed approach. The UKLA and RYA sometimes bring Coaches to help the whole Fleet with briefings and on-the-water support in-between races for all sailors.

Some of the Laser 4.7 Ladder Events are run alongside the main fleet Qualifiers, so the young sailors enjoy sharing the dinghy park and race course with the top sailors in our sport. Recent World Champion and Rio Olympians Nick Thompson (Standard Rig) and Ali Young (Radial Rig) are just some of the star-studded entries sailing alongside the Laser 4.7 Fleet.

2019 starts with some experienced former Laser sailors assisting the UKLA Committee; former Youth World Champion and Finn Olympian, now International Race Officer, Stuart Childerley is assisting the Class with all aspects of Race Management, Stuart's son and daughter have both been successful Laser 4.7 sailors in recent years. Former Laser National Champion Keith Videlo is the Laser 4.7 Class Representative, his daughter is a current Member of the Laser 4.7 National Squad. Keith will be working with the UKLA's Youth Representative Ben Nicholls, whose 2 daughters have both recently won the Laser 4.7 U16 European Championships. In addition, there are a large number of active volunteers from amongst the parents of the Laser 4.7 sailors who help put on the Laser 4.7 Ladder events and it promises to be an exciting year ahead.

Entry details to the UKLA's first World Championship and European Championship Qualifier in 2019: <https://www.kbsuk.com/laser/47events/index.asp?EventID=99>

UKLA Laser 4.7 SailingFast Ladder 5 is being hosted by WPNSA on 26/27 January.

There is also UKLA Laser 4.7 & Radial Class Training at the *ASWC-Portland* this weekend. Over 50 young sailors will be training with former Olympian Laura Baldwin and former British Sailing Team Laser sailors led by Tim Hulse.

General information is often posted on the new *GBR Youth Lasers* Facebook Page.

Ben Nicholls
UKLA Youth Representative

Keith Videlo
UKLA 4.7 Representative

The Laser 4.7 has the perfect rig/hull combination for young sailors post-Optimist:



GBR sailors at the 2018 Laser 4.7 World Championships:

Flo Nicholls 🏆 and Abby Childerley 🏆 at 2018 U16 Laser 4.7 European Championships:-



Fin Dickinson 🏆 at 2018 Laser 4.7 European Championships with RYA Laser 4.7 Squad Coach James



Nick Thompson with recent Laser 4.7 sailors at a Ladder event:

