

Buying and Optimist

Here is some information that will help you when buying an Optimist New or Used. It is easy to get caught up in today's world of infinite choices and specialized equipment. Keep in mind that the boat and equipment have a small effect until they are racing at the higher levels. Sailor skill has the largest impact on performance. Craigslist and Yacht Club bulletin boards are great sources for used Opti's.

http://www.windcheckmagazine.com/optimist_buying_guide

<https://www.sturgisboatworks.com/Articles.asp?ID=257>

This is a quicklist of some items that you will want included with your boat. If they do not have some of the big items make sure that the total cost is in line with what they are selling. You will have to add these items if they are not included.

- Condition and number of Sails
- Dolly (Tires that take air are better for launching in the sand.)
- N1 Foil (epoxy) Rudder & Daggerboard
- Black Gold Spars (2 booms is ideal. One for practice sail, one for race sail)
- 3 Airbags
- Blade Bag
- Spar & Sail Travel Bag
- Top & Bottom Cover
- Wind Indicator
- Bailers (two is better)
- Mast Clamp
- Paddle

What to look for when buying an optimist

Make sure it is an optimist

Real Optimists have a little blue numbered label called a "building fee plaque". If it does not have this, it may be an imitation and therefore not allowed to take part in optimist regattas.

Is it IOD 95? This means that the builder is licensed by the international class.

Common Brands in the US are:

- Winner, McLaughlin, Blue Magic, Zim, Far East, Laser Performance

Winner, McLaughlin and Blue Magic seem to be viewed as better boats. The others have been rumored to be less durable.

Pricing

A serviceable competitive used boat can be bought for around \$2,000 - \$2500

A very good competitive used boat can be bought for around \$3000 - \$4,000

A new boat with all the equipment will cost \$6,000-\$7000.

Ask the major boat providers about boats that have been chartered at major regattas. Often times they have only been used a few times and they are significantly discounted.

Hulls

- General dents, scratches, chips and cracks and repairs.
- Check the deck cap join and hull sides around the centre bulkhead.
- Check the floor (e.g. around fittings). The floor has foam in it and water can ingress through cracks or poor repairs, causing the boat to gain weight.
- Corrosion of fittings and around mast step.
- Cracks / damage around the mast step and the seat where the mast goes through the deck (check underside).
- Where has it been stored?
- How much has it been raced?

The rig

There is some big differences in the type of rig packages available on second hand boats.

The rig on the “learn to sail” boats is vastly different to that on a top of the line race boat and there are many variants in between. Sails and spars can be matched to the child’s weight and experience. There is no point buying a rig matched to a 50 kg child when your child is 30 kg. It could overpower your sailor and kill their enjoyment of the sport.

Generally the beginner spars are silver in color. Optiparts Black/Gold spars are a good set for racing. And Optimax MKIII or MK IV are also good racing spars.

Sails

The sail(s) you buy with the boat may not necessarily suit your sailor. If buying a yacht for a beginner, make sure the sail is cut for a beginner. If the yacht comes with a set up for an experienced sailor put it in storage and perhaps buy a spar and sail that matches the weight of the sailor...

Do not be fooled – ‘Training sail’ usually means worn/used.

The boat you buy may well have a good race sail. But be prepared to put it in storage as you may need to get a sail that actually suits your sailor. A beginner sailor that weighs 30 kilos needs a flatter sail than an experienced sailor that weighs 45kg. It is unlikely that you will be lucky enough to get a boat with a nice flat sail that is in good nick for your beginner, so be prepared to perhaps need to buy a sail.

New sails: Each sailmaker has a range of sails to suit sailors with different experience and/or weight.

It is ideal to have a race sail and a practice sail with the right shape that suits the weight and experience of you sailor. A new sail will cost between \$500 and \$650.

Do not be tempted to buy a cheaper ‘club’ or ‘training’ sail – shape is more important.

Typical Sail Makers are: Olimpic, J Sails, North, Quantum, Toni Tio

Mast, Boom and Sprit

The boom is more important when considering the set up relative to the weight of the sailor.

Mast – A good quality race mast would be ideal (a ‘soft’ or ‘club’ level mast will be quickly outgrown) Boom – If you have a light sailor, a smaller diameter boom would be an asset (32 or 40mm).

Sprit – A standard 27mm race sprit is fine.

Rig condition:

Check for corrosion around fittings and condition of control lines.

Foils

Check that the foils have been measured and meet class rules.

Check general condition - The foils have a foam core covered polyester or epoxy weave and resin – check for water damage and general condition of the mould join, leading and trailing edges.

Be aware that you can fix minor damage, but a split centreboard or rudder will need replacing \$\$\$.

Check for corrosion around the rudder gudgeons, pintles, stock, tiller and tiller extension.

Fittings and equipment

- Mainsheet system. Tapered mainsheet is softer and easier to trim.
- A good ratchet block - replacement \$20 - \$60.
- Adjustable mast step - Essential to tune the boat for lighter or heavier sailors.
- Airbags condition -Replacement \$35 each
- Covers -Hull Top and bottom cover \$180 - \$375
- Blade bag to protect blades
- Sail tubes, covers, spar covers
- Dolly - Corrosion, tires & axle condition. Tires that require air are easier to push through sand than the hard plastic tires. \$500
- Stuff -Windex, Bailers, Praddle, Hiking straps, Mast clamp

Registering your boat....

When you purchase an Optimist you need to register the change of ownership with USODA if you want to race in USODA sponsored regattas. The change fee is typically included if you join USODA.

<http://www.usoda.org/>

USODA membership information and online payment:

https://ssl4.westserver.net/usoda.org/site/pages/public_info/membership.php?sectID=0