

WHY THE AMYA SOLING 1 METER?

by Frank Vella – Former Soling 1 Meter National Class Secretary

With the help of some previous writers and a little insight by yours truly, please allow me to discuss the merits of the Soling 1 Meter. The Soling 1 Meter is the 2nd most popular boat registered in within the AMYA (American Model Yachting Association). How many? We really don't KNOW the total number of "Soling" Kits that have been sold - some estimate well over 10,000. AMYA Members registered some 3100 active boats, and about 50% of ALL AMYA Members own one or more "Solings".

The continuing popularity of the Soling is the result of acceptance by thousands of sailors, multitudes of clubs, the AMYA, CRYA (Canadian Radio Yachting Association) and many local sailing clubs. Clubs racing Soling 1 Meters range from the tip of Florida, north to New Brunswick in Canada, west to Washington State, down to California and over to Texas. The fact is that sailors all over North America sail and race Soling 1 Meters in over 70 model yacht clubs ALL OVER the USA and Canada!!

Why is that important? Fun. You should be able to find other Soling skippers to race and socialize with, almost anywhere in North America. Even if you don't want to (or don't think you want to) race- these owners can provide a wealth of information and support.

How come this boat so popular??

Easy to own: The Soling is not a huge boat, but she isn't small either. At 10 lbs. (4.5 kg), and 1 meter (39-3/8") in length, she is easy to transport, quick to take apart when needed, and easy to see out on the water. She can be carried in a small-medium SUV, or in a coupe or sedan with the rear seats folded. One guy even carried his Soling in a Corvette Coupe- it stretches from the back of the interior and the tip of the mast is over the console- but it fits!!

Performance: The Soling 1 Meter moves gracefully through the water on all points of sail. While skippers of smaller and lighter model boats may find their boats are hard to tack, "round up" in heavier winds, or go into irons, the size, shape and weight of the Soling 1 Meter allow the boat to smoothly pass through rough water, remain well-balanced in heavy air, tack easily, and even track upwind close-hauled with 'no hands on the sticks'.

She looks like a boat should: many RC boats look more like a sailing canoe. They have narrow hulls and keels with lead bulbs on the end of a deep keel, and odd-looking sail plans. These narrow boats can "submarine" off the wind, round up and be difficult to steer as the wind picks up. There are disadvantages. First is the fin and bulb keel design takes more water to launch, up to one's knees, where the Soling only draws 8 inches or so. These keels also will catch weeds- this can be annoying and can actually require you to go retrieve it by using a rowboat. The Soling has a lead-filled fin keel which collects many fewer weeds than other designs and a standard-looking sail plan. **She looks like a boat should!!**

The Soling has a full bow, instead of a "knifelike" forward section, and resists "submarining" downwind. She can actually semi-plane in the right conditions off the wind, a fast bow-up downwind ride with the jib and main set on opposite sides (wing-on-wing) - delights every owner!!

Highly tunable: Soling skippers tune their sails and rigs to add or reduce drive and keep the boat under control in wind speeds up to 20 mph or even higher. Adjusting the sails *just right* makes her go fast. So, sailing a Soling, you will develop your skills in tuning and boat handling.

The Soling is inexpensive compared to other model yachts. A new state of the art Soling can be built for around \$ 1000. No “A”, “B”, and “C” rigs.

Many other boats have several sails and rigs, to allow them to sail in different wind conditions. The Soling can sail in winds 0- 20+ MPH, with ONE rig, not four!!! A competitor’s \$500 base cost boat, with a total of an extra \$400 for a three extra rigs and sails (“B”, “C”, “D”) is a \$ 900 boat. And you have to have a “rig box” or bag to carry all these rigs to the pond- another \$50- \$125.

True one-design: While after-market features or enhancements to the Soling 1 Meter may be added to make the boat to allow ‘pond-side’ tuning adjustments to be made more easily, but under the Class Rules enhancements that might influence performance cannot be made.

Easy to start with as a first boat: For new model sailors, the RC sailing hobby appears complex, difficult to understand, and the ‘learning curve’ to get started seems steep. The abundance of Soling sailors in various locations around the country make it likely that there are experienced model sailors not far from where you live who would be delighted to assist you with your build and learning to sail.

Fun to build: You can build your new Soling per the instructions, in 12 or so hours. Since the Soling 1 Meter has fleets racing all over the USA, Canada, the Class offers competition at every level, with local club racing, regional and national events that will challenge any skipper, new or veteran. And the popularity of the Soling 1 Meter means resale values are retained.

Soling 1 Meter: the best choice in R/C sailing!



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