

# SUMMER SAILING SPECIAL

→ STARTS ON PAGE 44

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# SAIL

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## → TECH NOTES

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# Toys for the Boys (and Girls)

Stowable fun for sailors of all heights and skills BY TOM NUNLIST

PHOTOS BY COREEN SCHMIDT

Summer sailing and fun in the water go hand-in-hand, and there's nothing like a few water toys to keep younger crews amused in those quiet anchorages. The limited stowage on most sailboats rules out carrying traditional kayaks or windsurfers on board, so we thought we'd try out a selection of inflatable/collapsible playtime gear. As *SAIL*'s intern, I was volunteered to be the "splash-test dummy" on a sunny spring day in Marblehead, Massachusetts. With 10 feet of water at the dock and 6-8 knots of breeze, I donned a wetsuit and took my first-ever ocean swim (I'm a mid-westerner).

→ Each item was individually evaluated on quality of construction, performance, ease of setup, and stowability. I used a 5-star scoring system; "o" means "from the builders of the *Titanic*", and "s" means "worth every penny."

Construction: 4  
Performance: 3  
Setup: 4  
Stowability: 5  
Overall: 4.5  
Price: \$1,200



## WALKER BAY AIRIS SPORT INFLATABLE KAYAK

Weighing less than 30 pounds, the Airis inflates to high rigidity in minutes. A seat back is included, though we used the deluxe seat (sold separately, \$99). At 10' long, the Airis can be conveniently launched from a small sailboat. The sit-on-top Airis is suited to fun exploring, not long-distance kayaking. The beamy underside creates substantial drag so paddling at high speeds is taxing. It doesn't track perfectly, but it is stable enough for beginners. Its short length makes it highly maneuverable; a 180° turn takes two paddle strokes. The durable hull should be able to weather many a hard landing. Stowed, it's slightly bulkier than a medium-sized duffel bag, making it a practical accessory for just about any sailboat. [walkerbay.com](http://walkerbay.com)



**CONCLUSION:** A solidly built, space-efficient toy for all ages.

Construction: 3.5  
Performance: 2  
Setup: 4  
Stowability: 4  
Overall: 3  
Price: \$686



## SEVYLOR SAMOA PADDLEBOARD

This sturdy inflatable is nearly 11' long and has a beam of 2' 6". It is rigid enough to stand on and propel yourself with a paddle (sold separately, \$99.99). Balance-challenged? The board can be used just as well sitting or kneeling. The Samoa seems sturdy enough to take tough groundings. It comes with a pump and a backpack-style carrier, and, at 22 lbs, it's easy to stow. [sevylor.com](http://sevylor.com)



**CONCLUSION:** A good toy for playing around the beach, but it lacks versatility.



## FOLBOT COOPER

This full-on sea kayak is just shy of 17' long when assembled and features an aluminum-pole skeleton under a durable skin of polyester and Hypalon. The complex setup takes about 20 minutes with practice, but pays dividends on the water. The Cooper tracks well and maintains its speed with minimal effort. While I didn't use the optional rudder, it may come in handy for long-distance paddling. Weight is under 40 pounds and it folds into a large backpack, but assembly requires a lengthy workspace, at least 25 feet. You'll need a big boat for that. While the Cooper's rubberized bottom is built tough, you wouldn't want to jam it onto a jagged rock. It has inflatable flotation bladders but a swamped kayak isn't fun. A patch kit is available for \$30, and a sprayskirt for rough-water paddling is sold separately for \$130. [folbot.com](http://folbot.com)

Construction: 4.5  
Performance: 3  
Setup: 3.5  
Stowability: 3.5  
Overall: 4.5  
Price: \$1,795



**CONCLUSION:** A solid-performing, stowable kayak for exploring interesting coves and inlets.

## THE AQUAGLIDE MULTISPORT 4.1

Before this review, I had never boarded a sailboat, but it took only minutes to master the Aquaglide Multisport's sailboat option. *SAIL*'s edit team was skeptical at first: the mast is held fast by three adjustable-length nylon shrouds (straps) on a flat step and the boat itself is inflatable. However, it performed well enough for a newbie such as myself to comfortably sail. As far as sailboats go, the Aquaglide won't become an Olympic class, but for children and beginners, it's perfect. The whole setup, which includes the inflatable hull and an 11.5' rig and sail with a windsurfer control bar, takes about 15 minutes to assemble. The sail has an elastic mainsheet strap that attaches to the hull and lets the sail self-tack and self-trim. I opted to hold the sheet myself. At 8.5' LOA and 4.3' wide, it can be easily launched from a larger boat. The Aquaglide accommodates four different water sports, although we only tried the sailboat configuration. If you're finished sailing, a rotating connector allows for windsurfing. Remove the rig and add a seat, and it's a (wide) kayak. Also, it can be towed. [aquaglide.net](http://aquaglide.net)



Construction: 3.5  
Performance: 3  
Setup: 3.5  
Stowability: 3.5  
Overall: 3.5  
Price: \$600

**CONCLUSION:** Comical for an old salt, great for juniors or novices.



Construction: 5  
 Performance: 4  
 Setup: 5  
 Stowability: 5  
 Overall: 5  
 Price: \$1,549

EDITORS'  
**SAIL**  
 CHOICE

## HOBIE MIRAGE 19S

The Hobie Mirage 19s is the perfect cruiser's toy. It features high-quality construction, multi-functional design, fits into a rolling bag, and is small enough for even a J/24. The three-chambered body inflates in about 8 minutes. A built-in rudder can be deployed and steered from the cockpit via internally routed control lines. You can choose between three methods of propulsion. First, there's a collapsible kayak paddle that clips to the hull for stowage. If your arms get tired, you can use the ingenious Mirage Drive, a removable device that looks like bike pedals attached to penguin flippers that scissor past each other to create forward momentum. They can also be set flush against the hull for beaching or dock/deck launching. Or you can sail. The optional rig is supported by three shrouds. There's no centerboard so leeway is noticeable, but if you play the rudder and occasionally pedal the Mirage Drive, you can get the boat sailing well. The Mirage 19s comes standard with a well-padded seat, a patch kit, a fantastic inflation pump, and a large dry bag, which can be bungeed onto the boat's deck, abaft the seat. Hobie didn't miss a beat with this one. [hobie.com](http://hobie.com)

**CONCLUSION:** An all-around great kayak that stores snugly, deploys quickly, and performs well.

## CAT2GO

Two pontoons, a crabclaw rig, and more metal bars than a jungle gym give the Cat2Go a decidedly homemade feel. It comes in two large bags, but it can accommodate two people. Set-up is not intuitive, but short with practice (20 minutes). The cat performs about as well as it looks. The lateen rig is big enough to get it moving, but the hull is anything but stiff. Controlling the dual steering oar rudders is difficult, but they can be used as oars if the breeze dies. [sailboatstogo.com](http://sailboatstogo.com)

**CONCLUSION:** A complicated design with limited performance.



Construction: 2  
 Performance: 2  
 Setup: 2  
 Stowability: 3  
 Overall: 2  
 Price: \$1,199

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The good folks at Walker Bay have teamed up with SAIL to present a giveaway prize of the Walker Bay Airis Sport Kayak. The entry process is simple—just submit your name, address, e-mail address, and phone number to us at [sailmagazine.com/walkerbay\\_sweeps](http://sailmagazine.com/walkerbay_sweeps), and we will draw the winner in mid-September. Look for the official rules online.