

San Diego Windsurfing Site Guide



Site Name: Sail Bay/Santa Clara Point

Location: West side of Mission Bay in San Diego

Skill Level Rating: Beginner and up

Typical Sailing Conditions:

Wind: 8-12 knots from the W or WSW, typically starting in the late morning and tapering off mid-late afternoon. Winter storms can bring strong south winds, typically preceding the storm and clocking around to the west as the storm passes.

Water: Salt water, mid-70 degrees in summer, high 50s in winter. Water quality can be poor due to runoff/sewage spills after heavy rains, though this part of the Bay has better tidal flushing than east Mission Bay does and in general the water quality is better.

Boards: Early planning/giant slalom, 120-160l volume, 9'0" to 9'10" length.

Sails: 6.0 to 9.5+

Water Conditions: Generally flat water sailing with minimal chop. Sail Bay has more fetch than east Mission Bay so the chop can get bigger in stronger winds. Sail Bay is decently wide, so it's usually possible to get fairly long reaches no matter what direction the wind is coming from.

Sail Bay gets pretty busy with sailboats and kayaks, especially during the summer months. It is a 5mph boating area between 11am-5pm from May 1st to October 31st, but water skiing and high speed power boat traffic is permitted at all other times so beware!

Wind Notes: As with most of the Mission Bay sailing sites, the wind is typically driven by a standard coastal onshore flow. In general, Sail Bay has slightly lighter winds than east Mission Bay by the Hilton, but the location of the fog bank and other micro-conditions can also cause the opposite effect. Give the folks at the San Diego Sailing Center, 858-488-WIND (9463) a call to check on conditions. For beginners, a very protected cove adjacent to the Sailing Center on Santa Clara Point offers a protected environment with lighter winds than the main part of Sail Bay. As another plus for beginners, the prevailing winds typically blow you right back to the beach in the cove, so you won't find yourself stranded on the opposite side of Sail Bay.

During the occasional storm in late fall/winter/spring can bring good winds from the south that clock around as the storm approaches and then turn to the northwest. Storm winds tend to be gusty, so it's not unusual for people to be slogging around on a 7.5 one minute and then barely hanging on to a 5.0 ten minutes later as a squall line comes through.

Rigging and Launching Notes: There is a nice grassy rigging area with plenty of room to rig even on the busiest days. The launch itself is a sandy beach, though there is a 3-foot concrete staircase to negotiate between the rigging area and the beach. Beware of fin-eating rocks, especially at low tide. Also low tide means dealing with "Mission Bay Muck" and eel grass if you don't beach start close to shore - on a minus tide, it's almost impossible to avoid.

Other Notes: Santa Clara Point is very popular for sailboats, kayaking and water skiing, as well as having a softball field right next to the water. For other alternative activities, you might want to bring bikes or rollerblades since the Santa Clara Point is right in the heart of Mission Bay Park with easy access to the boardwalk. This is a beautiful area to enjoy even when there's not enough wind to sail. Mission Beach is also only a few blocks away, so you might as well pack the surfboard as well as the windsurfing gear and make a day of it.

Public restrooms are located in the Mission Bay Aquatics Center/Sailing Center building.

Parking and Fees: The parking lot is directly adjacent to the grass rigging area. During late fall, winter and early spring, parking is not usually a problem. However, during the late spring, summer and early fall days parking is very scarce. Get there early if you want to spend the day. Santa Clara Point has a lot of users, and parking is pretty limited.

Parking is free.

Directions to Site: Take Interstate 5 to the Sea World Drive exit and head west. Follow the signs to Ingraham St/West Mission Bay Drive and loop around onto West Mission Bay Drive. Go right at the stoplight on Mission Blvd (by the roller coaster). Go right at the stoplight at Santa Clara Point. Keep left to head to the Aquatics Center/Sailing Center on the north end of Santa Clara Point