

CURRENTS

SAILING NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA



The University of Pennsylvania
Sailing Team's Newsletter

Fall 2019

Coach's Report

Isaac Clark – Head Coach

Another fall season flies by! This one felt like the fastest yet and the whole team was shocked at its pace, always feeling like we were running out of time. It was a reflection of the energy and vitality in the group this fall, fueled by the introduction of our electric, new freshman class. All six of them brought their own strengths to bear this fall and contributed to the team's progress and motivation.

The Pennsylvania sailors competed in 20 events this season, and while we faced some major hurdles along the way, the Quakers nonetheless broke new ground for our program. Competing in this many events made sure our entire roster of sailors, new and old, all had many chances to compete across MAISA and NEISA. As a coach, it was really incredible to not only have the entire roster dedicated and invested in their performances weekend after weekend, but also to have many of our sailors travel to and experience new venues.

We achieved much this season, qualifying for both the Coed Showcase Finals and Women's Showcase Finals, with strong performances by all of the

freshmen at major and minor events, and posting very strong conference championship results. Helping the Quakers place second at Women's was a new B-Division pairing of Amanda Majernik C'22 and Laura Whelan C'20 who missed out on the divisional win by 1 point. Pushing the coed team to finish 7th at the WAR Memorial, were two new coed drivers Lenox Butcher C'20 and Chris Sharpless W'23, earning a respectable 8th in B-Division.

On a different note, I want to take the time to graciously thank our alumni and parents who support us in the most generous ways possible. Due to their exceptional contributions of hosting, and raising over \$105,979 in 2019 towards the Richard Jaffe C'79 G'79 Endowment Matching Challenge Fund we have been able to expand and further the incredible experience of sailing at Penn. We now attend more regattas, always with the support of a coach, have a trainer who leads all the team workouts, and are able to aid our team's ability to compete in Laser's and match racing. Our alumni sports advisory board led by Jack LeFort C'76 has been instrumental in connecting with so many Penn sailing alumni who share such a love and passion for this lifelong sport, and we have them to thank for helping secure so many of our gifts these past two years.



Letter from Alumni Jack LeFort C'76

December 2019,

Dear Quakers,

I am writing you today in follow up on behalf of the Penn Sailing team in their continuing drive to raise funds and achieve varsity status at Penn. Penn Athletics, with the support of Athletic Director Grace Calhoun, has partnered with us in aligning towards a goal of raising 4 million dollars in joint endowment and term funding, which will ultimately aid in our efforts in becoming a full varsity co-ed team again. The good news is we are almost halfway there. Thanks to a generational gift from my family and a major \$500,000 endowment matching gift from Richard Jaffe, we are off to a great start, but we really need your help.

From everyone's perspective the team's progress over the past several years has been a tremendous success. It all started with the approval from the Athletic Department to get a full time, high level coach. This was major! It is the first time Penn Athletics has committed to a full-time coach for a club sport. And in just two years our coach, Isaac Clark, has developed an outstanding program that is now nationally ranked in both the co-ed and women's divisions. To add to the momentum over the past two years we have just recruited some of the best freshmen sailing recruits in the country, a fantastic start. But we are virtually the last Ivy program to reach this level. As you know, the other Ivies have been the powerhouse programs in collegiate sailing for years. It is now time for Penn to get to that status and keep it!

As fellow sailors we know this is a lifelong, generational sport. It is the only co-ed varsity sport in college athletics today. And the success within the sport continues to play out with grads from our past sailing teams: Cory Sertl, the current President of U.S. Sailing and Rolex Sailor of the Year, Phil Lotz, the Past Commodore of the NYYC and champion sailor, and myself, winner of the 12 Meter World Championship this summer. All this could not have happened had it not been for our sailing experience at Penn.

The buzz around the program could not be higher. Please help us continue this momentum by giving generously to our effort. We need you ALL....to help reach our goal.

Thank you,

Jack LeFort C'76
Enclosures

Women's Team Report

Dana Hackett – N'20

This fall season has been a time for significant growth and development within our women's team. All four of the seniors who will graduate in Spring 2020, myself, Ava Esquier, Laura Whelan, and Lenox Butcher, are core sailors in women's and coed events. As such, this season was an opportunity for the four of us to enjoy and make the most of our last fall season and for our younger women's skippers, Amanda Majernik C'22 and Julia Johansson C'23 to develop their own skills as college sailors.

The first four weekends of the season this fall were unique for our team as we had underclassmen skippers sailing with our more experienced junior and senior crews. Kelly Hanlon W'21 and I both sailed with our newest women's recruit Julia Johansson C'23 in a variety of early-season events. This experience let us share with her the knowledge and experience that we have gained during our college sailing years, and more broadly, it allowed the freshmen to be eased into a new

format and pace of the sport. Not only was it beneficial for the growth and development of our team as a whole, but it was also a fun and rewarding way to start off the season.

It felt like the fall had just begun when we were already entering the top level coed and women's showcase regattas. The first event, Women's Showcase Semifinals at Brown was a lovely regatta with great breeze on the Providence River. The team cleanly qualified for the showcase final, finishing 4th overall. The following weekend at the Coed Showcase Semifinals at Navy, Ava Esquier C'20 and Lenox Butcher C'20 split B division with Emelia Bartusiak W'21 and myself crewing. It was exciting for our women's drivers to be competing in the championship coed fleet. Lenox and Ava were among eight women drivers between all eighteen teams at the Coed Showcase Semifinal A. Though certainly among the minority, the growing number of women skippers on the co-ed stage was an exciting change, indicative of a new era of progress for college sailing as an inclusive and ever-changing sport. With their solid performances and Joe LaForgia ENG'21 and Shaanti Choi-Bose C'23 outstanding results in A-Division, the Quakers



qualified for the first time for Coed Showcase Finals!

The Women's Showcase Finals, comprising of the top nine teams from each semifinal, was also held at Navy the following weekend. This event was an incredibly difficult regatta for our team. At such a high level of competition, small mistakes created larger hurdles to our overall success. While we aspired for a better result than 14th, this challenge gave us the valuable information we needed to avoid the same mistakes going forward and strengthen our weaknesses in the remaining events of the fall. For Ava and myself, this regatta really gave us the push we needed to be more aggressive in our last two events of the season: Yale Women's and MAISA Women's.

MAISA Women's, our conference championship, was a challenging event at St. Mary's. After eight arduous races in extremely light, shifty breeze on a short course, the Quakers finished day one in second place by 15 points. With only four races in each division left to be sailed on Sunday, we worked hard to anticipate rather than react to changes in conditions. We were able to finish almost every race of the day in the top 3 and fought our way into first place overall by the end of the day. Unfortunately, a protest in the last race of A division resulted in a DSQ and brought us back down to second overall. Though it was hard to see the championship slip through our fingers, we were all immensely proud of our grit and determination to bring the victory back into sight by the end of the event. As our esteemed trainer John Breen would say, we exercised "grace under pressure" to stay focused and disciplined in each of those few races sailed on Sunday. We were challenged to balance the

need for overall fleet management with the need to keep specific teams behind us. At MAISA Women's, we learned that we are capable of working hard until the last race and to fight for every point.

In summary, this fall has been equally as rewarding as it has been challenging. It has been so exciting to welcome the new Quakers onto the team, especially since we have such a large freshman class this year. We spent the season pushing ourselves and each other to perform in tough conditions. It is bittersweet for me to have completed my final fall season of college, and I am so lucky to have been able to spend eight fall weekends with a group of unconditionally supportive teammates. I think we have progressed beyond having faith and confidence in our independent abilities to now trusting every member of the team fully and completely. With the spring season already approaching, I know that we will be ready to tackle everything it throws at us.



Co-ed Team Report

Joe LaForgia – ENG'21

Now concluding my third Fall season for Penn Sailing, I am so impressed with how far our co-ed team has come. The team is smarter, stronger, and tougher than we were just two years ago. The group that sailed co-eds this half embodied the strong characteristics that define Penn Sailing: grit and determination.

Including myself, many Pennsylvania sailors did not have the most decorated careers before college sailing, but the structure and support of the team here at Penn has given us the ability to achieve such great things through our dedication to the sport and with the guidance of our head coach, Isaac. This semester in particular, we were really able to focus on putting our heads down and working hard.

To focus in on our grit and embody the Philadelphia spirit this fall, many of us watched the Rocky films over competition weekends, an effort

motivated by our native “Philadelphian”, Sam Gavula C’23. We made sure to include one of the Rocky films as part of our regatta weekend ritual, watching it the night before racing and focusing on the character of Rocky. Seeing Rocky’s drive and development compete with his weaknesses allowed us to get in a great headspace before racing and inspired us to have the fighting underdog mentality that allowed me and Shaanti Choi-Bose C’23 to break out this year and have a strong transition into the co-ed A-division, opening the season with 2nd overall at the Cayuga Lake Invite at Cornell, winning A-division at the Captain Hurst Bowl up at Dartmouth, and third in A at the co-ed Showcase semifinals at the Naval Academy. We were able to identify with the Rocky story as an up-and-coming team that is now threatening the other top programs.

With the resources graciously afforded to us by the University, our alumni, our parents and our dedication, we have seen outstanding development from all members of the team. Together, we have grown from a team that struggled to qualify for our conference championships to a high-performing



and nationally-competitive program that develops its athletes into their best selves. It is this development that illustrates the strength of this program that is taking root here at Pennsylvania, a program that is able to build phenomenal sailors from people that came from humble beginnings. It is this trajectory that makes me so proud to be a part of this team.

This semester, we've achieved some phenomenal results. For the first time in program history, the co-eds qualified for and finished 16th at the showcase finals, an event equivalent in competition to the spring national's finals. With this finish and the rest of our strong Fall season, we captured a 17th-place rank in the Sailing World Coed rankings, Penn's best coed rank in recent history. From here, we're only looking to continue to improve by keeping our grittiness and dedication at the center of our focus.

Reflecting on my experiences so far, I now fully trust the process that is Penn Sailing. This team is proving its ability to turn dedicated athletes into champions. I look forward to being a part of this process and helping lead it for my next few seasons, both for myself, my current and future teammates, and all those who come after us, coming together to make each other great. The co-ed team here at Penn Sailing is hungry, and ready to continue the fight.

We look forward to the Spring season and are excited to have the opportunity to work towards qualifications for both fleet race and team race nationals down in New Orleans!

The 2020 Penn Sailing Alumni, Family, and Friends Regatta

All Penn Sailing Alumni, Friends, and Family are invited to join us at the Corinthian Yacht Club of Philadelphia on Friday, May 15, 2020

We will have a fun regatta and BBQ on the Corinthian Yacht Club deck! Competing is open to all and spectating is welcome and encouraged!

For more information, contact head coach Isaac Clark at ihclark@upenn.edu





Freshman Experience

Chris Sharpless – C'23

The Freshmen of the Penn Sailing team had an incredible semester. Our first college classes, workouts, weekday practices and eight weekends of traveling made for a busy first semester. Despite our different backgrounds we always met at practice, forgot about all the stress of the day and went sailing together. The Freshmen started as a group of five sailors; Sam Gavula, Shaanti Choi-Bose, Karlei Kongsiri, Julia Johansson and Christopher Sharpless. We welcomed walk-ons Claire DuBois and later Lawrence Taritsa to the team as well. We all had different sailing experiences but that didn't stop us from becoming great friends.

The start of the semester led all of us into some firsts. The structured workouts that the team did were different from anything any of us had done before. We had difficulty adjusting at first and had many sore mornings, but we saw our bodies grow

stronger and our sailing abilities increase. We also had our first practice on the Delaware, a place known for its difficult conditions. Our first practice had 3+ knots of current which we had never experienced, as I hit a personal record of six marks that day. But eventually, we adapted and got used to Isaac preaching "The Delaware giveth and the Delaware taketh away."

Despite being freshmen, we were given many chances to sail this fall. The fall started for our team as it always has, with the Philly Fleet Race. All of the freshmen sailed and finished in the top three in their division, a great showing for our team. Julia Johansson was able to skipper some of the premier women's regattas. Shaanti Choi-Bose crewed in the A division at our team's biggest events. I was given the chance to sail with fellow freshman Sam Gavula at the fall Maisa Championship, the War Memorial and Karlei Kongsiri crewed at some of the most prestigious events in the fall.

The biggest adjustment for me was the amount of travelling and the numerous regattas in a season. When I sailed for Antilles High School in the

Virgin Islands, we left our home yacht club for only 4 events, team racing and fleet racing qualifiers and nationals. It took some adjusting to let go of the previous weekend and focus on the present one. Some of the best advice I got was from Joe LaForgia when he said, "Let go of the past, just make the boat go fast" this mentality allowed me to adjust to the new format of sailing.

One of my favorite memories of the fall was when Sam Gavula and I were able to sail together on the second day of War Memorial in wind conditions of 35+ knots. This opportunity provided endless fun around the racecourse, as we were able to plane on every leg of the course. I still remember our final

downwind leg where we hit an exceptionally windy puff and we both held on while the boat rocketed through the waves.

Our upperclassmen have been incredibly supportive of us, educating us on everything from where to get food to which classes to take. Our experience at Penn has improved dramatically because of all of the wonderful sailors who have helped us. Our freshman class came to Penn with a tremendous amount of potential both on and off the water, and the Penn Sailing team is helping us live up to it.



Spring 2020 Schedule

WKND #	Dates	Event	Format	Boats	Host
1	February 29-March 1	Tom Noble Team Race	Coed Team Race	FJ	Washington College
1	February 29-March 1	GW Team Race League	Coed Team Race	Z420	George Washington
2	March, 7-8	Navy Spring Women's Interconference	Fleet Race - 3 Race Sets	Z420 and FJ	Navy
2	March, 7-8	John Jackson Team Race League	Coed Team Race	FJ	Georgetown
2	March, 7-8	Wood Trophy	Coed Team Race	FJ	Harvard
Spring Break	March 9-13	Spring Training at ODU	Training Camp	FJ and Z420	ODU
3	March 14-15	Graham Hall Team Race League	Coed Team Race	FJ and Z420	Navy
3	March 14-15	Southern New England Team Race	Coed Team Race	FJ and Z420	Connecticut College
4	March 21-22	Szambecki Team Race League	Coed Team Race	FJ and Z420	ODU
4	March 21-22	Seahawk Team Race Invite	Coed Team Race	FJ and Z420	St. Mary's
5	March 28-29	Team Race Challenge	Coed Team Race	FJ and Z420	ODU
5	March 28-29	Dellenbaugh Trophy	Fleet Race - Women's A/B	FJ and Z420	Brown
6	April 4-5	Prosser Trophy	Coed Team Race	FJ and Z420	HWS
6	April 4-5	Ocean County Spring Open	Fleet Race - A/B	FJ and Z420	OCN
7	April 11-12	Navy Spring	Fleet Race	FJ and Z420	Navy
7	April 11-12	Old Guard for Mosbacher/Knapp/Owen Trophies	Fleet Race	T420s and FJs	Cornell
7	April 11-12	Women's Team Race National Invite	Women's Team Race	FJ and Z420	Brown
8	April 18-19	MAISA Women's Spring Championship	Fleet Race	T420s and FJs	Cornell
9	April 25-26	America Trophy	Fleet Race	FJ and Z420	KP
ICSA Nationals	May 26-29	Sperry Women's National Championship	Women's Fleet Race	FJ and Z420	Tulane
	May 30-June 2	Gill Coed Dinghy National Championship	Coed Fleet Race	FJ and Z420	Tulane
	June 3-5	Laser Performance Team Race National Championship	Coed Team Race	FJ and Z420	Tulane

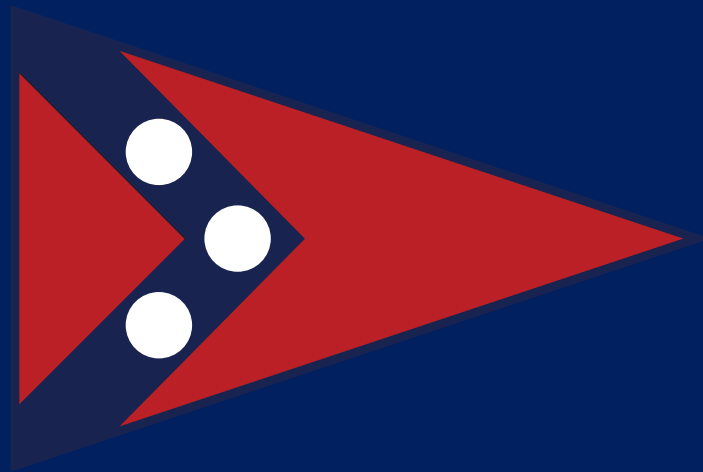


Ava Esquier C'20 and Dana Hackett N'20 working hard upwind at Women's Showcase Semifinals at Brown

We would like to thank the Sertl's C'80 (in Jamestown and Annapolis), Ramirez's C'96, Hanlon's P'21, and Esquier's P'20 (in Jamestown and New Haven) for all welcoming us into their homes this year. It's always such a source of comfort and joy when we arrive at your houses on a Friday evening and are welcomed with open arms and refrigerators. We could not compete at this level without all of your unwavering support and generosity.

We would like to thank our home venue the Corinthian Yacht Club of Philadelphia for being a perfect home to us. We would also like to thank St. Thomas Yacht Club and the Antilles School, for all hosting us throughout this year for training and practice. This service is invaluable to us and the sport of sailing.

Photo credits to Rob Migliaccio and HDFA Photography, thank you, as always for extraordinary work and time.



UNIVERSITY *of* PENNSYLVANIA
SAILING TEAM

Fall 2019