

USF St. Petersburg sail team wants a good season

on the water



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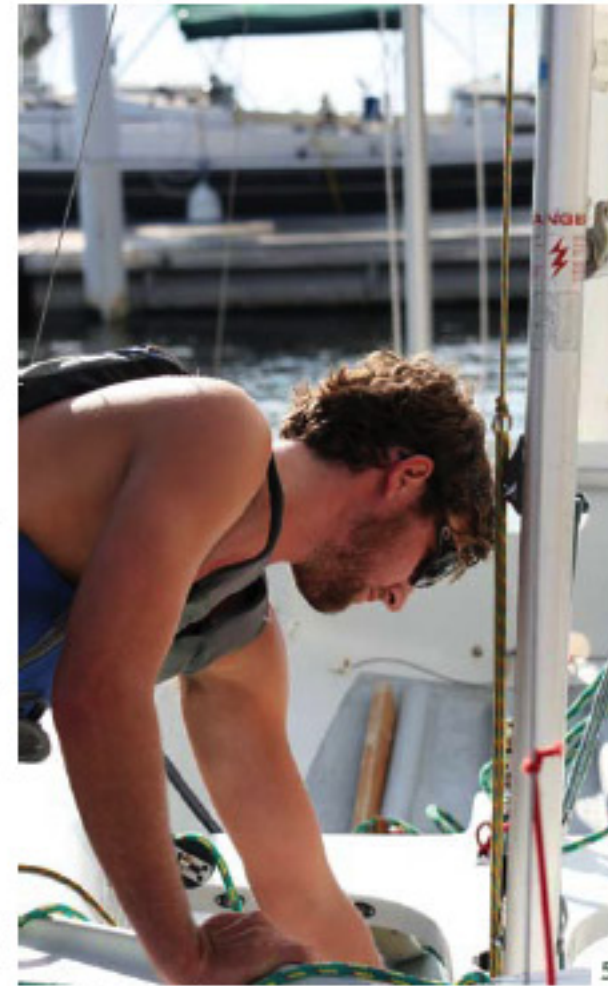


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With students buzzing about University of South Florida football's success, USF sailing quietly made appearances at five out of six national championships each of the last two seasons.

This year, the only intercollegiate sport based at USF's St. Petersburg campus continues to sail under the radar.

USF sailing has two teams, co-ed and women's, and competes against top universities around the country such as Texas, Michigan, Notre Dame and Charleston.

"The fact that we made it to nationals at all is a big deal," said women's coach Allison Jolly. "And we made it to five out of six."

The Inter-Collegiate Sailing Association holds national championships every spring, inviting the top 18 schools in each of six disciplines to compete. This format allows a team to win up to six national championships each season, one for each event.

"It's much like swimming," Jolly said. "A nationally ranked breastroker is not going to be nationally ranked in the backstroke."

While one sailor can reach nationals individually, Jolly said only a strong team can qualify for multiple championships in a single year. Only one school reached more champi-

ships than USF in 2007.

Junior Tim King received All-American honors last season, and senior Liz Foy hopes to join him this year. With disappointing finishes of 11th and 16th this season in their first two races, or regattas, both said they have a lot of work to do.

"I have to improve individually," King said, "and we have to be more consistent as a team."

At one regatta, sometimes lasting an entire weekend, a team sails several times and receives points for each race. A first-place finish merits one point, and an eighth-place finish receives eight points. The team with the lowest point total at the regatta's conclusion wins.

"We had a second-to-last race, then we had a first place race," Foy said. "They were very up-and-down."

The teams have less than two months to improve their consistency to qualify for the conference championships in November.

While working to duplicate last season's success, the sail teams also worry about funding. As the least funded sports program at USF, they have a fundraising team to raise money for travel and boat maintenance.

To host a regatta, the team must have a fleet of reliable and equal boats because the visiting team borrows boats from the host. Conference rival Eckerd College recently got

a brand new 18-boat fleet. USF is close to raising enough money for a brand new fleet of its own.

"We have enough money for 11 boats," women's coach Jolly said. "We need to raise enough for seven more to compete with Eckerd in recruiting."

"We sail against Eckerd in our conference," she said, "but we also compete with them for recruits. A lot of sailors come here from the north because they're tired of sailing in the cold."

Jolly, in her third year coaching at USF, said she is committed to continuing the team's growth into a perennial national contender.

The team has competed in at least one national championship every year

since 2001. While they are trying to reach five for the third straight year, she said reaching all six and win-

ning at least one remains the ultimate goal.

THE INTER-COLLEGIATE SAILING ASSOCIATION'S 6 national championships

- » **WOMEN'S SINGLE-HANDED NATIONALS**
A single female sailor competes in a race against individual females from other schools.
- » **CO-ED DINGHY NATIONALS**
Same as the women's dinghy nationals but teams can be male-male, female-female or male-female.
- » **CO-ED SINGLE-HANDED NATIONALS**
Single male and female sailors compete in a race against other individuals from opposing schools.

- » **WOMEN'S DINGHY NATIONALS**
Two females, one called the skipper and the other the crew, race in one boat called a dinghy against female pair teams from other schools.
- » **SLOOPS NATIONALS**
These co-ed only teams consist of three sailors. These trios race one large boat, called a sloop, against other co-ed three-person teams from competing schools.

- » **TEAM RACES NATIONALS**
This co-ed race consists of three single-handed sailors from all competing teams. Each individual sails a separate single-handed boat in a race against other schools' sailors. All boats are awarded points based on the place they finish in a race. The winning team is decided by adding together the places of all the boats in each team and the team with the least points wins.

USF St. Petersburg Sailing

- 1 » Sophomore Jon Ellington, 19, prepares his boat to sail out of Bayboro Harbor.
- 2 » Sail team members sail out of Bayboro Harbor.
- 3 » The USF St. Petersburg sail team meets Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.
- 4 » The sail team reads their boats for launch during their Tuesday afternoon practice.
- 5 » Sophomore Chris Kelmig, 19, prepares to raise the sail.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SAILING TEAM » For more information on the USF sailing team, visit their Web site at <http://www.stpt.usf.edu/sailingteam/>.