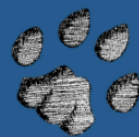


The Windward Panther

End-of-Season Report – Spring 2017



Message from the Commodore

Hello MCSC sailors, friends, and alumni!

My name is Rebecca Freeman, the Commodore of MCSC for 2017. I am a Molecular Biology and Biochemistry major and studied abroad in Chile last semester, so it was truly great to be back on the water and with the team after being away for so long.

I jumped back in with a great group of sailors on the board to bring me up to speed on the changes since last spring.

While the spring season is abbreviated, we took advantage of the time we had and sailed hard.

In addition to the annual spring training trip, we competed in eight regattas including the NEISA Women's and Coed Championships. It is really exciting to see the team compete against the top sailors in the country, and I am proud of everyone for putting in the effort to make this happen. We also hosted the Little 3 regatta for the first time with great success, thanks to the support of sailors and alums Meghan Colwell, Sean Willeford, Nick Dragone and Annie Hopper.

While I dread to see the seniors graduate, I cannot wait for the fall season. We hope to take big steps for our teams' future, including continuing the boat campaign, the Stuart Walker Regatta and, as always, bringing in new members to the MCSC fam. Ben Brown '18, Nathaniel Wiener '18, Emmet Byron '19, and Sam Zimmer '20 will be joining the ranks of the board next semester and I look forward to all that we will achieve.

I'd like to thank the friends and alumni of Middlebury Sailing, Coach Alex, members of the board, and all members of MCSC for making this a great season! I hope you all enjoy this edition of the Windward Panther.



- Rebecca Freeman, '18

Coach's Corner

Unlike the fall sailing season's long, arduous, and marathon-like schedule, the spring sailing season for our team is merely but a sprint. With two of our first three March regattas cancelled and the team's inability to practice due to a frozen lake, the season truly began in sunny Santa Cruz, California. We were lucky this year to travel with 12 sailors to Santa Cruz, and were warmly welcomed by the Santa Cruz YC and UC Santa Cruz staff. Furthermore, our trip was made memorable by the planning efforts of Casey Astiz and Erich Wu, who planned and coordinated an excellent trip with Tom and Dafna Brown.

The tone was set early and through five tough days of sailing in heavy winds, 4-6 foot swells, and white caps, the team felt prepared to tackle the season head-on. The team was preparing for the short spring season, starting with our most important regatta, the New England Dinghy Tourney. Last year, we fell short of our goal, a top two finish in this regatta, which would qualify us for the Dinghy Champs in late April. A combined effort through our week-long training trip in Santa Cruz enabled our team to earn the bid for the Dinghy Champs this year, placing a close second at the Dinghy Tourney. It was the entire team's preseason workouts and team building efforts, along with a hard-working week in Santa Cruz, that prepared our team for the Dinghy Tourney. The success at that regatta was entirely a team effort, one that could not have happened without every team member's hard work.

Needless to say, the last two championship regattas, the Women's and the Dinghy Champs, were tough. Having tasted the high caliber level of sailing at these championship regattas, the team can now see what hard work and real teamwork can do, and know where we need to improve to continue to progress. Although this season went by extremely quickly, this spring season's triumphs were truly defined by a real team, a cohesive unit, all with a similar vision of success.



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This spring, the team adventured across the country to Santa Cruz for our annual training trip. It was a great week full of sailing on the open ocean complete with sea otters, seals, sea lions, dolphins, and whales. Thank you to Santa Cruz Yacht Club and UCSC for boats, the Brown family for hosting us, Casey and Erich for organizing everything, Coach for getting us ready for our Spring season, all the MCSC sailors who made the week so memorable, and Lexie for making this amazing submission! (Photo Credit: Dafna Brown)



A Letter to Coach

To Alex, with love:

NARP, or None Athletic Regular Person, had been the word that my friends used to characterize me for a long time. After getting into Middlebury I wanted to do a sport and get rid of these letters of shame. I came to the Stu Walker regatta, and for the first time we met.

Believe it or not, I hated you immediately after joining the team. You'd always sit me on the coach boat and told me to watch, when all I wanted was to pull a sheet, roll a boat. When I was on the coach boat, you would from time to time surprise me with a question—"did you see what Ben did over there?" And I'd say no for much of the time, to your disappointment.

You would then ask me the same questions later. I didn't know for how many practices I sat on the coach boat with you, and how many questions you asked, but it was on the coach boat I learned the basics of sailing—point of sail, courses... It was on that coach boat that I learned to be patient, learn to observe, and learn the first step of being a good sailor. And you introduced me to the world of sailing.

But later we somehow became friends, pretty good ones as well. I would write to you my questions for sailing, and you would always respond, in very prompt, detailed manners. You would hold office hours specifically for me, laying out strategies and plans before my every race (I still retain many of our plans and your funky drawing). We would meet at Dunmore even before the 3:00 p.m. crew arrived. You would be my crew and we would go out for some joy ride. You would repeat "ease, hike, trim" to me; you would ask me to point up, put the tiller on the rail while tacking, and not to oversteer. You would ask me to tell you where the wind is coming from, and we would always catch the puff...

You always have a vibe of professionalism. You would always remind us the 5Ps, "Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance." You would send out detailed, organized practice plans. You would host chalk talks pointing out strategies and improvements.

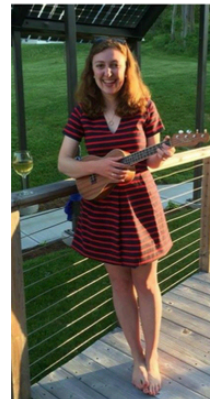
When I got the news of you leaving, I was shocked. Two years have flired by without much notice! Looking back, I have got to know you a lot more, and we have met each other not only in Vermont, but also Florida and California. I have grown from a sailor who capsized every week, to someone who is confident going against other experienced sailors. I am no longer a NARP, as I beat another kid from my high school in the Little 3 Regatta. Most important of all, I have fallen deeply in love with sailing. Even though you and I have only gone to the same regatta once, it was no doubt the best regatta I have ever been. If we could again travel to Tufts' Mystic Lake for the "Mendum Pond Invite", I would still ask to stop at the Hooksett Service Station. Not necessarily for the bathroom or food. I hope you would still ask me for a good reason to do so, and would still make fun of me for whatever I came up with. But I hope you would stop, eventually, and talk about sailing, strategies, and all kinds of crazy things like the cat that said "YASSS" and Sarah's rainbow unicorn attack. Or, we don't have to talk about anything at all. Just grab a coffee, hop on the van and leave. Because I know the van is heading back to Midd, and I would still get your practice plan the next morning.



Thank You Coach!

Yours sincerely,
Vick Xu '19

ALUM SPOTLIGHT!

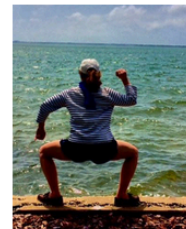


Meghan Colwell recently graduated from Middlebury, the only MCSC sailor in the class of 2016. She majored in International Politics & Economics and paired her social science focus with a variety of French and comparative literature classes.



Meghan grew up sailing Optis, FJ's, 420s, and J24s on the San Francisco Bay. While she wasn't set on sailing competitively in college, she hopped into a practice van on her first day at Middlebury, weathered unforeseen gale force winds on Lake Dunmore (shout out to Emily Cordner '13 for crewing!), and joined the board as Treasurer that spring. Meghan continued on to serve as a Social Chair, Women's Team Captain, and Commodore. She came for the sailing, then stayed for the people and the gin bucket.

Meghan has spent the last year since graduation working with a professor to implement social impact and experiential learning programs at Middlebury. She spends her free time enjoying Vermont—hiking, sailing, skiing, auditing courses, cooking, and spending time with two other sailors-turned-locals, Sean Willerford and Annie Hopper. Over the summer, you would have seen her behind the bar at Lincoln Peak Vineyard, pouring glasses and chatting about wine with locals and visitors. She'll be returning to the Bay Area to start a new job this summer (Let's go sailing if you're out west!). She has continued to support the team and is excited to see the diversity of people and skill levels that make up MCSC today.



Looking to become more involved?

Host the team! Our sailors travel across the country to regattas, let us know if you are willing to host four of us for a weekend!

Fundraise! The team fundraises for the spring training trip, coaching expenses, new boats and equipment, and other needs. We would love for alumni to help coordinate our fundraising efforts.

<http://sites.middlebury.edu/sailing/support-us/>

Buy a Shirt! MCSC finally has merchandise in the bookstore! All profits from the two shirts being sold in the bookstore go directly to the team and buying new boats! www.goo.gl/5EOeGE

For more information or to donate please contact Erich Wu, Ministers of Special Events

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