

College Placement Program

To create an alternative to professional sailing and provide a range of diverse opportunities is a great way to keep more young athletes involved in sailing.

The opportunity to become Olympic athletes is destined to few, and many young athletes unfortunately stop competing when they reach the age of 17. Especially with regards to Italy, the problem arises when the athlete enters high school, and is due mainly to the strict school system and the budgetary requirements to continue with the sport. Our goal is for these athletes to envisage a future in which promising students can continue their sailing activity while progressing with their academic career in US universities where sports and school are given equal importance.

International Junior Sailing Academy (IJSA) and EUROSAF are proposing the College Placement Program, a new project to guide and prepare young sailors, from both the academic and sports perspective, to access College Sailing (www.collegesailing.org) and continue their careers in US universities. The program is addressed to sailors between 10 and 18 years of age; because of the lengthy application process and the importance of the planning stages of the project it is necessary to have enough time to increase the chances of a successful application.

The Program

The main goal of the College Placement Program is to guide the students, through continuous consulting and regular check-ups on their competitive sailing and academic results, in gaining the adequate skills and knowledge that will allow them to access universities in the US where they will be able to proceed with their sailing careers.

After an initial student evaluation carried out by the IJSA Team (which takes into account specific requests, personality, long and short-term goals) a personalized program is prepared, developed specifically to allow the athlete to carry out all the tasks independently with the support of his club/federation. The program is tailored on the requirements and selection criteria of College Sailing.

The program includes two yearly clinics where all the students come together for four days to give the IJSA team the opportunity to evaluate their progress and adapt the individual plans if needed.

The later stages of the program, once the athlete/student is ready, focuses on the research of the most suitable University depending on academic and sailing results as well as personal preferences. The IJSA team then liaises with the University and supports the student/athlete through the entire process.

Work Flows

The structure of the program revolves around four work flows: English language, physical conditioning, technical and tactical training, and the introduction to the systems and requirements of college sailing. There have been four key sessions (clinic) during the season in which staff and students have met to verify progress achievements and outline the work to be completed when they returned home. Even though the sailors are often in touch with the IJSA team, it has been evident how they have taken individual responsibility towards their goals, demonstrating commitment and dedication during the sessions but especially with their individual homework.

English Language

The objective is to get all students prepared with the necessary English language skills a couple of years ahead of their college application, in order for them to have the time and knowledge to concentrate on their SATs. The program, developed in conjunction with Cambridge School Verona, aims for progressive learning of the English language not tied to school curricula but personalized to fit the students' level and age. During the season some of the technical and tactical components of the program are delivered fully in English.

The program is designed for students to be able to study from home, with support of Cambridge School Verona staff if necessary. During the clinics native speaking Cambridge School Verona teachers also deliver classroom-based sessions. The objective is for students to reach a level of English that allows them to be independent abroad, but especially to be able to take all classes and exams in English.

Other than language tests that are required for non-native speakers, students will also have to prepare for a general culture test and

consequently will need all the skills to actively participate in college life and attend all classes.

Conditioning

Other than promoting the importance of physical conditioning at a competitive sailing level, self-care and injury prevention, this work flow also focuses on developing a competitive sporting mentality in the students.

Students are followed by a personal trainer specialized in the sport of sailing. At the beginning of the season students undergo tests that allow for the preparation of a basic program and injury prevention. In a second phase and over the following years, the focus shifts on the creation of specific programs tailored for the class and role of each sailor. Another essential aspect of this part of the program is that we have been able to collaborate and provide sailing specific support to the sailors conditioning coaches, who are not sailors.

Technical and Tactical Training

On-the-water training focuses on the style of sailing used in College Sailing (starts, short races and boat control) and is carried out on the new 420Z, that has been developed following the requirements of College Sailing.

Students are also helped on a personal basis with their current racing issues, to help overcome insecurity and achieve short term success that will help in their long-term goals.

Preparing for College Sailing

The objective is to prepares students for what to expect from a US university system, compared to a European one. The program covers the application process and requirements to be enrolled in a school and selected by a coach. Throughout collaboration with Intercultura students have also been introduced to material that will prepare them to live and study abroad. The other aspect of the program consists in promoting our sailors to college sailing managers and coaches while monitoring the opportunity for scholarships.

What has been done to date

The first year of the IJSA College Placement Program has come to an end, allowing us to evaluate our progress to date. The key message of the project has been to communicate that through the sailing, and if you are a good student you can access scholarships to the best universities in the US. The first year has been a platform to test the structure and contents of the program. The limited number of students has allowed us to concentrate on maximising the modules' efficiency and to understand what issues could arise and how to tackle them.

The results obtained have been very encouraging, with students exceeding expectations and a lot of positive feedback. The 15 participating students all come from very different backgrounds, for the widest range of feedback possible. They are in fact of different ages (12-16 year olds), they come from all across Italy and sail on various different classes (Laser, Optimist, RSFeva, 29er, 420). This has allowed us to conduct research and test our programs in a thorough and complete way.

The Team

IJSA is born from an idea of Claudio Brighenti and Giovanni Canazza, both sailing coaches and sailors. Claudio's 20 plus year experience in coaching junior athletes and Giovanni's experience in studying abroad brought the project to life.

Claudio Brighenti – General Director and coordinator of coaches and professionals involved in the project. Claudio has a long lasting experience in coaching high level junior athletes with many international level results in his curriculum, including world championships in the Optimist, 420 and RSFeva. He has contributed to the development of sailing on Lake Garda and has collaborated with the Italian Sailing Federation, San Marino Sailing Federation, the Argentinian Sailing Federations and VDWS.

Giovanni Canazza – Responsible for the academic aspects of the project and for relations with US Colleges. Bilingual and graduated from the USA, Giovanni will bring his experience to the team and liaise with universities. At the moment he is involved in the organisation of major multi-sorts events.

IJSA's added value

The clinic give students an opportunity to delve into concepts that aren't necessarily dealt with within their school or sailing clubs. The analysis of the topics are held by specialised professionals that collaborate with IJSA, and tackle different themes across all work flows.

Workshops and Collaborators

Alex Ambrosi - Hampton University, Head Coach. Coach Ambrosi brings his experience in the College Sailing world both on and off the water. A real taste of the American university sports environment.

Luca Babini – International Umpire. Luca is one of the most respected umpires in Italy and internationally. After specializing in Match Racing he was part of the Umpire team at the 32nd America's Cup in Valencia and is often involved in the Match Racing World Tour. In the past he has also participated in the London 2012 Olympics, where he umpired the 49er race.

At IJSA, Luca works with the students mainly on the management of protests and how to use their language skills in protests at international level.

Curtis Blewett - Curtis is one of the most experienced and accomplished sailors currently living on lake Garda. The Canadian professional sailor has a long-lasting experience both in long distance races and in America's Cup sailing. In 1997/98 he won the Whitbread Round the World Race (now Volvo Ocean Race) on EF Language with Paul Cayard who he also joined on Pirates of the Caribbean for another Volvo Ocean Race. Curtis also participated in five America's Cup, winning two editions with Alinghi.

Curtis is a great example for the students as a person and as a sailor and his guidance is highly appreciated.

Carlo de Paoli – Pharmacist and nutritionist, Carlo is one of the few professionals who, thanks to his knowledge and experience in sailing, works specifically on nutrition for sailors. Very promising from a young age, Carlo was third at the Optimist Team Race Worlds and was crowned national champion on 29er, Laser and F18 and Moth.

Federica Salvà – After a top level international career on Olympic dinghies, Federica has now switched to coaching and seldom continues racing. She participated in both Atlanta '96 and Sydney 2000 on the 470.

Samuel Nicolettis – Owner and manager of OneSails, Samuel is an experienced sailor and sail maker. He has been sharing his knowledge with the young sailors and his lesson are always the ones that attract the most attention.

XMoth ed XKite – Thanks to the collaboration with these two schools, the IJSA students have the opportunity to test modern high-performance disciplines such as Kitesurf and Moth that will play an important role in the future of sailing.

Intercultura AFS (America Field Service) – INTERCULTURA is a non-profit, volunteer based, educational organization, promoting intercultural learning through student exchanges since 1955. The organization, through its volunteers, takes the students on a learning experience to understand the issues of moving to a different country and prepare them from their experience abroad

SVTA (Science Vision Training Academy) – An innovative training method used by athletes from a variety of sports. The method aims to increase attention and focus on pre-established targets. It is a mix of visual training and exercises that IJSA students experience during the yearly clinics.

Logistics

Clinics take place at Campione Univela or Circolo Nautico Brenzone, both on Lake Garda, Italy. Both locations offer incredible weather conditions for training as well as top-class facilities such as classrooms, accommodation and gyms.

Talks are in place to arrange winter clinics in collaboration with similar academies in Malta and Valencia.