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## Bulls Sail into Success

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## Bulls Sail Into Success

**W**HEN A LOOSELY-ORGANIZED group of students formed a sailing club team that practiced on a lake near the USF Tampa campus some 20 years ago, no one probably imagined the nationally recognized intercollegiate program it would grow to become. Today, the USF Sailing Team, under the direction of Coach Stephanie Doyle, has tripled in size, added a new fleet of boats and is regularly ranked among the top 20 schools in the nation.

"Three years ago no sailing coach thought USF would be a player in the district, much less the country," says Doyle. "Students have worked hard and accomplished a lot because of their drive to win."

During its 2002-03 season, the team won every South Atlantic Women's Sailing Championship, beating the historically strong College of Charleston women's sailing program. Team member Genoa Griffin was ranked number one in the country in women's college sailing, while Ali Deese, Claudia Aguado and Amanda Olivier all were named to the South Atlantic Region's All-Conference team.

Unlike most intercollegiate sports, sailing is a coed sport with women often competing against men. USF men also have brought the school recognition with two team members, Garth Reynolds and Kevin Reali, selected for all-conference honors in 2003.

In fall 2003, at the Hatch Brown Regatta hosted by Boston University, sophomores Kevin Reali and Ashley Reynolds took first prize in the A Division. USF upset Ivy League regatta favorites Harvard and Brown.

### A Determined Past

After its start in the 1980's as a club team that competed at colleges around the Southeastern United States, the USF Sailing Team disappeared for a while, reorganizing in 1992 under the direction of Steve Lang, an education professor. Lang volunteered as adviser and coach, joining the team at competitions around the country. The team grew under Lang's

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The USF Sailing Team is regularly ranked among the top 20 schools in the nation in college sailing.

direction, becoming increasingly competitive at local regattas. As it grew in stature and size, the team moved to the university's St. Petersburg campus, where a waterfront training facility is located on Bayboro Harbor.

The team joined the South Atlantic Intercollegiate Sailing Association, an association that includes 20 schools from Florida to North Carolina.

In 2000, USF's Intercollegiate Athletics Department added women's sailing to its group of women's sports. At the same time, Doyle was named the first coach of the women's sailing team. Today, sailing is the only varsity sport housed out of USF St. Petersburg—a natural fit for the waterfront campus.

### A Bright Future

This year, the Bulls will compete with a young squad made up of students from around the country who chose USF for its sailing program.

"We have a lot of new recruits this year, without a lot of college sailing experience," Doyle says. "Our goal is to put them into as many regattas as possible to give them the experience they need."

Key players for the Bulls this spring will be Andrew Blom, Amber Cockburn, Kevin Reali and Ashley Reynolds, with the remaining two coed starting positions up for grabs. Reali and Blom both were fre-

quent top competitors in junior sailing qualifying for international competition.

In women's sailing, underclassmen Jee Lee, Abby Ethington, Kirsten Murray and Lauren Sinclair will all start. USF also returns Kristen Herman from last year's championship winning squad. Last year, as a freshman, Herman surprised many in college sailing after coming off the bench at the Atlantic Coast Championships in high winds and forty-degree weather in Connecticut to score several first-place finishes against some of the top women sailors in the country.

The biggest challenge for the Bulls this year will be qualifying for postseason competition because district rivals College of Charleston and Eckerd College both return strong teams. USF will bid to host the South Atlantic Regional Championships this spring. Hosting these regattas gives the teams a home water advantage that could just push them over the edge.

College Sailing North Americans will be hosted at the gorge in Oregon this June with more than 200 teams vying for 18 spots at this regatta. USF qualified for North Americans at Michigan last year in team racing and women's sailing. They're hoping for a repeat in 2004.

Looking at the team's impressive history, that seems like a realistic goal.

by Ann Carney