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USF SAILING TEAM WINS KENNEDY CUP, TO COMPETE IN FRANCE NEXT YEAR

Members of the USF Coed Sailing Team took first place in the Kennedy Cup Intercollegiate Sailing Association (ICSA) National Collegiate Large Yacht Championship Nov. 5-6. The USF Bulls, seven of whom are USFSP students, competed at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., and qualified to represent the United States in the 37th annual Student Yachting World Cup next year in France.

"In the college sailing community, the Kennedy Cup is a big deal," said USF Coed Sailing Coach Alan Capellin, adding that it is relatively rare for teams to get to compete. "There are only 10 teams out of all the colleges that are in the U.S. that get to participate. The Navy has a protocol and standards to participate in the event."

The team received a sizeable trophy that carries great historical significance in the sailing community. The eight students from the USF System were excited for the chance to participate in the challenging competition.

"Winning the collegiate big boat national championship is a huge accomplishment for each of us involved, and is great for the USF sailing program," said Michael Trebilcock, who served as the skipper during the Kennedy Cup. "It is very rewarding to end our season with the national championship."

One of the greatest challenges for the students is that they competed aboard one of the Academy's Navy 44 MKII sloops—a large craft unlike anything in the USF System.

"It's a huge challenge, learning how to work together and how to make the boat go fast," said Capellin, who worked with the students on Friday before the competition started. "We made mistakes, which they were able to work through themselves to determine what they could and couldn't do, and to identify their strengths and weaknesses. That's the bigger challenge than just making the boat go—a big challenge with all eight people."

Another challenge is the strong caliber of the teams they faced. In college sailing, there are seven national championships—five coed, two women's—for seven disciplines. Most teams have a dedicated offshore or big boat teams that sail and practice on similar or the same boats for months.

"What makes this special for our team is that we have the same students sailing in all the disciplines," Capellin said. "Typically, schools have dedicated teams for all seven disciplines. At USF, we only have two: the Coed Team and the Women's Team. So they don't have as much time to focus on practicing a specific discipline."

The eight competing students include:

- Andrew "Ty" Baird, a pre-Business Administration junior at USFSP
- Sean Cornell, a Finance junior at USFSP
- Scott Ewing, an Environmental Science and Policy junior at USF Tampa
- Brendan Feeeny, a Finance junior at USFSP
- Michael Sanadajian, a Biology junior at USFSP
- Cameron Smith, a pre-Business Administration freshman USFSP
- Orrin Starr, a pre-Business Administration sophomore at USFSP
- Michael Trebilcock, an Environmental Policy senior at USFSP

"The pageantry and passion around the sailing center was incredible," said Feeeny, a Finance junior at USFSP who knew little about the history of the Kennedy Cup before going to the U.S. Naval Academy. "Teams flying their war flags, academies chanting their cadences—we quickly realized that we were competing against some of the best offshore teams in the country."

Three of the students—Cornell, Ewing, and Feeeny—also recently were part of the four-person team that successfully competed in a conference championship regatta in Charleston, S.C., finishing second. The match qualifies them to compete in the 2016-17 College Sailing Match Racing National Championship later this month with teammate Mandi Dickie, a biology junior at USFSP.

"This significant win is yet another example of how our students benefit by an education at USFSP—the opportunities they have to grow as scholars, athletes and citizens," said Regional Chancellor Sophia Winiewska. "We extend our sincerest congratulations to this talented team and our coaches!"
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