

Island Sports

NK sailors have potential to win it all this season

By Adrienne Downing

The parents of the sailors on the North Kingstown High School sailing team got together this year and made a quilt to help the team raise money and the team is going to need the money if coach Matt Largess' prediction plays out the way he hopes it will.

"Our goal this year is to make it to nationals in fleet racing and win the national championship," the coach said.

The goal is not so lofty when considering that the Skippers have been the state champions for the last two years and finished sixth out of 89 teams in New England.

"It is very unusual for public school kids to be this good in sailing," Largess explained. "We are racing against some of the elite wealthy academies and I know that we surprise them."

They are hoping to surprise more than one team on Saturday



The Jamestown members of the North Kingstown High School sailing team braved the cold, rainy weather to practice on Monday afternoon. Pictured with the team is coach Matt Largess, also from Jamestown.

Photo by Jeff McDonough

when they compete in a four-way regatta hosted by Portsmouth Abbey and the Naval Academy Preparatory School.

"This race will really show what we are about this year. This is a big regatta and we need to be in races like that. It is a big thing that they invited us," Largess said.

"It is like the Mighty Ducks taking on the Boston Bruins," he continued. "It seems that the odds should be against us, but they aren't. They really are a premier sailing team."

The team has actually dubbed themselves the "Sailing Ducks," a spin on the fictional hockey team that rose from nowhere to defeat some of the top hockey teams in the world.

Largess said that one of the team's strengths this season is the depth of the team.

"We have four really good skippers, Pete and Gary Largess, Mike Marshall, and Lyle Fielding, and the great thing is that they have all sailed together since they were little," he explained. "We did lose some of our crews last year, but we have some kids this year who are really stepping up and sailing very

well."

Largess notes that seven of the sailors that are part of the "team depth" are from Jamestown.

The class of 2008 is represented by Oliver Allaux and Tucker Silvia, who Largess calls a heavy air crew specialist. Team sophomores include Eric Von Hohenleiten, Victor Lambert and Kelsey McDonough.

"Eric and Victor both love the sport. Eric is also involved in track and Victor is a great student. Kelsey is one of our future star skippers," Largess said. "Freshmen Alice Toll and Erica Lush both show great potential."

Another strength, explained Largess, is that the team is a good heavy air team. "We sail well in ocean sailing conditions, when the wind is blowing hard and there are big waves," he said.

Team chemistry is very important in sailing because they spend so much time together and Largess said that the team gets along very well.

"I like to have them stay actively sailing all year round. We sail in regattas on the East Coast in the summer and the fall and sometimes we do frostbite races in the winter," he noted. "It keeps them in the game because it is amazing how competitive sailing is."

Even during the course of a regular season, the team can travel as far away as New York and they may even have to go to California if they make the national finals.

Home regattas take place at the Wickford Yacht Club and the commodore of the club, Chuck Allen, has been an inspirational presence for the team.

"He is such a great volunteer. We just couldn't do it without him," Largess praised. "Not only does he help our team tremendously, but he is a great supporter of high school sailing in general."

Their last home win came against Portsmouth on March 29.

"This team is a dream team, they are extremely talented. Most of them grew up sailing. It is not that we are so much better than the other teams, we have just done it more. The kids who are coming up feed off of the other kids and it just makes the team so much better," he explained.

"Our goal is the national championship. It is not the end of the world if we don't make it, but we are going to try our best and along the way we are going to be good sports to the other team," Largess concluded.

Free pet grooming workshop offered

The Potter League for Animals is holding a Pet University Class on Wednesday, April 18, at 6:30 p.m., on the topic of Great Grooming Tips.

Carlene Rodriques of Monique's Grooming Salon will discuss nail clipping, brushing, ear cleaning, and bathing techniques. Good grooming not only keeps animals looking nice but it is good for their health. Spring is the perfect time to pets off on a regular grooming routine.

This class is free of charge and will be held at the shelter on 87 Oliphant Lane, Middletown.

For more information on this class or to pre-register, call the Potter League at 846-8276.

Baseball registration deadline tonight

The major league registration period has been extended through the parents meeting to be held tonight, Thursday, April 5, at 7 p.m. in the Melrose school multi-purpose room. All other age group registrations can also be submitted at this time. Registration forms will be available. Parents of new players are encouraged to attend this meeting for important information.

Boys and girls, ages 5 through 12 on April 30, are eligible to play in the Cal Ripken divisions. Players are requested to bring a birth certificate to registration and if not available, it must be provided by April 23. Try-outs for major leagues (ages 9 through 12) and boys Babe Ruth (ages 13 through 15) will be held this Saturday, April 7, at Around the Horn Sports Center, 3377 South County Trail in East Greenwich. Players 9 years old and older, who have not played on a major league

team, need to try-out if they wish to play on a major league team. New Babe Ruth players, even if they played in the majors last year, must try out for the Babe Ruth teams. Major league tryouts will start at 8:15 a.m., followed by Babe Ruth tryouts at 9:30 a.m. Players who are already on a major league or Babe Ruth team are not allowed to try-out.

Opening day is Saturday, April 28. All players, in all age groups, are responsible for their own batting helmets.

Jamestown Baseball needs volunteers to serve in various positions, including concession stand coordinator, instructional league coordinator, and instructional league managers/coaches. A second Babe Ruth team and qualified umpires are also needed. For more information, contact Tony Rafanelli at 423-3953.

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