

Club sailing full of fun challenges in water

■ Dedication is required to be a part of the club sailing team, but you don't need any prior experience to join

By Dylan J. Darling
for the Emerald

While most think of sailing at Fern Ridge Reservoir as a relaxing way to spend a warm afternoon, for members of the Oregon club sailing team it is all preparation for the team's tension-filled races.

In all, there are fifteen members of the sailing team, with an even mix of male and female competitors, according to coordinator Summer Bryan, a junior biology major.

Bryan said the team's main seasons are the fall and spring, when they compete in regattas almost every week. The team members also



have occasional regattas in the winter, but they don't practice because the water at their practice site at Fern Ridge is too low.

The regattas, hosted by Northwest schools such as Washington, Portland State and San Francisco, require a large amount of travel by the team.

Oregon also hosts two regattas of its own during the school year, one during Halloween weekend called the Outlaw and one in late March called the Rainier Cup. Both events are held at Fern Ridge and feature

teams from throughout the West Coast.

All this time spent at competitions, combined with three three-hour practices a week, makes participating on the sailing team quite a commitment, according to Bryan. Just getting out to practice takes 30 minutes each way, but she said being able to sail is worth the time and effort, and she is flexible with people who can participate on only a limited basis.

Even Bryan admits that it's difficult to balance her time in the classroom with her time on the water.

"It's hard to be as dedicated to both as I want to be," she said.

Bryan said that as long as team members set their priorities and manage their time well, they are able to succeed at both school and sailing.

The team draws a wide variety of people to its ranks, but the members are all unified by the type of boat they race in. For the most part, they race in flying juniors or "FJs." An FJ is a 15-foot long dinghy that has one sail and a crew of two.

The team has eight FJs, as well as a Santana 20, a 20-foot long boat with two sails that holds two sailors. The team usually races the boats on bays or lakes and stays away from the ocean.

"We have a lot of inexperienced sailors, so out on the ocean is not where we want to be," Bryan said.

While the members don't sail the seven seas, sailing does give the team an escape from school and everyday life.

"I like the quietness," Bryan said. "I love being able to cruise through space without disturbing it."

Team member Carey Clouse, a senior interior architecture major, said she loves being out on the lake because it is calm and beautiful, but she also likes sailing because it is something that requires a lot of thought.

"You are figuring out how to move yourself by arranging your sails," Clouse said.

She said a sailor needs to know how the wind works and how to harness it with the sails of the boat.

The amount of thinking required for sailing is increased even more when the sailors are racing against 20 or so other boats. The calmness of recreational sailing is a contrast to the intense competition at the regattas, which Bryan described as "an adventure."

"It is intense, hectic; it gets your adrenaline pumping like crazy," Bryan said.

She said the races are usually tight, and the experienced racers know how crucial time and position are.

"The best sailors will be next to each other," Bryan said.

Clouse said the most intense time is the beginning of the race.

"Your position at the beginning of the race makes or breaks your final time," she said.

The courses are usually in the shape of a triangle, and the racers have to complete one or more laps, depending on the rules set by the race committee. The sailors aren't

racing against the clock, but rather they are competing with the other boats because times are dependent on the amount of wind at the time of the race.

Clouse said the races are pretty stressful because the sailor needs to be constantly checking how everything is going.

"When you are racing you are trying to harness the maximum amount of wind you can," Clouse said.

She said the sailors need to be constantly thinking about boat speed, and they need to be focused on their boat and its efficiency. The sailors also need to be concerned with their direction and how their weight is balanced in their boat.

If careful attention is not paid to these areas, one of the most dreaded things can happen to the sailing crew — capsizing. Though it would take experienced sailors only a few minutes to right their overturned ship, the overall loss of position would greatly affect a team's finish.

"You pretty much lose the race if you capsize," Clouse said.

Linda Chung, a junior biology major and another member of the sailing team, said the danger of capsizing is something that is always in the back of sailors' minds, especially if have always kept their boat right-side up.

"If you have never capsized you are afraid of it," she said.

Capsizing is not the only thing sailors want to avoid, as bumping into other vessels can also lead to major setbacks in the race.

During the race, sailors need to yield the right-of-way, in similar fashion to car drivers yielding to merging traffic. If a sailor fails to give the right-of-way, it ends up hitting another boat, and this time-consuming process can have drastic results on a boat's finish.

The highest risk of hitting another boat is at the beginning of the race, according to Clouse.

How often such incidents occur depends on the skill level of the sailors, which can vary greatly depending on their individual backgrounds.

While Bryan said she has been sailing all her life, Clouse and Chung said they both just started in college.

Chung said she went into the sport completely cold, but in her time on the team she has learned everything she needs to know to be a competitive sailor. While many people come in with some knowledge of boats, others have never even been in a sailboat before.

"You definitely don't need any experience to learn to sail," Chung said. "It really depends on what you want to get out of it."

Once the sailors are done competing in college, there are opportunities for them to race through local yacht clubs and other organizations. But Bryan, Clouse and Chung all said they would probably sail only for pleasure once their racing days are over at Oregon.

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Horoscope by Linda C. Black

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (April 17): Your team is red-hot this year, and as cool as ice. The combination is unbeatable! Get the best to be on your side in April. Draw up the rules in May. Practice in June, then recuperate in July. If you don't have much time for romance in August, ask your sweetheart to be understanding. Make the time for romance in October and December, and make your outings special. February is for a group activity, and for winning against all odds. You'll have more private time in March.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) — Today is an 8 — The problems you and your group are most likely to encounter are financial. Your ideas are fabulous, but who's going to pay for them? Sidestep that dilemma by staying within your budget.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — Today is a 5 — Face it: You're outnumbered. You're likely overworked, too, and it isn't fair. On the other hand, somebody important is becoming more and more dependent on you. The money should be pretty good. If not, ask for more. You've earned it.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) — Today is an 8 — You're on a roll, but don't go too fast. The law of gravity is still in effect, you know. Don't get so excited that you accidentally race right off the edge. Enjoy the fantasy, but don't set yourself up for a rude awakening.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) — Today is a 5 — Focus on service. Provide the very best for the one who needs it most. Expect to get more out of this experience than you're putting into it, even though you should put 100 percent into it. This will work — eventually.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) — Today is an 8 — It may once again be difficult to contain your enthusiasm. For the most part, everything is wonderful. You don't have to be inhibited all the time — just at certain times. You know when.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Today is a 4 —

There's more of the same to deal with today. You should have the routine down by now, so there's nothing to worry about. You could finish this job with one hand tied behind your back, but use both hands or people will wonder.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) — Today is a 9 — You are the lucky one! The conditions are right to enhance your natural talents, and that goes beyond your good looks. You also have excellent peacekeeping skills. Use them if one of your colleagues gets a little too rambunctious.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) — Today is a 4 — You're still in danger of being stretched too thin. Do what you can to prevent that happening. That means you might have to say "no," or "later." You can do this. You could grow to love those words.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — Today is an 8 — Keep pushing the limits, but don't get flustered if something you try doesn't work. It won't — at least not on the first try. But that's part of the adventure. Remember your safety net.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Today is a 5 — Your to-do list of household chores is becoming more of a priority. Something needs fixing or mending, and it can't wait much longer. Creativity is required in order to keep costs down. You can come up with an innovative idea. All you have to do is get the family to go along with it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — Today is an 8 — You're not just a student; you're also a teacher. But don't get tricked into thinking you know everything. Stay humble. You're getting most of the answers right, but a silly little detail could trip you up tonight.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) — Today is a 4 — The person issuing the order could make a mistake, so try not to make the same mistake yourself. It's perfectly OK to follow orders, but don't be a robot. Watch where you're going.

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