

LESSON

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it was then he realized the sport had his name written all over it.

"It's a physical impossibility to have stress when I'm sailing," Yioulos said. "Time basically stops for me."

Yioulos, a junior business major, sees sailing as a place to practice and implement the skills he has learned in the classroom. Sailing has taught Yioulos the intangibles that can only be mastered through experience.

"You learn to take risks, how to delegate responsibilities, how to deal with a crisis and how to accept the good," Yioulos said. "And when the bad does happen, you learn how to encourage people to get through those tough times."

Sailing Club member Sarah Higgenbotham said Yioulos' enthusiasm inspires competition and keeps the team moving forward. She said Yioulos' leadership and commitment to the team has almost become a lifestyle for him.

"Enthusiasm is the most important

thing to bring to a leadership role, and his enthusiasm for sailing rubs off on other people," Higgenbotham said.

Reorganizing the sailing team took new equipment and more people to get involved. Realizing that need, Yioulos became a recruiter in addition to his other duties, and he found this task the most rewarding. Yioulos said sailing, as well as being the Club's coordinator, has taught him everything he has wanted to know about people.

Matthew Sperry has been by Yioulos' side since the beginning, and has witnessed the many hours Yioulos has sacrificed in order for the club to become what it is today. With 22 members, eight boats and a renewed campus interest, Sperry said Yioulos is the best thing to happen to Oregon's program.

"He coordinates, he coaches, he teaches," Sperry said. "He has literally sacrificed the whole rest of his life for this right now. This is his dream."

Yioulos and the team compete in a number of regattas across the West Coast throughout the year and

participate in the Northwest Intercollegiate Sailing Association. Lewis and Clarke, Linfield, Oregon State, Portland State, University of British Columbia, Washington and Western Washington all compete in the Northwest District against Oregon.

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George Yioulos
Oregon Club sailing coordinator

The Ducks will compete this weekend in the Spring Championships at Cascade Locks in the

Gorge, which will determine the league's national qualifiers.

Although Yioulos said he would love to be a favorite at the Spring Championships, he is just happy the team can compete at a higher level.

"It's our goal to win at the Spring Champs, but it probably won't happen this year," Yioulos said.

On May 8, the Ducks will compete in the Portland State Invitational — their final regatta of the year — on the Willamette River. The event will give younger members of the team a chance to work on sailing for next year and will be a fun and casual send-off event for the team's senior members.

For now, Yioulos would like to put more emphasis on the importance of teamwork and camaraderie. He said he would like to see the team become a powerhouse in the upcoming years, and a healthy dose of both competitive drive and teamwork would produce the best overall team atmosphere.

Yioulos cannot imagine where he would be today if he had not found

sailing and the sailing program at the University. He said his grades would be better, but he would be "a sad soul" because he would lack the life lessons sailing has taught him. Never giving up is one characteristic Yioulos believes can't be taught in the classroom; it has to be learned individually and sailing gives him that chance.

"It's the perfect life lesson," Yioulos said. "You fall off, you get wet, you get back on, and you keep going no matter what."

In the coming years, Yioulos would like to see the alumni of the sailing Club become more involved and connected to the program. He also would like to see more freshmen participate, so the team could build off sailors who have been involved in the program for an extended amount of time.

In the end, Yioulos said keeping things in perspective is the key to maintaining his sanity.

"It's college sailing, not Russian roulette," Yioulos said.

Kirsten McEwen is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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