

Name; Joanna Freeman

Age: 20

When did you first start sailing, with whom, in what and where?

At Parkstone. My Dad taught me how to sail in a Poole Harbour AB (which is slightly bigger than an Optimist but also has a jib) at the age of five.

Where is your home club and what makes it special?

Parkstone. I learnt to sail there and spent most of my Cadet days sailing out of there. At the time we had one of the biggest squadrons in the country so the racing was great. I also think Poole is a beautiful place to sail, particularly in summer.

The cadet(s) you have sailed:

I have only ever sailed fibreglass Cadets. I crewed for 2 years in Nitro aged 10 and 11, then helmed C'est La Vie for two years before getting True Blue which was a brand new boat. I was fortunate to have the same crew for all of my five years helming a Cadet.

Your achievements in Cadets

In 2006 after narrowly missing out on the team for the Cadet Worlds we won the promotional regatta in Hungary.

In 2007 we came 5th in the Worlds qualifying series and came 8th at the World Championships in Pwelli and I was first under 16 helm.

In 2008 we came 2nd in the national ranking series and then 2nd at the World Championships in Medemblik and 1st girl helm.

Did you go through the squad system and when?

Yes, after crewing in the National Squad for two years at the age of 10 and 11, I started helming when I was 11 and got into the Southern Zone squad when I was 13. I did two years in the Zone squad followed by two years in the National Squads.

If so, what lessons did they teach you?

They taught me about tactics and boat speed. Each year you need to build on what you learnt the previous year and you will slowly improve. The squads help you stay on the upward ladder, climbing your way towards the top.

The best thing(s) about Cadets

They are colourful, fun and friendly and you get to sail with someone else. I never wanted to sail on my own when I was younger and in fact I never want to move into a single handed class. Because the Cadet is a two person, three sail, symmetric spinnaker boat if you learn to sail it well you will be able to jump into any boat and know how to sail it.

What are you currently campaigning/doing within sailing?

I am currently doing a 470 campaign with the ultimate aim of competing in Rio 2016. This summer once I have finished my degree I am looking forward to sailing full time and focusing all my attention on sailing, which has been a lifelong dream.

What are your strengths and weaknesses on the race course?

Strengths- downwind boat speed, upwind tactics

Weaknesses- starting

What are your sailing highlights to date?

Coming 2nd in the Cadet World Championships in 2008

Winning the Youth Nationals in 2010 (in the 420 class) and coming 4th at the ISAF World Championships

Coming 2nd in the 470 Junior European Championships 2012

What are your sailing ambitions?

To represent Great Britain in an Olympic Games and to win a gold medal

Where has sailing taken you?

Wales, Scotland, France, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Argentina, Israel

Who has been the biggest influence on your career?

Definitely my Dad as he used to take me round to all the events when I was younger, but he is still an influential person in my campaign and I always go to him for advice.

Who is your sailing hero and why?

I don't have a sailing hero. I aspire to be the best I can and have an image in my head of what I will be like when I am good enough to win an Olympic medal.

What words of wisdom would you like to pass on to the current crop of Cadet Sailors?

Make a lot of friends particularly with sailors from other squadrons and other countries. Stay focused, take each step as it comes and enjoy it, particularly your time in Cadets as they are lovely boats!