

BEN HAZELDINE, aged 15, from Arford Hants & Cadet National Champion for 2011 tells us what inspired him and about his future sailing plans.

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

I first started sailing with my Mum and Dad in a Contessa 32. When I was 7 I learnt to sail in an Optimist at Frensham Pond Sailing club and then moved into Cadets as a crew.

Where is your home club and what makes it special?

Frensham Pond Sailing Club, and Royal Lympington Yacht Club. I learnt to sail at Frensham Pond - it was a great place to sail Cadets at the weekend we often had 30 Cadets on the water so we had some very close racing. At Frensham you quickly learn to sail in shifty conditions. I now sail from Lympington Yacht Club as they have a strong 420 fleet but still sail at Frensham when I get a chance.

The cadet(s) you have sailed?

I started crewing in Tornado GBR9151 and crewed for two years before getting Fluke GBR8364 when I started to helm which I sailed for two years. In 2011 I got Touchwood GBR9047 which I sailed for 1 year with my crew George Bridge until I left cadets at the end of that year.

Your achievements in Cadets?

Selected for a World Team Place in 2011 and leading the world championships at the end of the 1st day, but a few problems on the second day and a Black Flag on the last race put us down the rankings!

Became Cadet National Champion 2011 at the age of 14 with George, and we were ranked number 1 boat in the 2011 national ranking series.

Did you go through the squad system and when?

Yes

-Started crewing at 8 and was in the RYA Southern Zone Squad.

-Started helming at 11 and got a place in the 2008 RYA Southern Zone Squad.

-UKNCCA National Squad (helm) 2009

-RYA National Junior Squad (helm) 2010/11

-RYA National Junior Squad (helm) 2011/12

At the end of 2011 I decided to leave Cadets to further my sailing ambitions as a helm in 420's and with Rhos Hawes another ex-Cadet sailor from South Cerney Sailing Club, we were selected for the 420 Class RYA Transition Squad at the end of 2011. In 2012 we were selected for the 420 Class RYA National Youth Squad and reselected again for the Youth Squad in 2013.

What are you currently campaigning/doing within sailing?

I am currently sailing 420's with Rhos and this year we are aiming to be selected for the 420 Worlds and European teams.

What are your strengths and weaknesses on the race course?

Strengths-Calm (most the time), downwind boat speed and upwind tactics.

Weaknesses- Boat Prep

What are your sailing highlights to date?

Winning the Cadet Nationals in 2011.

Getting into the 420 National Youth Squad in my first year and in the same year coming 4th in the 2012 420 inlands.

What are your sailing ambitions?

Sailing in the America's Cup after an Olympic career.

Who has been the biggest influence on your career?

All my RYA and Class coaches have been a big influence but Adam Bower's my Cadet National Junior Squad coach has probably been my biggest influence.

What are you studying at school?

I am in my final GCSE year at Portsmouth Grammar studying core subjects and I hope to move on to study sport and biology at Alton College.

What is your favourite subject at school?

Sport

Where has sailing taken you?

Wales, Scotland, France, Germany, Belgium and Denmark.

Can you give our readers one tip?

Never give up in a race, even when things go pear-shaped because there always places to be gained.

