

**Name:** Sophie Shepherd

**Age:** 19

**When you first started sailing and where and who with:** First started sailing when I was 7 at West Kirby and crewed for my older brother in a cadet.

**Boat name and number:** The Red Cadet 8854

**When did you do the squads:** I crewed for my brother in the West Zone Squad for two consecutive years, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 before we qualified for a place in national squad the year after 2005-2006. Once my brother grew out of cadets I decided to helm for myself where I was in West Zone Squad for a year then National Junior squad (U15) 2007/2008 with coach Adam Bowers and National Squad in 2009/2010 with coach Michael McNamara.

**How much did they improve your sailing:** Squad weekends improved my sailing a lot, regular practice and time on the water improved my boat handling considerably. Coaches taught and encouraged me to try out new things at training such as starting technique and broke down complicated processes into smaller chunks to practice – for example gybing with the spinnaker. This practice improved my sailing and I regularly achieved top 10 results at indicators or nationals.

**Sailing highlights:** Getting the opportunities to travel all over the world. Achieving places in the national squads, Youth British Team Racing Champion – 4 years running, bronze medal in Australia-Team Racing World Championships and getting a Gold medal in Ireland – Team Racing World Championships. 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Batavia regatta 2 boat Team Racing held in Holland.

**Where have you travelled to through sailing:** I have travelled all over England through sailing, particularly the south coast! It has also taken me to Perth, Australia for ISAF Team Racing World championship (2009) Schull, Ireland (2011) also for the ISAF Team Racing World Championship and Holland – Batavia Regatta 2 boat team racing Championship (2011)

**Who has helped you and who do you look to for advice:** WKSC, coaches and especially my parents and brothers have helped me with my sailing over the years. Without the support of people from the sailing club or my parents/ brothers taking me to events and training over the years my sailing would not have been so successful.

**Who was your role model:** Always have been very competitive and wanted to be as good as my older brothers or beat them.

**WKSC:** I have been a member of WKSC for the past 13 years, the club is great for encouraging young sailors and welcoming new members. People within the sailing club have helped and coached me over the years and provided me with great opportunities. The support from the club was phenomenal when representing West Kirby in the ISAF Team Racing world Championships and I was proud to represent the club.

**The Wilson:** I have competed in the Wilson Trophy for the past 5 years. In my first two years I represented West Kirby crewing for Andy Bryson where we reached semi-finals. I then got the opportunity to sail with New York Yacht Club in my third year before I started to helm representing

West Kirby Youth along with Cam Douglas and Ben Robinson. It gave me the experience to learn from and compete against some of the best sailors.

**Lead up to World Championships:** In the lead up to the Championships a lot of training took place supported by the sailing club, this included off the water theory as well as on water practice. Our coach Jamie Marston and members with years of previous team racing experience helped out - Mat Shepherd and Angus Armstrong. As a team we could not have won the youth championship without this help and committed hours of training.

**Gold medal:** Achieving the gold medal didn't sink in for a couple of months but was a relief that everyone who had helped us and hours of committed training had paid off. As a team we were pleased we could give something back to the people who had supported us. The event itself was one of the most memorable and enjoyable experiences of my life.

**Your future goals and aspirations:** Future goals are to carry on with team racing at a competitive level, one day win the Wilson trophy and now that I have achieved the Youth Team Racing World Champion title I would like to progress to win the Adult – Open Team Racing World Champion title.

**What encouragement would you give to present juniors and what would you recommend to them with regards to sailing:** Never give up, keep a positive mental attitude, don't be hesitant to try out new things- they may work for the better! Keep practising on a regular basis and have fun.



