

# Riverside Yacht Club

## Jr Sailing Program

### Jr Sailing Staff 2019



**Samantha Labuzetta**  
Sailing Director

sailingdirector@riversideyc.org  
(203) 637 - 1706

#### **Years at RYC**

1<sup>st</sup> summer at RYC

#### **Hometown & Club**

Greenwich; CT  
New York Yacht Club  
Island Heights Yacht Club  
Rochester Yacht Club

#### **School**

St. Mary's College of Maryland &  
St. John's College

#### **Fun Facts**

My parents met in Junior Sailing Program at the Island Heights Yacht Club in NJ. I grew up in a house next door from the yacht club and attended the same Jr Sailing program every summer.

I have a 6yr old standard poodle named Baie after the Chesapeake Bay.

I grew up sailing and racing Optis, Byte, and Laser Radial on Barnegat Bay in New Jersey. I went to college at St. Mary's College of Maryland where I raced on the Varsity Sailing Team. After college I went on to Graduate School where I earned two Master's Degrees in Education and one in Philosophy. I moved to Annapolis, MD where I taught for six years before moving on to sail full-time. I have competed in the J22, J70, J80, Lightning, Thistle, and Melges24 at the National, North American, and World Championships.

I have found that as a Sailing Director I am able to combine my love of sailing with teaching. I have worked as the Sailing and Program Director for programs in Annapolis, MD; San Francisco, CA; and Westport, CT. I joined Riverside Yacht Club in January of 2019.

I am very excited to be part of Riverside Yacht Club and I look forward to seeing everyone out on the water!



**Emily Kuchta**  
Jr Sailing Assistant

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(203) 637 - 1706

**Years at RYC**  
3<sup>rd</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**  
Norwalk, CT

BIO COMING SOON!





**Emma Jakobson**  
Head Instructor

**Years at RYC**  
3<sup>rd</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**  
Rye, NY  
American Yacht Club

**School**  
Harvard University,  
Class of 2021

**Fun Fact**  
I have performed modern dance for 10 years and I love baking. I'm a pre-med student studying Molecular and Cellular Biology.

I sailed Optimis for seven years, 420's the last five years and a J109/J100. I currently sail for Harvard on the varsity sailing team.

My favorite sailing memory was sailing with my great uncle on the Swedish Archipelago

I'm very excited to come back for my third summer at RYC. I can wait to help lead a wonderful new staff and make positive changes to the program.





**Liam Ballou**  
Instructor

**Years at RYC**

1<sup>st</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**

Fairfield, CT

Pequot Yacht Club

**School**

Washington and Lee University,  
Class of 2023

**Fun Fact**

I have a Golden Retriever named after Bob Marley (her name is Marley, not Bob).

My Dad started to take me sailing at a very young age, then at eight I began to sail competitively. Over the past 10 years I have sailed Optimis, 420s, and Lasers along with a lot of big boat sailing on many different types of boats, including being a regular crew on a J105 and a J109.

My favorite Sailing Memory was this past summer at the CJ Buckley Team Race Regatta. My friends from St. George's and I put together a team. We all stayed together and travelled together, we saw some great competition and good wind.

I am excited to be on the water at RYC this summer coaching sailors of all levels and instill in them a love of the water.





**Ashton Borcharding**  
Instructor

**Years at RYC**  
2<sup>nd</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**  
Greenwich, CT  
Bell Haven Club

**School**  
Stanford University,  
Class of 2022

**Fun Fact**  
I speak French.

I have sailed for two years in Optis on the Long Island Sound and two years in c420's out of Belle Haven. I have sailing for five years in i420's with LISOT.

My favorite sailing memory was competing in Auckland New Zealand in the i420. It was such an amazing venue and honor to be able to sail for the US. I had an incredible time both on and off the water.

This summer I am looking forward to being part of the Riverside community and being able to spend my summer out on the water! Some of my favorite sailing memories were out on Long Island Sound so I'm really excited to be able to come back as a coach!





**Isabella Clemens**  
Instructor

**Years at RYC**  
2<sup>nd</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**  
Riverside, CT  
Indian Harbor Yacht Club

**School**  
Gettysburg College,  
Class of 2022

**Fun Fact**  
I am an avid skier and race at Mt. Snow.

I have sailed Optis, Fevas, Pixels, 420's, Melges 32 and Farr 395. I am the Varsity Sailing Team Captain for Greenwich High School. I also work at Sportsplex teaching swimming to kids 2-10 years old.

My favorite sailing memory was doing the Beach Point overnight for the last two years through the RYC program. When I was able to do the race the first year, I was onboard with multiple friends and it was my first time sailing overnight. I would recommend the Big Boat program at RYC. It made me a more knowledgeable sailor.

I look forward to teaching the next generation of sailing as it is my favorite sport.





**TJ Danilek**  
Instructor

**Years at RYC**  
2<sup>nd</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**  
Stamford, CT  
Noroton Yacht Club

**School**  
Clemson University

**Fun Fact**  
I used to play hockey.

I have been sailing since I was born. I have sailed Sonars, Optis, i420s, c420s and Lasers competitively.

My favorite sailing memory is from when I travelled to Italy for the i420 worlds because it was awesome to sail against all the best i420 sailors.

This summer I'm looking forward to being a good influence and role model for all of the kids at RYC.





**Grace Flanagan**  
Instructor

**Years at RYC**

1<sup>st</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**

New Canaan, CT  
American Yacht Club

**School**

**Fun Fact**

I play the handbells.

I have been sailing competitively for three years. During high school, I sailed C420s in the fall and spring. I sailed Laser Radials and J105s in JSA events and also competed in J70 regattas.

My favorite sailing memory was in Newport last summer when I learned to sail Nacra 15s. It was the best day ever. It was sunny and super windy, and my teammates and I raced each other around a course for hours! My friend and I pitchpoled, but it was awesome. Nacra 15s are especially fun to sail in breeze, because the windward hull flies above the surface of the water, thereby generating a ton of speed. I love sailing fast.

I'm looking forward to seeing my sailors win races and achieve their goals. Sailing is my absolute favorite sport, and I can't wait to be out on the water every day.







**Cristobal Flores**  
Instructor

**Years at RYC**

1<sup>st</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**

Mexico City, Mexico

Club de Vela la Peña

**School**

Universidad Iberoamericana,

School of Architecture;

**Fun Fact**

I play the cello and I think I know how to sing.

I started sailing when I was around 10 years old. I began as an Opti sailor and then moved on to C420s and i420s. Through the years I have also been on big boats including J70s and transatlantic sailing.

My favorite sailing memory was my first 420 regatta in Cancun, Mexico. I had just returned from a broken leg injury and was not in the best condition, but we were fighting for the podium on that last day. The wind was very strong in the reach, so I told my crew that we were not putting the kite up. Hike hard! All of the sudden, we started flying past the rest of the boats that had kites up and we came in second. It was a very fun regatta.

I look forward to meeting everyone who is participating in the program this summer! To lots of improvement, hard and fun work at Riverside Yacht Club!





**Sam Gavula**  
Instructor

**Years at RYC**

1<sup>st</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**

Villanova, PA  
Bay Head Yacht Club

**School**

University of Pennsylvania,  
Class of 2023

**Fun Fact**

I also sing, play guitar and play hockey.

I have 11 years of sailing experience in Optimis, C420s and i420s.

My favorite sailing experience is finishing on the podium at Kiel Week 2018 in front of a large crowd with some of the world's best sailors competing across all classes of boats.

I am looking forward to passing on my knowledge to the next generation of sailors, as my yacht club program where I learned to love sailing did for me.





**Devin Hart**  
Instructor

**Years at RYC**

1<sup>st</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**

Darien, CT

Noroton Yacht Club

**School**

Tufts University,

Class of 2023

**Fun Facts**

I have been playing violin for 10 years starting in third grade.

I have also been competitively ski racing since I was 7. I have raced SL, GS, Super G, and High School racing.

I grew up sailing at Noroton Yacht Club and have been there since I was eight years old. In that time I have sailed Optis, Pixels, 420's Lasers, and multiple big boats.

My favorite sailing memory is from my first day of Lasers. It was a very windy and stormy day and I was still new to the boat but I had so much fun surfing the waves, getting soaked by spray, and even flipping few times.

I am looking forward to being out on the water all summer and getting everyone at Riverside excited to sail. I can't wait to share my love of the sport and help the juniors experience all the great things sailing has to offer.





**Jonathan Mears**  
Instructor

**Years at RYC**  
2<sup>nd</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**  
Fairfield, CT  
Pequot Yacht Club

**School**  
Virginia Tech,  
Class of 2022

**Fun Facts**  
I am an expert at backing up trailers.  
  
I built my first boat in the eighth grade.

I have sailed for six years in 420's, four years in J24's, four years in J109's, two years in J70s, six years in Lasers, four years in FJ's, and two years in Pixels.

My favorite sailing memory is from the 2017 Faulkner Island Race. With five miles to the finish and a dying Northerly, we had to race against another J109 to the finish with over a dozen sail changes in under an hour.

As a new instructor I am extremely excited to teach many kids what I have been able to learn throughout my long sailing career. I loved to learn the physics behind the sails and hull on improving sail shape, weight placement and overall balance on the boat. As well as learning from the kids themselves on how I can become a better coach as well as a sailor.





**Jamie Paul**  
Instructor

**Years at RYC**

1<sup>st</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**

Darien, CT  
Stamford Yacht Club

**School**

Dartmouth College,  
Class of 2023

**Fun Fact**

I started skiing when I was 4 and have not stopped since.

I started sailing Optis at Stamford Yacht Club when I was seven years old. I continued to sail Optis in the JSA until I turned 11 when I joined LISOT and started competing on a national level. In Lisot I competed in various national and international regattas including the Opti Team Race Nationals where I finished second. After Optis I started sailing C420s and I420s with Lisot and competed for two years before switching over to the laser radial. I sailed the laser the last three years. Over that time I won the Chubb US Junior Singlehanded Championship. Last winter I started training with Lauderdale Yacht Club and I continue to train on the weekends throughout the year.

My favorite sailing memory was when I was sailing at IODA North Americans in Antigua. I was very excited to represent my country at such a great venue against great competition.

I am looking forward to being part of a great program and helping sailors fulfill their potential on the water.





**Lindsay Powers**  
Instructor

**Years at RYC**  
3<sup>rd</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**  
Rye, NY  
American Yacht Club

**School**  
Tufts University,  
Class of 2021

**Fun Facts**  
I can individually move one eyeball while the other stays perfectly still.

I have been sailing competitively since I was 8 years old out of American Yacht Club's on the JSA of LIS circuit. I sailed Optis (six years) and Lasers (three years). I was also a member of the Young American Big Boat Program. I sailed c420s for Rye High School as both a skipper and crew. At Tufts, I compete in our three different programs – Dinghy, Big Boat, and Match Racing. On the collegiate circuit, I have skippered and crewed on a variety of boats.

At Tufts we practice on the lower part of Mystic Lake. One day, it was blowing 10 knots from the best direction we get (from the dam), and a crazy cluster of clouds came over only one side of the lake. It started to rain pretty hard as we were racing. After five minutes, the rain stopped and the breeze dropped to three knots as it swirled around the lake in crazy shifts. Then a huge double rainbow crossed over the entire lake, touching the water at both ends - prettiest sky I have ever sailed under.

I am so excited to come back and see all of the sailors!





**Chase Reynolds**  
Instructor

### **Years at RYC**

1<sup>st</sup> summer at RYC

### **Hometown & Club**

Southport, CT

Pequot Yacht Club

### **School**

### **Fun Facts**

I love skiing.

My dad was the Head Instructor at RYC in 1990 and 1991.

I have been in and around boats since I was four years old, sailing in my parents' Soveral 27. Since then I have sailed a variety of boats from dinghies to big boats to foilers. My favorite boats to sail are my Laser and a modified Santa Cruz 39.

The greatest sailing memory I have is sailing at CORK OCR in Kingston. It was my first freshwater sailing experience and I was able to sail against the best laser sailors in North American in 25-20 knots of breeze.

I am looking forward to many things this summer! This will be my first summer coaching sailing and I am stoked to share my passions for the sport and hopefully guide some new sailors to find their passion. I am excited to meet some new people as well.





**Kate Russack**  
Instructor

**Years at RYC**  
2<sup>nd</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**  
Old Greenwich, CT  
Rocky Point Club

**School**  
Boston University,  
Class of 2022

**Fun Facts**  
I am a competitive diver and will dive at  
Boston University.

I have also been a serious skier my whole life.

I have sailed Optimis for six years, 420's for two years, and Fevas and Pixels each for one year.

My favorite sailing memory is when my team did a drill where the skipper was totally blindfolded and could not see anything. The skipper had to rely on the crew to give them directions on how to navigate around the course. Although I was the crew, I felt a lot of pressure to give specific and proper instructions to my skipper so that they would not get hurt and would sail in the right direction. This drill was valuable and unique in that it helped the skipper gain trust with the crew and forced the pair to communicate with each other. Although these are not technical skills for sailing the boat, they are equally as important in order to be successful on the water.

I am so excited to be working with kids because I love to pass down my knowledge and be someone that the kids can look up to. I am also looking forward to gaining new perspectives and insights about sailing from the other instructors. My goal is to get kids to love sailing as much as I do!







**Addie Schoen**  
Instructor

**Years at RYC**  
2<sup>nd</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**  
Darien, CT  
American Yacht Club

**School**  
Northeastern University,  
Class of 2022

**Fun Facts**  
I love to play Volleyball and make food!

I have sailed for four years in an Opti, one year in a Pixel, two years in a c420, two years in a Laser Radial, and three summers on a J105 team.

My favorite sailing memory was in a 420 with my best friend for a summer because that's when I realized how enjoyable but competitive sailing really is.

I am looking forward to spending as much time as possible on the water, meeting lots of new kids, and teaching them what I know about sailing, including how much fun it is!





**Griffin Segalla**  
Instructor

**Years at RYC**  
2<sup>nd</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**  
Stamford, CT  
Stamford Yacht Club

**School**  
George Washington University,  
Class of 2022

**Fun Fact**  
I used to compete in mogul skiing.

I have 11 years of sailing experience in Optis, c420s, i420s, z420s, FJs, big boats and Lasers.

My favorite memory from sailing is when I went to i420 Worlds in 2016, because I had worked so hard to get there.

I am looking forward to seeing all of the kids again and helping them improve.





**TJ Stoker**  
Instructor

**Years at RYC**

1<sup>st</sup> summer at RYC

**Hometown & Club**

Stamford, CT  
American Yacht Club

**School**

Fox Lane High School,  
Class of 2020

**Fun Fact**

I can solve a Rubik's cube in less than five minutes.

I have been sailing for nine years, and I have sailed Optis, Pixels, 420s and Lasers.

My favorite sailing memory was two summers ago when I was sailing 420s. At the start of the summer, I was not a competitive sailor. Throughout the summer, my coaches kept encouraging me to become a better sailor, and that motivated me to learn and practice hard every day. In the last regatta of the summer, I was having a great race, and I remember looking over and seeing my coaches with a huge smile on their face. This was my favorite moment because it made my coaches so proud to see how far I had come.

I am looking forward to meeting a lot of new people and I am so excited to help pass on my knowledge of sailing to the next generation of sailors and have fun.

