

My Summer of Sailing Comes to a Close

-Alex Kerai

Is it just me or does it seem that each year summer goes by faster? It's eleven weeks every year, but for some reason it seems like it was more like five this year. It's not like I was busy every day, running from this activity to another. No, it was more relaxed: I'd work in the mornings, eat lunch at home, and bike to Pleon to sail. It seemed that all my time revolved around sailing, the sport seemed to consume my summer. Not that it's a bad thing.

People who know me know that I love to sail. It's all I do from March to the end of October. I just love the freedom that the water gives me, I can go anywhere by boat (be it to Manchester for ice cream or around a mark for a race) and it can be a whole day event. Sure, it's a pain when the wind dies and I'm stuck floating in between Manchester and Boston, but that's why there are motor boats. The only time I'm ever thankful for them is when I need a tow. Windless days frequently came during our practices right outside the Marblehead Harbor. We, the Marblehead High School Sailing team, had incredible weather. It was sunny and the perfect temperature, not too hot but not too cold. However, the wind, the very key to successfully sailing, was uncooperative. We had an average of five to ten knots of wind per day, which isn't a lot, leaving us, as the saying goes, up the creek without a paddle. Often it would barely reach five knots; those were the true lazy days of summer. But we still went out, we still tried to sail, and on those days when it did hit over ten knots, it was the most incredible experience. Sailing in a 420, a certain kind of boat, when the wind picks up to a reasonable amount, the boat will start to keel to leeward side, it becomes imperative to try, at all costs, to keep the boat flat on its hull. So, when the wind gets up high enough, the crews jump outside of the boat – hooked on by a wire that connects to their harness and then to the boat – and use their body weight to even the boat out. It's a surreal, out of body, euphoric experience, and I highly recommend it. It's closer to flying than anything else in daily life, which is a good enough reason to sail right there.

I sailed everyday, and in the process raced in Marblehead Junior Race Week and traveled to Hingham and Anisquam for the Hingham Junior Regatta and the Junior Olympics, respectively. With so many competitions and practices, it seemed like the end of summer snuck up on me. I didn't see it coming, but in an instant the school year was looming.

Yeah, after I got over the fact that school was starting fairly soon, and that my summer of relaxing and doing nothing (except for sailing) was coming to an abrupt close, I started to welcome the idea of school. I was hesitant, but my schedule looked good, and my teachers sounded great, so why shouldn't I be happy? I was excited to see my friends again and ask how their summers were. I was eager to get started on the year and learn new things again. Sure, I could do without the tests, but if that's what it takes, count me in. And for some reason, I was glad to be back. Maybe it's just that it hasn't yet sunk in. Maybe in a few more weeks I'll be counting the days until summer, until freedom. But right now, there's something I'm just realizing. I'm a sophomore.