

US SAILING YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM

SUMMER DEBRIEF 2026

USSAILING.ORG/TEAMS



Maddie Nichols in Aarhus, Denmark

Prepared For:

Parents, Sailors, & Stakeholders

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RECAP OF SUMMER 2026

Summer is the peak season for the Youth National Team with lots of training and competition domestically and abroad. In the past three months, Youth National Team sailors competed in 8 countries at World and European Championships from Scandinavia to the Iberian Peninsula.

DEAR PARENTS,

Congratulations to you and your sailor for such an enriching summer. These regattas tend to pull us to incredible venues, making friendships and memories that last a lifetime. Peak summer events like the World Championships are significant benchmark events that identify your sailor's performance and maturity level.

"PRESSURE IS A PRIVILEGE"

It is a privilege to be able to self-selectively choose adversity, and you've chosen well. We are incredibly proud of our Youth National Team and the hardship and challenges they've risen to at these events. We look forward to continuing to guide our YNT as they transform these experiences into performance gains on and off the water.



Youth National Team Camp in Bristol, Rhode Island



EVENT LOCATIONS 2026

“ We just wanted to thank you again for hosting all of our sailors at the Youth National Team Clinic in June. As you know, Sophia/Ana and George/Finley had an incredible experience at the Camp and were all confident to say that the Camp contributed greatly to their success at Worlds. ”

Meg Alexopolous



“From July 6th through the 11th, the world’s best converged at the Centre Nautique Biscarosse Olympique in Biscarosse, France to compete for the title of World Champion. The race committee did an unbelievable job managing difficult and unexpected conditions. Sailors raced in shifty lake sailing conditions throughout the duration of the event. Every day brought two races with the exception of the second to last day, in which racing was canceled due to light conditions on the water. There were a total of 10 races sailed through the course of the event,” recalls JP Panebianco.

420 RECAP

“Racing against some of the best female sailors in the world was an incredible experience. We were really excited to stay in the mix throughout the regatta and were proud to finish fourth. Having a good mentality and staying consistent, even when some races didn’t go our way kept us in a position to compete for a medal spot going into the final race. It was a great feeling to know that we had put ourselves in that position, and it gave us a lot of confidence going,” says Sophia Alexopolous.



29ER WORLDS RECAP



Strong offshore winds, gusting between 15 and 24 knots, frequent rain, and a record-breaking 276 boat fleet that challenged sailors to remain consistent throughout the event in Kiel, Germany.

“This was a demanding regatta with plenty of breeze and a lot of different conditions across the three courses. Each day challenged the sailors to adjust quickly, learn the patterns of their course, and keep improving as the event went on. I was really impressed by how hard everyone continued to work through the end of the regatta, even when the days were long and tiring. For me, it was a great opportunity to learn more about how to support each team in the way that was most helpful to them. It was a really fun group to coach, and everyone brought a great attitude and a strong willingness to learn,” recalls coach Bella Casaretto.

Youth Worlds Gold Medalist 29er crew from 2018 Bella Casaretto flew back to the Baltic from College Nationals to join our Youth National Team coaching staff including Fernando Gwozdz and Tomas DeLuciano for the event. US Sailing is so proud that Bella has come full circle with the program, having gone from World Champion to World Championship coach. Sharing her experience with this year’s Youth National Team brought a strong, youthful, female voice to the coaching staff.



From Mixed World Champion helm Annie Sitzmann:

“29er Worlds this summer was great. Super happy that there was solid breeze for a majority of the event allowing for quality racing. We had light air leading into the regatta and super light at last year’s Worlds so it was nice to have a different experience. Anton and I have not had a lot of sailing days together so this felt like a good result.”



NACRA 15 WORLDS

The 2026 Nacra 15 World Championship was hosted by Hooe Point Sailing Club & the Plymouth Yacht Club from the 25th July to the 1st of August.

4 American teams competed, and one hybrid team representing South Africa this year. 2025 Youth Worlds teammates Casey Small and Dylan Tomko of Texas placed fourth overall. Super crew Casey Smalls says, “It was an honor to represent team USA in Plymouth and compete in a big fleet again. We tried to make the best of the challenging conditions and learned a lot over the week.”

“The wind was lighter than we had hoped for but we put our heads down and pushed on. We ended up with fourth place overall, not the result we had hoped for but still a solid performance.” ~ Dylan Tomko.



“Going into the event Orlando and I were keen on a top 10 finish... It really wasn’t until the end of the regatta did I really believe it was possible, though. Not because I had distrust in any of our abilities as a team but because I truly had no idea where we stood with the fleet and their capabilities. Wrapping up my time as a sailor with this result brings me so much joy and is truly a full circle moment for our partnership as our first regatta together was the NACRA 15 World Championships 2024 in Barcelona Spain. We put the most work ever into ourselves when training over the summer from working at summer camp, then going out to practice, and even doing land workouts after like running on our own time when we had the chance.”

Sara Shumanis

IQ FOIL WORLDS



This Championship was an amazing event in a beautiful venue. Team USA of Garrett January and Rohan Desjardins joined forces with the kiwis of Team New Zealand, sharing housing and training alongside one another during the event.

“The success of the event ultimately came down to two things: The support net around me and the ability to regulate effort between races and days. Throughout the regatta days were extremely long with postponement and grotesquely intense due to light winds over long periods. This made fatigue rates high not only in myself but with rest of the fleet. The two largest thing combating this for us was our support as a whole and discipline,” reflects silver medalist Garrett January.



FORMULA KITE

WORLDS

“Turkey was an experience I’ll never forget. So proud to finish 2nd U17 and 10th overall at Youth Worlds. I had some really fun battles with the girls on the race course and learned so much from every race. So many great memories and I can’t wait to get back on the water!” says Formula Kiter Molly O’Brien.



ILCA 6 WORLDS



Aarhus, Denmark offered extremely challenging conditions in the Baltic Sea for the ILCA 6 Worlds which pulled together 429 boys and girls in total.

“We haven’t raced that many evenly matched boats in offshore conditions. Not sure the last time our sailors even raced in phasey offshore conditions. We don’t really get it unless we race get post cold front sailing, remarks coach Erik Bowers.”

Paloma Arrigo from California placed top American at the event, “The fleet was very competitive and the challenging wind conditio-

ns made each race a whole new one. It seemed like no race was quite the same. Overall, it was probably one of the hardest events I’ve ever sailed, but it was also the most rewarding by far.”

Coach Lucija Ruzevic observed, “the offshore breeze was tough for the group. One of the biggest challenges the sailors were faced with from the offshore breeze was being adaptable and vigilant to the changing conditions. They needed to be prepared to adapt to changing angles and pressures during unstable conditions.”

“The world-class sailing center and Danish hospitality were wonderful to experience. Aarhus challenged me with a majority of offshore days, a condition I havent sailed often. We had both light and heavy air days, but always puffy and shifty. The key success factor for me was sailing smarter; each day required keeping my head out of the boat, being keyed into what was happening on the ever-changing course, and being one of the first to react to it.

Amongst a fleet comprised of the best youth sailors in the world...I feel lucky to have had the opportunity to be coached by Sophia Reineke, Lucija Ruzevic and Erik Bowers as a part of the US Youth National Team delegation. Our coaches made sure we had the most course data out of all the teams competing,” reports Danny Cheng-Sun.



NOVEMBER TRAINING CAMP

November 21-24, 2026 at Miami Yacht Club

The premier annual racing camp for youth worlds classes.

All classes working together with expert coaching: ILCA 6, iQ FOiL, 29er, i420, N15.

Invitations to all YNT sailors, and sailors finishing in the top 50% at US Youth Champs in October.



Training in the Gulf Stream offers incredible conditions in this large fleet, collaborative event that is our annual Thanksgiving Racing Camp.

This is the camp that started it all, back in 2018 the affectionately named “ODP” launched to create foundational support for sailors in Youth Worlds Classes. We have refined our camps and support ever since, and capstone each year with this pinnacle training event that brings the entire nation together for a competitive camp.

Highlights

- Capstone YNT camp of 2026
- Ocean conditions
- Bigger fleets create simulated regatta environment.
- Final YNT camp before 2026 Youth World Championship



Registration in Fall 2026



A MESSAGE FROM PHIL MULLER

With so many events and such a large team it was challenging to pick which of the many amazing stories and quotes to select for this document. Many accomplishments have been left out, but that's not to diminish their import.

It was a big summer, and in your sailor's pursuit towards constant improvement, the challenges and moments of frustration are the side effects of success. So embrace the growing pains. We are proud of what our Youth National Team has achieved.

Looking ahead for the next line of pressure!

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Thank You to Our Partners for Continued Support of the Youth National Team