



# CSTS Notes



Newsletter of the United States Naval Academy  
Command & Seamanship Training Squadron

## DIRECTOR'S CUT

by Renee Mehl



Welcome back to the start of a new training year, to our XO recruits for the class of '23 and newly minted Skippers from this summer! We're excited that we have a lot of new volunteers, and the list is growing. That list includes a group of happy midshipmen who will be returning after a successful summer as crew to take

on their next leadership challenge of XO training. Our current volunteers are our best recruiters, so if you know someone who would be a good mentor and leader of midshipmen on the high seas, please let us know so we can get them started now.

We had quite the summer of training midshipmen! There were plenty of challenges with logistics due to COVID this year. There were also some good lessons learned for midshipmen on how logistics have to change during a mission due to circumstances. HUGE thanks to all of our volunteers who made this summer possible!!! We had several new Officers of Tactical Command (OTC) this year. They lead a squadron in addition to the team on their own boat. **LCDR Bruce Hamilton (ret)**, **Reed Smith**, **Ned Ross**, and **Ross Rosiak** all excelled in this new role and got a lot of on-the-job training. Numerous volunteers were able to help out when we had those logistical challenges mentioned earlier. Thanks to everyone who helped with administrative tasks, ground school instructors, extra instructors the first week of sailing and all who went above and beyond to offer your midshipmen outstanding training.

We're almost done sorting through all the metrics from summer so it's time for Block debriefs. Skippers and XOs are invited to attend our annual CSTS Summer Training lessons learned. We pull information from your post cruise reports, midshipman surveys, maintenance records and incident reports to see what worked and what needs improvement. We will have an online option to attend and if you can't make your block debrief, you're welcome to attend another session.

Dates are:

Block 1 - Monday, Sep 19<sup>th</sup>, 1600-1700, Luce Hall Room 101.

Block 2 - Wednesday, Sep 21<sup>st</sup>, 1600-1700, Luce Hall Room 101.

Block 3 - Thursday, Sep 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1600-1700, Luce Hall Room 101.

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Block 3 NA-30 off NYC heading home

To all our new people - this newsletter comes out monthly during the school year to keep you informed on vital information for your training track. We include updates from volunteer Fleet Captain, **Mr. John Formisano**. The regular lineup also includes **Mr. Nathan Hesse**, our CSTS Deputy Director. Our new Maintenance Director is **Mr. Craig Patterson**, who some of our volunteers may know from his many years working at the cutter shed and his very knowledgeable guidance when we're fixing systems offshore. Congratulations to Craig on his new position! Look for his profile and article below. There is a new Operations Officer at the Cutter Shed, **LT Joe Barrett**. Please welcome him aboard when you meet him. **LT Christian Burton** has moved back to the Sailing Center as Acting Deputy Director (DDNAS).

We include guest articles and links on seamanship and sailing topics to keep existing volunteers engaged, provide links to training and upcoming events and good leadership book recommendations for winter reading. Copies of prior newsletters are on our website and Blackboard®, the web-based software the Academy uses to host online exams and information.

Important milestones for fall training:

- Turn in paperwork prior to your first sail. PLEASE do not email Personal Identifiable Information (PII) such as date of birth, full social security number, etc. We will call you for that information for the DBIDS form, or you can drop off the filled-out form in our office and we will safeguard it accordingly.
  - ☞ All: Volunteer questionnaire.
  - ☞ All: Copy of COVID vaccination card. You must be fully vaccinated to get underway on a Navy vessel. Booster shots are not required at this time.
  - ☞ Retired military and civilians: Volunteer Service Agreement.
  - ☞ Civilians without Yard access: Form 5512 DBIDS with background check so you can receive a pass to drive into the academy and park. This takes a few days to process, depending on the processing load at the Pass & ID office.

Note: Foreign nationals may start training on the Navy (Colgate) 26s. We are awaiting the policy decision on whether we can get you underway on the Navy 44s for midshipmen training.

- Sign up for Navy 26 training in September. If you are new to sailing, we teach you the basics on a Colgate 26 keelboat. You have up to 10 lessons to qualify. If you're an experienced sailor, we still want you to take a few lessons to learn the "Navy way" of training using standard commands and standard operating procedures. Our midshipmen crew in the summer are 95% novice sailors so we all need to teach the same way.
- Sign up for the Navy 44s starting at the end of September. The goal is to get 33 underway hours and master the skills outlined in the qualification book for "Senior Crew". Sign up even if you aren't quite done with your Navy 26

qualification, since it's harder to get the Navy 44 hours and the training schedule tends to fill up fast.

- Blackboard® access will be granted in November. We recommend that you take the online exams after starting the winter training. We will provide a test taking guide in this newsletter, based on the course schedule and will give you additional reference reading. In the meantime, we will post all program relevant information on our Google Drive. We use this tool for training signups and to host relevant information for seasonal operations.

#### Logistics:

- Parking: Use unmarked parking spots, and not the ones marked "1/C" for the midshipmen or "F/S" for faculty/staff. Parking usually opens up at the end of the school day which is 3:45 pm.
- If you need to check out foul weather gear, please come a few minutes early and come up to the Sailing Center CSTS office. The office is upstairs and to the right.
- Existing volunteers can sign up as crew, but we may spread you out amongst boats to keep crews balanced.
- Please check the sign-up sheets prior to arriving for training. We may need to shift personnel to equal crew numbers between boats or consolidate if we have cancellations. We may also switch boats.

We look forward to sailing with all of you!

#### DEPUTY DIRECTOR NOTE

by Mr. Nathan Hesse



Thanks to all of the volunteers for a successful summer. I hope that it was rewarding both for you and the midshipmen. I really enjoyed seeing the midshipmen take ownership of running the boat on my Block 3 trip to Mystic, CT this summer. That said, I am looking forward to cooler weather and the fall sailing season.

Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup> marked the start of fall training on the Navy 26s! We have 45 prospective volunteers this season which we hope will translate into a robust new cohort of XO's. Lessons on Navy 26s will go through the week of October 24<sup>th</sup>, assuming the weather holds. The idea behind Navy 26 training is to level the playing field for sail training on the Navy 44s.

Sign-ups are also live for the Navy 44 training. Sunday September 25<sup>th</sup> is the first day of sail training on the Navy 44s. The fall training season this year runs until Friday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. We will be sailing on weekends when the Navy 44s are not being used for a regatta, and we will have an overnight sail on October 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> (Sat to Sun). The new volunteers have a head start on sign-ups, but we will need instructor trainers to sign up so that we can get underway. Links to the signups are below.

Finally, the newly commissioned TAD officers did a wonderful job of organizing charts at the Sailing Center. They've placed a pile of old charts on top of the chart table just outside the CSTS office. Feel free to grab a few when you're here. I've found that they make for great wrapping paper!

**Links to Training:**

Sign up for both Navy 26 and Navy 44 training at the link below. This link is for both new volunteers and seasoned instructor trainers. If you are an instructor trainer, please list your availability on the Instructor Sign-Up tab, and **Ms. Renee Mehl** will assign Skipper and XO positions for each boat.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1GcrowzNsDe20Yg4W2P9q2-OZveUBxRHfo-WSpqSpdNg/edit?usp=sharing>

For those of you doing Navy 26 training, the following link will direct you to training videos.

<https://www.usna.edu/Sailing/Proficiency/index.php>

We will be using Google Docs to store any relevant information for fall training. The link is below.

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1HYcQxA3YH\\_ebGm4U\\_h\\_OZOLB1kcIDQFh3?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1HYcQxA3YH_ebGm4U_h_OZOLB1kcIDQFh3?usp=sharing)

**FLEET CAPTAIN NOTE**

by *John Formisano*



*Skipper John Formisano*

First and foremost, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to making the summer blocks of 2022 successful. You have heard this many times before, but it still rings true – the program cannot succeed without the participation of our many committed volunteers.

The fall is an interesting time in the program as we have the new volunteers learning the fundamentals of Navy Sailing and our existing “D Qual’s” keeping their skills sharp, so we have a great learning opportunity for everyone in our afternoon and weekend sessions to learn from each other and pass along what happens during the summer blocks.

I look forward to meeting all of our new volunteers and to catch up with those that have logged sea time on the Navy 44s. I always learn from something every time I'm underway with any volunteer and I hope to spend time with you on the water soon.

**MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR NOTE**

by *Craig Patterson*

Hello everyone, Craig Patterson here. I'm happy to be the new maintenance director at the Cutter Shed. I've been working at the Shed since 2000 and before that at Small Craft Repair Depot (SCRD) waterfront for 10 years. Many of you will recognize me

from rocking out maintenance chits (i.e., work order) in the morning or from the plumbing class in winter training.

We had a few rough spots this past summer with fuel contamination and impellers coming apart. We are looking into replacing the Yanmar raw water pumps due to age. Also, when the fleet was built LED lighting was not available, so we are looking into replacing cabin lighting for lower power consumption. I look forward to working with everyone in my new role as we work together to support Navy Sailing.

**PROGRAM UPDATES**

We are working on updating the Blackboard® exams. All the references for answers are being checked and updated by our diligent team of TAD officers (recent grads who are working with us before they ship out to their next training assignment). We are adding new questions to the question banks and there will be a new test module on the Boat Information Book (BIB), Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and Navigation Standards. Online exam taking will not be available until the end of November.

The Personnel Qualification Standards (PQS) book is getting a makeover too. It will be renamed the Job Qualification Standards (JQR). We're reviewing that in conjunction with Phase I, II, and III skills spreadsheets we require during summer training for the midshipmen.

Additional training hours for midshipmen who completed Senior Crew and Watch Captain during a summer cruise will be added, to be completed during fall and spring XO training. There is no substitute for experience and currency to aid in retention of skills, broaden systems knowledge and learn XO instructor-trainer topics.

We do not anticipate any changes to the BIB this winter and the 2022 SOP will be published soon .



Block 2 in LIS heading to Greenwich, CT



**SEAMANSHIP TIPS***"Using the tools to depower the mainsail"*Published in *Scuttlebutt* on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022

The breeze is up, or a puff is on, and you need to depower the mainsail ASAP. So, which do you reach for, the sheet or the traveler?

Quantum Sails experts, Dave Flynn and Todd Basch, weigh in with their thoughts.

*"I am a mainsail trimmer and my skipper, and I are always arguing about depowering. Which should I be using, the traveler or the mainsheet?"*

Technically, no one is wrong here. Depending on the situation and the boat, you can use either, both, and even something else! Here's the breakdown:

**Traveler**

We'll call this the "small hammer." The traveler has two functions: it controls the boom's angle to the wind, and it helps steer the boat, controlling helm and heeling in puffs and lulls.

Set the twist with the mainsheet then use the traveler to position the boom on the centerline for maximum power and pointing, as long as helm and heeling are under control. As the breeze builds and mainsheet tension increases, the traveler will gradually be dropped to keep the boom on the centerline.

In medium breeze, the role of the traveler will expand to include maintaining control of helm. As the boat heels too far and generates weather helm, you can drop the traveler to depower the boat. The position of the boom, relative to the centerline, will become irrelevant.

In this wind range, play the traveler aggressively to maintain the correct amount of helm. Dump the traveler down quickly at the onset of a puff, but then be ready to pull it right back up as the initial power of the puff dissipates and turns into forward speed instead of heel. If you leave it down too long, you will miss the opportunity to point once you've accelerated.

In medium air, the range of adjustment on the traveler will be wide, from the boom on centerline to all the way down to leeward.

Think of the traveler as the "fine tune" power control device. As long as the changes in velocity are not too rapid and too great, it will keep the boat on its feet (and stop the helmsperson's whining). The beauty of using the traveler is that mainsail twist (controlled by the mainsheet), which is vital to both speed and pointing, does not change, only the total amount of power.

In shifty or puffy conditions, or in a lively sea-state, the trimmer might have to ease or trim a lot - maybe even constantly. Using the traveler, instead of the sheet, reduces the amount of muscle the trimmer will need to use - it's less of a lift that can have a lot

of impact. Over time, the lower-effort option may just save your trimmers' arms and back.

In very puffy conditions when velocity and direction are changing rapidly, the sheet can be a better tool to control power. This is a technique called "vang sheeting," because the vang takes over the job of pulling down on the boom and controlling twist. The mainsheet moves the boom in and out to reach proper trim. Typically, the traveler is pulled part of the way back up towards the centerline to keep the bottom of the mainsail working.

Once the velocity has increased to the point that the traveler alone will not keep the boat upright, it's time to use the big stick and shift over to the mainsheet.



Block 2 in Oyster Bay, NY doing STEM Training

**Mainsheet**

The mainsheet is the "big hammer" when it comes to adjustment for the overall amount of power.

The type of boat and its performance characteristics also influence the choice. On fractional rigged boats with large mainsails (particularly when the boat is on the lighter side), the mainsheet is played somewhat more aggressively, and the traveler is usually kept closer to centerline. The bigger sail makes the boat speed particularly sensitive to small changes in mainsheet tension. The right amount of twist is key.

Of course, the sophisticated mainsail trimmer continually makes adjustments to both traveler and mainsheet based not just on the overall amount of power, but also on issues like boat speed, waves, and even tactical situations.

For example, the trimmer may ease the mainsheet slightly and drop the traveler to depower if the boat is sailing slower than targets or about to hit a set of waves. Or, if you are lifted or close to fetching the weather mark, it may pay to ease the mainsheet and lower the traveler more aggressively to turn a puff into speed instead of height.

If you're going downwind and you've got the sheet pretty far out, you won't have much more to give, so even if you're committed to adjusting the mainsheet, there may be a time where the traveler or vang is a better tool.

All in all, there may not truly be a right answer here. To paraphrase rather badly from an ancient Zen saying, as in all things, the correct answer lies in the middle way. Or, to take inspiration from a younger generation - you do you.

**A few more things to remember:**

- Don't forget the role the backstay has in controlling power — you may be able to give your main trimmer a hand by playing the backstay more efficiently. If you put on a lot of backstay tension, it will also tighten the forestay. This straightens not only the jib's luff, but also flattens the main. Together, these will impact power and provide a little more stability.
- Make sure your main and jib trimmer are coordinating their efforts.
- Yes, you can depower the main, but as soon as it's backwinded it will start to cause some trouble up front.
- Utilizing the traveler, main, vang, and backstay each have different impacts on different boats, depending on their weight, size, setup and maneuverability. Every boat has its nuances, so choose what strategy is right for you and your crew.

**CSTS FACEBOOK PAGE**

CSTS has its own rebranded Facebook Page! In addition to this newsletter, we will post important information about the program to this Facebook page. Please "Like" us so you have the program information as it is released. We have 1.1K "followers" to date and growing every month. Help us get to "2,023" in 2023. Please encourage your midshipmen to send photos and video from their spring training sails and summer block sortie. Anyone can post to our Facebook page. Just let Rick know by email or text so he can approve your post. We are generating a good following of CSTS family and friends that are following your sailing experiences. Do not be shy and please post!

Please "Like" us at:  
<http://www.facebook.com/USNAOffshoreSailTraining>.

**EMAIL OPT-OUT**

If you are on this email newsletter and would like to be taken off, please let us know. If you have any articles or information you would like to share through this newsletter, please email to [richard.robey@gmail.com](mailto:richard.robey@gmail.com). As always, thank you for your support of CSTS.

We keep about 12 months of past CSTS newsletters posted on the Navy Sailing website for your reference at:

[https://www.usna.edu/Sailing/Command and Seamanship Training Squadron CSTS/Newsletters.php](https://www.usna.edu/Sailing/Command_and_Seamanship_Training_Squadron_CSTS/Newsletters.php)

**THANK YOU!**

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**Notes:**

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