



**ATHENA**  
SAILING

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017

INSPIRING AND TRAINING WOMEN IN THE SPORT OF SAILING



## **ATHENA SUPPORTS AND TRAINS WOMEN IN THE SPORT OF SAILING, OUR GOALS:**

### **TO INSPIRE AND DEVELOP WOMEN IN SAILING**

To introduce and empower women to be confident in the sport. Showcasing the physical and mental strength of women, in pushing boundaries both within themselves and within a team.

### **TO BE A SUSTAINABLE SAILING PROGRAM**

We aim to be self funded by subscriptions, attracting and growing new members, fundraising events and sponsorship.

### **TO GAIN NOTABLE RECOGNITION AT SAILING CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Our expectations for our program are high and our goal is to reach skill levels that rival the best sailing clubs in the world. We aim for the program to be made up of 40% of new sailors – women who have not sailed prior to program.

## Message from Stewart Gray, Manager



### Why we do it?

Athena Sailing was formed in 2016 to increase women's participation in sailing through building confidence, joy and knowledge within the sport. To see an all women crew competing in Hobart is rare and Athena fills that gap by providing a platform for women to experience and develop their skills and love for sailing.

Before anyone can be confident and engage in a new sport, they must first feel welcome, safe and have fun. Athena offers a low-cost entry into the sport for women with just that. Providing a learning, development, teambuilding program focusing on introducing new, returning and experienced sailors all working together and sharing their knowledge in an empowering environment.

### What we do?

Athena is making a mark for women sailing in Tasmania, utilising four SB20 sport boats. Our aim is to put together four complete women teams with sailors of both skilled and novice backgrounds. Adding in the objective to grow the program for participants to understand the importance of fitness, working together in a team, taking the time off the water to learn the tactical and technical aspects of the sport in a fun dynamic environment.

In 2017, Athena underwent changes to further strengthen the teams in lead-up to the 2018 World Championships. The teams were out in force training and racing with everyone giving 100%.

The season started with the Banjo's Shoreline Crown Series held by the Bellerive Yacht Club which saw a fantastic turn out of yachts, sports boats and dinghies. Pride of Athena taking sixth position and Fire and Essence did a great job controlling their boats and pushing the top sailors in the fleet.

The teams participated in the DSS Winter Series, with Colleen Darcey and her team taking second position and Clare Brown and the Fire team taking third.

The Australian SB20 Championships were held on the Derwent River on the 8 to 11 December 2017. Over a difficult weekend the Athena teams excelled with great results. So much so, Fire of Athena, beautifully skippered by Clare Brown and her crew of Jo Breen, Mollie Grainger and Chloe Abel were crowned the 'Australian Women's Champions'. In second position was Pride of Athena skippered by Colleen Darcey.

Next up for Athena is the World Championships in January 2018 to be held on the Derwent River. We are so extremely fortunate as a sailing community to have the opportunity to have the World Championships on our home waters.

## Joanna Breen on Athena Sailing



### What was your sailing experience before Athena?

Before joining the Athena program, I had been overseas getting the RYA Yachtmaster certificate and working as a delivery skipper internationally. Whilst I had a lot of offshore experience, I had never sailed a sports boat before, and had not been involved with racing since sailing dinghies as a kid. Sailing has always been a big passion of mine and the opportunity to further develop my racing skills was what encouraged me to join the program.

### What have you learnt or gotten out of the program?

My racing skills have improved a lot as part of the program. The One Design racing was a steep learning curve, but it has been a great experience, and has definitely made me a better sailor. My boat handling improved significantly whilst I was a helm, and then I was happy to become a main

trimmer when our team was finalised, as this was a new position for me to develop in. I competed in the Melbourne to Osaka Double Handed Yacht Race and was really excited to represent the Athena Program in this. This race was a 5,500NM marathon which took approximately 45 days at sea to complete. Whilst it is a very different type of racing, the skills I learnt sailing on the SB20 will certainly help!

### Would you encourage others to participate and why?

I would definitely encourage others to participate in the program! It's been really empowering to sail with so many amazing women and it has opened up a lot of opportunities to move forward in the sport. I have made so many new friends through the program, and look forward to continuing to be a part of it.

# Athena Sailing Team



**Stewart Gray**



**Clare Dabner**



**Joanna Breen**



**Lauren Davidson**



**Colleen Darcey**



**Clare Brown**



**Victoria Westbury**



**Molly Grainger**



**Aron Gavin**



**Chloe Abel**



**Cole Dabner**



**Isabella Declerck**



**Meg Goodfellow**

# Athena Sailing Team

## **Stewart Gray, Manager**

I have been sailing since my father pushed me off the dock at Lindisfarne Sailing Club at around the age of 8 in a Sabot. I have loved it ever since and have pretty much made a profession from the sport, and some may argue I may have never had what is perceived as a 'proper' job.

After spending all my 20's and half my 30's either sailing professionally or working with Volvo Ocean Race or Americas Cup Teams overseas, winning 2 World Championships along the way. I returned to Tasmania to open North Sails.

The Athena Sailing program is a great initiative and keeps going from strength to strength. I have been coaching the Athena program for a year now, and it has been a very rewarding process. With the teams now stronger than ever I look forward to helping them achieve their goals at the World Championships here in Hobart in 2018.

## **Clare Dabner, Team Member**

I started sailing at the Tamar Yacht Club when I was 12 years old in a Flying 11. I sailed there for a few years before progressing to 29ers and B14 skiffs. I love sailing B14s and have competed in these at state, national and world level. In keelboats I have been lucky enough to sail on some fantastic boats in Hobart and travel interstate for the Australian Women's Keelboat Regatta for the past 2 years. I've sailed on SB20s in Hobart for a few years, but this will be my second season in the Athena Sailing program. I am looking forward to competing at the national and world championships as part of Essence of Athena.

## **Joanna Breen, Team Member**

I started sailing as a 12 year old with the Tamar Yacht Club in a Sabot. I moved into flying

11's lasers before getting into keelboats. I completed the RYA Yachtmaster Offshore certificate in 2013, and spent 3 years working as a delivery skipper all around the world. The highlights were working on Skip Novac's expedition yacht 'Pelagic' for a season, sailing around Cape Horn, the Falkland Islands and circumnavigating South Georgia, followed by a singled handed delivery of a 28ft from the Azores to the UK. I built up over 30,000NM in these three years. When I got back to Tasmania I jumped straight into offshore racing with the 2015 Launceston to Hobart, Maria Island Race, and the 2016 Sydney to Hobart as Navigator on the same yacht (Cromarty Magellan), where we won the Corinthian Division of the race. I'm now preparing for the 2018 Melbourne to Osaka Double handed yacht race, in my own yacht, as the only all female team in the race with Hobart sailor Jo Harpur. The Athena Program has been an incredible experience, and not only improved my sailing significantly, but also provided a network to sailing with some very talented women sailors in Hobart. I am really looking forward to representing the Athena Program in the 2018 SB20 World Championships in Hobart as part of team Fire.

## **Lauren Davidson, Team Member**

I have been sailing all my life and racing since I was about 12, starting at Bellerive Yacht Club with my dad. I am usually found on the bow of Taspaints although have ventured further back on occasion. The majority of my racing has been here on the Derwent but I have also competed events around the country such as the Australian Women's Keelboat Regatta, Port Lincoln Race and Race Week, Brisbane to Gladstone Race and the Festival of Sails. After spending last season focusing on the Bluewater Pointscore Series and offshore racing I am looking

forward to new challenges and improving my skills in the SB20's and the Athena program.

## **Clare Brown, Team Member**

My Dad introduced me to sailing when I was about 5 sailing a Cole 23 called Tom Thumb. I started sailing competitively at the age of 7 when I joined Lindisfarne Sailing Club. I competed in my first National Sabot Championships at 8 and continued to sail competitively at world and national championships over many classes. I have also competed in International and National match and teams racing regattas. I'm currently a member of Derwent Sailing Squadron and I look forward to the up coming season with Athena.

## **Colleen Darcey, Team Member**

My experience in boating started at a very young age due to the influence of my fantastic father. My earliest memory of sailing was in a Diamond when I was about 4 years old, holding on for my life! At the age of 10 I started sailing Sabot's at the Lindisfarne Sailing Club and moved into Heron's when I was about 14 years. I have great memories of my dinghy days and the friendships I formed still influence my sailing life now.

In my early 20's I moved into keelboat sailing and since then I have had opportunities to sail on great yachts with some fantastic people both locally in Tasmania and interstate. I have regularly competed in the Australian Women's Keelboat Regatta and have been very lucky to be joined by some very talented Tasmanian female sailors for this event. It's difficult to remember all the races but I always remember the crew comradery and I never stop learning.

Although I love sailing, I am also an active member of the Derwent Sailing Squadron Sailing Committee, Secretary of

the SB20 Tasmania group and a Board Member of Yachting Tasmania. I had the pleasure to jointly own an SB20 for approximately 4 years and so the opportunity to continue to sail in the SB20 fleet in the Athena program has been fantastic.

#### **Molly Grainger, Team Member**

I only started sailing just over a year ago. I have always had an interest in the sport, largely due to listening to my dad's sailing stories, and wanted to give it a go. I sailed a couple of twilight races a few years ago which was a lot of fun but struggled to find an opportunity to sail more until I found out about the Athena program. This past year has been fantastic. I have learnt a lot and met a great group of girls. I have also been lucky enough to travel interstate to participate in the Australian Women's Keelboat Regatta which was a great experience. I am looking forward to furthering my skills this season and especially competing in the SB20 World Championships in Hobart in early 2018.

#### **Aron Gavin, Team Member**

Starting at the age of 8 sailing Sabots in Melbourne, I progressed through dinghies and skiffs competing at state and national level. Following a break during Uni I moved into trailerable and sports boat racing dabbling in some offshore on the way. After a few moves for work I ended up in Hobart and onto SB20's. The tight racing and one design aspect of the SB20 is a huge appeal, combined with the great people that make up both the Athena program and wider Hobart sailing community. With the World Championships in Jan 2018 it is an exciting time to be part of such a strong fleet.

#### **Chloe Abel, Team Member**

I started sailing at the Sandy Bay Sailing Club when I was 7. My whole family is involved in sailing so I had been waiting since I was 4 to be able to get in a boat on my own. I started off in an Optimist, then moved to forward hand

in the International Cadet and then helming. I love the Cadet because it is a two person boat and team work is so important. I have competed in 7 National titles both as a crew and a helm. I have also sailed in promotional fleets in Belgium and Lake Garda. I represent my school, Fahan, in teams racing and match racing. We are off to our second Interdominion Schools Team Sailing Championships in September to compete against New Zealand. I am also doing some 420 sailing and love being out on the wire. I love all sports and play hockey in winter and enjoy road bike riding and surfing.

#### **Cole Dabner, Team Member**

I started sailing sabots when I was 9 at Port Dalrymple Yacht Club on the Tamar River, before progressing into lasers and B14 skiffs. I have also raced sportsboats and keelboats successfully, completing a couple of Australian Three Peaks Races and Launceston to Hobart yacht races on the Inglis 47 Advantedge. Over the last couple of years I have been sailing SB20s in the increasingly competitive Hobart fleet with Nick Rogers. I'm looking forward to the upcoming world championships where I will join my wife and crew as part of the team Essence of Athena.

#### **Isabella Declerck, Team Member**

I started sailing when I was 8 after dad suggested it and instantly fell in love with it. I've been so lucky to be involved in it and it has become such a large part of my life which has given me so many amazing opportunities. Competing in dinghies out of Sandy Bay sailing club in both an International cadet and an Optimist. Attending 5 nationals (3 as a helm 2 as a crew) and 3 world championships (1 as a helm 2 as a crew). I have also been lucky enough to also sail for my school and represent my state and country in teams sailing and winning 2 states and 2 nationals along the way (1 as

a helm 1 as a crew). I have also been involved in school match racing enjoying the close one on one racing. I'm a very busy person who also loves playing other sports as well such as Soccer Water polo and AFL. I have been hopping on and off SB20s for the past couple of years and loving the close racing and the large fleet. I have been so lucky to have so many amazing opportunities and I am very excited about my first season with Athena and the things that it will bring.

#### **Meg Goodfellow, Team Member**

My dad got me into sailing around the age of 7 in sabot out of the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania. Even before I even started sailing I was always around it because of my dad's sailing. After sabot's I took a break from sailing for a few years. I joined the Fahan School Sailing Team where I have had the chance to attend multiple nationals/inter-dominions. During the 2014/2015 season I crewed in an international cadet for Issi Declerck and attended the nationals in Port Lincoln, South Australia. I sailed a SB20 last season and now going into my second season. I love sailing with other people because you are on the water with a team and you are all working together to achieve the best outcome. I like that through sailing you get the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. When I'm not sailing I coach the learn the sail programs out of Sandy Bay Sailing Club.

#### **Victoria Westbury, Team Member**

I first began sailing a little "Opi" at Kingston Beach Sailing club, and later, inspired by the coaches, went on to sail the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Completing some commercial tickets kept me in the nautical scene until I began sailing with the Athena women's program. It has been a powerful learning experience racing SB20s and the occasional keelboat.

## Financial and Business Report

Athena Sailing continues to grow our list of supporter. Through membership and fundraising initiatives the program is becoming sustainable. The program aims to become self-sufficient, covering the costs which are incurred to supply a great program to women with the sense of adventure.

Such costs that require cover are:

- Athena team gear
- Boat storage & maintenance
- Management costs
  - Insurances
  - Course costs
  - Race Fees

If you are interested in supporting the team please contact us!  
[info@athenasailing.com.au](mailto:info@athenasailing.com.au)



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