

# The Mainsheet

Fall 2007

34° 40.90' N  
82° 51.75' W



## Clemson Sailing Club Begins a New Semester

A new semester has begun at Clemson, marking 42 years of sailing on Lake Hartwell. Looking to build on last year's 72 members, we placed a Hobie 18 on Bowman Field to attract new students during the Bowman Block Party. Over 150 new students expressed interest in the club, with many of them coming out to the club the following day.

The race team has grown to 15 sailors, and we just purchased 8 new sets of sails for our 23 year old 420s. Several freshmen on the team have a long sailing history, including experience sailing at the national level and on tall ships. Some regattas that our sailors participated in over the summer include the E Scow Nationals, the US Sailing Ida Lewis Championship, and the GYA Challenge Cup.

After three regattas this semester, the race team is in second place in SAISA North. We finished 4th at Charleston, 2nd at Clemson, and tied for 2nd at Tennessee. Our next regatta is the SAISA Championship, October 27&28, hosted by Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida.

With our new dock complete, we are turning to maintenance projects to keep our boats in working conditions for the coming years. Our goal for the fall semester is to haul out our C&C 26 for new topside paint in addition to blister repair and a bottom job. Any topside painting tips would be appreciated.

On Friday, October 5, the Sailing Club hosted our Fall oyster roast. Matt Preslar ('05) brought 300 pounds of fresh oysters from Charleston to the club, and everyone had a great time.

We are currently working to update our alumni list. If you need to update your information or know some sailing club friends who are not on our mailing list, please visit our website, [www.clemsonsailing.org](http://www.clemsonsailing.org), and fill out the form. We will post regatta results and information on club events, so please check back often.

We'll see you on the water!

### Officers

Edward Levert  
*Commodore*  
*Race Team Captain*

Sean Cavanaugh  
*Vice-Commodore*

Eric Nilsson  
*Treasurer*

Rachael Draper  
*Secretary*

Logan Bonner  
*Equipment Manager*

Alex Caskey  
*Public Relations*

Cliff Kincaid  
*Safety Officer*

Liam Cunningham  
*Clemson Sailing Foundation*

5225 University Station  
Clemson, SC 29632

[www.clemsonsailing.org](http://www.clemsonsailing.org)  
[cusail@clemson.edu](mailto:cusail@clemson.edu)



Sailing on Bowman! Many new students were attracted to the club's Hobie 18 during the Bowman Block Party



Several club members enjoy an afternoon sailing our C&C 26

## New Dock Completed



What began as a project in the fall of 2004 was finally completed this past spring after two and a half years and countless hours of labor. The decision to replace our aging dock was spurred by new EPA regulations that made our uncovered styrofoam floats illegal. After consulting several dock companies for designs and quotes, we realized that the cost of a professionally made dock would exceed our budget. Several club members who were engineering students researched different designs and construction methods. The club decided that a steel frame dock would last long into the future and thus be worth our time and money investment.

After clearing a work area next to the club buildings, the steel arrived in January 2005 and construction began.

Work times were mainly spur of the moment decisions with most of our progress occurring late at night and into the morning with Lynyrd Skynyrd, Jimmy Buffett and a nice fire to keep us going. However, on breezy afternoons, the majority of our workers could be found on the water. With football games and regattas on most weekends in the fall semesters, most of our progress was made in the spring, with a big push at the end of each spring semester.

All the sections are now connected with space for 10 420s and our fleet of keelboats and cats. While the construction process took time away from sailing and other activities, the knowledge and experience gained and the great times shared with friends will follow us throughout our lives.

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## Charleston to Bermuda 2007: Halfway There and Back

I was walking to class this past February when I received a call from club member Liam Cunningham saying there was a Clemson alumnus who wanted two CUSC members to race with him in the 2007 Charleston to Bermuda race. I nearly dropped the phone. My immediate thoughts were that this would be an experience of a lifetime, shortly followed by thoughts of being several hundred miles offshore with people I had never sailed with on a boat whose history was unknown to me. Any doubts were short lived once I met Eddie Evans ('79) and the other three guys who would race with us.

Liam and I drove down to Charleston one weekend to race with the crew and begin practicing for the 777 nautical mile race. For our first time out we sailed on a tight course in Charleston Harbor in 15-20 knots on Eddie's 38' Beneteau *Naut on Call*. Liam and I returned for Charleston Race Week for 2 more days of practice to work on our boat handling and crew positions. The light conditions did not favor us, but we sailed very well as a team. As there was too much wind to fly our spinnaker during the previous regatta, this was our first time seeing the solid orange chute with the Clemson tiger paw.

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Rob McCroskey steers through the Gulf Stream



Lunch time 300 miles offshore in the middle of the high pressure system. Clockwise from bottom left: David Champain, Liam Cunningham, Eddie Evans, Rob McCroskey, Claus Bech

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We returned to Charleston the week before the race to begin loading the boat and making our final preparations. When race day came around, none of the teams knew what the wind was going to do. Even the professional weather forecaster described the situation with a "high degree of uncertainty." The race started with a short downwind run before heading out of the harbor on a tight reach. We decided that our best bet would be to work south of the rhumb line in hopes that a low to the south would push the expanding high to the north. We would have no such luck.

The breeze began to build through the evening, and we put a reef in around 10:00 that first night. We crossed into the Gulf Stream that night and next morning. It was similar to sailing in a washing machine as the wind was blowing directly against the Stream. I was having a blast as the boat was sailing like a big dinghy, surfing at 12 knots and launching over (or through) waves. The breeze began to die that evening and into the night and eventually went flat on the third day. We heard over the phone that up until the wind died, the tracking software had us in first place overall on corrected time. We were thrilled but disappointed at the same time.

Sailing with little wind for two days, our progress was not enough to escape the expanding high. Still 380 miles from the finish, we would not realistically be able to make the party in Bermuda even if we started the engine. After discussing our options, we decided that it would be best to turn around. The breeze eventually filled in from the east, and we had another roller coaster ride through the Stream. With a steep following sea under a pitch black night sky, constant steering was required to keep the boat under the mast. Despite our best efforts, we still ended up going sideways down some waves in excess of 13 knots. Everyone had an ear to ear grin. We entered Charleston Harbor sipping cold ones under small craft advisory conditions. It felt like a Sunday afternoon cruise.

My sailing experience had been limited to buoy racing and costal races along the Northern Gulf Coast. Through Eddie's generosity, Liam and I were given our first true offshore experience and memories we will carry for a lifetime.

Edward Levert



Heading east through the Gulf Stream

For more pictures, visit [www.clemsonsailing.org](http://www.clemsonsailing.org)

Clemson Sailing  
5225 University Station  
Clemson, SC 29632

## Hooked for Life

The Clemson Sailing Club is a 501c(3) organization. Donations of any kind are fully tax deductible.

For more information on how you can help the Sailing Club, contact Liam Cunningham [lcunnin@clemson.edu](mailto:lcunnin@clemson.edu)



Rachael Draper, crew, and Logan Bonner, skipper, lead around the leeward mark during the Spring 2007 Clemson SAISA regatta

What is the sailing club to me? At first, it was just a great way to meet friends and gain access to beautiful Lake Hartwell. I had never even sailed before coming to Clemson, but with the affordable club dues and the opportunity to enjoy the gorgeous South Carolina weather, I joined.

In the past seven months, being a part of the club has come to mean much more than enjoying being out on the water. I've become secretary of the club and have not only learned how to sail, but I have also learned how to race. I've traveled with the team to Charleston, NC State, and the University of Tennessee these past semesters, and I am

looking forward to future regattas. Sailing is a great sport, and I never realized just how much skill and knowledge went into it until this past year.

From just hanging around the bonfire at the club to the tradition of Friday's at 4:00 to traveling to compete against other schools, I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the sailing club. I know it takes a lot to make it work, and I really appreciate all of the people who have the ability to make it happen.

Rachael Draper