

# SailATL



## Atlanta Yacht Club Junior Alumni Making Waves in College Sailing

Atlanta Yacht Club has long been a launching point for young sailors, and its impact is clearly reflected in the success of its junior alumni at the collegiate, professional and Olympic level. From the Naval Academy to Tulane University and the University of North Carolina and beyond, AYC sailors continue to excel both on and off the water.

Among these standout alumni are sisters Carlyn and Evie Blauvelt, both of whom attended the United States Naval Academy. 1st Lt Carlyn Raad, Logistics Officer, United States Marine Corps, Class of 2023, was a sophomore when her team won Team Race Nationals in 2021—an impressive achievement at one of the highest levels of collegiate sailing. Reflecting on her experience, Carlyn noted, “Growing up sailing on a body of water like Lake Allatoona helped me become accustomed to shifty and unpredictable wind conditions, which mirror many college sailing venues.” Following in her footsteps, 2nd Lt Eva Blauvelt, Air Command and Control Officer, United States Marine Corps, Class of 2025, built an equally remarkable career, earning Honorable Mention All-American and First Team All-MASIA Skipper Women’s Sailor of the Year Finalist during her time on the team. Continuing the AYC presence at the Naval Academy, current juniors Darby Dryden and Josie Sherry, Class of 2027, are carrying on the tradition and representing the club at a highly competitive level. They are currently working towards qualifying their women’s team race team for college sailing nationals this spring.



*Evie Blauvelt Skippering at ICSA Women’s Atlantic Coast Championships*

Atlanta Yacht Club’s influence is also evident at Tulane University, where twin sisters Ellie and Lucy Spearman (Class of 2025) made their mark. During their time sailing for Tulane, their team captured a national title at the 2022 Co-Ed Sailing Nationals and went on to place second at the 2025 Women’s Fleet Race Nationals. Reflecting on her time as an AYC junior, Ellie shared, “Being part of the Atlanta Yacht Club junior program gave me the opportunity to sail a wide variety of boats, including Snipes, Y-Flyers, and Thistles. That experience strengthened my crewing skills—from boat handling to tactical awareness—and helped me adapt quickly to the boats used in college sailing, like FJs.” Their contributions highlight both their individual skill

and their ability to thrive in a team environment. Lucy reflected on the lasting impact of her time at AYC, sharing, “Having such a strong youth program at Atlanta Yacht Club gave me friendships that will last a lifetime off the water. One of my favorite parts of college sailing has been seeing fellow AYC sailors at regattas across the country. After such an impactful youth sailing career, I am very excited to offer my support and mentorship to the next generation of AYC youth sailors.”

Another notable alum, Grayson Berrier (Class of 2025), brought her passion for sailing to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. There, she took on a leadership role within the club team, helping to organize practices, coordinate travel to regattas, and foster a strong team dynamic. Her dedication demonstrates the leadership and initiative that AYC helps instill in its youth sailors.

One of AYC's most recent junior alumni, Frances Hansen, is already beginning to make her mark at the collegiate level. Now a freshman on Jacksonville University's sailing team, she has already competed in multiple regattas this semester. Her early involvement highlights both her skill and the strong foundation developed through the Atlanta Yacht Club junior program.



**Frances Hansen Crewing at a Jacksonville University Practice**



ODP Camp 3 | Jan 4-8, 2025 | © Allison Chenard / USST

**Daniel Escudero Training at an Olympic Development Camp**

Daniel Escudero also represents the continued excellence of AYC alumni. While attending the Webb Institute, he pursued Olympic aspirations in the ILCA 7 class while also competing collegiately. During his time at the Webb Institute, he secured the 2024 College Sailing Open Singlehanded National Championship—marking the Webb Institute's first-ever national title. Daniel is now training to qualify for the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, continuing to build on his already impressive sailing career.

The success of these athletes is no coincidence.

Atlanta Yacht Club provides a uniquely supportive environment that emphasizes both competitiveness and camaraderie. With access to a wide range of one-design boats, junior sailors are able to develop versatile skill sets, gaining experience as both skippers and crews. Just as importantly, the club fosters mentorship, with experienced sailors eager to guide and support the next generation. Through these opportunities, Atlanta Yacht Club continues to prepare its juniors not only for success in collegiate sailing, but for leadership and achievement well beyond it. The club looks forward with excitement to seeing what the next generation of junior alumni will accomplish, both on and off the water.