

# In the Name of Sustainable Youth Sailing

*In the next Y2A, we'll check in with St. Vincent & the Grenadines to see how they are progressing and formalizing their national federation. Until next. We get what we celebrate.*

**Y2A Featured Youth**

Kephra Grandison, 14 years of age  
 Member: Nevis Yacht Club  
 Favorite boat: Hobie Cat

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*Youth2Adult — Y2A — is a new series of articles for Compass readers. Featuring the "Caribbean youth or adult next door", we celebrate junior sailing and its role as a life skill that might lead to employment within the marine industry as an adult.*

Historically, national sailing federations in the Eastern Caribbean were formed to facilitate modern keelboat racing and its consequential economic development. Sailing development often has a seat on the bus but is not a driver. But there is a new phenomenon afoot. Two island nations — St. Kitts & Nevis, which formed a sailing federation last year, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines, which is in the process of creating one this year — cite sustainable youth sailing as their driving force.

Like many other Caribbean nations, St. Kitts & Nevis had youth sailing instruction programs that came and went over the years. In 2011, then commodore of Nevis Yacht Club, Mark Theron, decided he would make it otherwise. With the knowledge that international support is out there, but only countries with a national sailing federation qualify to receive it, Theron reached out for information from both ISAF (International Sailing Federation) and IODA (International Optimist Dinghy Association; Optimists are the one-design dinghy used worldwide for introduction to both recreational and competitive sailing, Target age: five to 16 years). The first few years, Mark waded through the paperwork alone. Eventually, others jumped on board.

"ISAF was helpful in providing templates and samples of how emerging island nations had answered some of the questions. My advice to others seeking to start a sailing federation is 'don't give up'. It took a lot of time behind the computer. Go ahead and get a start irrespective of the perceived hurdles that lay ahead. If you plan to do it, address your challenges as they arise and keep moving on," Mark says.

This attitude worked. In 2014, officers were elected and the St. Kitts & Nevis Sailing Association (SKNSA) was formed. They still await formal recognition by their National Olympic Committee (NOC). SKNSA has to establish a track record of consistent instruction and competition. Theron is confident they'll eventually receive the nod from their NOC to apply for funding.

A goal for this summer? Yes. SKNSA anticipates receiving a shipment of six Optimists to Nevis and nine to St. Kitts. This will pave the way for a larger number of children participating in summer sailing camps as well as level the playing field for inter-island racing events.



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