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According to BYS coach Andy Mitchell, his son Drew, at only ten years old, was the youngest of the 175 participants in the July 2015 Optimist North Americans held in Antigua. Drew plans to go back again next year but he is rapidly outgrowing the Optimist. BYS is working to raise funds to send Drew, along with Eltino Bynoe, also now 11 years of age, and Oton Compton who is 14. Last year, junior sailors, coach and chaperones sailed from Bequia to Antigua on a large catamaran, using it for transportation and housing. Owing to various challenges, they only arrived the afternoon before the start of the championship. Next year, they plan to arrive days early, for rest and practice before the big event begins. With a sign-up sheet (including donor and yacht name, e-mail address and donation amount) in hand, Drew approaches yachties in the harbor asking for donations for his Opti North American campaign. "He has raised EC\$2,000 so far," says Andy. "It gets exhausting to keep going after funding."

BYS has a website: www.bequiayouthsailors.org. They keep supporters informed of their endeavors and accomplishments.

Louise Mitchell says, "It is ironic that only in 2016 is sailing becoming an official national sport in SVG as it has been in the blood of the people of the Grenadines for generations, but as the saying goes here, 'nothing before its time'. I expect to see all sailing enthusiasts at the meeting of the Sailing Association on April 10th at 11:00am at Gingerbread Hotel restaurant, Bequia."

Y2A Featured Youth

Jojo Adams, 16 years old

Junior Sailing Program: Bequia Youth Sailors (BYS)

Port Elizabeth, Bequia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Favorite Boat: Laser

Of Jojo Adams, his coach Andy Mitchell says, "Jojo has a very steady hand. He works hard, is very calm and is a very natural sailor."



Jojo has been sailing with Bequia Youth Sailors (BYS) since he was ten years old. Mostly on weekends, Jojo, along with other youths, sails Optimists, a Laser and double-enders within well-protected Admiralty Bay. It started out with fun practice races where, as a group, they'd sail down to Lower Bay to De Reef restaurant. Andy Mitchell would buy them lunch. Then they'd race back upwind to where the boats are stored just off the main dinghy dock in Port Elizabeth.

When asked about his racing, Jojo says it came "very easy." In school, he likes geography. As he started sailing, he found out how the compass is used in sailing.

Jojo's mother works at Jack's Bar on Princess Margaret Beach. His father regularly goes to Rhode Island in the summer, performing varnish and other marine repair work. In Bequia, he drives a taxi during the rest of the year.

Jojo raced Optimists in the 2013, '14 and '15 Carriacou Regattas. He, Drew Mitchell and Oreakey Joseph raced in the June 2015 St. Lucia Nationals. Jojo also has been helmsman on 12-foot, 16-foot, 18-foot and 28-foot double-enders during Bequia's annual Easter Regattas and races held in Mayreau. According to Andy, Jojo will be the youngest person ever to captain a 28-foot double-ender in the upcoming Bequia Easter Regatta when he skips *Crystal Claire*.

Commenting on the physical strength built in the upper body and legs from hiking out in strenuous winds that normally blow through the bay, Jojo says, "We practice roll tacks and discuss right of way. Sailing is a good way to stay fit, to upgrade yourself and remain strong." He'd like to become a professional sailor one day. "I see myself in ocean-crossing races."

Ellen Ebert Birrell attributes her opportunity to cruise the Caribbean aboard Boldy Go with partner Jim Hutchins to life skills built in childhood. Believing swimming and sailing are essentials for island youth, she supports junior sailing and serves on the Caribbean Sailing Association Sailing Development Committee. Visit caribbean-sailing.com/youth/youth-programs for more information.

Youth2Adult - Y2A - is a series of articles celebrating sailing's role in youth development. If you know of a Caribbean youth sailor or adult candidate for featuring in Y2A, please contact ellenbirrell@gmail.com.

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