Sailing Away Victorious
Cooper River Yachtsman Wins World Championship
Local Skipper Sails Home With World Championship

World Champion yachtsman John McCausland, of Cherry Hill, learned to sail at the Cooper River Yacht Club.

by Michael Martinez
Community contributor

Never quitting is the most difficult thing you can do in life. It is also the greatest thing you can do and John MacCausland, a native of Cherry Hill, knows this first hand.

MacCausland won the 2013 Qualcomm Star World Championship at the San Diego Yacht Club on Sept. 6. He and crewman Phil Trienter of Virginia defeated 65 other professional teams from 10 countries in the prestigious international competition.

MacCausland returned to New Jersey’s Cooper River Yacht Club a world champion. A true champion is defined as a person determined to never quit the quest—and John has never quit!

Thirty two years ago, John sailed in his first Star World Championship with his father, John MacCausland Sr., fondly known as “Big Mac.” They lost. Over the next three decades there were many more defeats. Fourteen of them included other Star World Competitions around the world.

“I didn’t get disheartened when I would lose,” said MacCausland. “It motivated me to hike harder, train deeper and to give more.”

A gentlemen and humble individual on and off the race course, he endured the losses graciously.

“Seven years ago a lot of people were telling me to give up sailing, move on, grow up and get a real job and to stop dreaming of being a world champion,” said the 52-year old. “Your mind and outlook have an incredible impact on your performance. I believed in myself and I wanted to prove to others that I had the skill, talent and determination to be a champion. I wanted to make my father, family and children proud of me.”

MacCausland knew he had to start his journey by acting like a champion, committing himself to practicing the habits and ways of a champion, engaging in these qualities and characteristics on a consistent basis. This commitment was a struggle and it came at a huge price for his personal life. His quest took him through a bitter divorce, the death of his mother, and alienation from his daughter and brother. For the past five years, he has lived with and has been caring for his ailing father alongside his brother Bob MacCausland, a former star sailor, and his sister Patti.

“I owe my career and sailing life to my father. Winning this championship has given our dad a great deal of joy,” he said.

Through his ups and downs, wins and losses, there was a tremendous amount of growth and self-discovery. Wiping away a tear from his eye, MacCausland said, “I chose to rise up in the most difficult of situations. I now know the sign of a champion is a comeback both in life and on the race course.”

MacCausland has that patient, can-do, hard-working, unstoppable attitude, which contributes to his winning and success. In his pursuit of the world championship Gold Star, he earned 19 Blue Stars for district level competitions and seven Silver Stars for Continental championships.

Continued on next page
John McCausland shows off his World Championship cup.

Photo courtesy of Christy Riedic.
Continued from previous page

“T’ve raced and won a lot of championships in a lot of different classes, but winning the Star Worlds tops everything else,” said MacCausland, who never forgets to publicly acknowledge the hard work of his crew and thanks the race committee, volunteers and planners at every event.

A champion also in business, MacCausland purchased Moorhouse Sailmatters in 2011 and became the CEO of Moorhouse MacCausland Sailing in Lumberton. His knowledge and expertise in the sailboat industry has given John an outstanding foundation to run his business. Just as in his sailing career, he strives for excellence and offers a full service sailing headquarters for sailors of all ages, abilities and interests.

“I am so fortunate to have Rob Seidelmann with me here at Moorhouse MacCausland Sailing,” says the Star World Champion. “Rob is also the commodore of the Cooper River Yacht Club and he is ecstatic to have the ninety-two year old Star Class International Trophy at the club in Camden County.”

John has traveled the world in his sailing career and has won the respect and friendship of the “who’s-who” in the sailing world. A former America’s Cup Team member and Olympian, MacCausland credits his experience sailing with Dennis Conner as the best education he ever received. Shortly after his Star World victory he received a congratulatory text from Conner.

“Some people never understand that I work at almost every sailing event I attend. It is tough mentally and physically,” said McCausland. “I enjoy helping people, I take pride in my work and giving back to my class makes me happy. No one can stop me from being the best I can be.”

Looking back on his quest for gold in September, JoMacCausland believes he was very well prepared. He developed a plan and followed it, maintained motivation and will power to succeed. He devoted a lot of time to improving his training by climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro, Africa in May.

“Getting Phil, a former World Star Champion, on board to crew for me was the best decision I made in the quest. Phil and I have a lot of history and respect for each other,” he said.
In addition to being prepared with the best people, John attributes his success to the best equipment.

“My boat was made by Mader, in Germany. I have worked with Mader since 1986. I had a lot of input and I did the boat the way I wanted to,” said McCausland. “It was the newest boat in the fleet with our masts and I was incredibly proud of the fact that the boat was everything I believed in.”

After a rare rain shower the morning of Sept. 6, an even rarer event occurred in San Diego Bay that day—the first Cooper River yachtsman took possession of the highly coveted World Star Class Trophy. With tears of joy raining down his cheeks, he thanked his father, who bought him his first laser, taught him how to sail and never stopped believing in him. Believing is something McCausland attributes to never quitting.

“When you have people who believe in you and you believe in yourself, you strive to do your absolute best and achieve your greatest potential,” he said.

Life-long Cherry Hill residents, the McCausland family’s life has revolved around sailing. From international competitions to local business. And they remain proud of their roots.

*Michael Martinez is a freelance writer.*

---

Cooper River Yacht Club promotes sailing by supporting youth and adult lessons, maritime charter school programs, high school and college sailing programs, ROTC programs, competitive racing programs April through November, community outreach programs including boating safety, environmental sciences, and Community Sailing.

The Yacht Club is family oriented and consists of members from all walks of life, regardless of social standing or nationality. It is not necessary to own a boat to be a member of the Club, nor do you need to live in New Jersey. The Club also has a very successful Community Sailing Program for people who wish to sail but do not want to purchase their own boat.

Beginner and advanced sailing lessons are offered to anyone who wants to learn to sail, including children. Instructors are experienced sailors certified by US Sailing and are fully capable of instructing novices in the art of sailing. The Club has produced sailors who have gone on to win more than 50 national and international races in their sailing careers.

The Club does more than just sail and race. Social events are held throughout the year which include barbecues and holiday parties.

For more information go to cooperriveryc.org.