

open OCEANS

Junior's endless training has made him a better sailor

While thousands of Wando students open their gifts on Christmas morning, **Austin Ando**, 11, is tearing through the waves with his crew off of the coast of Miami.

Sailing is a life commitment for this member of the Wando Sailing Team, and there's nothing traditional about this skipper's holiday season.

"He gives up his summer. He gives up every Christmas. He flies on Christmas day to Miami and he sails from Christmas to New Years. He sails over Spring Break... It's a lot," **Wendy Ando**, Austin's mother, said.

Austin walked on to the Wando Sailing Team last year not knowing what to expect. He was coming to a new school and starting to sail for a brand new team. This did not seem to faze Austin, seeing as he was easily accepted by his teammates.

"He brings a happy and care-free personality to the team... He just kind of like talks to everyone... He puts you on his level and includes you," **Emily Roudebush**, 10, one of Austin's teammates, said.

Managing his time is difficult, but not impossible as Austin proves with his charisma and lightheartedness. Austin's sailing career, however, captivates all other aspects of his life. Because Austin sails year round, he misses out on things other high schoolers get to do on a daily basis.

Aside from sailing and training for his national crew, the sailing team at Wando has also played a huge role in helping him and keeping him motivated throughout the school year. The sailing team has helped him get to where he needs to be regarding his skill level.

"This club has helped me a lot. You don't have to have a sailing background to join, which is cool," Austin said.

Austin has developed friendships with both of his crews: Wando and national crew.

"He is on a crew for the national circuit and on the Wando team... The high school circuit runs from like September through mid-November and starts back up in February and runs through Spring," Wendy said. "Austin sails every summer. For the last three summers he's been gone for the whole summer. He sailed every single day."

Sailing is seasonless. There is always something Austin can do to improve on. Both teams push him to be the best skipper he can be. Stress builds up fast in Austin's life, but his love for sailing is too strong for that to stop him.

"I like to just get away and be outdoors and on the water... It's really peaceful," Austin said.

His sailing has taken him to places like Britain, Spain, and Bermuda, but he has somehow managed to always sail right back home to Charleston.

-Bailey VanderVeen



SERENITY ON THE SEVEN SEAS (left) Sailing in Charleston Harbor, **Emma Scott**, 10, works with her middle school sailing partner to better her skills, "Sometimes it's really nice, when the wind is calm to just look out and take in everything... When you see the bridge and the wind and the water is just all so stress relieving. For two or three hours at practice... my mind is clear," Scott said.

GOOD TIMES AHEAD (center) **Heyward Main**, 9, and **Clay Register**, 10, work as a team to steer their boat. "I've sailed pretty much all my life... It just always felt natural to be on the water. The sailing team is a good way to just have fun out on the water," Main said.

PICTURE PERFECT: (right) **Emma Shultz**, 10, glides across the water. "Practices are really fun. Monday nights are fun because you get to sail in the sunset. It's kind of like a picture... I really like the water," Shultz said.

THE CREW'S ALL HERE: (inset) **Austin Googer**, 11, and **Austin Ando**, 10, sail together in Charleston Harbor. "I like the people I sail with and being out on the water. We see all kinds of stuff out there... It's peaceful," Googer said.

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