

My Pathway - - Tommy Wong

As a local kid, my journey starts as Paul, instructor of [Sailability Hong Kong Limited](#), gives me a trial session prior to the Scallywag Program in July 2019. Turns out he was really happy with my performance and that's how it all started with myself getting into the second group in the Scallywag Program. The program was set up to provide a pathway for kids to get into sailing as it's not the most accessible sport and that's why Scallywag, Sailability and Hebe are trying to promote it more around the community.



With the program, I also met Mike and Kay, they were one of the few biggest supporters to us throughout the program, and also, our lovely parents, to be always there.

My group took quite a long period of time to finish the course with various bad weather situations, but for me, I actually started volunteering for other Scallywag program courses but also different Sailability programs even before finishing mine. In that perspective, it just gives me more hours to spend with the boat and on the water which is perfect to me as a new sailor to keep practicing but also sharing joy to various other people who are willing to join in.

I actually remember that back in the days, I was just always using the same boat, Star Fish, a Hansa 303 launched in memory of John Fisher. That boat actually sort of turned into my personal boat as pretty much I am the only guy taking it out.

But with all that, I meet up with Ryan in May 2020, another volunteer to Sailability which he brings me into the other dinghy sailing world with the Enterprise and also RS Quest which then we were partners for nearly six months with my first proper event as Hebe Open 2020 which we are grateful to pull off a third overall. In the meantime, I was fortunate enough to be receiving the title of [Scallywag](#) Sailor of the Year.

Let's move to where I start ILCA sailing. Just two months before Hebe Open, I met with Alfie, Hebe Dragons Race Team Head Coach, we actually was chatting in the changing room, which he invited me to give a go on ILCA, I don't know what to expect and just say 'Sure', which that turns out to be a really huge turning mark to my life.

Alfie gave me all new stuff, boat and riggings, and that is also how I met Richard, a friend and training partner that made me be competitive in Hong Kong within one year of training. Both Alfie and him, basically I am with them every weekend from day to night, we got quite close actually. We did lots of training and also different types of racing together also with Faber and Daniel which they joined the team later in time.

Somewhere later, I was given the title of Hebe Dragons Laser Fleet Captain as the oldest but also 'youngest' in the team. More responsibility on the shoulder but also showing the appreciation from the Hebe Team to myself which is so great.

Taking all that, we step into Hebe Open 2021 where I finished 5th out of 12 boats, not bad for the first race but also room to improve and be aware.

Training carried on but with the leaving of Richard for the UK, a sad thing but it's the reality. Yea, I kind of lost the best mate in sailing which helped me so much but yea, you can also keep stepping up no matter what is happening around, as long as you are with the sport.

Time flies and the next race was ABC Southside 2021, finishing 4th overall and 3rd in youth. It's a not bad result but I am not totally satisfied, anyway, that's sailing.

Still with that result, I was lucky enough to be selected into the HKSI National Sailing Team as a Youth Athlete which at the age of 17, youth is pretty much closing the gate on me but it's good to gain as much as I could from the team with my lack of experience.

Still we got lots of lockdowns as always in the winter since 2020. We all stopped for nearly 3 months. Still the team held strong and we managed to pull off some good results in Hebe Open 2022 with podium finishes.

As with that, we set ourselves for European Racing in the summer which is amazing as last time I was out was three years ago and this time around, will be my first sailing trip, and might be the last as a youth athlete.

So yea, the first race was the EurILCA 6 Youth European Championship in Thessaloniki, Greece. We are lucky to team up with a local team from Athena, Greece throughout the regatta which I would say is one of the favorites. With differences in sailing abilities, they are still very nice and we had some great times throughout no matter on or off the water. Thanos, Thomas, Alex, Gabriela, Iro and Evelina, led by Vagelis, a great team to be with anytime.

Race result going a bit up and down which... Yea, you really don't know what will happen till it happens. Black flag and yellow flag with one each throughout the regatta. That's actually a bit devastating when you see your name on the committee boat whiteboard or someone chasing you down and raising up a yellow flag behind you, but I had to know one thing, the regatta still got to go on. You get a Yellow Flag, you do the penalty, then keep racing. You get a Black Flag, you start preparing for the next race. The regatta just never ends, gotta keep going, gotta keep going!

So yea, as I said, it keeps going so we moved on to the UKLA National 2022 held in Hayling Island. To be honest, a tough place to sail with the strong current. Three training days is still less than enough to get into the situation. I actually took it to the second racing day to actually get into it. Yea so it's a tough regatta with all kinds of conditions from 4 knots to 22 knots, sunny to stormy, it's just the tough way for a regatta but also something that fits everyone with some better in the strong wind, some in the light wind.

4 days of qualification puts me in the top batch of Silver fleet, with the last day of fleet racing starting with wind over 22 knots, strong current, and storm, ending with 4 knots in the last race, got to be real adaptive to everything.

Finishing 7th in silver, not bad, but I was expecting more from myself, still it's sailing, gotta move on. Going to the Europeans was actually something never ever thought of since my start cuz I didn't even expect myself stepping into the ILCA class which thanks to Alfie, I am now here, keep stepping up, racing in higher and higher levels of regattas. Mike, Kay, and Paul bring me into the sport, Alfie brings me to another level of the game, and my mum, my biggest supporter throughout the past three years in the sport. Without any of them, I would never make it to this far with Europeans and overseas regattas. Thank you!

People say it takes years to race competitively in sailing, but I say it takes passion and love. Still, time plays its role during the journey, the more training hours you get, the more you can gain.