3-5-2010

UNH Sailing Team Committed to Season and Rebuilding the Program after Devastating Fire

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Recommended Citation
Mantz, Erika, "UNH Sailing Team Committed to Season and Rebuilding the Program after Devastating Fire" (2010). UNH Today. 3281.
https://scholars.unh.edu/news/3281

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UNH Sailing Team Committed To Season And Rebuilding The Program After Devastating Fire

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Mar 5, 2010

DURHAM, N.H. – The University of New Hampshire Sailing Team, a co-ed club sport with more than 60 members, will begin its spring season as scheduled after a devastating fire Wednesday, March 3, 2010, destroyed the team's boathouse at Mendum's Pond as well as the more than 55 boats, five motors, three launches, trailers and additional equipment stored inside.

The State Fire Marshal’s Office has ruled the fire was incendiary, or intentionally set. Early estimates of loss exceed $500,000.

Coach Diana Weidenbacker and the team’s student leaders are committed to getting on the water this weekend, as originally planned, and vow to rebuild the three-season program as well as its popular summer Community Sailing Program. UNH Sailing Team members run the popular program that has taught thousands of community members how to sail over the more than 30 years it has been operating. Weidenbacker noted one example of community involvement was the addition of a Kittery Point Tender donated by Judy Jellinek in memory of her husband, a supporter of youth sailing.

"This has been devastating for the program and our students," said Weidenbacker, "but the outpouring of support from alums of the team, participants in the summer program, the local sailing community as well as programs around the world has been overwhelming and heartening. We will rebuild the program and look forward to a great season on the water. Team members are eager to move forward."

Many of the team’s regattas scheduled for the spring are at other schools where sailboats are provided and plans are already underway to make alternate arrangements for practice time and boats.

The university will rebuild the boathouse.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state’s flagship public institution, enrolling more than 12,200 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

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