



## SSL league confirms another team member selected

The Star Sailors League (SSL), is an international regatta circuit launched in 2013 by a group of professional and amateur sailors to support sailing athletes. The movement brings together all regattas raced in the Star Class and offers a ranking based on the ATP World Tour model created by tennis players in 1972.

Team South Africa recently announced a new team member: Howard Leoto...

*According to the SSL selection policy, the team is partly selected by the captain and partly by SSL rankings. At certain dates, the highest ranked sailor must be invited to the team. The highest ranked sailor is SA at the moment is Ian Walker. He is an optimist and 420 star. At the moment he is not eligible for selection to the team as the minimum age, according to the SSL rules, is 18 years*



*old. He seems to be a future star and I hope that we will be welcoming him on board when he is old enough.*

*The second highest ranked sailor is Howard Leoto and he has accepted the nomination. This is Howard's story in his words:*

*I am Howard Leoto, from Masiphumelele near Cape Town. I am aged 28. I started sailing in 2004 at the Izivunguvungu school in Simon's Town. There, I learnt a lot of sailing skills as well as using hand tools for boat building. I concentrated on sailing mirror dinghies. It is a difficult boat to sail well but I learnt a lot of techniques to make it fast. I got my skills from Matthew Mentz and Ian Ainslie and the staff of Izivunguvungu that were employed back then. I was given the opportunity to compete in a lot of events in South Africa at an early age. I learnt a lot competing in the mirror fleet and was then given the opportunity to compete in a world championship overseas in 2009. I used an old boat, I still remember the number, which was 50735. I came 27th. When I competed overseas, I could improve my skills a lot and then I could use those skills in the races in South Africa. I was then given the opportunity to sail a fibreglass boat. My first event on my fibreglass boat was the mirror nationals. I found the fibreglass boat a bit faster than my previous, wooden boat. I was able to win the nationals multiple times in a row. I am also the current national champion.*

*I was then given the opportunity to study yacht and boat building and Westlake False Bay College. I studied there for three years where I learnt lots of techniques of how to build boats. After three years, I was able to work at some big boat building companies, like Two Oceans Marine, Jacobs Brothers and Gemini Marine.*

*Then I started a small business, repairing boats and coaching at Imperial Yacht Club on Zandvlei. I hope to develop this business. I am now also sailing laser radial and 420s. in the 420, I came third and fourth in the last two nationals. In the laser radial I came fifth in my first event. The opportunities and skills that I got have helped boost my confidence. I want to learn more about teamwork and communication on a keelboat with this opportunity that I have now. I want to say thanks a lot.*