



> [Olympics](#) > [The Team](#) > John Dane III

John Dane III

For Star sailor John Dane III, tenacity counts. When Hurricane Katrina swept over the U.S. Gulf Coast, one of the businesses in the storm's path was Trinity Yachts, the New Orleans megayacht builder of which Dane serves as president. With company buildings ravaged, manufacturing equipment destroyed, and many employees left without homes, the business appeared to be in ruins. But Dane and his team made Trinity Yachts one of Katrina's biggest comeback stories: a post-hurricane expansion with a new facility in Gulfport (Mississippi) and a workforce grown stronger in adversity resulted in an order book that makes this company, according to ShowBoats magazine, the biggest superyacht builder in the United States.

Dane is just as resolute when it comes to his quest for Olympic gold. For nearly 40 years, he tried for an Olympic berth. In 1968, at age 18, he arrived at the U.S. Trials in a borrowed Dragon class boat and finished a close second. He sailed more Olympic Trials—in the Soling class (1972 Games), the Finn class (1974) and the Star class (1984)—coming close to victory at each event. His campaign for the 2008 Games, racing with son-in-law Austin Sperry as crew, proved to be his charm.

"Austin's youth, athleticism and enthusiasm coupled with my racing experience and never-say-die attitude make us a great team," says Dane. That's the big-picture view; but on the eve of the final day of racing at the U.S. Olympic Team Trials, this Star duo had a very narrow margin for error.

Two points out of first place and four points ahead of third, Dane and Sperry needed some distance on fleet leader George Szabo. In an adrenaline-fueled finale, they nosed out the second-place boat at the finish line for a win in what journalists would come to call the biggest race of Dane's life. "It was definitely emotional," Dane told the hometown Times-Picayune newspaper after their victory. "I didn't cry; I just shouted for joy."

This duo will face a fleet deep in world-class talent at the Olympic Regatta in Qingdao, but Dane and Sperry have already triumphed over formidable Star talents at the U.S. Trials, including three-time Olympic medalist Mark Reynolds. And for Dane, this long sought-after goal of winning the U.S. Trials is his own personal Everest: "Winning the Star Trials and beating a multiple medalist like Mark Reynolds and competitors like Mark Mendelblatt, George Szabo and Andy Horton at the young age of 57 is by far my most significant sailing achievement."



Just the Facts

CLASS: Star
POSITION: Skipper
US SAILING TEAM ALPHAGRAPHICS: 2007-2008
MEMBER OF: Pass Christian YC/Southern YC/Gulfport YC/New York YC/New Orleans YC
HIGH SCHOOL: De La Salle High School (New Orleans)
COLLEGE: Tulane University (graduated 1972) Tulane University (PhD, 1975)
AGE AT QINGDAO OLYMPICS: 58
BIRTHPLACE: New Orleans, Louisiana
HOMETOWN: Gulfport, Mississippi
OCCUPATION: Yacht builder/patrol boat builder
SAILING SINCE AGE: 10

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS:

#1-ranked U.S. team, ISAF Star Class rankings (2007)
 Three-time inter-collegiate All-American

SAILING RESUME:

2008
 3rd Bacardi Cup/Miami, Florida
 14th US SAILING's Rolex Miami OCR/Miami, Florida

2007
 1st U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Sailing/Marina del Rey, California
 8th Star Western Hemisphere Championship/Tampa, Florida
 10th US SAILING's Rolex Miami OCR

2006
 1st Bacardi Cup/Miami, Florida
 1st Star Class Masters Regatta/Miami, Florida
 1st Star Western Hemisphere Championship/Annapolis, Maryland
 4th US SAILING's Rolex Miami OCR
 5th Cascais International Sailing Week/Portugal
 7th Star Eastern Hemisphere Championship/Naples, Italy
 18th Star World Championships/San Francisco, California

2005
 1st Star Class King of Spain Regatta/Marina del Rey, California
 2nd Star Western Hemisphere Championship/Nassau, Bahamas
 3rd Star North American Championships/Marina del Rey, California

- John Dane III is the spokesperson for the Melanoma Research Foundation, the largest, private, national organization devoted to melanoma. "The best way to prevent melanoma is to protect yourself from the sun," says Dane. "As a sailor who spends a lot of time in the sun, I know the importance of wearing sunscreen with a high SPF and to re-apply every two hours. I'm thrilled to be part of the MRF's efforts to educate others about prevention and the importance of research."

- For more information about melanoma or the MRF, please visit www.melanoma.org.

