

FROM: Joe Sullivan, former Coach & Director of Sailing, Fordham Sailing Team

DATE: December 11, 2015

Danielle, I spoke with Mike Callahan re: the best way to have this proposal brought up for consideration at the upcoming ICSA Annual Meeting in Park City, Utah, and he suggested that I write to you requesting that this topic be added to the agenda.

BACKGROUND

My father served in the U.S. Navy between WW I and WW II including a tour of duty in Panama; an uncle served four years with General Patton in Europe during WW II; our son, Sean, who was on the USNA Sailing Team for four years, was awarded the Bronze Star while serving as a USMC officer in Iraq during Operation Desert Storm, and was subsequently named the "USMC Intelligence Officer of the Year" in 1991. As a graduate of Fordham's AFROTC program, I served in Korea in 1959 and 1960 after being commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the USAF.

Because of the above and not due to any great talent in playing the game, I was selected as a contestant on "Wheel of Fortune" during Armed Forces Week last month (November 12), and I was thrilled to have the opportunity to give a "Shout out" to Fordham Sailing.

In the spring of 2011, our Women's Team participated in the ICSA Women's National Championship competition for the first time. As coach, I accompanied the team to Portland Oregon. It was my first ICSA national championship and I was delighted to be there with our team. However, something was missing and I could not initially grasp what it was. Eventually, it occurred to me, that the preliminary activities on site somehow lacked the build-up and excitement of a national championship competition. In many ways, it was no different than any 18-team conference championship. It needed something special and what came to mind was the singing of our National Anthem before the competition began. Not only at national championships but at regular season College Basketball and Football games, it's a given that the

Star Spangled Banner will be sung. Why not at College Sailing competitions, at least at our national championships?

PRESENT

To my knowledge and I've been to scores of locations over the past 16 years, in College Sailing, "The Star Spangled Banner" is not played or sung before any competition. I vowed to change that when I returned from Women's National's in 2011.

At Fordham, we pride ourselves on the "Values" we impart to our students and the "Values," which our University represents. As a coach, I took the "Teaching" role seriously and without standing on a soapbox with the team or others, in 2012, I quietly introduced the singing of our national anthem at the two annual competitions, which Fordham hosts, i.e., the Jesuit Open Interconference Regatta in the fall and the Greater New York Dinghy Regatta in the spring. When selected to host North #1, a qualifying event for the WAR Memorial Fall Conference Championship, and the MAISA Club Team's Championship, we added our National Anthem. It's become a tradition, which other coaches have told me is uniquely "Fordham." We engaged the services of Cantor Daniel Pincus, whom I heard sing "The Star Spangled Banner" at our home Basketball games and is excellent. The cost? \$75.00 per appearance! It doesn't pay him to get up early on a Saturday morning and drive to City Island by 8:45 AM but he loves to do it, and on the one occasion when he had a conflict, he arranged for a professional replacement from the Metropolitan Opera, who also enjoyed the experience and offered to return anytime. But whether it's a professional or a young male or female college sailor with a terrific voice, I truly believe, that it would add a special quality to the event.

Invariably, cadets and/or midshipmen/women from Annapolis, West Point, Kings Point, the US Coast Guard Academy and SUNY Maritime College compete at our events, and seeing them standing at attention and in some cases saluting as the anthem is sung is a tremendous example of patriotism to our own sailors and those representing other civilian schools.

Last June 30, I retired from Fordham Sailing after nearly 16 years as volunteer Coach and/or Director of Sailing. I received a number of nice notes during the weeks that followed but one touched on the issue of our National Anthem. It was from Dave White, who coaches the Sacred Heart University Sailing team and had coached the Fairfield University team, as well.

“Joe,

I'm sorry to hear that you retired. You added so much class to the regattas with the National Anthem and cheesecake. We will all miss you.

Dave White”

I'm sure that Dave was not placing our delicious cheesecake on a par with the singing of “The Star Spangled Banner,” but it got me wondering about the relationship between Sports and our National Anthem and I found the following, which may be of interest to our ICSA Board Members:

This is excerpted from a story, which appeared in the September 19, 2011 issue of ESPN The Magazine.

“...in a country that loudly lauds actions on the battlefield and the playing field, "The Star-Spangled Banner" and American athletics have a nearly indissoluble marriage. Hatched during one war, institutionalized during another, this song has become so entrenched in our sports identity that it's almost impossible to think of one without the other.”

“...on Sept. 17, 2001, Major League Baseball resumed following 9/11. The country was in mourning, hurting in ways it could hardly have imagined a week earlier. And when the nation collectively decided to right itself, to acknowledge tragedy while reclaiming everyday life, it turned to sports -- and to the anthem.

Across MLB, teams surrounded the song with tributes to the victims and the country's public servants.”

“In Los Angeles, police officer Rosalind Iams sang the song while members of the Dodgers and Padres helped firefighters and police officers unfurl a colossal stars and stripes that stretched almost entirely across the playing field. That same night in Pittsburgh, two members of the Air Force Reserve were called on to sing the anthem as spectators donned ‘I Love New York’ buttons. And in every ballpark for weeks afterward, tears were shed over what it took Francis Scott Key's lyrics to remind them of: ‘Our flag was still there.’ “

“Of course, in American sports, the flag -- and the anthem -- is always there. At the biggest events, pregame festivities surrounding the song provide as much spectacle as the games themselves...At lesser events, even at the high school level, a color guard is often on hand with the flag as the anthem is played. **A game without the anthem is likely one that doesn't matter much.**”

PROPOSAL

Thus, I respectfully propose that commencing in 2016, “The Star Spangled Banner,” our National Anthem, be sung and/or played prior to all ICSA National Championships. Conferences can decide if they want to do the same prior to their championship competitions, and teams can decide what they want to do on a team-by-team basis.

This proposal is for ICSA National Championships only. I ask the ICSA Board to give it serious consideration, and I predict that if you adopt this proposal in today's political climate, College Sailing will receive extensive and nonpartisan praise for its discernment and leadership.

Nothing in life is easy but the Star Spangled Banner should not be a controversial issue.

Voting for it is more like voting for Apple Pie and Motherhood. I thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Sullivan

Fordham '58

PS Danielle, unbelievably, I received a video this morning from a Fordham classmate and fellow 1958 Air Force ROTC graduate. The timing is incredible as you will realize after you view it. Please feel free to add it to my proposal for the benefit of the ICSA board members. I am forwarding it in a second e-mail message. Again, thank you very much.

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