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Virgin Islander Nikole Barnes Qualifies for 2021 Tokyo Olympics; She's Also the First Active Duty U.S. Coast Guard Officer to Compete in the Olympic Games in Any Sport

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Virgin Islander Nikole 'Nikki' Barnes

The 2021 470 World Championship fleet racing series concluded Friday, completing the third and final stage of the U.S. Sailing Team's Olympic Selection series. At the conclusion of the qualifying series, U.S. Coast Guard LTJG Nikole 'Nikki' Pern Bareuther Barnes (St. Thomas, USVI) and Lara Dallman-Weiss (Hugo, Minn.) had 97 points and stand in seventh place. This position guarantees them the lowest point total of the three competing USA 470 women's teams and qualifies them to be nominated as the US representatives in the Women's 470 for the Tokyo

2021 Games, which takes place July 23-August 8.

Ms. Barnes is also the first active duty U.S. Coast Guard officer – man or woman – to compete in the Olympic Games in any sport. She is currently stationed in Miami, FL, and will make LT in May. Since she is living and stationed in Miami, Ms. Barnes is competing for the US rather than the USVI.

As of Friday afternoon, all 11 scheduled races are complete for the three fleets racing at the 2021 470 World Championships, hosted by Vilamoura Sailing in Vilamoura, Portugal. The top 10 entries in each fleet will compete in the medal race on Saturday.

The US Sailing Team has two boats racing in medal races on Saturday. In the Men's 470, Stu McNay (Providence, RI) and Dave Hughes (Miami, Fla.) are currently in sixth place, and in the Women's 470, Barnes and Dallman-Weiss are currently in seventh. The medal race will be live streamed on Vilamoura Sailing's YouTube channel and is sure to provide some weekend entertainment for spectators, as racing has been tight through the qualifying series.



Day 5 of racing brought sailors sunny skies and 7-11 knots of shifty North/Northwest breeze . A highlight of the morning included Oyster Bay 470 Team members Shawn Harvey (Miami, Fla.) and Augie Dale (Pewaukee, Wis.) catching a right shift shortly after the first start and rounding mark one in first. Throughout the race's six legs they changed places with Panagiotis Mantis and Pavlos Kagialis of Greece a handful of times and ended up in third, their strongest finish of the regatta.

Carmen and Emma Cowles (Larchmont, NY) sailed well, scoring a 5th and 6th place, keeping qualification hopes alive at the time and race fans on the edge of their seats. The last race was exceptionally exciting as the Cowles sisters and Barnes/Dallman-Weiss rounded at the head of the fleet and battled all the way around the course in a shifty and choppy final race.

“We didn’t know about Trials when we crossed the finish line because it was so close, so my feeling was just immense pride in our team and how we sailed the regatta,” said Dallman-Weiss. “We went in with a goal to have consistent top 10s and we executed that in the highest-pressure scenario. We laid it all out there, we did all we could, and we pushed till the end.”



“When we crossed the finish line, our coach Robby wasn’t sure [about the final results] because the racing was so close, so we were crunching numbers and waiting to see if anyone filed a protest. All of the other competitors towed in and the three of us sat out there refreshing the results page waiting to find out. Nikki started bawling and we felt all the emotions. I am just so proud, so grateful—so grateful we even had a Worlds, grateful we had the other two teams pushing us, just all-around happy.”

Full coverage of the event will follow Saturday after the conclusion of the medal race, where McNay and Hughes have the potential to move up to fourth place.

Ms. Barnes was born on St. Thomas, Sept 20, 1993 with Dr. Wilbur Calendar welcoming her into the world. She attended Joseph Sibilly Elementary and then graduated from Antilles in 2012. As a grade schooler, she sang with the Caribbean Chorale Youth Choir under the direction of Dr. Lois Habetes. She also participated in several Carnival Adult Parades as part of Johnny McCleverty’s Traditional Mocko Jumbies. For 16 years, from age 2 to 18, she studied dance at the Caribbean Dance School with Monty Thompson and Curliss Solomon John.

Ms. Barnes started sailing at the St. Thomas Yacht Club at age 6. Beginning at age 12, she started sailing in regional, national and continental and world championships. From age 12-18, she sailed five days a week, including 8 hours each on Saturday and Sunday, while the other two days a week she maintained her Caribbean Dance instruction. Nikki was introduced to the idea of the US Coast Guard Academy from Alvin Dalmida and Austin Callwood. She was first accepted to Coast Guard prep school at Marion Military Academy and was not able to sail for a year in this land-locked destination, but a career in the US Coast Guard was worth it to her. It didn’t hurt, as she was a three time All-American sailor at the US Coast Guard Academy, and Women Sailor of the Year in 2016 for all of college sailing.



Nikki was given a support billet to train for the Olympics while serving as an active duty Coast Guard officer. She is the first active duty U.S. Coast Guard officer – man or woman – to compete in the Olympic Games in any sport. She is currently stationed in Miami, FL, and will make LT in May. Since she is living and stationed in Miami, she is competing for the US rather than the USVI.

Standings at the conclusion of the qualifying series: [Click here for Results and Standings](#).

Men's 470 – 29 Entries

- *Stu McNay & Dave Hughes – 6th
- Shawn Harvey & Augie Dale – 25th

Women's 470 – 27 Entries

- *Nikki Barnes & Lara Dallman-Weiss – 7th
- Carmen Cowles & Emma Cowles – 12th
- Atlantic Brugman & Nora Brugman – 19th

Mixed 470 – 20 Entries

- Louisa Nordstrom & Trevor Bornarth – 13th

*Final finishing position dependent on Medal Race results.