

Team RyVita – about us.

Having both come from sailing an optimist at the Salterns and Royal Lyminster from a young age, Lyminster was our bread and butter. For Vita, sailing has always been the centre of family activity, both leisurely and competitively. Most days involved some sort of action on the Solent, inspired by the whole family. She couldn't escape the competitive gene so at the age of 7 began her adventures of optimist racing! Ryan however has a different story; he had some difficult years as he went from different homes, before being adopted by a lovely couple from Hampshire who are both well accomplished sailors. They've sailed all over the world in various boats, so Ryan was in good hands to begin his career as a determined

sailor. Being an incredibly talented sportsman, Ryan was torn between just about every sport under the sun. Eventually resting on the one that we all know will be carried through life – sailing!

We both progressed out from the top end of the Optimist fleet onto well spent years in 420s. Ryan being a few years older, our 420 careers never really overlapped but we both experienced a very similar 4 years; sailing with our best friends, not only looking to champion the racecourse but the bar too!! Ryan specialised in this 🏆. These were the best summers; racing 420s and making friends all over the globe we created memories for life. And just to top it all off, Vita finished up her 420 career by winning the World title!

Now comes the serious business! Sailing was too good to give up; an experienced 470 helmsman asked Ryan to crew for him at the Junior Europeans. With that being a trial run for Ryan in the 470, he had done well enough to receive a place within the British Sailing Team. That winter led Ryan straight into a full time 470 programme with a vision to take it all the way to the Olympics.

Vita having a medical passion running parallel to that of sailing, wavered slightly between going to medical school or pursuing the Olympic dream, the latter of which was too good to resist; but she still seeks to fulfil her medical ambitions after hopefully leading a successful campaign to the 2024 Olympic games!

We paired up as Vita rounded off her career in 420s and Ryan had just split up with his previous helm and had already a couple of years crewing experience in the 470. We rolled straight into the Junior Europeans that summer, Vita having barely stepped in the boat, and pulled a silver medal out the bag! That was the kickstart to our 470 Olympic campaign, that we have been endeavouring ever since.

Ryan too has interest and a career he wishes to pursue after sailing. Ryan attended Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College and got a taste of Military life and much like his father really enjoyed it. So to fill the time Ryan is an Army reservist with the aim of going full time after 2024. Meanwhile Vita has initiated her medical career by training as an aural

care nurse. She regularly practises on all her family members and even Ryan can't escape the torture as he lives on the farm with them.

And for the non-sailors out there: a 470 is a 2-man dinghy, with the helm (Vita) steering the boat and the crew (Ryan) providing the leverage on the side of the boat to keep the boat flat, trimming the spinnaker as well as looking around the course to feed information to the helm. We are a mixed team because last year it was announced that the 470 would become a mixed class at the Paris 2024 Olympics. This gives us a great opportunity, as existing single-sex pairings will have to re-pair into mixed teams and thus start their sailing partnership from scratch, which takes a lot of time on the water to build up. We strive to improve our sailing ability faster than any of our competitors. This requires a well thought out and structured training programme, including time off which we usually spend going on expeditions! Examples of our adventures include ice skating across Lake Baikal and climbing in the Dolomites; these not only push our physical boundaries in another dimension but also give us time to reflect on our campaign and build trust in each other. Plus, they are the most amazing fun!

We have a great team around us. Vita's uncle is a double silver medallist in the 470 so when they require guidance and high-level coaching they go to Nick for help. Vita's optimist and 420 coach in Lyngby Shelly has recently moved back to NLZ for a year for the Americas cup but has been helping us in our early stages in the 470. However, our main coach is Jonny McGovern who is a fantastic mentor and has coached both of us since the age of 14. Jonny has taken Vita to winning the 420 World Championships and in the same summer coached us to number 2 on the podium at our first ever 470 event, the Junior Europeans. Since then, it hasn't all be a success story. After the best summer of her life; achieving 3 A* at a A level, showing her skills in the 420, and quickly adapting to a new partnership and a new boat, Vita struck ill to glandular fever which meant we were unable to train effectively until the new year. Determined to make up for the lost time we headed out to Vilamoura and started a hard grind learning how to make a 470 go fast! At this stage, we had now had a few months of experience and hard work under our belt, but our kit was old and didn't reflect our sailing ability. We had to address this issue before our Worlds in March, so we set out to find help. Cecil Wright and Partners, having huge passion, insight and enthusiasm into the world of sailing, invested into our team by buying us a brand-new boat! Coming all the way from New Zealand, the new boat inspired us to work harder and achieve more. We arrived in Palma where our Worlds were set to be and the new boat was there, a beauty of a race machine. It's hard to describe the feeling but neither of us had ever had a new boat! As you can imagine this was a massive help and allowed us to step up onto the world class platform with more than just confidence – we were bursting with enthusiasm to challenge all comers!

No sooner were we ready to give those foreigners a good beating at Worlds, COVID struck and everything came to an immediate halt, 2 days before the first day of racing to be exact! We were devastated. So close to what was going to be our first ever 470 World Championships.