

Adapted sailing feeds the competitive spirit in Pointe-Claire

Quebec Cup regatta runs July 25 and 26 at the Pointe Claire Yacht Club

By Andie Bennett, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 18, 2015 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jul 18, 2015 7:00 AM ET

René Dallaire was a competitive skier before an accident left him without the use of his arms and legs when he was 19.

"A tree hit me," he says. "It's easier for me to deal with it that way."

For 25 years, he channeled that competitive spirit into his work and learning a new way to live life.

Then he discovered adapted sailing.

One phone conversation, a chance wedding table assignment (where he met his sailing partner), and a trip to his first regatta later, Dallaire's skepticism turned to belief. He had found his new passion.

Now, he expertly captains his boat, Aladdin, across the St. Lawrence with a puff and blow system. He controls everything from the rudder to the jib with a straw.

Other boats are set up for people like Luc Fortin. He is blind and tried sailing for the first time.

It wasn't fast enough for his liking.

Then there's Lovie Rivard, the self-professed favourite of the instructors because she brings music along and is a thrill-seeker who thrives on a sense of danger.

Dallaire is now the executive director of the Association québécoise de voile adaptée (AQVA).

He sails out of the Pointe-Claire Yacht Club in the West Island and tries to convince others with limited mobility or limitations to try the sport he loves.

There are more than 200 members in the adapted sailing program. It runs through the summer months, six days a week from 10a.m. to 9 p.m.

Participants can be involved at a competitive or recreational level depending on what they want.

Montreal's regatta for sailors with disabilities, the Quebec Cup, runs July 25 and 26.



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Getting my first adapted sailing lesson at Pointe Claire Yacht Club with captain Rene! #cbcmnt
[instagram.com/p/5NUU5wHyt/](https://www.instagram.com/p/5NUU5wHyt/)



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