



“I started sailing as a sport in 2013 we would go down the harbour on Thursdays, my first sailing experience at Sail Africa was bad so bad that I considered quitting, but the following week I decided to try again,” recalls Manelisi Mkhize of his early days starting out as a sailor.

“I started to participate in races and because of my determination I was signed up for race crews. On weekends I volunteered in sailing the dinghy boats at Sail Africa,” continues Mkhize. In 2015 Mkhize and his teammates won the EMC regatta.

In 2015, he got an opportunity to go to Spain for the Marine Inspirations program to learn more about the maritime industry. During their 2 weeks visit in Spain they were allocated mentors who were sharing their experiences in maritime with them.

“After the Maritime Inspirations program, I fell in love with the maritime industry,” said Mkhize. In 2015 he was in grade 10 already so the following year he repeated grade 10 at Lawhill Maritime Centre because he wanted to do maritime studies.

“When I was in matric I applied for a bursary through General Botha Old Boys Association, to study at Sea Safety Training Group for a Watch Officers course unlimited, which I have completed successfully to be able to serve on a foreign going ship,” he added. Mkhize is currently doing sea time the duration of which is one year.

The qualifications held by Mkhize include that a day skippers license, a certification that states he has completed the Officer Of the Watch (OOW) theory. Currently, he is busy with training for his OOW certificate and the Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) basic training to go to sea.

Through sailing Mkhize has gained a host of personal skills: confidence, leadership skills, people skills, as well as other sailing and related expertise, like first aid, boat maintenance and firefighting and the ability to work with different people. He has conquered some of the fears he had before sailing like the fear of water, heights, and bad weather at sea.

“Right now, I am in a ship with Filipino people, we are only two South African citizens. I am learning a new culture and communication skills,” he said.

Mkhize is grateful to Sail Africa and General Botha Old Boys Association for propelling him forward in his life and career. Mkhize’s short term goal is complete his cadetship at sea and his long-term goals are to fly the South African flag high, change the negative perception about South African seafarers by becoming the best officer possible, and to be a master mariner. Mkhize encourages young people who have interest in a maritime career industry to: “Follow what you love, let go of the fears.”