



---

---

May 12, 2020

The good news is that the weather is starting to warm up, which means that sailing season, the only one that really matters in any year, is getting tantalizingly close. The bad news is that Covid-19 has affected all of our lives so dramatically and fundamentally, and that it has tragically ended so many. No matter what the weather and the time of the year, going sailboat racing has been bumped way down on our collective priority lists. Like so many other parts of 'normalcy' (school, work, college, NBA basketball, the Olympics, concerts, parades, etc) scheduled sailing events have been falling like dominoes, either postponed or cancelled. The first responsibility for all of us continues to be doing whatever it takes to help cope effectively with Covid-19.

At the same time, going sailing is a primal urge for a lot of us, and be assured that a lot of dedicated and creative people are working really hard to find ways to allow us to do that in some form, if not in the usual one. Beyond the clubs, that are working on protocols that will allow them to open gradually and with limitations, the MRA has brainstorming on ideas that can manage risks and still give us a chance to play. The survey that Elise produced for Fleet 5, and that the MRA followed up with one of their own, have been helpful in discerning what the hopes and expectations may be across our local one design fleets.

A lot of us responded within minutes of the Fleet 5 survey's release, and about 40% of the +/-50 members who received it did so in the first 12 hours. At least for our more committed sailors, the big picture was clear:

- A lot of us are chomping at the bit to go sailing
- A clear 6 in 10 majority would be most comfortable starting in July (that includes Race Week!), with many of the rest OK with June.
- 9 in 10 would be fine with pretty much any racing format that is offered
- About half would do some Twilight racing (People who don't live locally struggle to get here in time for the starts)
- A somewhat surprising 3 in 4 would consider Sunday AM porch racing

Gov. Baker is expected to release details of his re-opening guidelines on May 18, and the clubs are likely to confirm their approaches the same day. Fleet 5 plans a virtual leadership meeting the following day to discuss our own plans, that inevitably will depend on decisions still to be made by others (MRA, the clubs, the Harbormaster, etc). Given the realities of continued social distancing, we can expect limited launch service and probably some 'automated' race management that avoids the risks of squeezing a lot of volunteers into committee boat cockpits to handle flags. A more serious constraint would be the requirement for 'one household' crews, if that is extended. While that would be a great incentive to go family sailing with kids and be fine for single handing, it would be a real challenge for a lot of boats in our fleet. In anticipation of our May 19 virtual meeting, our leadership group would love to have more feedback and/or suggestions from membership, either via the [Fleet 5 MRA 2020 Season Survey](#) for those who have not done that already (no stuffing the ballot box, please!), or via email to Jim Taylor at [ajtaylor8@verizon.net](mailto:ajtaylor8@verizon.net).

Rest assured that there will be some sailing this summer. What its various forms may turn out to be is still TBD. Stay tuned!