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Fleet 5 Newsletter

April 2025

GREETINGS FROM THE PREZ



I'd like to start with an enthusiast *happy birthday* to our man on the street, Mr. Thursday night, **John Casler**, who turned 80 years young on April 15th. Imagine that. John isn't just a member of Fleet 5, he is Fleet 5. He's done so much – in fact just about anything and everything a person can do to support and promote a fleet. And he's been doing it for decades, dating back to the **Reagan** administration. John may not win as many races as he used to, but as far as I'm concerned, his warmth, kindness, generosity, humor and contribution earn him the gun every time. He represents the very best of us. Happy birthday old friend.

I'm writing from the cockpit of my SunSail charter, hanging lazily off the mooring in Anegada on a sunny March afternoon in the BVI. Not only is this one of the most spectacular places on earth, but I'd take an Anegada lobster (grilled on the barbecue and basted every five minutes with garlic butter) over a new England lobster every time. Sacrilege, I know, but hey, I'm feeling feisty. Anyway, as we were arriving at Gorda Sound a couple of days ago, we stumbled onto the practice session for the inaugural [North Sound Maxi Regatta](#).





Cool, right? While there, we watched one of the round-the-buoys races from Hog Heaven, high atop Virgin Gorda. Take a look.



What was interesting is that with this perspective, the game becomes so clear and what to do, so obvious. Believe it or not, we watched pros like **Dean Barker** making the same bone-headed tactical mistakes that we do (late at the start, tacking on lifts, overstanding, not covering, etc.). Kind of reassuring, really. Anyway, that was fun and got our juices flowing for the coming season, which by the way, is bearing down on us like a freight train. We have just eight short weeks before the first gun. We'll be ready, how about you?

Today is an anniversary of sorts. It was 15 years ago in the April 2010 newsletter that our Road To The Cup was born. Here is a walk down memory lane with a reprint of my rantings from April 2010.

"It's time to get something off my chest. We sail each year in hopes of winning something called the Nick Nichols trophy – let's call it 'The Cup.' 'The Cup' represents our season championship and is awarded each year to the boat with the lowest aggregate score across all our racing, which includes Spring Series, MRA, Race Week, Twilights and Fall Series.

*“Is this news to you? Does it ring a bell? Does anyone even know what ‘The Cup’ looks like? Well, if you don’t, I’m not surprised. The last time someone other than my wife had the opportunity to polish the thing was before **Bill Clinton** didn’t have sex with that woman. That’s ridiculous! How could you guys let us get away with that?”*

How indeed?! I prattled on about goal setting and such, but the primary reason Christina and I won it for a decade was because no one else was paying attention. The culture was so short-term focused on winning the race or winning the day that people lost sight of the big prize: winning the season. We were so not focused on it that the cup was often handed out as an afterthought at the end of the awards banquet. Go figure. Anyway, to get on with my rant of 15 years ago ...

“We as a fleet haven’t really emphasized ‘The Cup’ for a while, so it’s no surprise folks aren’t focused on it. And unless you track the scoring on your own, how would you know what the season rankings looks like? Well, we’re going to fix that. Once the season starts, we’re going to post the season scores under the heading ‘Road to the Cup.’ We might even do weekly email blasts...”

Weekly email blasts!! All season? Right?! Who in their right mind would be willing to do that?

Well, apparently at least one, and just like that, RTTC was born. What started as a modest weekly scoring blast evolved into the Fleet 5 chronicles, including race commentary, member news, plenty of gossip, and of course, scoring. There have been ups and downs, for sure, but it’s been generally well received. Of course, I also came close to being tarred and feathered a few years back for, well let’s say, being a bit too forthright. Anyway, here we are 15 years later and gearing up to do it again.

But here is the point. The distribution of cup winners expanded significantly. After one team (embarrassingly) won the cup for ten straight years from 2000 to 2009, in the 15 years of RTTC from 2010 to 2024, six different teams took home the prize, with the maximum number of wins capped at four. Good outcome, right? Below is the breakdown if you’re interested.

Cup Wins - 2010-2024	
<u>Team</u>	<u>Wins</u>
Pendleton / Raisides	4
Team P.	3
Team Frisch / Hourihan	2
Team Lane / Heffernan	2
Team Cooke / Kaznoski	1
Team Uhl / Lane	1
No scoring due to Covid	2
Total	15

The Week Zero edition of 2025 RTTC will go out on Sunday, May 18, one week before first gun. Who’s going to take it this year?

This April edition includes a couple of nice reads. First is a piece called ‘*Deck Layout For Double Handing a Rhodes 19*’ by **Nat Taylor**, and the second is a reprint of **Charlie Pendleton’s** 2011 piece ‘*Rudder Equals Brake.*’ Both are worth your time.

Lots of stuff coming up, starting with the spring meeting on April 23rd at my house. Check out upcoming events below for details and a rundown of what else is coming.

Eight weeks people, just eight weeks!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Our draft 2025 calendar of events is below. Some of the uncertainties from last month have been nailed down, but not all. It should be finalized by May 1. Here are a few near-term events you should know about.

Spring Meeting - Wednesday April 23rd – This year’s spring meeting will be held from 6:30-8pm on Wednesday April 23rd at the home of **Christina & Kim Pandapas**. We’ll discuss racing, scoring and social details of the upcoming season, and vote on a few things, while enjoying hors d’oeuvres, the fleet bar and each other’s company. We’ll also have a laptop to help you register, courtesy of **Timmy Dittrich**.

MRA Kick-off Party – Friday May 2nd The MRA will kick off the season with a party at CYC on Friday evening May 3rd.



Fleet 5 Spring Clinic - Thursday May 8th Fleet 5’s Spring Clinic will be at 7pm on Thursday May 8th at the CYC, and will feature a panel discussion of the new rules. Details below.

Fleet 5 2025 - Schedule of Events DRAFT

<u>Date</u>	<u>Cup Scoring</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Expected Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Wed April 23		Fleet 5 Spring Meeting	6:30 PM	Home of Christina & Kim Pandapas
Friday May 2		Sail 2024 - MRA Kickoff Party	6:30 PM	Corinthian Yacht Club
Thur May 8		Fleet 5 Spring Clinic	7:00 PM	Corinthian YC, Fantail
Sat May 24	x	MRA Series 1 - Day 1	1:00 PM	South Line (consolidated - all fleets)
Sun May 25	x	MRA Series 1 - Day 2	1:00 PM	South Line (consolidated - all fleets)
Thur May 29	x	Twilight Series 1 - Day 1	7:00 PM	Twilight Line
Sat May 31	x	MRA Series 1 - Day 3	1:00 PM	North Line
Thur June 5	x	Twilight Series 1 - Day 2	7:00 PM	Twilight Line
Sat June 7	x	MRA Series 1 - Day 4	1:00 PM	Brimbles Line (Short Course Format)
Sat June 7		On the Water Clinic	1:00 PM	Brimbles Line (Short Course Format)
Sun June 8		Clinic Debrief	TBD	TBD
Thur June 12	x	Twilight Series 1 - Day 3	7:00 PM	Twilight Line
Sat June 14	x	MRA Series 1 - Day 5	1:00 PM	North Line
Thur June 19	x	Twilight Series 1 - Day 4	7:00 PM	Twilight Line
Friday June 20		EYC Pursuit Race 1	TBD	TBD
Sat June 21	x	MRA Series 2 - Day 1	1:00 PM	Brimbles Line (Short Course Format)
Sat June 21		East Coasts - Day 1	12:00 PM	Cottage Park Yacht Club
Sun June 22		East Coasts - Day 2	11:00 AM	Cottage Park Yacht Club
Thur June 26	x	Twilight Series 1 - Day 5	7:00 PM	Twilight Line
Sat June 28	x	MRA Series 2 - Day 2	1:00 PM	Brimbles Line (Short Course Format)
Sun June 29		Fast Mermaid Pursuit Race	TBD	TBD
Sat July 5	x	MRA Series 2 - Day 3	1:00 PM	South Line (consolidated - all fleets)
Thur July 10	x	Twilight Series 1 - Day 6	7:00 PM	Twilight Line
Sat July 12		MRA Series 2 - Day 4	1:00 PM	Brimbles Line (Short Course Format)
Thur July 17	x	Twilight Series 2 - Day 1	7:00 PM	Twilight Line
Sat July 19	x	MRA Series 2 - Day 5	1:00 PM	South Line
Thur July 24	x	Race Week Day 1	TBD	North Line
Thur July 25		Race Week Party	6:30 PM	Home of Jennifer & Steve Uhl
Friday July 25	x	Race Week Day 2	TBD	North Line
Sat July 26	x	Race Week Day 3	TBD	North Line
Sun July 27	x	Race Week Day 4	TBD	North Line
Thurs July 31	x	Twilight Series 2 - Day 2	6:00 PM	Twilight Line
Friday Aug 1		EYC Pursuit Race 2	TBD	TBD
Sat Aug 2	x	MRA Series 3 - Day 1	1:00 PM	Brimbles Line (Short Course Format)
Thur Aug 7	x	Twilight Series 2 - Day 3	6:00 PM	Twilight Line
Friday Aug 8		EYC Pursuit Race 3	TBD	TBD
Sat Aug 9	x	MRA Series 3 - Day 2	1:00 PM	South Line
Thur Aug 14	x	Twilight Series 2 - Day 4	6:00 PM	Twilight Line
Thurs Aug 21		R19 Nationals - Practice Race	2:00 PM	TBD
Friday Aug 22		R19 Nationals	12:00 PM	TBD
Sat Aug 23		R19 Nationals	11:00 AM	TBD
Sunday Aug 24		R19 Nationals	11:00 AM	TBD
Thur Aug 28	x	Twilight Series 2 - Day 5	6:00 PM	Twilight Line
Sat Aug 30	x	MRA Series 3-Day 4	1:00 PM	North Line
Sun Aug 31	x	MRA Series 3-Day 5	1:00 PM	Brimbles Line (Short Course Format)
Monday Sept 1		Around Misery Island Race	TBD	Twilight Line
Mon Sept 1		Sail Salem Charity Race	TBD	TBD
Sat Sept 6	x	MRA Fall Series 1	1:00 PM	South Line (consolidated - all fleets)
Sat Sept 13	x	MRA Fall Series 2	1:00 PM	South Line (consolidated - all fleets)
Sat Sept 20	x	MRA Fall Series 3	1:00 PM	South Line (consolidated - all fleets)
Friday Oct 24		MRA Awards Party	6:30 PM	BYC
Sat Nov 8		Fleet 5 Awards Party	6:30 PM	Home of Christina & Kim Pandapas

SHORT TACKS

Registration is Open – Fleet & Class Secretary **Timmy Dittrich** reports that registration is now open for both Fleet 5 and the Rhodes 19 Class Association. Just click [here](#). Thanks for getting it done early.

Class Rules Eligibility Proposal – Attentive class members may have noticed that a rule change proposal appeared in their inbox recently. We encourage you to support it. Here is the gist. Our class rules rightly seek to prevent pros with no prior association with our class from parachuting into and winning our sanctioned regattas (i.e. ECs and nationals). And the rules have done a pretty good job of that. However, on more than a few occasions, they've also snagged non pros who are just getting started with us, effectively prohibiting new recruits from sailing ECs or Nationals. This proposed amendment is intended to fix that by focusing the language on pros only, allowing us to continue to be the welcoming, friendly inclusive group we aspire to be. So if you haven't voted yet, please vote yes.

Fleet 5 Spring Clinic - Thursday May 8th Fleet 5's Spring Clinic will be on Thursday May 8th at 7pm at the CYC, and will feature a panel discussion of the new rules. Our panel this year will be a real treat and is among the more impressive we've ever assembled. Panelist will include former BC sailing team star, CYC team racing skipper and perennial club champion **Will Bailey**, EYC Sailing Dean and former MIT Sailing Master **Franny Charles**, and 2-time Olympian in the 49er, **Tim Wadlow**. They'll discuss the new rules in the context of areas of the course: pre-start / start, upwind / weather mark, and downwind / leeward mark. You won't want to miss this one. As usual, admission is free and open to all. Cash bar will be available. Circle the date.

We'll keep you posted on details as they become available.

2025 East Coasts in Boston Harbor– The East Coasts will be in Boston Harbor on June 21-22. The event will be hosted by Fleet 45 and the Cottage Park Yacht Club. We'll let you know when the NOR is posted, and keep you updated on details as they are worked out.

2025 Nationals in Marblehead – This year's Nationals are coming back to Marblehead on August 21-24. The event will be hosted by Fleet 5 and the Eastern Yacht Club. The event chair is **Jeff Shoreman**, who has provided this preliminary schedule.

Thursday, August 21st: Practice Race and Annual Meeting
Friday, August 22nd - Sunday, August 24th: Days 1-3 of Racing

You'll find more info at the [event website](#).

No Labor Day Party This Year – You might notice the absence of our traditional Labor Day Party on this 2025 schedule. Unfortunately, that is not a mistake. You'll recall that last year, we repackaged the final two days of MRA into a Labor Day Regatta and even held our own awards at the Sunday evening party. It was a tremendous success that we plan to do it again, but not this year. With a late August nationals and all the associated festivities, it didn't make sense to schedule another party just one week later. But look for it back on the schedule in 2026.

Fleet 5 On-the-Water Clinic – As we did last year, the fleet will again hold an on-the-water clinic, led by **Joe Fava**. The target date is Saturday June 7. The clinic will be run during MRA racing (MRA Series 1, day 4), when we'll be sailing short courses on Brimbles line. There will likely be a chalk talk the following Sunday morning, but details are still being worked out, so stay tuned.

DECK LAYOUT FOR DOUBLE HANDING A RHODES 19 *by Nat Taylor*

When double handing a Rhodes 19, the turning marks are bedlam because there just aren't enough hands. Beau Brigham, from the budding Portland fleet asked me about how to optimize his deck layout for double handing, and I've repurposed our email exchange into these recommendations. You can check a video of a Team Taylor windward mark rounding on YouTube [here](#), to see how these all come together at the usually chaotic windward mark, though they apply to tacking, gybing and dousing too.

Recommendations:

1. **Fraculator System:** A bungee-loaded fraculator is indispensable for quick jib takedowns. The system should be rigged to allow the jib to partially drop upon release, minimizing manual handling. Consider placing the cam cleat for the fraculator where it is easily accessible from the cockpit.
2. **Double Traveler Cars with Bridle:** A double traveler car system with a bridle significantly reduces the need for extensive traveler adjustments during tacks. This setup streamlines roll tacks, enhancing overall boat handling.
3. **Spinnaker Pre-sheet Mark:** Accurate pre-sheeting of the spinnaker sheet is critical for successful hoists. Clearly marked pre-set positions on the sheet ensure consistent and efficient hoists.
4. **Spinnaker Halyard Clip:** A simple, self-releasing plastic clip secures the spinnaker halyard, preventing accidental releases. A clip attached to the chainplate is a common solution.
5. **Laundry Basket for Spinnaker Dousing:** A tethered laundry basket in the cockpit provides a designated space for dousing the spinnaker. This keeps the cockpit organized and prevents tangling.
6. **Low-Friction Guy System:** A low-friction system for the starboard guy is essential for smooth spinnaker hoists. This minimizes resistance when pulling the guy around the headstay.
7. **Midships Sheet and Guy Placement:** Leading the spinnaker sheet and guy to midships with cam cleats under the deck is the ideal balance between skipper and crew placement. Being under the deck prevents butt cleats.
8. **Long Tiller Extension:** A long tiller extension allows the helmsman to move forward towards the cuddy during spinnaker takedowns, as well as other times. This positioning is essential for managing the spinnaker halyard and jib simultaneously.

Further Rigging Adjustments:

- **Outhaul Placement:** Consider moving the outhaul control to a clam cleat on the boom, as it is infrequently adjusted.
- **Twing Placement:** Move the twings aft of the cuddy for improved reach.

- Jib Luff Fine Tune: Prioritize a high-quality, easily accessible jib luff fine-tune system, especially for boats without jumpers.

FROM THE HISTORY FILE

*Below is a reprint of a **Rules & Tactics** article, first printed in 2011, that is just as insightful and relevant today as it was then.*

Rudder Equals Brake by Charlie Pendleton

When I was 16, after a full day of practice, my coach told me to take out the rudder and sail in. I laughed – but he looked me in the eye and repeated the instruction. I learned a critical lesson that day: the rudder is barely necessary. In fact, it’s one of the slowest parts of any sailboat. And you’re best off not using it if you can help it.

That day we spent 15 frustrating minutes spinning in circles until we realized that we could steer with the sails. Trim the main, ease the jib and the boat headed up. Trim the jib, ease the main and the boat headed down. Easy enough. However, the trip back to the dock was down wind, so both sails needed to be out. This was a problem.

Next lesson – heel the boat to windward and the boat would bear off. Heal the boat to leeward and the boat would head up. Ok – this was starting to get interesting. We managed to sail back to the dock with no rudder – and I’ll never forget the “Eureka” moment that came with that experience. Steering with the rudder is slow. Steering with your weight and sails is fast. This lesson applies to so many racing situations.

Tacking and Jibing: If you don’t roll tack your Rhodes, you’re missing out on a big speed advantage. Roll tacking starts by heeling to leeward, which causes the boat to head into the wind. You’re basically using your weight to steer the boat into the tack – *not* your rudder! When jibing, move all your crew weight to the windward side and heal to windward hard. The boat will bear off and peel into a nice, smooth jibe.

Windward mark: I see a lot of Rhodes sailors trying to round the windward mark with their boats heeled way over. The crew’s heads are in the boat getting the spinnaker ready, trying to dig out the pole, etc. As they round the mark, the skipper’s arm is extended way back. He/she is pulling the tiller extension and wrestling the boat to bear off, a huge wake is coming off the rudder and you can almost hear tires screeching! The windward mark is a critical place to hike **HARD** and keep your boat as flat as possible. Heeling makes the boat want to round up and the skipper has to use a huge amount of rudder, which creates drag and slows the boat down.

Downwind: Jim and I shift our weight around the boat a lot downwind when we’re crewing. In a puff, we’ll shift our weight to windward and pull the guy back to get the boat to bear off. In lulls or lighter air, we’ll heal the boat to leeward to steer the boat higher. There is no excuse to use the rudder down wind – you simply don’t need it.

Leeward mark: As you round the leeward mark, heel to leeward and (this is important) trim the main quickly but delay trimming the jib. This lets the boat round itself up and, by delaying jib trim, you won't force the bow down - away from the wind.

Ducking: When you're on port tack crossing tacks with a starboard boat, you may decide to duck. Ease the main first, then the jib and let the jib steer you down. In heavy wind, the main can actually prevent you from being able to duck a starboard tack boat as it forces the boat to steer to windward. It's critical to dump the main in order to bear off and duck.

Circles: We all foul another boat from time to time. Learn how to exonerate yourself quickly, by steering with your weight and sails. When you're doing penalty circles, heel to leeward, trim the main to head up and let the jib luff. Once past head to wind, backwind the jib and heel the boat to windward to bear off. Practice this.

When you stop and think about it, you'll be surprised by how little you really need the rudder. Over the years I've come to understand that a rudder is good for two things: Disrupting the flow of water and making skippers feel like they're actually doing something.

SCUTTLEBUTT

Wedding Bells – Word on the street is that 2024 Race Week champ **Alden Reid** and **Hannah Lynn** tied the knot back on March 22nd at the top of Jay Peak. How great is that? And what a cool location! Congratulations to them both.



NOTICES

Mast Needed - **Rick Roberts** at CPYC is looking for a mast after snapping his old one in half last season. You can reach him at rick@rroberts.com.

MAIL BAG

No mail this week, other than this [link](#) to a racing video **Mike Lane** sent with the comment, “*Awesome video, worth watching.*” The video follows a boat up and down the course with everyone miked-up. What’s great about it is the quality of the ongoing conversation. Definitely worth a look. Also worth noting is that Mike sent this to **Steve Uhl**. So put another way, the two guys who kicked our butts last year, winning Nationals and the Cup are studying this video. Hmmm... maybe we should too.

RACERS RESOURCE BOARD

Alcole Marine – **Luke Andrews** (978-500-1505) and **Renato Qarri** (781-470-4550) do high quality fiberglass repair, gelcoat & Awlgrip and boat detailing. Email alcole.marine@gmail.com.

Cape Cod Shipbuilding makes Zephyr extrusions and a full range of mast and boom hardware and fittings. Call **Dick Landis** at (508) 295-2240.

Chris Small – Full restorations and glass work- csmall9021@yahoo.com, (978) 500-9021.

Doyle Sails - Call (978) 740-5950 for new sails, sail repairs and all variety of canvas work, including boat covers, rudder bags and marine stitching.

Neal Lewanda – Repairs, fiberglass/gel coat, rudders, keel work, etc. - neal@lewandamarine.com, or call 978-525-2700

Sailor’s Tailor www.sailortailors.com for boat covers, rudder bags and marine stitching.

Seacoast Specialty Marine - Call **Greg Dolan** at 978-255-2769, click on seacoastspecialtymarine.com, or visit on Facebook [@seacoastspecialtymarine](https://www.facebook.com/seacoastspecialtymarine).

Stuart Marine - **Dave Whittier** of Stuart Marine in Rockland Maine is the exclusive builder of Rhodes 19s. Call Dave at 207-594-5515 for pricing on new boats, used boats, repairs and parts.

The Trailer Shop – Located on 87 High St. in Danvers for any trailer repairs. Call **Dan Sullivan** at (978) 750-6799

NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

Fleet 5 newsletters are distributed on the 1st of January, March, April, May and November. The Road to the Cup mailings are distributed weekly starting one week before the season with the ‘*Week 0*’ edition, and continuing through the end of the season, typically on Sunday mornings, unless there is racing on Sunday, in which case Monday mornings.

COMPLAINTS DEPARTMENT

Got Gripes? Don’t be shy. Unload at kpandapas@comcast.net. The buck stops here.