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## Fleet 5 Newsletter

## April 2026

### GREETINGS FROM THE PREZ



Eight more weeks! We have just eight short weeks before the first warning of the 2026 season. Spring is officially here, the snow is melted, the skis are put away, the Red Sox season has started, and Memorial Day weekend is barreling down like a freight train. I'm excited. I mean, how can you not be? In the words of my **Brother Jim**, "*I love opening day*," and it will be here before you know it.

But before we go sailing, a little housekeeping. First, we have our 2026 Spring Meeting scheduled for April 16<sup>th</sup> at my house. At that meeting, we'll preview the season, both on and off the water, and vote on three open scoring questions (highlighted in yellow in the draft calendar below). The doors open at 6:30 and the meeting will start shortly thereafter, and we'll try to finish up before 8. Beer & wine from the fleet bar will be on hand, as well as a few munchies. Just bring yourselves. See you then.

Speaking of scoring, as we do every year, we'll plan to give you the full rundown in the Week 0 edition of *Road To The Cup*, which is slated to hit your inbox on Sunday morning, May 17<sup>th</sup>. Also, you should know that many of our registrations are open, at least for the local stuff! You'll find the details below.

Finally, this newsletter edition includes an excellent feature by **Jim Gabriel** entitled, '*Getting Into Sailboat Racing in Marblehead: There are Real Options and Why Fleet 5 Works Well*'. Jim lists some of the obstacles Marblehead sailors face, as well as a bunch of possible solutions. It's a great read and well worth your time. You'll also find an MRA update from old friend **Joe Fava**, who shares some details about some of the new events MRA has cooked up for this season - also a must-read.

Okay, that's it for me. Remember, just eight short weeks.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

At the bottom of this newsletter is a draft 2026 Fleet 5 calendar. We'll provide the final version in May. The first near-term event you should know about is the spring meeting.

***Spring Meeting - Thursday April 16<sup>th</sup>*** This year's spring meeting will be held on Thursday April 16<sup>th</sup> at the home of **Christina & Kim Pandapas**. We'll discuss racing, scoring, some new MRA events and social details for the upcoming season, all 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 **Jim Gabriel**

***MRA Series 1-Day 1*** – Saturday May 23<sup>rd</sup> marks the official start of our 2026 season.

## SHORT TACKS

***2026 Registration*** – Some registrations are open. Details, current status and links are below.

- *Fleet 5 & R19 Class Association* - Register [here](#). This link will take you to Regattaman where you can register for both Fleet 5 (\$80) and the R19 Class Association (\$35). You'll find the class renewal by clicking 'My Account' (at top right), then 'Memberships' tab if the system doesn't automatically take you there.
- *MRA Registration* – MRA Chair **Dan Himes** reports that registration will open April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- *Race Week* – Register [here](#).
- *East Coasts* – You'll find the registration link [here](#). The link isn't active just yet, but it should be soon.
- *Nationals* – Register [here](#). The link also isn't active yet, but suggest you keep checking.

***MRA Preview*** – MRA has spent the winter cooking up all kinds of inducements to get more of us out on the water this season. One of those is to insert two one-day regattas within our usual MRA series racing and then hold a party and awards after. The first of those is the Somerset on June 6<sup>th</sup>, and the second is the Mid-Summer on July 11<sup>th</sup>. They also are planning a harbor championship event called the Harbor Challenge, to be held in Sonars on September 19<sup>th</sup>. This

will allow two of the best teams in each fleet to go head-to-head. **Joe Fava** provides details below about that and some of the other events they have planned.

**2026 Draft Harbor Calendar** – The harbor calendar is not up on the MRA web site yet, but you'll find the draft [here](#).

**It's Party Time** – Fleet 5's busy social calendar is taking shape. Details to follow. Many thanks to our hosts.

- Season Kickoff      Sat May 30<sup>th</sup>      Home of **Brooke & Matt Hooks**
- Race Week Party      Thurs July 23<sup>rd</sup>      Home of **Jennifer & Steve Uhl**
- Labor Day Party      Sat Sept 5<sup>th</sup>      Home of **Lisa & Frank McNamara**

The Labor Day party, by the way, will combine Fleet 5 folks with our friends from the Etchells fleet. Should be fun. Details as we get closer.

**Laser Spring Series** – The Laser fleet kicks off its Spring Series out of the EYC on Sunday April 5<sup>th</sup>. You'll find more info [here](#).

**East Coasts Headed Back to Padanaram** – The 2026 East Coast Championships will be hosted by Fleet 9 and the New Bedford Yacht Club in Padanaram next June 27<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>. If you've never sailed there, it's awesome, so make your plans early. They haven't got the [web site](#) up yet, so for now, circle the dates.

**Sail Newport Regatta** – Sail Newport is offering R19s a start at their 2-day Sail Newport Regatta on July 11-12. Old friend and class president emeritus **Mike Hebert** holds the distinction of being the first to register. You'll find more info [here](#).

**Helly Hansen - Sailing World Regatta Schedule** The [HH regatta schedule](#) is set, and as usual, includes Race Week, which will be held July 23-26. You'll find the [NOR](#) [here](#).

**Nationals In Chicago** – The 2026 -Nationals will be hosted by Fleet 12 and the Chicago Corinthian Yacht Club from Wednesday through Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>. Fresh water, Chicago restaurants, genuine Midwest hospitality... what more can I say? They're still pulling stuff together so keep an eye out for information [here](#).

**Better Get WhatsApp** – Another reminder that Fleet 5 is planning to lean into WhatsApp this season, with the goal of promoting better and more timely communication between all of us. So if you haven't downloaded the WhatsApp app yet, do it now. The current Fleet 5 chat is *Mhead Rhodes 19*.

**G.O.A.T. Trophy** – This season, Fleet 5 will introduce the G.O.A.T. Trophy (Goes Out All the Time). Sure, G.O.A.T can sometime stand for something else, but that's just a fortunate coincidence. Anyway, we plan to track the number of race days each team sails over the course of the season, which will include MRA, Race Week and Twilights. We'll show you the top 5

standings each week in the RTTC, and honor the winner with a suitably appropriate G.O.A.T. Trophy at our Fall awards party. Who will be the G.O.A.T.?

**Refreshed Class Website** – Congrats to **Tod Riedel** and his team for a well-done refresh of the class website. Check it out [here](#).

### **GETTING INTO SAILBOAT RACING IN MARBLEHEAD: THERE ARE REAL OPTIONS AND WHY FLEET 5 WORKS WELL** *by Jim Gabriel*

Marblehead is an incredible place to race sailboats. It's also a place where getting involved can feel harder than it should. The usual barriers are familiar: limited moorings in Marblehead Harbor, tight dry sail and storage capacity, and the real time and logistics of getting a boat launched, crewed, and to the course. The good news is that there are workable paths, and Fleet 5 is one of the best ways to turn those paths into actual start line participation.

If you want to race Rhodes 19s in Marblehead, the most important move is to treat "access" like part of the sport, not an afterthought. A few options are already working today:

The three main private yacht clubs (Boston, Eastern, and Corinthian) offer dry sail storage and cranes, with the usual membership and waitlist considerations. On the public yard side, Marblehead Trading Company has confirmed there is 2026 space available through their existing operations. Up to four boats can be added immediately to their dry sailing group out of Cliff Street, and if there's larger demand, there may be a way to use Parker's Boatyard as part of a broader solution.

The Main Harbor waitlist is long, but the mooring application includes several areas that each have a different reality. West Shore (in Salem Harbor) is often a shorter wait, and temporary moorings can make it more workable than it sounds. Peaches Point has no waitlist as of 2026, but there is currently no launch service that accesses that area. That's a real constraint, and also one that may be solvable if there is enough interest and coordination.

One of Fleet 5's biggest strengths is that you don't have to solve everything alone, and you don't necessarily need to own a boat on day one.

**Adam Roberts** joined Fleet 5 and quickly found success, winning Marblehead Race Week in 2024 and the National Championship in 2025 in two different boats that he didn't own. It's a strong reminder that borrowed and chartered boats are a legitimate path into competitive racing, whether for a marquee event, a full season, or a single race day.

**Stefan Thibodeaux** sails actively with Fleet 5 and has chartered his boat for seasons, marquee events, and to out-of-towners. Others will do this as well. Rates vary, and so do the arrangements. Sometimes it's a straightforward day or event rate, and sometimes it's more creative because the goal is simple: get more boats on the line.

**Rich & Rosie Denton** race out of a Salem mooring and choose to make a day of it. Their routine includes arriving around 9:30am, kayaking out, doing a short bottom clean, and sailing to

the course. It's a longer day, but when you compare it to hoist lines and tide waits, it's not as far off from a dry sail day as people assume.

Marblehead racing has universal friction points: crew coordination, schedule conflicts, and busy weekends. The Rhodes 19 hits a unique sweet spot: two-person crew, true one design racing, and a cost to competition ratio that's hard to beat. Historically, Fleet 5 has been one of the most active fleets in the harbor, with 25 plus boats consistently registered. And because the class has marquee events like East Coasts, Race Week, and Nationals, you can regularly find yourself on starting lines with 40 boats or more.

This is the short version. We're posting the full writeup online with more detail on storage and launching paths, mooring areas, and additional future opportunities (including course location ideas in Salem Sound). You can access it [here](#).

A special thanks to **Rich & Rosie Denton, David Reynolds, Adam Roberts, Stefan Thibodeaux, Jack Carney, Bill Rice**, Marblehead Trading Company, and the Marblehead Harbor Master for providing their experience, thoughts and input.

#### **MRA PREVIEW** by Joe Fava

The good folk at the U.N. have taken the trend of declining participation very seriously and are excited to share the following changes, updates and initiatives to get you excited, raise the level of fun - and most importantly get your program ON THE WATER!!!

- *Somerset and Mid Summah Regattas* - When you are making your summer calendar, you must put June 6 and July 11 on it as must sail days. In conjunction with the normal MRA Saturday sailing, these 2 days will also be scored as one day regattas and finish with awards and drinks (all included in your MRA registration) at the Corinthian following sailing. We know you have questions...=
  - Q: Do I register separately?
  - A: No. Just register for MRA.
  - Q: Do I do anything differently on this day?
  - A: Yes and No. Be sure to register for MRA and then go sailing on these days. After sailing, go to the CYC for drinks and awards.
  - Q: Is **Matt Hooks** going to sail these?
  - A: He better!!!
  - Q: Is there any change to scoring for the MRA Series or the Road to the Cup?
  - A: No. There is no change. The only thing that is different is that in addition to this day being a normal MRA and RTTC day, it will also be scored as a one-day event followed by awards and drinks.
- *The Fall Classic - September 19* - New this year will be a Marblehead Harbor sailing championship which will bring together the top finishers from each of the MRA fleets, along with some special invited guests for a day of fleet racing in evenly matched (and brand new) Sonars. Ever want to prove that you as a Rhodes sailor got better game than those Etchells guys? Here is your chance. Fleets are asked to each nominate 2 teams to compete in the event. The notice of race is [here](#).

- *MRA Awards* - The MRA awards will be moved up on the calendar to the evening of Saturday September 19. The strategy of this date is to align it with The Fall Classic - and to move the date out of October, which is already packed with fleet specific events.
- *Pursuit Races* - Based on strong feedback and a desire for format changes, expect one MRA day to feature a pursuit race. The exact day is being debated in committee, but likely either the Saturday after race week or one of the Labor Day weekend days.
- *Finishing at the Harbor Mouth* - Expect this season's SI's to contain a provision to allow the final race of the day to finish at the mouth of the harbor. Use would likely be limited to when conditions are ideal for a sleigh ride in - and when fleets are condensed in finishing. Keep an eye out.

### SCUTTLEBUTT

**Mark "O" Refresh** – Twilight PRO **David Graham**, with an assist from **Bart Snow** and the Town Class, has delivered a brand-new Twilight Mark "O", and makes this observation. *"You will see that the color-scheme is rather unique, so that it, 1) cannot be mistaken for being used as a MRA mark, and 2) can be observed during times of somewhat thick fog."* I see what he means. Here's a shot of it sitting on the conference table in the Crowninshield Room at the CYC.



### NOTICES

**Dave's Racing Tips** – Racer extraordinaire **Dave Dellenbaugh** is hosting a 3-part webinar in which he'll be sharing his best racing tips. The event will be held on three consecutive Mondays starting April 27<sup>th</sup>. He will use videos, animations, Q&As, quizzes, and more to explain helpful strategic and tactical tips. The series is geared to both skippers and crew and each session is about 90 minutes long. You find more information and can register at a R19 Class Association discount [here](#).

**Need Used Sails** – Old friend **Eric Cressy** has an old Stuart R19 centerboard and is looking for someone willing to sell a lightly used Doyle main and jib. He's also looking for a rudder if you have an extra. Contact Eric at [ecressy2003@yahoo.com](mailto:ecressy2003@yahoo.com).

## MAIL BAG

Can you believe it? No mail.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:neal@lewandamarine.com), or call 978-525-2700

**Sailor's Tailor** [www.sailortailors.com](http://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](http://seacoastspecialtymarine.com), or visit on Facebook @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 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:kpandapas@comcast.net). The buck stops here.



### Fleet 5 2026 - Schedule of Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Cup Scoring</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Expected Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Thur April 16		Fleet 5 Spring Meeting	6:30 PM	Home of Christina & Kim Pandapas
Sat May 23	x	MRA Series 1 - Day 1	1:00 PM	South Line (consolidated - all fleets)
Sun May 24	x	MRA Series 1 - Day 2	1:00 PM	South Line (consolidated - all fleets)
Thur May 28	x	Twilight Series 1 - Day 1	7:00 PM	Twilight Line
Sat May 30	x	MRA Series 1 - Day 3	1:00 PM	Brimbles Line (Short Course Format)
Sat May 30		Fleet 5 Summer Kick-off	5:00 PM	Home of Brooke & Matt Hooks
Thur June 4	x	Twilight Series 1 - Day 2	7:00 PM	Twilight Line
Sat June 6	x	MRA Series 1 - Day 4	1:00 PM	Brimbles Line (Short Course Format) / Somerset 1-day
Sat June 6		MRA Party	5:00 PM	Corinthian Yacht Club
Thur June 11	x	Twilight Series 1 - Day 3	7:00 PM	Twilight Line
Sat June 13	x	MRA Series 1 - Day 5	1:00 PM	South Line (consolidated - all fleets)
Thur June 18	x	Twilight Series 1 - Day 4	7:00 PM	Twilight Line
Friday June 19		EYC Pursuit Race 1	TBD	TBD
Sat June 20	x	MRA Series 2 - Day 1	1:00 PM	North Line
Thur June 25	x	Twilight Series 1 - Day 5	7:00 PM	Twilight Line
Sat June 27	?	MRA Series 2 - Day 2	1:00 PM	Brimbles Line (Short Course Format)
Sat June 27		East Coasts - Day 1	All day	Padanaram
Sun June 28		East Coasts - Day 2	All day	Padanaram
Sun June 28		Fast Mermaid Pursuit Race	TBD	TBD
Thur July 2	x	Twilight Series 1 - Day 6	7:00 PM	Twilight Line
Thur July 9	x	Twilight Series 1 - Day 7	7:00 PM	Twilight Line
Friday July 10		EYC Pursuit Race 2	TBD	TBD
Sat July 11		MRA Series 2 - Day 3	1:00 PM	Brimbles Line (Short Course Format) / Mid-Summer 1- day
Sat July 11		MRA Party	5:00 PM	Corinthian Yacht Club
Sat July 11		Sail Newport Regatta-Day 1	All day	<a href="http://sailnewport.org/calendar/26-newport-regatta/">sailnewport.org/calendar/26-newport-regatta/</a>
Sun July 12		Sail Newport Regatta-Day 2	All day	<a href="http://sailnewport.org/calendar/26-newport-regatta/">sailnewport.org/calendar/26-newport-regatta/</a>
Thur July 16	x	Twilight Series 2 - Day 1	7:00 PM	Twilight Line
Sat July 18	x	MRA Series 2 - Day 4	1:00 PM	Brimbles Line (Short Course Format)
Thur July 23	x	Race Week Day 1	TBD	North Line
Thur July 23		Race Week Party	6:30 PM	Home of Jennifer & Steve Uhl
Friday July 24	x	Race Week Day 2	TBD	North Line
Sat July 25	x	Race Week Day 3	TBD	North Line
Sun July 26	x	Race Week Day 4	TBD	North Line
Thurs July 30	x	Twilight Series 2 - Day 2	6:00 PM	Twilight Line
Friday July 31		EYC Pursuit Race 3	TBD	TBD
Sat Aug 1	x	MRA Series 2 - Day 5	1:00 PM	North Line
Thur Aug 6	x	Twilight Series 2 - Day 3	6:00 PM	Twilight Line
Sat Aug 8	x	MRA Series 3 - Day 1	1:00 PM	Brimbles Line (Short Course Format)
Thur Aug 13	x	Twilight Series 2 - Day 4	6:00 PM	Twilight Line
Wednesday Aug 19		R19 Nationals	All day	Chicago
Thur Aug 20	?	Twilight Series 2 - Day 5	6:00 PM	Twilight Line
Thurs Aug 20		R19 Nationals	All day	Chicago
Friday Aug 21		R19 Nationals	All day	Chicago
Sat Aug 22	?	MRA Series 3 - Day 2	1:00 PM	North Line
Thur Aug 27	x	Twilight Series 2 - Day 6	6:00 PM	Twilight Line
Sat Aug 29	x	MRA Series 3 - Day 3	1:00 PM	Brimbles Line (Short Course Format)
Thurs Sep 3	x	Twilight Series 2 - Day 7	6:00 PM	Twilight Line
Sat Sept 5	x	MRA Series 3 - Day 4	1:00 PM	South Line (consolidated - all fleets)
Sat Sept 5		Fleet 5 / Etchells Labor Day Party	5PM	Home of Lisa & Frank McNamara
Sun Sept 6	x	MRA Series 3 - Day 5	1:00 PM	South Line (consolidated - all fleets)
Mon Sept 7		Around Misery Island Race	TBD	Twilight Line
Mon Sept 7		Sail Salem Charity Race	TBD	TBD
Sat Sept 19		Fall Classic-Season Championship	TBD	TBD
Sat Sept 19		MRA Awards Party	6:30 PM	Corinthian Yacht Club
Sat Nov 7		Fleet 5 Awards Party	6:30 PM	Home of Christina & Kim Pandapas