

J/35 Fleet Newsletter

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A Word from our Newsletter Sponsor

With the spring season beginning and One Design racing around the corner I have a lot of things on my mind, and I want to share a few of my thoughts with you. Let's start with our exceptional sailing club, North Star Sail Club (NSSC). With 36 Windward/Leeward races planned this year, NSSC has established itself as the de facto epicenter for One Design racing - the elite standard for pure, competitive, fair racing. This didn't just happen by chance. NSSC and our superior race committee have kept "the main thing" the main thing. Also, NSSC has fostered **the largest One Design fleet in the USA**, and we're growing with the addition of Rumors and Lyons' Den.

This year we're taking our races to a new level for the J/35 fleet by escorting our classic vessels into the digital age with the advanced technology of the **Vakaros RaceSense** system. This system brings superior precision to racing, effectively eliminating subjectivity by integrating accuracy. No more debates in the protest room. Key features of the Vakaros Atlas 2 & RaceSense system include

- Accurate starts using dual-band L1+L5 GNSS
- Instant OCS notification if you're over the line early
- Automated race management with accurate start timers, line bias, and finish line crossings
- Live Leaderboards providing real-time data during a race

At home and abroad the J/35 class continues to prove its racing performance. Most recently evidenced abroad was a J/35 that took the podium in the **Blue Flag Double-Handed Race** in Spain while navigating 200 miles of challenging Mediterranean waters. Stu Johnstone highlighted this victory alongside the momentum building here at NSSC in his **J/News** newsletter. Speaking of here at home, you have opportunity to gain experience competing toe-to-toe against **three J/35 National Champions: Bill Wildner, Mike Welch, and Gary Snider** every week at NSSC.

So, what about the sport of sailboat racing itself? One of the most attractive aspects of sailboat racing is longevity; it's a lifelong sport where your skills and intuition sharpen with time. And competing against the best makes everyone better. Whether a seasoned pro or a newcomer, we have a spot for you in the fleet. And with proven performance, technological advancements, and a growing fleet - there's no better time to race on a J/35. We're toeing the line and leading the way! **Join the Fleet!** Call Dean Fitzpatrick at **(248) 790-0666** to get involved.

2026 J/35 Open House Recap

On March 22nd we hosted our annual open house at **GW Boat Repair**, where over 80 attendees celebrated the graduation of **17 new sailors** from Ian Pouliot's J/35 sailing class. At the repair shop, Gary Snider showcased his latest masterpiece, **Lyons' Den**. Often referred to as "The BOB" (Best of the Best), the craftsmanship on this vessel has set a new bar for the fleet. Our class president, Larry Taunt, attended as well as many NSSC members, J/35 owners, sailors, cyclists, race committee representatives, and many more. As I often say, these things don't just happen. It takes a host of sponsors and volunteers to coordinate, organize, and orchestrate an event like our open house. And it isn't a success without each of you who made time to attend. Thank you!



Save the Date!

See all North Star events at www.northstarsail.org.

<p>North Star Sail Club Presents:</p> <h1>Race 2 Place 2026</h1> <p><i>A voyage to crew competency</i></p> <p>April 11th & 18th , May 2nd & 9th</p>	<p>Saturday April 11th: The Boat! Saturday April 18th: The Crew! Saturday May 2nd: Skills! Saturday May 9th: Sailing and Racing!</p> <p>Bring clothes suitable for sailing in spring conditions No previous sailing experience required</p>
<p>North Star's 4-day sailboat racing workshop! The fee: \$50.00 for all 4 days Contact northstarracetoplace@gmail.com for details</p>	

Top Gun Twilight Spring Series – Tune Up May 12; Series starts May 19

Friday Fun Sail – Spring – Starts May 22

Bayview/Helly Hansen, Great Lakes Championship – May 31

Annual Pig Roast – Aug 8, 2026

2026 J/35 North American Championship in Milwaukee – Sep 17-20

Thank you for reading!

Dean Fitzpatrick - Honor Roll

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