

J/35 Fleet Newsletter

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Let the Games Begin!

It may not feel like it just yet, but winter is behind us and spring is in the air. It's time to pull our boats out of hibernation, finalize splash plans, and confirm all is operating properly. If you need help planning re-entry into the water, contact Dean. You'll need to set up your Vakaros Atlas 2 system, too. James Baker and Leslie Kozlowski hosted a Vakaros info session April 27th at North Star Sail Club where J/35 owners participated in practice "races" on land. The race committee is well versed in operations of these instruments from both race committee and boat owners' perspectives. If you have questions about the Vakaros Atlas 2 system, contact James Baker.

Early spring is also time to finalize 2026 racing season plans. Top Gun Twilight Spring Series begins May 19th with a tune up event on May 12th. Bayview/Helly Hansen Great Lakes Championship is May 29th-31st. NSSC's Throwdown in Motown is scheduled August 29th-30th. The 2026 J/35 North American Championship in Milwaukee is Sep 17th-20th. That's just a sampling of the races and regattas to look forward to this year. Don't delay registering for your 2026 races!

Preparing your boat and registering for races are a great start, but the boat can't sail itself. If you need crew or you're willing to train crew, now is the time to recruit! Keep an eye on NSSC's Race 2 Place students. Race 2 Place wraps up May 9th, and this year's program is more comprehensive than ever before with 4 days of training in the classroom and on the water. Also, Dean Fitzpatrick can send you a list of students from his 2026 J/35 sailing class. Both provide excellent recruiting opportunities. Act now to build your crew, and this racing season will be a blast. I guarantee it!

A New Addition to the J/35 Bullpen

In April we added another J/35 to our fleet! After permits granted, routes finalized, load signs procured, shipyard scheduled, trailer prepped, truck fueled, hotels booked, supplies loaded, and dog (VIP) packed, we started the journey to pick up Escapade and bring her home to Michigan! Nothing ever just happens, and hauling a J/35 is risky business. Following is a rundown of the trip.

- 5 states traversed (and 2 countries)
- 4 days on the road
- 3 route snafus
- 2 pullovers by state police
- 1 sheriff escort
- 0 citations or accidents!!!



Did I mention the snow? Things don't always go according to plan, but we got Escapade home to Michigan safe & sound despite challenges. Interested in seeing her in person? Call me. Interested in hearing my story about the journey? Ask me at the May NSSC general meeting.



Save the Date!

See all North Star events at www.northstarsail.org



2026 Racing May - October

Top Gun Twilight Racing Series

Spring Series – **Tuesdays** May 19 through June 30

Summer Series – **Tuesdays** Aug 4 through Sep 15

Fall Series – **Sundays** Sept 27 through Oct 17

Friday Fun Sail – Spring – Starts May 22

Bayview/Helly Hansen, Great Lakes Championship – May 29-31

Throwdown in Motown Regatta – Aug 29-30

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



15th Annual Pig Roast Saturday Aug 8th in Oscoda!

Camp onsite or grab a hotel. Enjoy mountain biking, volleyball, dancing, euchre, and more. Activities are planned Aug 7-9. The main event is on Aug 8th with dinner and a band. Bring friends, family, dogs and a dish to pass. See details in the accompanying flyer. I hope to see you there!

As always, thanks for reading!

Dean Fitzpatrick / Honor Roll

T: 248.528.8440 E: deanfitzpatrick35@gmail.com

1122 Naughton Rd, Troy, MI