

March Acton Action 2026



March 21- HSA's highly professional team, Joe Fulford, Roger Henthorn, Bobbie Bode and Brett Hart removed the Committee boat and Rescue boat from Guntle's barn to Acton Lake. Dave Judy was waiting there to start preparations on the boats for racing. Our April 11 th launch date quickly approaches and it will be all hands on deck in the boat yard, at the launch ramp and in the Hueston room kitchen to get all our boats ready for the sailing season in the water and sailors fed! A class on our new AED equipment will be held after lunch in the old Nature center classroom, presented by Shawn Conner.

Hueston Woods Visitor Bureau



Hueston Woods Visitor Bureau board presented HSA with a new AED and sturdy case on March 23, 26', with a note that they hope we never have occasion to use it. Thank you! AED is the acronym for Automated External Defibrillator.

An AED analyzes a person's heart rhythm during sudden cardiac arrest and if necessary, delivers an electrical shock to restore a normal, effective rhythm.



After our launch and lunch on April 11th, Shawn Conner will provide 30-60 minutes of training on our new AED nextdoor in the old Nature Center classroom. Everyone is encouraged to attend!



Hueston Sailing Association would like to send a sincere thank you to Hueston Woods Visitors Bureau for their support in obtaining that AED. Kudos to this wonderful Board of volunteers who love the park and volunteer their valuable time in support of not only Hueston Sailing Association but also all the other clubs who meet at the park, the lodge and the park itself.

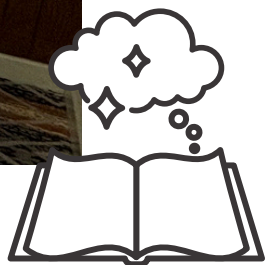


Lunch Delicious March 21st

The comradery of eating together is irreplaceable! As is the history of our sailors and “secrets” on fast racing!



Learning Fantastic



Joe Fulford gave an update on the marina area depth survey that is scheduled for the week of April 20th by ODNR. This comprehensive survey work is needed to better accomplish dredging this season and will confirm what most of us already know...the ramp and dock areas are silting up. Joe also spoke about HSA's success in securing two new AEDs for use in the park. One will go in the shed and the other one will travel with park officers. Park officers were not equipped with one so this grant is wonderful. Kudos to David Parrott and Brett Hart for doing the heavy lifting on these two successful grants. Pete Peters gave a talk on committee boat responsibilities and numbers of person who should be on the committee boat during races for safety and proper recording of scores. Brett Hart covered our new Race record keeping sheets and Mike Stratton spoke about exciting possible courses our race committees could choose from for this years new race season. So be sure to check the committee boat flags and signs before the races begin!

The Triangle vs the Olympic Course: Time to Spice It Up?



At the March Lunch and Learn, participants spent some time discussing the race course at HSA and how a committee might approach the new season.

Beginning back in the last century somewhere, our club, like many others around the country, started using a triangle course with variations on leg lengths, laps, and start line position.

The Triangle began to fall out of favor beginning in the late 90's as many regattas began using windward/leeward courses, but the Triangle continued to be favored for local club racing on lakes. We at our lake have continued to use the triangle out of tradition with little variety except the positioning of the gybe mark and the start/finish line.

The only variety we usually experience is the X course with four marks and two windward legs each lap. It is a useful course but seems to cause problems for committees to construct since you need to have a parallelogram where the two windward legs are very similar. We sometimes have trouble with just one windward leg due to our shifty lake let alone two.

There were good reasons for us to continue using a triangle since it gives us two reaching legs, which are faster on light air days than sailing downwind. Plus, it is simply easier for committees to set up. It also keeps boats at the windward mark from one fleet from getting in the way of other fleets that started after them, which sometimes happens if the leeward mark follows the windward mark.

Our lake is also a factor when it comes to course setting in that it is narrow and surrounded by hills and trees that often causes the wind to shift in velocity and direction. When the wind is coming across the lake, long windward legs are not often really an option.

Yet, in some ways the triangle is very limiting also. One problem is that the reaching legs don't often offer much chance for tactical gains and they become parades where positions don't change much. Another problem is that the triangle can be a bit dull with repetition.

Enter the Olympic Course or the Modified Olympic. For some reason the club adopted the Olympic Triangle for Sunfish racing back in the late 90's, and we have stuck with it, but only for Sunfish racing. The Olympic Course consists of a one lap triangle, followed by a windward leeward lap (often called the "sausage" or "hot dog" leg) before the finish.

We have had four or five Sunfish only days in our racing calendar for a long time and sailing in those events is fun with a fleet of Sunfish that is almost always in the double digits. But it is also fun because the course offered a change from what we normally do on Sundays – the Triangle.

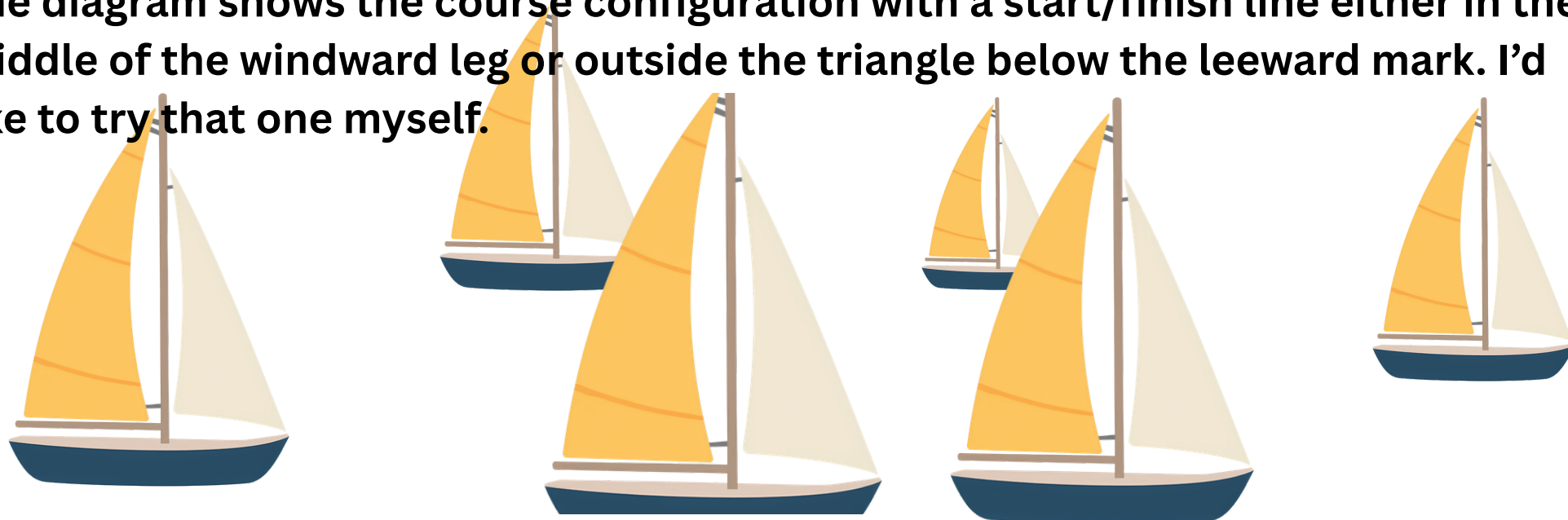
Triangle vs Olympic (cont.)

One of the better features of the Olympic Course is that it is always two laps – one triangle and one windward/leeward – with a start/finish line somewhere in the windward leg, usually closer to the leeward mark than the windward one. Last year we used (for maybe the first time) an Olympic Course for one of our races in our usual Sunday racing and it was a nice change since people who never sail a Sunfish got to experience some variety and face the challenge they seldom get to experience – sailing downwind.

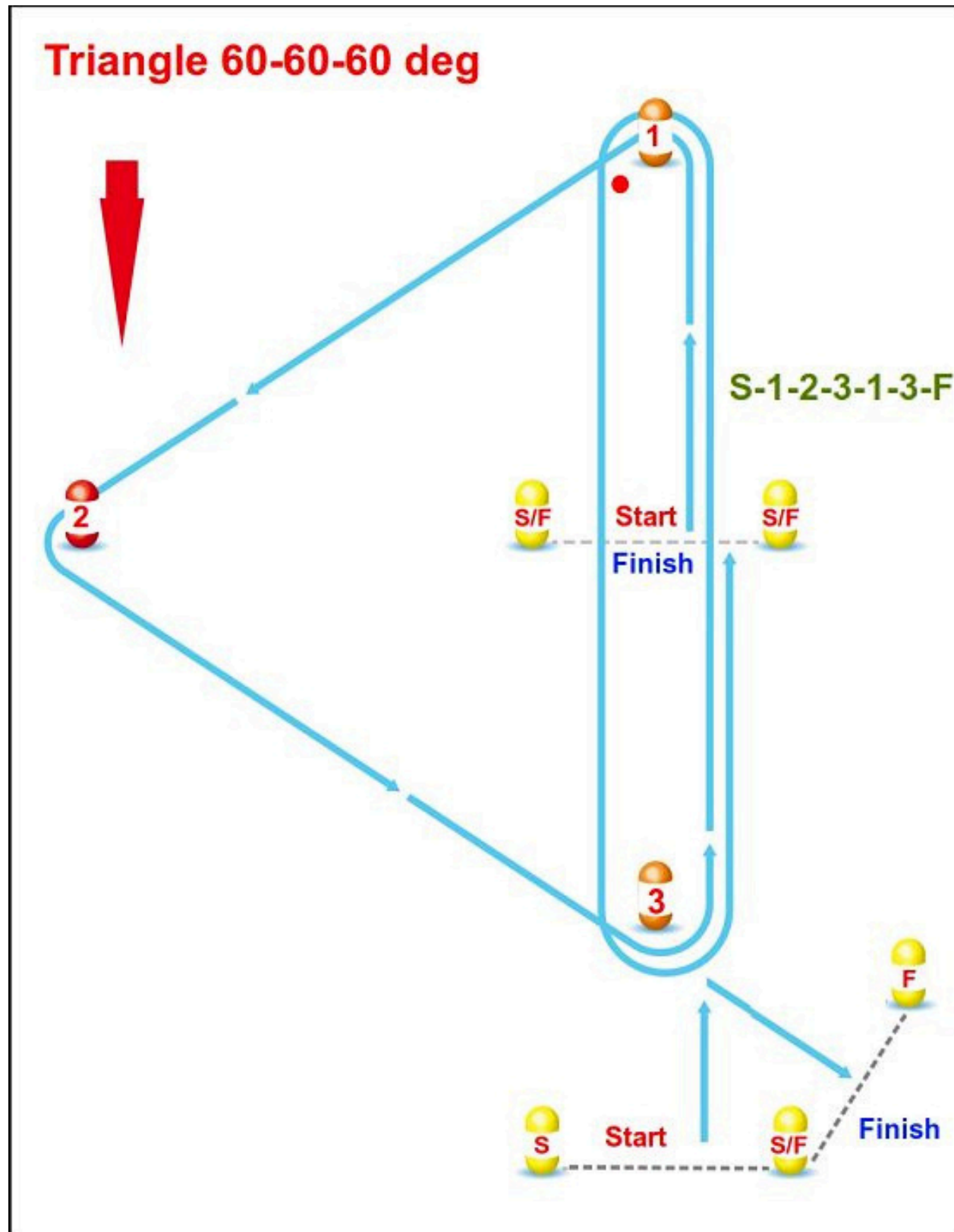
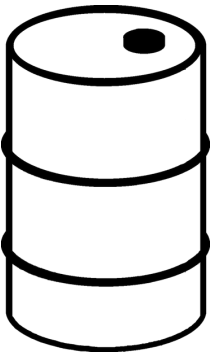
The Traditional Triangle has its place and it does offer some variety in that you can set the gybe mark high or low and thus vary the reaching legs to be either closer or broader. And the length of the legs can be shortened or stretched out depending on the wind strength. Plus having a triangle allows boats that are built for reaching can really stretch their legs. Sunfishers racing the Olympic often get five races in on a single afternoon, averaging 20 minutes each. On a normal Sunday, we stick to two races but a committee could adapt a course leg length so that each race is our usual 30-40 minutes. If you are a little weary of the Triangle, the Olympic Course is always an option. If you are on committee this season, you can simply put the mast course card up that indicates an Olympic Course and not have to worry about numbering the marks.

Competitors will likely appreciate the change up from the ordinary. The Olympic Course is always two laps, just two different kinds of laps. The beauty is that you can make the course as large or as small as you want and not have to worry about lap numbers either.

The diagram shows the course configuration with a start/finish line either in the middle of the windward leg or outside the triangle below the leeward mark. I'd like to try that one myself.



Olympic Course



Some Key take aways from our lunch and learn were:

- 1) Set your course in the middle of the lake if possible, not next to the sides of the lake
- 2) Set your course for drama, not a parade

The SailGP Race Course: More Fun or Just Fantasy?



If you are really looking to shake things up a bit on race committee this season and the Olympic Course (mentioned elsewhere in this issue) is just not enough, we have just what the race course doctor ordered: The SailGP Course.

If you haven't seen a SailGP competition or you have never heard of it, it is a new kind of sailboat racing initiated about five years ago. It involves fifty foot foiling catamarans that can careen around a course at twice to three times the speed of the wind, sometimes as fast as sixty miles an hour.

The course is not what makes the boats fast, but it is interesting. The race consists of legs instead of laps on what is essentially a windward/leeward course. Each end of this course has a "gate" which is simply two marks spaced about six or seven boat lengths apart. The boats sail between the marks at each end of the course, choosing either the left or right to return either upwind or downwind.

The real variety with this course comes with the start. Most sailboat racing begins with an upwind leg. SailGP begins with a reaching start which is set up to the side of the middle of the course. A fifth mark is placed in the center of the upwind/downwind leg and is called the "turn" mark.

One time around the SailGP course would consist of a short reaching leg from the starting box to the turn mark, then a leg downwind to the leeward gate. From there boats race upwind to the windward gate before returning to the turn mark and reaching to the finish line.

There are variations in the construction of the course depending on the venue and wind strength. For example, the finish line is often not the same as the starting line but rather a short reach directly across from the top gate.

Although it sounds complicated, it is in reality very simple. (The diagram accompanying this article illustrates a typical SailGP course.)

Should you try a SailGP course on your next committee duty? Let's make a case for it. You will need five marks: the four yellow barrels for the upwind and downwind gates and one small red ball mark for the turn mark. (We have several of these.)

Variety is not the only reason for trying this course out. It also helps make the starting line a lot easier to negotiate. Reaching at full speed and coming to the starting line from a more perpendicular angle greatly reduces the barging we often experience in a traditional upwind start.

You can still luff a windward boat and force them up but the focus is on speed and timing and not on positioning. The start of a SailGP race is often called a drag race to the turn mark.



SailGP (cont.)

Another strong selling point is that it levels the playing field between experienced skippers and newer ones. With a reaching start most boats can shorten the distance between them and the competition since the emphasis is on speed and getting inside at the turn mark rather than tacking on wind shifts and getting to the favored side of the course.

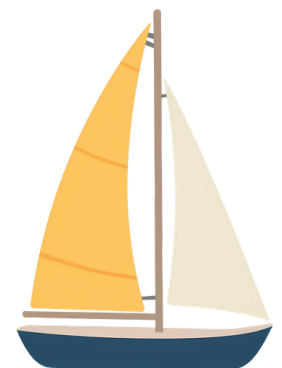
Another way the SailGP course levels the field is because the second leg after this sprint to the turn mark is downwind. Most newer sailors lose ground early on simply because they are not yet proficient at upwind sailing. Downwind, they have a better chance of staying close and competing. We all know how demoralizing it is to get behind early and find ourselves trying to catch up in a race that may often be decided by the first windward mark.

The number of “legs” (not laps) is up to the committee. Boats can go up and down the windward/leeward course as many or as few times as conditions demand. If you decide to try a SailGP course when you are committee chair, it might be better on a day when the wind is coming from a direction that allows a longer windward/leeward length to avoid congestion in the middle of the course. It could also help if the turn mark is only used for the start and not for the finish. In that case, boats would sail to the windward mark and then head for a finish line nearby on a reach either right or left.

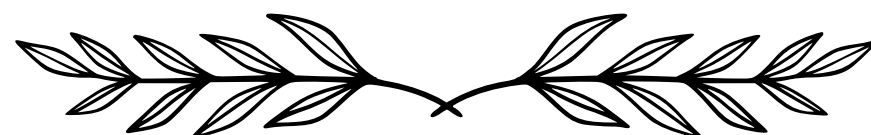
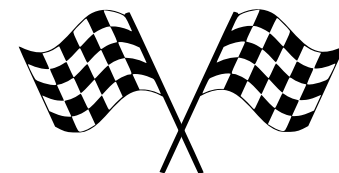
That would require that the committee boat pull anchor after the last start of each race and set up a finish other than at the starting place, but we used to do this same thing all the time – finish the races at the windward mark by simply anchoring the committee boat (or the safety boat) near that mark.

Since it would be unfamiliar to most of our racers, it would be important to have a skippers’ meeting before racing and hand out a diagram of the course.

If you would like to see this course in use, you can use this link to a SailGP race and watch it happen. It is the weekend highlights from the race in Sydney harbor and contains video of several starts. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Za9EW6kNq4I>
We have done this course at our lake. Once, two years ago. It works.



SailGP Course



A special Thank you to Dave Judy for fixing the drinking fountain and garden hose connection making it easier for all of us to wash “nature’s blessings” off our boats and docks!



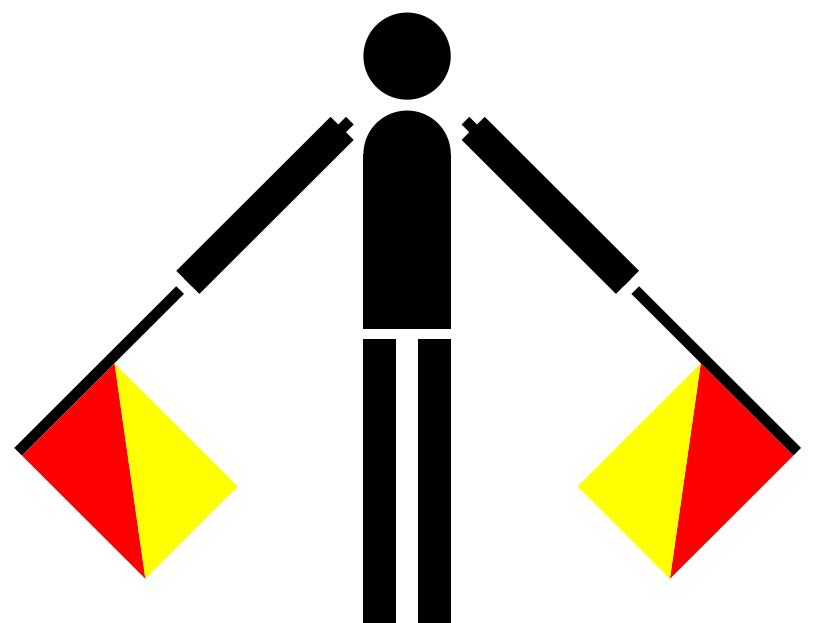
Commodore's Corner

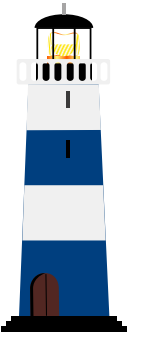
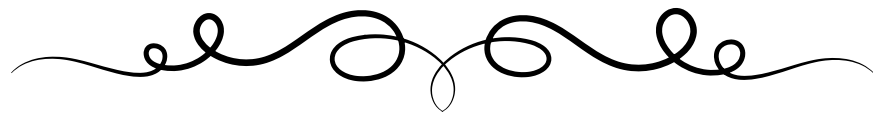
Fourth Starts with Sailboats (and cars)!



When I was 16 years old, I bought a used Chevy Vega. It was silver, had sturdy 5 mph chrome bumpers, and a four-speed manual-shift transmission that made it fun to drive. I certainly “got my kicks on Rt 66” in Yukon OK. However, because the unmarked custom aftermarket shifter knob gave no clues as to where the gears were, I can attest that an underpowered econo-car bucks around when starting in fourth!

Well, *unlike* my Vega days, HSA will have a smooth fourth race start! But, like me in 1976, many of you may be asking the adults in your lives, “how does one start in fourth?” We will have clear instructions for everyone out on the course. Jerry Brewster has refined our score sheets and veteran sailors who remember the Acton Lake days of six starts say it is easy. Work your way through the yellow, red, and blue shapes (cans) on the race committee boat, then proceed to the yellow shape again. It’ll also be captured in our annual yearbook in the HSA Sailing Instructions under Section 5 - Signals. I promise you it will not be as hard as coaxing a manual shift car to start moving in fourth gear! Below is the new score sheet for those with enquiring minds. Order: Catamarans, Y-Flyers, Sunfish & Capri 14, Handicap boats.





Great Flying Scot For Sale

#2666 is an 18' recreational/racer turn-key sailboat which has had most items replaced and/or updated during the time we've owned her. Trailer has also been significantly updated. She is competitive for racing but also roomy and comfortable enough to use for recreational outings. Truly a great multipurpose sailboat. Happy to provide list of everything that has been updated on the boat and trailer. \$4000, with trailer and some spares.

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