RACE HANDBOOK 2026

The Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race™

Racing to Save the Bay

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Steering Committee Chair Norfolk
Steve Briggs
Virginia@GCBSR.org

The Great Chesapeake Bay
Schooner Race
www.gcbsr.org

A SPECIAL MESSAGE TO ALL RACE PARTICIPANTS

Welcome, Friends

If this is your first Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race—welcome aboard! You are now part of a tradition that stretches back nearly four decades and connects sailors, schooners, and communities from Baltimore to Norfolk.

For newcomers, the race is as much about camaraderie and celebration as it is about competition. You'll find yourself among friends—captains and crews who return year after year not only for the thrill of the sail but also for the shared mission of supporting charities and preserving the Chesapeake Bay.

This handbook is your guide. Inside, you'll find what to expect from arrival through the finish: dockside events, skipper's meetings, parties, parades, and of course the start cannon that sends us all down the Bay.

So, take a deep breath, settle into the rhythm of schooner sailing, and enjoy the journey. By the end, you'll understand why so many call this race the highlight of their sailing year.

We're glad you've joined us—welcome to the family.

Huzzah!
Paul Carroll
VP and Race Committee Chair, GCBSR

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Emergencies During Race Week

All race participants and volunteers attend the events and may be unable to respond immediately.

In an Emergency:

Duncan Hood, GCBSR Executive Committee Chair
(410) 703-6003 - duncan9277@gmail.com

Steven Briggs, President
(757) 777-6080 - virginia@gcbsr.org

Paul Carroll, Vice President
(301) 785-0337 - race@schoonerrace.org

Nan Nawrocki, Steering Committee Chair Baltimore
(410) 458-7489 - maryland@gcbsr.org

U.S. Coast Guard

VHF 16 · Dial 911

USCG National Command Center (emergencies only): (800) 323-7233
Rescue Coordination Center in Norfolk: (757) 398-6231
U.S. Coast Guard Sector Maryland Command Center Emergency: (410) 576-2693
U.S. Coast Guard Sector Hampton Roads Command Center Emergency: (757) 668-5555, ext. 1

Schedule of Maryland Events

Please ask your crew and passengers to wear their race shirts when they participate in race activities.

Tuesday, October 13th, 2026

Dockside viewing at the Anchorage Marina. We encourage all vessels to participate in the dockside viewing periods as this is one of the few opportunities to engage the public about the race and its mission.

1200-1900 **Open Docks** – See the vessels dockside at Anchorage Marina.

Wednesday, October 14th, 2026

Dockside viewing at Anchorage Marina, from 1000 to 1400.

0900-1200 **Expeditionary Learning Experience** aboard selected vessels. 100 students from neighborhood schools will board a few vessels for a special learning opportunity. Students will be able to connect to past and present aboard a working vessel.

1000-1400 **Open Docks** – See the vessels dockside at Anchorage Marina.

1200 **Deadline for all schooners to be docked in Baltimore.**

1400 **Captains' Meeting and Briefing:** in the Boater's Lounge
All participating vessels must have formal representation or risk disqualification. Due to space limitations, please do not bring your whole crew. Plans for the Parade of Sail and special contingencies for the race (it is still hurricane season) will be discussed. Race shirts, bags and wristbands will be distributed.
Captains must bring their Safety Statement and Waiver to this meeting.

1600 Cast off for the Parade of Sail. A chance for all of the beautiful schooners in the race to show off from Canton to the Inner Harbor. The parade officially starts at 1700.

1900-2100 **All Hands Party** (restricted access) for captains, crew, sponsors and volunteers on the dock at Anchorage Marina (rain site under the parking garage). Captains, crew and guests on board the schooners wearing a wristband (captains will receive wristbands for the number of crew and guests indicated on their entry) will be admitted for free. Additional guests will be asked to pay $20.

Thursday, October 15th, 2026

0630 **Mandatory Skippers' Meeting:** in the Boater's Lounge.

All participating vessels must have formal representation or risk disqualification. Due to space limitations, please do not bring your whole crew. Captains may not delegate attendance. Detailed starting procedures will be given, and weather will be discussed.

Completed crew lists either online (https://form.jotform.com/232334009214040) or in paper form must be given to the race committee at or prior to this meeting.

0730 **Cast off for the Start**. The distance from the docking area to the starting line area is about 25 NM.

1200 **Start of the 37th Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race**. The first warning gun will be fired just south of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.

Schedule of Virginia Events

Note: The fleet-docking and race events have moved from Portsmouth to Norfolk.
Norfolk race headquarters are in the RV near the pavilion at Freemason Harbor.

Saturday, October 17th, 2026

0800-1300 Schooners may be viewed dockside. We encourage all vessels to participate in the dockside viewing periods as this is one of the few opportunities to engage the public about the race and its mission.

1000 **Deadline for calling in finish time**. See The Finish.

1300-1700 **Pig and Oyster Roast Award Ceremony** (restricted access) at Freemason Harbor, Norfolk, VA. The awards ceremony will begin at 1600. This year's official GCBSR shirt and a wristband will be required for admittance. Additional guests will be asked to pay $20.

1700-2100 **Schooner Social** We all like meeting other classic boat sailors and seeing each other's boats. Captains and crew are encouraged to host those from other vessels and show them all the neat things that you love about your boat. All are encouraged to knock on the hull of a vessel you would like to get to know and wait to be asked aboard.

2000-2200 **Sailors' Evening and Sea Chantey Sing-along** The much-touted annual Sea Chantey Sing-along. You are all invited to come and lend our voices! Chanteys are about having fun, not perfect pitch, so come join in the festivities. Songbooks provided. Location is the Norfolk Boat Club, 432 W Freemason St, Norfolk, VA 23510 just a couple of blocks from the harbor.

Sunday, October 18th, 2026

0730-0900 **Captains' Meeting** All vessel captains meet under the tent at Freemason Harbor to discuss the race results.

0900-1100 **All Hands Breakfast** will be held under the tent at Freemason Harbor. Schooner captains and crews gather for breakfast to share some sea stories and say a fond farewell to volunteers, sponsors and fellow sailors.

1. *Alcoholic beverages are available at race events. Captains are responsible for the behavior of their crew members.*
2. *Please dispose of all trash bags in appropriate places rather than in the trash receptacles located near or on the pier.*
3. *Please refrain from firing cannons at dock as this might cause the loss of GCBSR dockage.*

Docking in Baltimore

Docking will be at the Anchorage Marina which has generously provided free dockage at their facility. Assigned slips will be available Monday, October 13th through Thursday, October 16th. A detailed docking plan will be sent to captains before the event. 2025 will be our seventh year at Anchorage Marina and things have gone very smoothly there and they are very excited to host us again this year. Let's all work hard to continue this great partnership!

Early and extended docking is available by contacting Anchorage Marina. If you plan to arrive before Monday, October 13th, you are responsible for your own arrangements. The marina can be very busy this time of year; please make plans early.

Anchorage Marina

2501 Boston Street	https://www.anchoragemarina.com
Baltimore, MD 21224	dockmaster@anchoragemarina.com
(410) 522-7200	Latitude: 39° 16.77'N / Longitude: 79° 34.84'W

Anchorage Marina monitors channel 16. Please call the marina on VHF or by phone as you pass Fort McHenry so they can have line handlers standing by.

Anchorage Marina has the following amenities for 2025 race participants:

1. Transient packages with local info available to captains on check-in at the Anchorage Marina.
2. Gate access – Key card will be released to the captains (large crews may request additional cards as available.) **After hours, please contact security office at (443) 520-9567.** Missing or non-returned key cards will be billed at $25 per card.
3. Dockage (no cost) Monday, October 13th through Thursday, October 16th.
4. Water (no cost).
5. Electric ($15/day, $40 max) – give the marina office a credit card to enable, no cost if not needed.
6. Bathhouse, showers and laundry, open 24 hours (located in the main building).
7. **No Parking is available at the Anchorage Marina**. However, there is no cost parking on Boston Street. Please DO NOT LEAVE anything visible in your car if parked on the street. NOTE: DO NOT PARK AT SAFEWAY – you will be towed. Short term parking across the street at the Can Company.

To ensure continued support to this annual event we ask that participants observe the following practices while enjoying their stay at Anchorage Marina:

1. Do not overload laundry machines.
2. Return all key cards to the marina office (if after hours please deposit cards in drop boxes provided at each pier gangway).
3. Trash cans are provided on the docks for normal waste. Anchorage Marina cannot dispose of used oil, fuel, filters or antifreeze.
4. Please use the recycling dumpster located in the parking lot beside the office.
5. If unable to access the piers after hours, please do not climb around or over security gates. Contact your vessel watch or coordinate access prior to departure of the marina.

Captains' Meeting and Briefing

1400 Wednesday in the Boater's Lounge *(new time)*

All participating vessels must have formal representation or risk disqualification. Due to space limitations, please do not bring your whole crew.

Please bring your Safety Statement and Waiver (which must be signed by the captain) to this meeting to receive your shirts and wrist bands. All forms are attached to the end of this book, or available online at *https://gcbsr.org/bay-participants/*

Last-minute concerns about impending weather, measurements, rules, classing, sailing plans, etc. will be discussed. Race shirts and wristbands will be distributed. All parade logistics will also be discussed.

Mandatory Skippers' Meeting

1400 Thursday in the Boater's Lounge

All participating vessels must have formal representation or risk disqualification. Due to space limitations, please do not bring your whole crew.

Please fill in your crew list online any time before this meeting. The jotform is available at this link: *https://form.jotform.com/232334009214040*.

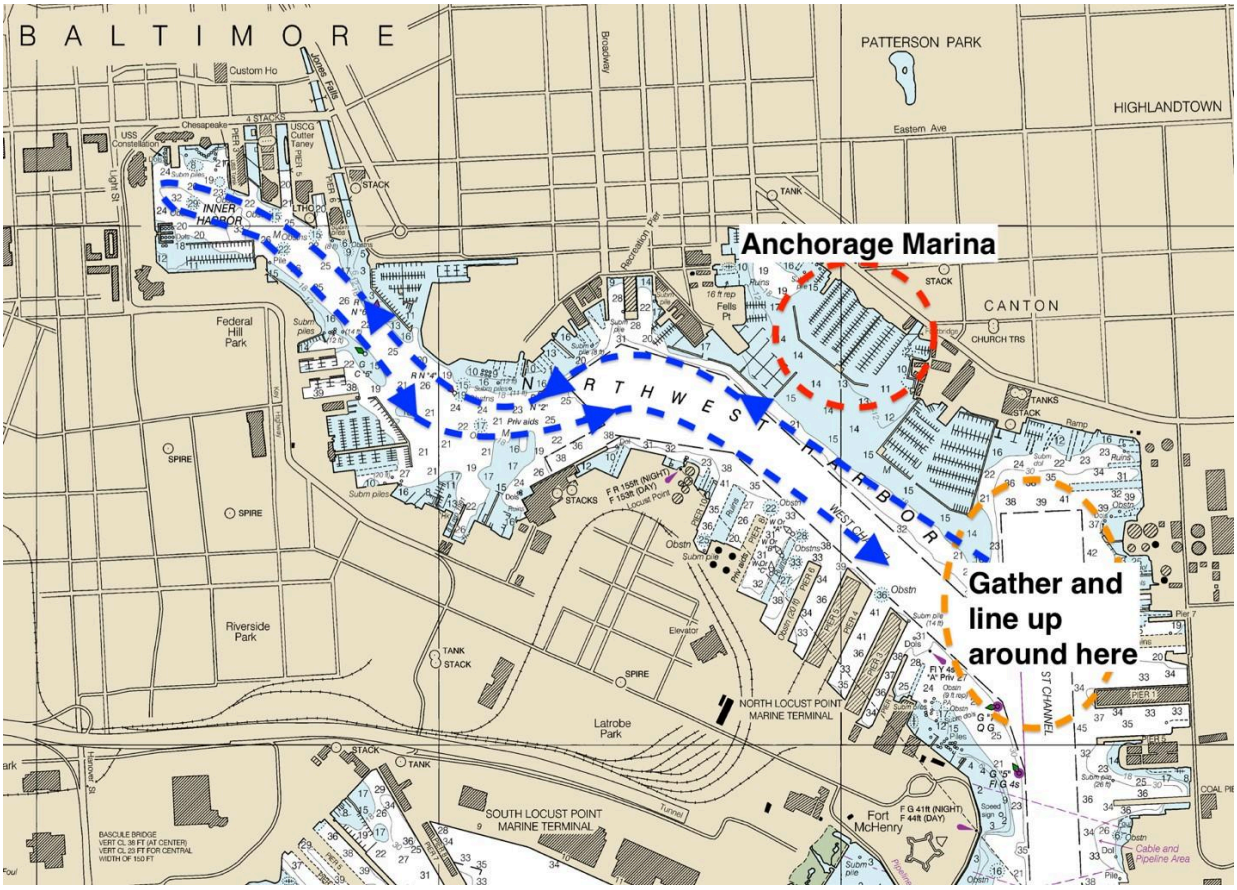
Race committee strongly prefers that you use the jotform online. If you are unable to use the online form, please bring your completed Crew List and give it to the Race Committee before the meeting starts. All forms are attached to the end of this book, or available online at *https://gcbsr.org/bay-participants/*.

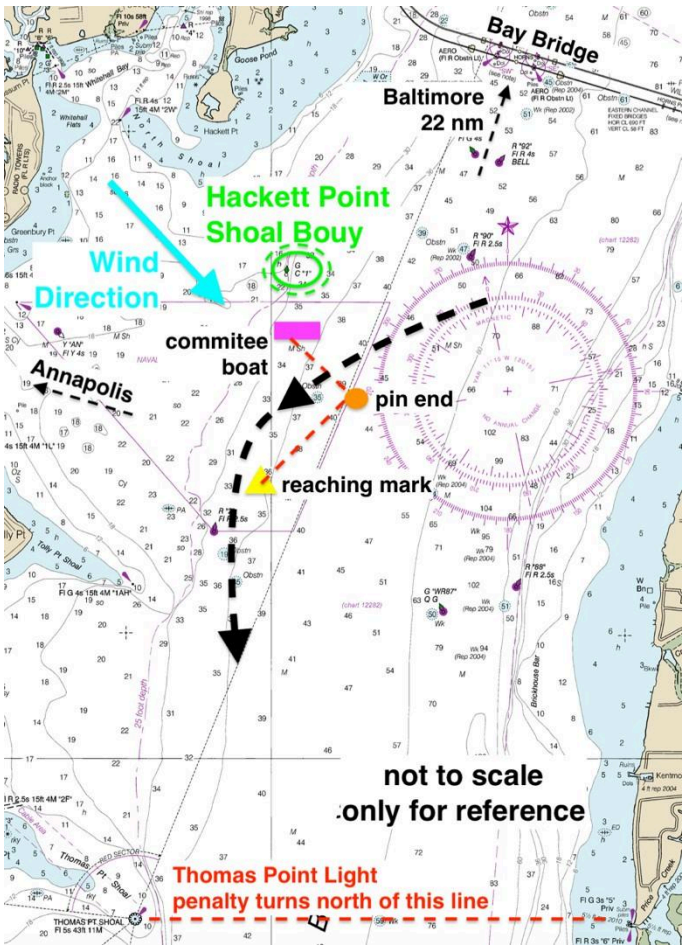
Last-minute changes in course, rules or anything else will be discussed. GPS time will be announced for synchronizing watches. Captains may not delegate attendance except with prior approval from the Race Committee.

Parade of Sail

Wednesday, October 15th, 2025, 1700

1. Participation in the Parade of Sail is voluntary. However, we encourage everyone to sail to promote the Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race and its sponsors.
2. All parade information will be provided at the:
   Mandatory Captains' Briefing on Wednesday at 1400 in the Boater's Lounge.
3. The docking team and line handlers will be present to assist you.
4. Captains are encouraged to run engines for safety.
5. All vessels are encouraged to dress ship and fly as much canvas as is safe.
6. *Please monitor **VHF 01A** for parade communications*.
7. Cast off around 1600, please be prepared to form up and start the progression at 1700.





The Start

Muster off of Annapolis, south of the Bay Bridge. The start will be near Hackett Point Shoal buoy "G1." Distance to the start area is approximately 22 NM from Baltimore. **The start line shown in the image here is an example and is not to scale! The actual position of the start line will be determined by the Race Committee the day of the race depending on wind direction and conditions!**

The committee signal boat will be *Nellie Crockett*, a traditional Chesapeake Bay Buy Boat pictured here. *Nellie Crockett* has AIS and is about 65' long.

Any changes to the start will be presented at the Captains' Meeting or the Skippers' Meeting.

1. All boats should monitor **VHF 01A**. The race committee will announce any changes or start issues on VHF 01A. ***Please do not attempt to hail the race committee during the starting sequence.***

2. The start will be a **reaching start**. The alignment of the starting line as a reaching start is designed to assure a safe start for the larger vessels.

3. **Starting Line:** The starting line will be between the orange flag displayed on the race committee signal boat and the course side of the starting mark, which will be a 5' orange, cylindrical, inflatable mark. The starting line will be quite long (often >1/4 NM) to ensure a safe start for the larger vessels.

4. **Reaching Mark:** A reaching mark may be placed several hundred yards after the race start line. The reaching mark will be an inflatable, triangular, yellow mark. It will be square to start line and at least as far from the committee boat as the pin end of the start line.

The Race Committee will hoist flag "ECHO" (Blue over Red) plus either a red or green flag. The red flag signals that the mark shall be left to port. The green flag indicates mark shall be left to starboard. The approximate distance and compass bearing to the mark will be displayed on a board on the race committee boat. After crossing the starting line, all vessels must first round this mark before continuing down the Bay. It is to be treated as any other race mark with respect to the rules of sailboat racing.

If the start is pointed straight down the Bay the reaching mark may be omitted. For example, with a westerly breeze a reaching start will point all the vessels down the bay, in this scenario the Race Committee may not use the reaching mark. If the reaching mark will not be used, the Race Committee will make an announcement on VHF 01A.

Starting Sequences

There will be a ten-second verbal countdown prior to each warning, preparatory and starting gun, broadcast over **VHF 01A** by the race committee.

Please do not attempt to hail the Race Committee during the starting sequence!

First Start, Classes AA & A

1200	Attention	"F" Flag raised	One Horn
1201		"F" Flag lowered	No Sound Signal
1205	Warning	Class Flag raised	One Horn
1206	Preparatory	"P" Flag raised	One Horn
1209		"P" Flag lowered	Long Horn
1210	Class Start	Class Flag lowered	One Horn

Second Start, Classes B & C

1215	Attention	"F" Flag raised	One Horn
1216		"F" Flag lowered	No Sound Signal
1220	Warning	Class Flag raised	One Horn
1221	Preparatory	"P" Flag raised	One Horn
1224		"P" Flag lowered	Long Horn
1225	Class Start	Class Flag lowered	One Horn

Third Start, Class N

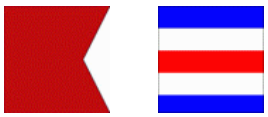
1230	Attention	"F" Flag raised	One Horn
1231		"F" Flag lowered	No Sound Signal
1235	Warning	Class Flag raised	One Horn
1236	Preparatory	"P" Flag raised	One Horn
1239		"P" Flag lowered	Long Horn
1240	Class Start	Class Flag lowered	One Horn

The above is the intended start sequence. The Race Committee may need to signal a postponement which will be signaled with the AP flag, a red and white pennant, and announced on VHF 01A.

Class Flags

AA/A

B/C



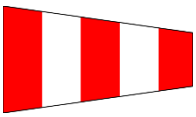
N

Other Flags

F

P

AP



Engine Use at Start

As a safety precaution, vessels are encouraged to run their engines until after their start; however, your engine must be out of gear after your preparatory signal (4 minutes before the start).

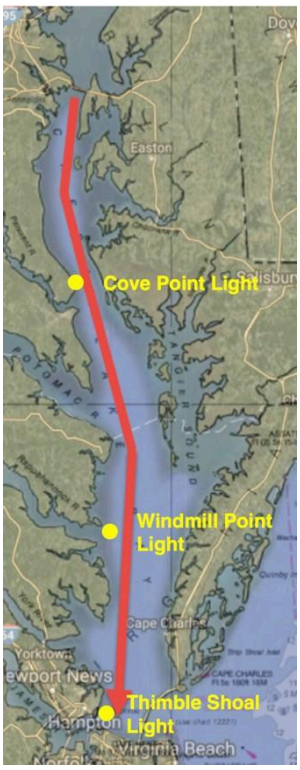
Invalid Starts

Vessels on the course side of the starting line early will be signaled by the Race Committee. The signal will be one long blast of an air horn, raising the individual recall flag (blue cross on white field), and calling the offending vessel(s) on VHF 01A by boat name. Any vessel starting early must complete a 360-degree maneuver at the earliest opportunity after first clearing the starting area.

Vessels which fail to properly round the reaching mark or otherwise fail to have a valid start must complete a 360-degree maneuver at the earliest opportunity after first clearing the starting area.

Any penalty 360-degree turns must be completed at the earliest opportunity after first clearing the starting area **AND** must be completed north of an east-west line through Thomas Point Light. Any vessels that have an invalid start and do not complete a penalty turn will be scored as DNS.

The Race



Thimble Shoal Fleet (118 NM course)

Class AA and Class A race from the start off Annapolis to the E-W line through the Thimble Shoal light.

Windmill Point Fleet (84 NM course)

Class B, Class C, and Class N race from the start off Annapolis to an E-W line through the Windmill Point light.

Please Note: Class B and C vessels wishing to compete for a spot on the Perpetual Trophy (Best Corrected Time at Thimble Shoal) may continue racing to Thimble Shoal. "Bragging Rights Only" (BRO) also applies to class B and C vessels that continue sailing to Thimble Shoal.

Sailing Instructions

Since time immemorial, or perhaps since 1990, the basic instructions for the race remain unchanged:

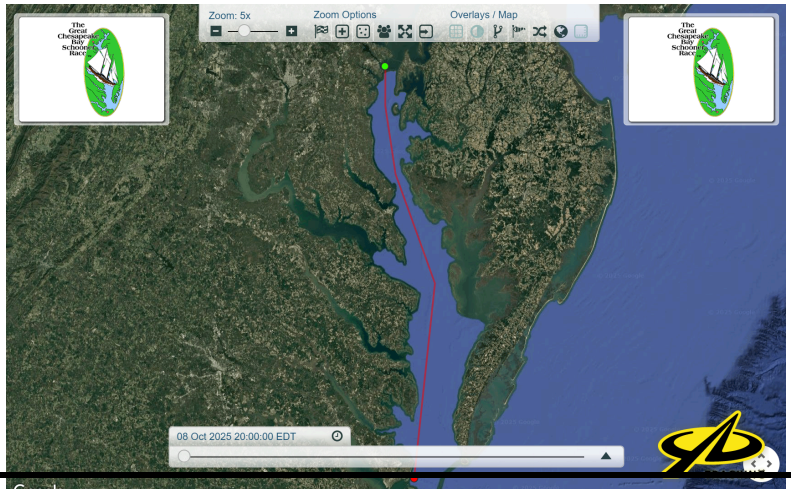
1. Leave Cove Point Light to starboard *(could a vessel leave it to port?)*
2. Leave Windmill Point Light to starboard
3. Leave Thimble Shoal Light to starboard

As last year, we will be using a professional satellite-based tracking service provided by Yellow Brick Tracking. Each boat will be issued a tracker at the meeting on Wednesday. Simply mount the tracker to the outside of your vessel, somewhere where it has a reasonable view of the sky and it will take care of the rest.

Friends and family will be able to track where each boat is and see the leaderboard online. You can give them the following link:

https://yb.tl/GCBSR2026

Or they can access this from the GCBSR website by clicking the Follow the Race Live link.



Required Gates and Log

Vessels not providing the required Race Log will not be scored.

Each vessel must log the position and the time (hh:mm:ss) at the following gates:

	Gate	Distance from Start (NM)	E – W Line at Latitude:	Light or Mark:
1	Cove Point Light	~35	38° 23.175'N	Fl 10s
2	Point No Point Light	~51	38° 07.688'N	Fl 6s
3	Smith Point Light	~67	37° 52.793'N	Fl 10s
4	Windmill Point Light	~84	37° 35.816'N	Fl 6s
5	Wolftrap Mark*	~96	37° 23.499'N	G "1WT" Fl G 4s
6	Thimble Shoal Light*	~119	37° 00.869'N	Fl 10s
** Any vessel continuing to race beyond their class finish line for the Perpetual Trophy or "bragging rights", should log all subsequent gates.*				

In addition, the vessels are to all *log the times they pass through each E-W line of 5 minutes of latitude* as per the Race Log at the end of this handbook. If a vessel retires from the race, they shall record the position and time when they retired from the race.

A smooth copy of the Race Log shall be turned in to the race committee on arrival in Norfolk ASAP. Please record all entries in chronological order and record all times in 24h hh:mm:ss format. The submitted log must be signed and dated by the captain. A vessel has finished racing when they have completed the race at the last finish line on the course that applies to that vessel, or the vessel has withdrawn from the race.

Blank Race Logs are included at the end of this handbook, will also be available in Norfolk from the Race Committee, and are available online at *https://gcbsr.org/bay-participants/*. **Vessels not providing the required log will not be scored.**

Shortened Courses

The race committee may decide to use a shortened course, most likely due to weather or time constraints. If the possibility of a shortened course exists, the Race Committee will do their best to make it known before the start of the race. If the course is shortened after the start, the finish line for each class will be the furthest gate reached by any vessel in that class. Announcement of the shortened course will be sent by text message to the cell phone number provided by each boat. Please see all notes above about gates and how to log the gates.

Engine Use Underway

Safety is paramount. If a vessel must use their engine for propulsion while racing, please log all related actions, report such events and total time lost when you finish, and submit documentation to the Race Committee as early as possible. This might include using your engine to move for commercial traffic, to render emergency assistance to another vessel or person, or any number of other reasons.

If a vessel must engage their engine for any reason, they shall record their position and the time they engaged the engine and subsequently record the time and position from which they resumed sailing in the race in Race Log described above.

There is no requirement to return to the same location you started your engine, the Race Committee will adjust your time and distance and calculate your results accordingly.

Withdrawal

In the event of dangerous or bad weather make for the nearest port of safety and contact the Race Committee.

Vessels abandoning the race must notify *Norfolk Rebel* or a Race Committee representative. Please try on VHF 16 as early as possible, giving times at any gates reached. If unable to raise *Norfolk Rebel* by radio, please call the Race Committee to report your withdrawal and give times, at the earliest possible moment, by calling Paul Carroll at (301) 785-0337 (leave a message at any hour).

Protests

The Race Committee requests that captains genuinely endeavor to avoid protesting another vessel, as the GCBSR considers sailboat racing to be a Corinthian sport engaged in by honorable captains and crews. Should a serious rules infraction occur during the race that cannot be resolved between the captains in a gentlemanly or ladylike fashion, then a protest committee will be convened to hear the protest using the current Racing Rules of Sailing.

In accordance with the guiding wisdom of GCBSR founder Lane Briggs all protests must be presented in-person, in Key West at midnight on New Year's!

Communications Underway

Safety Boat and Race Committee Underway

Hail *Norfolk Rebel* on VHF 16 or 13 while underway. *Norfolk Rebel* is equipped with salvage pumps, divers, patches, tools, etc. to effect emergency repairs or to assist with fires, floods and other underway disasters or to give you a tow.

The Race Committee will be spread out on various vessels during the race. You may try calling or texting Paul Carroll on Libertate at (301) 785-0337, or Michael Fiorentino on Virginia at (718) 302-1986. You can also email race@schoonerrace.org Announcements from the Race Committee, course shortening or other general announcements, will be made by text to the number supplied to the committee at the Captains' meeting before the race.

VHF Radio Watch Underway

All vessels are required to maintain a radio watch in accordance with FCC regulations. Since encounters with commercial vessels pose a potential risk during the race and commercial traffic communicates using channel 13, we recommend monitoring VHF channel 13 when in the proximity of commercial traffic. It is suggested that vessels equipped with dual-watch radios monitor channels 16 and 13 at all times.

Cell Phone Coverage

Cell phones are wonderful communication devices; they work fine on both ends of the race and in the region of the starting line, however, there is little or no service in much of the lower Chesapeake Bay south of the Potomac River. Plan accordingly.

U.S. Coast Guard in the Chesapeake Bay

There are several Coast Guard stations between Baltimore and Norfolk. Please use VHF 16 and the nearest one will answer.

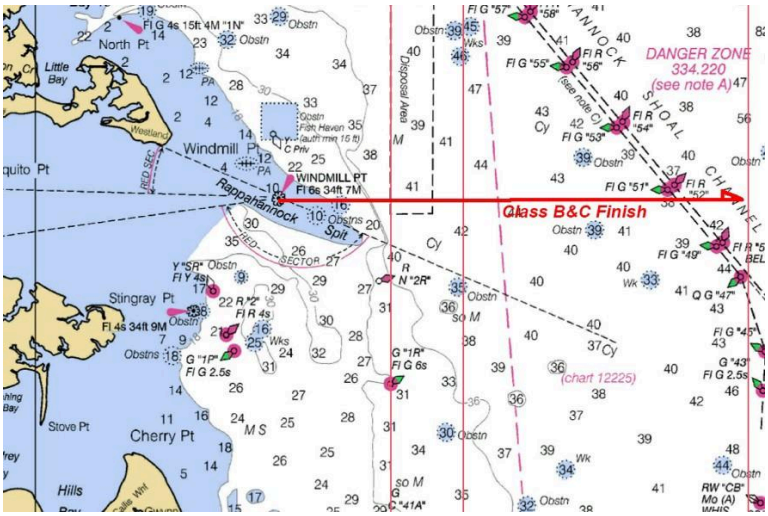
Environmental Emergencies

Please report all oil spills to the U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center at 1 (800) 424-8802.

The Finish

Class B – Class C – Class N

East-West line at Windmill Point Light (~84 NM): Lat. 37°35.818' N, Lon. 076°14.165' W. The light must be kept to starboard.

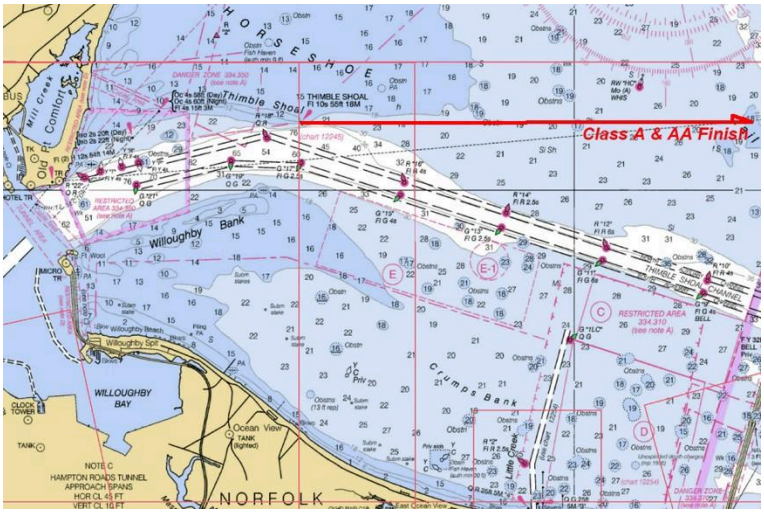


Please Note:

Course Length: Class B and C vessels wishing to compete for a spot on the Perpetual Trophy (Best Corrected Time at Thimble Shoal) may continue racing to Thimble Shoal. “Bragging Rights Only” (BRO) also applies to class B and C vessels that continue sailing to Thimble Shoals.

Class AA - Class A

East-West line at Thimble Shoal Light (~118 NM): Lat. 37°00.869' N, Lon. 076°14.391' W. The light must be kept to starboard.



Please be aware of commercial and naval traffic in the Thimble Shoal Channel as you finish. It is immediately after the finish line and can be busy at times of the day and night. Large Naval traffic will have an enforced security zone while underway, please exercise caution.

Finish Instructions

A vessel has finished when her STERN crosses the line. Note the GPS time (hh:mm:ss) as you cross the line and record it in the Race Log described above. **You must turn in a smooth copy of your Race Log to the Race Committee after docking in Norfolk in order to be scored.** Vessels not able to complete the trip to Norfolk must contact the Race Committee or deliver the log by any appropriate means.

Time Limit

Any vessels which have not called in a finish time before 1000 on Saturday will be counted as “Did Not Finish” in order that results may be computed in a timely fashion. Don’t forget the party starts in Norfolk at 1300 on Saturday.

Awards

Thimble Shoal Fleet Awards

The GCBSR Perpetual Trophy – Designed by Joy Heely and executed in wood and stainless steel by Howdy Bailey and Phil Huffman, this top honor annually goes to the schooner with the best corrected time at the Thimble Shoal finish line, 118 nautical miles. This is considered the most competitive schooner, and ordinarily is a Class A or AA vessel ("Thimble Shoal Fleet").

The Baltimore Perpetual Trophy – A smaller, Steiff-made sterling silver rendition of the Perpetual Trophy recognizes the top schooner of each year and resides at the northern end of the course, usually in a popular drinking establishment convenient to the harbor.

Robert Latimer Award, Line Honors at Thimble Shoal – Named for the designer and builder of our original trophy clocks. This is a special trophy for the Class A or AA schooner crossing the Thimble Shoal finish line first.

Windmill Point Fleet Awards

Trophy Buckle – The first schooner in the Windmill Point Fleet to cross this line is awarded a beautiful hand-crafted scrimshaw schooner belt buckle for "Line Honors." The smaller vessels, in classes B and C, finish at Windmill Point, a course length of about 84 nautical miles.

The Chesapeake Challenge Trophy – This ornate silver loving cup is awarded for the best corrected time at Windmill Point for a Class B or C schooner.

Bragging Rights Only ("BRO") – When a Class B or Class C (Windmill Fleet) schooner keeps racing all the way to Thimble Shoal, instead of turning on the engine when they reach Windmill Point, they are entitled to "Bragging Rights Only" by class.

Note: Vessels racing in Class N are not eligible for any of the above Schooner Race awards.

Special Awards

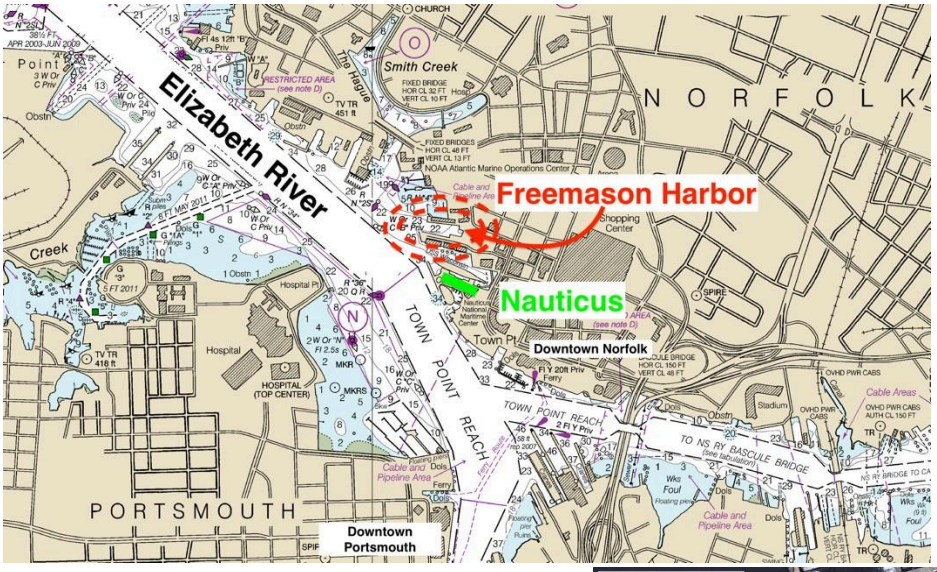
Black Dog Trophy – This is the Board's most prestigious honor. Named and modeled after race founder Captain Briggs' faithful companion, Rebel, its bronze statue of a black dog signifies loyalty to the race mission and faithful and honorable support for the event without personal recognition, in the spirit of Lane A. Briggs. The Black Dog Trophy is not an annual award but is only presented when significant service is deserving of very special recognition.

Junior Mariner Award – The Junior Mariner Award honors the next generation of sailors who embody the spirit and mission of the Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race. This award is presented by the GCBSR Board of Directors, based on recommendations from the captains of vessels carrying youth under the age of 18. The recipient is a young sailor who has distinguished themselves through seamanship, enthusiasm, and a willingness to learn and contribute as a member of the crew. Beyond skill at sea, the Junior Mariner Award recognizes a youth who demonstrates respect for the Chesapeake Bay, appreciation for the traditions of schooner sailing, and camaraderie with shipmates both on deck and ashore. In celebrating our Junior Mariner, we honor not only their achievements, but also the living heritage of the Bay—ensuring that the values of stewardship, community, and adventure are carried forward into the future.

The Volunteer of the Year Award – The Board honors an outstanding volunteer during the awards ceremony, someone who has gone above and beyond requirements to accomplish his or her assigned duties.

Docking in Norfolk

Docking in Norfolk will be in Freemason Harbor. Freemason Harbor is the basin directly north of the basin that contains the *USS Wisconsin* and Nauticus.



<u>Docking Committee in Norfolk:</u>

(757) 448-5965

Please call the docking team at the number above, about 30 minutes out from Freemason Harbor.

When you can see Freemason Harbor hail "Schooner Race Docking Committee" on VHF 16. They will direct you to switch to VHF 01A as a working channel.

You will be well up the Elizabeth River, almost to downtown Norfolk, before your radio will be effective.

Look for downtown Norfolk on your port side. The Naval Hospital and downtown Portsmouth will be on your starboard side. Freemason Harbor is directly across from Hospital Point. From the river, it will be the basin to the left (to the north) of the *USS Wisconsin* and Nauticus. The *USS Wisconsin* is a large battleship permanently docked as a museum.

There will be a spud barge positioned by the mouth of Freemason Harbor to provide a wind and wave break for the vessels tied up within.

2026 Rating Factors

Class AA (50+ ft rated length & invitational)

Name	*Rated length*	*2026 rating factor*
Denis Sullivan	62.50	1.165
Lady Maryland	45.60	1.078
Pride of Baltimore II	72.36	1.274
Sultana	31.64	0.861
Virginia	77.23	1.217

Class A (40 - 50 ft rated length)

Name	*Rated length*	*2026 rating factor*
Adventurer (56)	42.40	1.187
Sea Whip	41.23	1.015
Tom Bombadil	37.05	1.096
Ulysses	41.86	1.023
Woodwind	47.88	1.357

Class B/C (<40 ft rated length)

Name	*Rated length*	*2026 rating factor*
Bonny Rover	33.33	0.844
Dauntless	36.52	0.911
Lady Hawk	24.48	0.782
Norfolk Rebel	33.44	0.809
North Wind	39.76	0.921
Underdog	18.04	0.672

Class N (Non-schooner, invitational)

Name	*Rated length*	*2026 rating factor*
Bennu	36.90	1.074
Boojum	0	0
Genevieve	19.2	0.693
Grace	20.05	0.829
Howard Blackburn	34.94	0.935
Jolly Dolphin	31.47	0.710
Tangier	0	0
Tipsy	29.38	1.052

Vessels *in italics* are not planning to race.

All ratings are tentative and subject to change at the discretion of the GCBSR Race Committee.

Computation of Rating Factors

Corrected Time Computation:
The calculation for corrected time is simply:

Corrected Time = Elapsed Time * Rating factor

Rating Factor:
In 2017 the GCBSR changed over from using a Time-on-Distance (TOD) formula for corrected time calculations, to a Rating Factor (sometimes confusingly called time-on-time (TOT)). This type of rating is particularly well suited for races like the GCBSR, longer distances races that can have highly variable winds. The initial Rating Factor for a boat is based upon the Rated Length of the vessel through this formula:

Rating Factor = Sqrt (Rated Length) / Sqrt (40)

However, this initial rating factor does not consider all the myriad performance criteria for wildly different constructions, displacements, etc. Thus, the rating factor is then further adjusted each year based on the cumulative performance of the vessel in an effort to fine-tune the initial rating factor to reflect the true performance potential of the vessel. The Rating Factor has been calculated for every boat that has participated in the Race since 1999. Boats of similar Rating factor should perform similarly.

Rated Length:
Our base formula for the rated length is the 1974 Off Soundings Club Rating Rule:

Rating in feet = [{L + (2 * √MSA * RA)}/2.5] * PA

Where L = PL +/- BC; PL = (LOA + LWL)/2; BC = 2 * (LOA/4 - beam); MSA = Measured Sail Area; PA = Propeller Allowance; RA = Rig Allowance

The critical elements of this formula are the boat's dimensions, sail area, prop and rig type. Measured Sail Area has to do with the theoretical area available for all sail area and reflects the rig type and size, not the boat's sail inventory. There is no provision for spinnakers, main topsails, etc. so boats carrying these sails have some initial advantage.

Propeller allowance:

No prop	100%
One feather/fold	98%
Two feather/fold	97%
One 2-blade solid	96%
One 3-blade solid	94%
One 4-blade solid	92%
Two 2-blade solid	92%
One 5-blade solid	90%
Two 3-blade solid	88%
Two 4-blade solid	84%
Two 5-blade solid	80%

Rig Allowance (factor):

All vessels, main & fore	0.60
Marconi main	+0.10
Marconi fore or Staysail fore	+0.10
Fully battened main	+0.10
Fully battened fore	+0.10
Unstayed rigs	+0.15

Fleets & Classes
Classes are determined by vessel type and rated length, but the handicapping system used means that any boat **could** race in any Class. Classes have changed over the years, as has course length for each class. For the 2023 Race, the race committed has defined the classes to be:

+ **AA:** Invitational class (Traditional, larger vessels, often rated length 40ft or greater)
+ **A:** Modern and/or larger vessels (typ. rated length 40ft+)
+ **B:** Traditional, smaller vessels (typ. rated length 30 - 40ft)
+ **C:** Traditional, smaller vessels (typ. rated length below 30ft)
+ **N:** Non-schooner invitational class (traditional boats whose mission aligns with GCBSR)

The criteria that define a vessel as modern are the same as those used to adjust the handicapping for the race: unstayed rigs, fully-battened sails, and marconi or staysail foresail rigs.

Rating Adjustments:
The race committee reserves the right to make appropriate adjustments to race, rating factors or class placement until the vessel becomes competitive. If you question your rating or class assignment, please feel free to bring it up with the race committee.

An Important Note on Handicapping:
The Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race is a race meant for the fun of getting together a group of classic sailing vessels and participating in a fun race down the Bay. It is made up of folks that volunteer their time to make this event happen every year. No large value prizes or sailing careers are on the line. The fleet is divided into four classes, and a significant effort has been made to attempt to provide a handicapping method that can allow vessels of wildly different types, age and construction to race against each other. That said, there is no such thing as a perfect handicapping system, and nobody should read too much into which vessels place. As Oscar Wilde said, "please don't shoot the piano player. He's doing his best."

Mission of
the Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race
Racing to Save the Bay

The mission of the Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race is to promote public awareness of the Chesapeake Bay's maritime heritage and to encourage the preservation and improvement of the Chesapeake's natural resources.

This is accomplished by donating the proceeds of the race to one or more charitable organizations engaged in conservation of the natural resources of the Chesapeake Bay.

The Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race (GCBSR) is dedicated to local giving to foster local involvement. Each year the steering committees in Norfolk, VA and Baltimore, MD seek out organizations to partner with which share our mission. By working together locally, we all benefit in immediate ways.

For more information please visit: *https://www.gcbsr.org*

Thank you!

The board of directors for the Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race extends a special thank you to all the captains, crews, sponsors and volunteers for helping to make this event so unique and special. We look forward to your continuing support in the years to come as we continue…*Racing to Save the Bay!*

2026 GCBSR RACE HANDBOOK
©The Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race, Inc.

2025 Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race
Safety Statement and Waiver

Vessel: _____

Please print

Safety Statement

This is meant to be a fun race; however:

- The safety of a vessel and her crew is the sole and inescapable responsibility of the captain, who must ensure that the vessel is sound, seaworthy and manned by experienced crew who are physically fit.
- All vessels participating in the race shall carry full and adequate hull and liability insurance.
- The captain must further ensure that all equipment is properly maintained and stowed, and that the crew knows its location and proper usage.
- It is also the sole and exclusive responsibility of the captain to decide whether or not to start or continue in the race.
- Vessels will be disqualified for unsafe operation or failure to have formal representation at the Mandatory Skippers' Meeting Thursday morning.
- The race involves sailing at night in an area busy with commercial traffic. All participating vessels must fly radar reflectors, maintain a radio watch and keep a good lookout at all times. Vessels unfamiliar with night sailing on the Chesapeake are encouraged to seek local knowledge and experienced crew before entering the event.

Waiver

I agree to abide by the regulations and sailing instructions for this event and, by signing below, confirm that I have read the Safety Statement and that my vessel conforms in all respects. I hereby agree that neither I nor any of my crew members shall hold the Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race, Inc., or any of its personnel responsible for accidents, damage or injuries during the race or related activities; no crew member shall be aboard my vessel that has not consented to this waiver on his or her behalf. I understand that organizers may transfer to third parties the right to photograph, film or tape part of or the entire event for eventual license, sale or distribution, and agree that neither organizers nor such third party has any obligation to compensate entrants in any form.

Captain's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

The Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race™

2025 Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race
Crew List

Vessel: _____

Captain: _____

Total number of people onboard: _____

Full Name Phone and Email	Shore Side Emergency Contact: Name & Phone Number(s)

Full Name Phone and Email	Shore Side Emergency Contact: Name & Phone Number(s)

Full Name Phone and Email	Shore Side Emergency Contact: Name & Phone Number(s)

2025 Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race
Race Log

Vessel: _____

Captain: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Each vessel shall keep a log of the exact time at which they cross the lines at the gates listed below.

A smooth copy of this Race Log with all entries in chronological order, signed and dated by the captain, shall be turned in to the Race Committee upon arrival in Norfolk.

A vessel has finished racing when they have completed the race at the last finish line on the course that applies to that vessel, or the vessel has withdrawn from the race.

	Gate	Distance from Start (NM)	E – W Line at Latitude:	Light or Mark:	Time 24h (hh:mm:ss)
1	Cove Point Light	~35	38° 23.175'N	Fl 10s	
2	Point No Point Light	~51	38° 07.688'N	Fl 6s	
3	Smith Point Light	~67	37° 52.793'N	Fl 10s	
4	Windmill Point Light	~84	37° 35.816'N	Fl 6s	
5	Wolftrap Mark*	~96	37° 23.499'N	G "1WT" Fl G 4s	
6	Thimble Shoal Light*	~119	37° 00.869'N	Fl 10s	
** Any vessel continuing to race beyond their class finish line for the Perpetual Trophy or "bragging rights", should log all subsequent gates.*					

If a vessel must start their engine to avoid shipping traffic or divert from their normal course to render emergency assistance

to another vessel or person, they shall record their position and the time they started their engine and subsequently record the time and position from which they resumed sailing in the race in this log. If a vessel retires from the race, they shall record the time and position at which they retired from the race.

Engine Use			
Start/Stop/Retired	**Latitude**	**Longitude**	**Time**

The Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race™

2025 Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race Race Log (continued)

Vessel: _____

E – W Line at Latitude:	Time 24h (hh:mm:ss)
38° 55.000’N	
38° 50.000’N	
38° 45.000’N	
38° 40.000’N	
38° 35.000’N	
38° 30.000’N	
38° 25.000’N	
38° 20.000’N	
38° 15.000’N	
38° 10.000’N	
38° 05.000’N	
38° 00.000’N	
37° 55.000’N	
37° 50.000’N	
37° 45.000’N	
37° 40.000’N	
37° 35.000’N	
37° 30.000’N	

37° 25.000’N	
37° 20.000’N	
37° 15.000’N	
37° 10.000’N	
37° 05.000’N	