

NEW for 2026:

The Spring Racing Series has 12 races planned, the Fall Racing Series has 8 races planned, and each series has a back-up race scheduled to ensure at least 7 completed races occur during the spring series, and 5 completed races occur during the fall series. Because the racing series are fairly long and racers may not be able to make all the races, we will drop each racer's 3 worst scores (including missed races) from the completed races in the spring series, and their 2 worst scores (including missed races) from the completed races in the fall series.

This year we are also dividing the racing fleet into two groups... racers and cruisers, where each boat would declare themselves a "racer" or a "cruiser" at the beginning of each series. If your LCSA handicap is 150 or higher you should be in the cruising fleet, if your LCSA handicap is lower than 150 you should be in the racing fleet. Cruisers that desire to compete in the racing fleet may declare as racers (racers may not declare as cruisers) and cruisers that are "dry-raced," that is stripped for racing, with heads, stoves, or bunks removed, must declare as racers. At the end of the two series, awards will be provided to the winners in each group for each series.

To bring spinnaker racing back to Lake Conroe (when conditions are right for them), the use of spinnakers will be allowed on a per race basis if declared beforehand. If you have a spinnaker and want to use it, but do not have an LCSA handicap for your boat with spinnaker, please contact the race coordinator.

We will not be adding a "Single-Handed" bonus this year, as we hope to encourage skippers to share the experience with crew, and especially new members who want to get into sailing.

Race announcements will be sent out as early as Tuesday, but no later than Thursday noon so that skippers and crews can decide if they want to race that week or not.

SCORING:

At the end of a series, the points will be tallied and the **highest** score wins. In the event of a tie, the winner of the tied series will be the skipper who sailed in more races for that series. If that still ends in a tie, the tiebreaker for the tiebreaker will be determined by what skipper served aboard the Committee Boat more. In the unlikely event that the tie is *still* not resolved, then we'll settle it by rock, paper, scissors (best 2 out of 3).

Note - It is the boat *and skipper* of each racer or cruiser who will receive points in a race. Crew will not receive points.

LCSA will be scoring all races for all of the series this year based on the handicaps you have all provided or that have been assigned by the Race Coordinator and approved by you.

Our points scoring will not be based on finishing order across the finish line...

We have well over a dozen different boat classes in our club, and any number of them may be out racing on any given night. It is simply not fair for a faster, first-place "Ferrari" to win when it's competing against some slower "Volkswagen Beetles", a couple of "Hondas", and a few old "pickup trucks." That's why we use the handicap system... to remove the inherent bias between boats of different performance characteristics and "level the playing field" to reduce the success of a race to the skill of the skipper and their crew. Even then, dividing the fleet into racers and cruisers should increase fairness.

Additionally, although we have several boats of the same class, it is not in the best interest of time to have different divisions for each boat class (Catalina 22's, Catalina 25s, J/29s, etc.) so we race everyone together and let the handicaps sort everything out at the end.

We will be scoring each series with the Time on Distance (ToD) method.

It is also very important to remember that LCSA races are designed to be fun, spirited races, and are not to be taken too seriously.

It should also be understood that, although the primary focus should be on the enjoyment of racing, all races are conducted fairly and impartially.

See the ["Ten Commandments of 'Beer Can' racing"](#)

RACES:

All races will be sailed under daylight conditions, and the course lengths, geometry, and the number of legs will be based on predicted wind speed and direction such that all finishers should be able to cross the finish line before sunset (ideally) or no later than Nautical Twilight at the latest.

In the event that the wind fades to the point that the sun sets while boats are still out on the course, the Race Committee will abandon the race and award points in accordance with "Finish-In-Place" scoring (see explanation further below)

When Finish-In-Place scoring is used, handicaps are not used, and boats' scores are based on their finishing order, relative distances from the finish line (if they have at least rounded the first marker), or are considered "Did Not Finish" (DNF) if they have not rounded the first marker by the time the race is called off.

Races are abandoned at sunset (or at Race Committee's discretion), so that the Race Committee/Committee Boat and crew have time under twilight conditions backtrack along the course to retrieve the buoys and anchors and return to the dock by the time twilight has faded with a little light to spare.

In rough and windy conditions, retrieving buoys and anchors can be a tricky endeavor by itself. Darkness raises risks for crews and can damage the Committee Boat or buoys.

It is also worth noting that Committee Boat crews still need to return to the dock and hose down the anchor, stow the buoys, wipe down any mud that might have been brought aboard on the buoy anchors, or the boat.

COURSES/HANDICAPS:

LCSA's courses are not the "traditional" windward/leeward courses and, as such, the handicaps on which they're based don't always fit.

If LCSA races were seriously competitive, this could be an issue. However, LCSA's handicaps are meant to try to level the playing field a bit, in as many course layouts and wind conditions as possible. Remember, LCSA races are meant to be fun, *lightly*-competitive and good-natured. Sometimes races will be set up to start on a port tack. Sometimes our races will be a downwind start. Sometimes our races might be better suited to one type of boat over another.

This is why LCSA's handicaps are listed as, "LCSA Handicap", and not PHRF... we base our handicaps on PHRF (US Sailing, PHRF-NE, or another club's base rating) and modify as necessary for conditions on Lake Conroe, so you might see some variation between your PHRF handicap and LCSA's handicap.

The Rules of the Road still apply so let's keep it fun, fair, and friendly.

POINTS:

Below is an outline of how we will assign points for this year's races (example at the end of this email):

*Note: All finishing positions will be based on corrected (handicapped) time.

The first-place finisher gets the number of boats in that evening's race +2.

The second-place finisher is number of boats +1.

Third place is number of boats +0.

After that, the 4th place boat gets number of boats -1.

5th place gets number of boats -2, etc., etc.

Scoring points applies to LCSA members only... so, if there are 9 boats racing, and 2 of those boats are *non*-LCSA members, then only the LCSA boats will receive points. The Committee Boat will still record the visiting boat times on our score sheet and we will post them to the website.

The last-place boat will always receive 3 points with this system.

Any boat that did not finish (DNF) for whatever reason will also receive 3 points as a way of rewarding them for at least coming out and making an effort. Sometimes the wind dies, or there is a mechanical problem, or crew may get sick, requiring a skipper to decide to terminate their race (it happens). We don't want these sailors to walk away empty-handed.

However, the term "retire" (RET) may only be used for a boat that cannot, or did not, exonerate itself from a foul (by doing a 360 around the Committee Boat, Starting Buoy, or Mark, or by accepting a time penalty). There is no time penalty for fouling another racer, so failure to do a 360 would result in 0 (zero) points. In LCSA we don't commit fouls, so we shouldn't have anyone declare RET.

COMMITTEE BOAT:

Committee Boat captains and crews will receive points equal to the number of boats in that evening's race. Committee Boat captains and crews with point totals higher than the race series winners will receive special recognition but will not "win" the series.

In crowded races, this works out that the Committee Boat crew each receives one point for every boat which races, whether they are LCSA members or not.

This is to recognize these crews for the extra work it takes running a large race, keeping track of more boats, doing the post-race RaceQs GPS replay, and getting back to the dock later than everyone else after waiting for the last boat to finish.

If you've manned the Committee Boat during a large race, then you know how much work it takes to make it a fun and successful race!

All racing boats are requested to check in with the Committee Boat by sailing by the stern so they can be recognized. Alternatively, racing boats may check in via VHF marine radio on the channel designated in that week's racing announcement (often VHF Channel 71).

Please try and sign up for Committee Boat no later than noon on the Tuesday before a race.

Sailing captains are expected to serve on race committee duty at least once per series.

START TIMES:

Race start times in the Spring and Fall Series will be at 6:00 PM. Races may not start early, but exceptions may be made by the Committee Boat captain if conditions warrant a delay.

Boats arriving at the starting line late (15 minutes or later) will not be started or scored. However, it's a free country, and late comers may sail the racecourse as long as they do not interfere with racers or the committee boat retrieving buoys.

The horn sequence is as follows (yes, it's "*non-standard*", but that's the way we like it!

1 prolong blast (2-3 seconds) at 5 minutes before the start.

1 short blast at 3 minutes before the start.

1 short blast at 1 minute before the start.

1 LONG blast to signal the start of the race.

OVER EARLY:

In the event a boat crosses the starting line before the starting horn (between the 1-minute warning horn and the starting horn), that boat has two options to resolve the penalty:

-Do a "360" around the nearest starting line marker (either the Committee Boat or the buoy near the lighthouse), **or...**

-Accept a time addition of 10 seconds per mile, or...

-They may retire from the race.

HITTING A MARK:

If a boat hits one of the rounding buoys, that boat is expected to do a "360" around the mark to correct the penalty.

If boats fail to do a "360" around the mark which was hit, they will automatically be assessed a :10 second per mile penalty applied to their **raw** score, or...

-They may retire from the race.

FINISH-IN-PLACE (FIP):

Finish-In-Place is an unusual scoring method we sometimes must use when the wind flat-out *DIES*, and boats are left adrift with the sun setting and no sign of improving wind.

Finish-In-Place will be applied to boats that have at least rounded the first mark in a race, and their finishing places will be their scores for that evening's race.

Boats who have not rounded the first mark by the time the Race Committee abandons the race at sunset will be considered *Did Not Finish* (DNF) and will receive 3 points. (See example.)

FOULS/ETIQUETTE/PROTEST:

If you are fouled, the vessel which committed the foul is expected to do a "360" as soon as it is safe and practical. If they do not, they may retire. However, in LCSA we don't commit fouls, so we shouldn't have a problem.

If you feel a start or finish was not accurately timed or you feel any other part of the race was otherwise in error, do not take out your frustration by yelling at the Committee Boat crew. LCSA's Committee Boat

captains and crews are expected to behave professionally, and all racers should conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner.

All of our Committee Boat crews are volunteers and work very hard to make sure races are fun and fair. Any kind of disrespect by a racing boat toward the Committee Boat crew will not be tolerated. Egregious violations could result in a time penalty, a disqualification, or further action as deemed appropriate by the LCSA Board of Directors and the Race Coordinator.

Instead, please record as much information as you can remember and inform the Race Coordinator (Chuck Pool) at lcsaracing@gmail.com.

Let's have a great 2026 season... and I'm looking forward to seeing you all out on the water for a *FUN* season of racing on Lake Conroe!

Sincerely,

Chuck Pool
Race Coordinator
lcsaracing@gmail.com

SCORING EXAMPLES:

8 boats (all LCSA members)

Boat 1 1st place = 10 points

Boat 2 2nd place = 9 points

Boat 3 3rd place = 8 points

Boat 4 4th place = 7 points (tied for 4th)

Boat 5 5th place (single-handed) 6 points + 1 bonus = 7 points (tied for 4th)

Boat 6 6th place = 5 points

Boat 7 7th place = 4 points

Boat 8 DNF = 3 points

Committee Boat crew = 8 points each

9 boats (7 LCSA and 2 non-member racers)

Boat 1 1st place = 9 points

Boat 2 2nd place = 8 points

Boat 3 (non-member 1) = time and finishing order recorded only...no points

Boat 4 3rd place = 7 points

Boat 5 4th place = 6 points

Boat 6 (non-member 2) = time and finishing order recorded only...no points

Boat 7 5th place = 5 points

Boat 8 DNF = 3 points

Boat 9 DNF = 3 points

Committee Boat crew = 9 points each

Finish-In-Place 1 (All boats still out on the course when the wind dies):

7 boats

Boat 1 (boat rounds the marker, and is closest to the finish line, as seen from the Committee Boat (or on RaceQs)) 1st place = 9 points

Boat 2 (boat rounds the marker, and is next closest to the finish line, as seen from the Committee Boat (or on RaceQs)) 2nd place = 8 points

Boat 3 (boat rounds the marker, and is third closest to the finish line, as seen from the Committee Boat (or on RaceQs)) 3rd place = 7 points

Boat 4 (boat rounds the marker, and is farthest from the finish line, as seen from the Committee Boat (or on RaceQs)) 4th place = 6 points

Boat 5 (did not round marker) = DNF (3 points)

Boat 6 (did not round marker) = DNF (3 points)

Boat 7 (did not round marker) = DNF (3 points)

Committee Boat crew = 7 points each

Finish-In-Place 2 (Some boats have crossed the finish line, some have rounded the marker but not crossed the finish line, and some boats have not rounded the first marker):

7 boats

Boat 1 (boat crosses the finish line first) 1st place = 9 points

Boat 2 (boat crosses the finish line second) 2nd place = 8 points

Boat 3 (boat rounds the first marker but has not yet crossed, and is closest to the finish line, as seen from the Committee Boat (or on RaceQs) when race is abandoned) 3rd place = 7 points

Boat 4 (boat rounds the first marker but has not yet crossed, and is farthest from the finish line, as seen from the Committee Boat (or on RaceQs) when race is abandoned) 4th place = 6 points

Boat 5 (did not round marker) = DNF (3 points)

Boat 6 (did not round marker) = DNF (3 points)

Boat 7 (did not round marker) = DNF (3 points)

*Note: RaceQs has been extremely unreliable for the last few racing seasons and may not be relied upon this season.