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RACE WEEK ANNOUNCES MOVE FROM ANACORTES TO BELLINGHAM

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, December 2, 2024 – Race Week Pacific Northwest announces the move from Anacortes, WA to Bellingham, WA beginning with the 2025 event happening July 21-25, 2025 in Bellingham.

“Anacortes has been a great venue for our event for the past 4 years,” stated Schelleen Rathkopf, Producer of Race Week. “But we’ve maxed out all the available guest moorage that is available to us at Cap Sante Marina, and we’d like to continue to grow the event and get more fleets involved.”

In addition to guest moorage capacity restrictions at Cap Sante Marina in Anacortes, there were other factors considered in this move decision. For over 3 decades when Race Week was on Whidbey Island, the event had a fixed position of the 3rd week of July on the Seattle Area Racing Calendar (SARC). The timing of this was significant as schools were out, and the event did not run into conflicts with other sailboat racing events in the region. With the move to Anacortes, the only week that was made available for the event by the Port of Anacortes was the last week of June, which has proved to be a challenging time for many fleets and families.

“We’re excited to get back to the third week of July with our move to Bellingham,” added Rathkopf. “A good chunk of the commercial fleet clears out of Squalicum Harbor en route to Alaska at this time, so this opens up a lot of guest moorage for us to expand and grow. The closer proximity to Canada will also make it easier for those boats coming to the event from British Columbia.”

For these reasons, in addition to other extenuating circumstances, it was decided that it was in the best interest of Race Week to find a new host city that wants to grow the sport, and benefit from the economic uptick to the port, hotels, motels, bars, restaurants, and other businesses and services that Race Week delivers to the local economy.

The event will be based out of Squalicum Harbor in Bellingham, with direct access to Bellingham Bay, where buoy, distance and pursuit races will originate. Racers will make their guest moorage arrangements in the commercial area at Squalicum Harbor directly with the Port of Bellingham.

The commercial area of Squalicum Harbor is accessed by Gate 5, which is also the location of Fisherman’s Pavillion, a 9,000-sf event space that will serve as the site of the notoriously fun, post-race parties that feature live music, silly themes, and open bar. With an unobstructed view of Bellingham Bay, Fisherman’s Pavillion will also be used for the new Race Week Marketplace – an exhibition space for event sponsors and Bellingham business supporters. In addition to the Race Week compound at Gate 5, other Race Week events including the Sunday night skipper meeting,

opening and closing night parties, and protest hearings will be held at Bellingham Yacht Club; also located at Squalicum Harbor.

There are many restaurants located at Squalicum Harbor, including Anthony's, Lighthouse Grill, Lombardi's, Kuru Kuru Sushi, Nicki's, the Loft and more. The Hotel Bellwether is also located there, in addition to the USCG, marine & dive services, a fuel dock, boat ramps, cranes, and so much more. "We're really excited to call Bellingham our new home," adds Rathkopf. "There is so much support for the event coming from the port, yacht club, city and county, that we know we're going to be in good hands and have the support we need to grow."

Longtime Race Week's Principal Race Officer (PRO) Charley Rathkopf from Seattle, WA will remain at the Race Committee (RC) helm in Bellingham, and joined by Race Officer (RO) and Race Week Advisory Board member Paul Evenden from Vancouver, BC.

"I've been PRO for Bellingham Yacht Club's PITCH regatta for the last 6 years, and Bellingham Bay is a great place to sail," states Charley Rathkopf. "I'm looking forward to getting a big fleet back, and the dates moving back to July is so great. My entire Race Committee team is coming to Bellingham, and we're really looking forward to the new venue."

Joining Rathkopf and Evenden on the RC team is Christine Bounds-Poulin from Seattle as Scorekeeper, and the many other familiar Race Week RC team members on board the signal, finish, and mark set boats on the course.

With many sailing instruction programs in Bellingham, Race Week is considering bringing back the popular Race Week Kids Camp in 2026, a program that originated when Race Week was on Whidbey Island. The day camp program was designed for the kids of Race Week racers, who learned to sail, practiced water safety, and enjoyed fun outings. Race Week Kids Camp had to be dropped with the move to Anacortes due to the lack of local sailing instruction resources available.

Current sponsors of Race Week include Gosling's Rum, Fisheries Supply, CSR Marine, Port Townsend Rigging, Seattle Sailing Club, Corinthian Yacht Club Seattle, and Ullman Sails. With the move to Bellingham, the Port of Bellingham and the Bellingham Yacht Club will both be added to the sponsor line up beginning in 2025.

"We're really excited for this move," said Emily Gosling, 8th generation family member from Gosling's Rum and creators of the famous Dark 'n Stormy cocktail. "We're currently working on a signature cocktail called the Bellingham Bell – available for the first time at Bellingham Race Week next summer!"

New logo branding:

COLOR:



BLACK & WHITE:



Event registration opens January 1, 2025 at www.RaceWeekPNW.com. The Notice of Race (NOR) will be posted at the event website on or before December 31, 2024.

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