

## January NEISA Executive Committee Call Meeting Notes

January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Roll Call**
  - a. Full meeting attendance is available [here](#)
- III. Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees**
  - a. Approval of December Minutes
  - b. Commissioner's Report – Mike Kalin
    - i. Schools able to compete need clarification from athletics department for testing protocol
    - ii. Split season issue – nothing is happening now, just a thought exercise anticipating a proposal from SEISA, so we want to be well versed in all of the implications in how we want the sport to look and how it may affect our various constituents
      - 1. Work done there is very preliminary, we are currently mainly gathering input
    - iii. Re: Diana's email comment just using top-level coaches to determine the split-season dilemma. It's important to use people who understand what the Nationals block really looks like, and how it would be affected in terms of financials and adding Women's Team Racing
- IV. Scheduling Coordinator's Report – Frank Pizzo**
  - a. *Pizzo*: Bylaw changes for cross-regional and regional stuff should be ready for the February meeting. Regarding voting rights for all different teams, these should be ready to discuss in February as well.
  - b. *Assad*:
    - i. Previously we've had three types of members, but associate members didn't have a vote nor could hold a spot on the membership board.
    - ii. Older teams who have been on NEISA for decades should still have votes – we have to look carefully at how we balance this power and address keeping these teams involved
    - iii. This will likely be addressed by changes in the quorums – we want to reward the teams that show up at the regular meetings without being hamstrung by whether or not we have a quorum
  - c. *Wilkinson*: Current bylaws are a bit strange and outdated
  - d. *Assad*: We want the bylaws to be uniform
  - e. *Martin*: Reminder of Scheduling Meeting tomorrow (1/14) at 4:00pm
- V. Review of Split Season Proposal from SEISA – Taylor, David, Zach (11:08)**
  - a. *Leonard*: To frame the discussion and make general points – this is a complicated discussion. Those who have been here longest see the issues best as they watch everything evolve. The two things that have evolved are, there is a greater

emphasis on team racing, and that we have added championships, and we will continue to add others. One example is adding women's team racing which has become an important part. It's already problematic that Women's New England's was almost 2 weeks prior to the Coed New England's. If we add a Women's Team Race championship, putting that in a different place in the season, so early in the season, is just really unfair and silly. There are a lot of ways to look at these things, and nearly all the possible ways to improve involve us doing something that was likely blasphemous 5 years ago. Not making the change to a more fair situation for women's sailing is unthinkable. I'm not sure what my opinion is or what the solution is, but I'm committed to thinking about it with an open mind.

- b. *Thompson*: Zach nailed it on the head. The biggest thing is, regardless of what season, we need to make some compromises with the addition of Women's Team Racing. We need to look at the big overarching picture, and we have to make some hard decisions with out-of-the-box thinking. We should look at this as open as possible and think of other solutions too. We need to be proactive to be ready for ICSA. The biggest thing is to look at how either season looks. We run into the biggest challenges regarding championships, in terms of how it lengthens our season a lot. Decisions regarding a new qualification system will need to be talked about. Whether concurrent championships can happen, I don't know if it's the best thing, or maybe a hybrid option could be involved. We have to look at the whole picture.
- c. *Leonard*: I'd liked to make two more points. One, it's important to realize everything shown here does not show the minor regatta schedule that goes along with the regattas shown. If anything, the minor schedule will get bigger and be scaled dependent on the number of regattas teams want to go to. Second, we shouldn't talk a lot about putting team racing in the fall, because no one here really is considering that as an option.
  - i. *Bresnahan*: Echoing that last part of what Zach said. About 10 years ago Kenny and I worked on the minor level regattas to make sure every team had enough events. Every time we talk about championships, we lose half of New England. Team racing in the spring is better with more practice, but we can do so many things in NE because of our sites with our minor events. The Executive Committee won't let any teams sail less.
  - ii. *Legler*: Changes to add more Team racing and more women's racing, but shrinking of the season has exacerbated this problem. The recent shortening of the season to 18 weeks is making this a lot harder. I agree with what Zach said about the changes taking place.
- d. *Kalin*: At our school, in the last 5 years, our program has changed drastically. It used to be 4 boats on our Team Race team and it was exclusive and divisive. When the Team Race season was over it was almost a sigh of relief. But now that

women are into it, there's 16-18 boats that team race at practice. That's 400% growth with team race participation within our team, but without a lot of avenues for competition. It's bigger growth than you can see just by the number of regattas. The season is so short it's not commensurate with the passion our team has for it.

- e. *Anderson*: If we do this split season route, will there still be opportunities for fleet races in the spring even if we're focusing more on team racing? Some teams with smaller sizes don't have enough skippers to compete on the team racing level yet. We need to make this clear if we go down this route, with some teams nervous about this change.
  - i. *Assad*: It can be totally clear that a big part of the change is developing a league that is relevant and competitive for smaller teams, including a capstone event. Teams like that now aren't relevant in the current team racing league, but we are trying to make a full-Team Racing development path that's more robust with practical and achievable outcomes. We currently don't have that and it's not an achievable outcome for most teams to qualify for the Team Race national championship.
  - ii. *Martin*: There are no regattas removed from the current schedule. All minor C level events still exist as fleet races. Some of those higher-level spring fleet race regattas would become team race regattas. This would allow for a lot more opportunities for teams that want to get into lower-level team racing events while still supporting a robust fleet race schedule.
- f. *Leonard*: There is a fifth option for the schedule that's not included that's probably the default of what will happen if we can't compromise. If we do nothing, they will add three days of [Women's] Team Racing to the existing Nationals, so it would become a 14-day nationals. I don't think it's the absolute worst thing, but that's what would happen if we can't figure anything else out.
  - i. *Kalin*: There's not that many schools that that situation affects. I think it's ridiculous, but that's a tricky one.
- g. *Callahan (responding to Anderson)*: Smaller teams want this opportunity, but in the last 10 years, the scheduling committee and the draft have all allowed developing teams to get involved with team racing, but they haven't done that. I don't know why that's happened, but they haven't taken those opportunities. It's not because of a structural thing – there are spots available for them. As a result, my team has been able to get into three team races on a weekend when that was reserved for other teams.
  - i. *Leonard*: Maybe the answer to that is our team, your team, MIT, Brown, etc., is that we're hungry for those races, and those developing teams don't think it's the right fit for them. It's possible we need to segregate a bit, or maybe they don't want to do that.

- ii. *Pizzo (responding to Callahan)*: When I was the Scheduler, people had very lofty ambitions when they sign up in December, but reality comes when you actually have to send people to regattas in March and April. That's true for both team racing and fleet racing. They choose to sail less in the spring than in the fall, so there's this perception that there's not enough regattas for the demand, but there's still a team that may have a few different teams at an event. They're not being filled by the teams that are asking for more access in December. This makes it hard to create something in December that will work for people in March, April, and May.
- h. *Wilkinson*: I still hold that the Nationals block is a big problem and one that my team has felt for a long time. 11 days is ridiculous. The problem with the block is the length, not when it is. It's too many days, not when the days are. To address it through calendaring, doesn't address the real problem. To get a competitive national championship in women's and coed, we doubled the lengths. That was a mistake. We increased the size of the field for team racing by 25% to be more competitive and this makes us think we need a 3-day event. And now we're adding another event to an already too long block. The solution is to shorten the Nationals block that is too long. Another thing is hopefully the Nationals berth formula goes away, and it will change college sailing in NEISA for the better. I don't have the ability to see the potential of the changes, but with the reduction of pressure on single events, and the ability for teams to get to the championship through a body of work, that is going to change these pressures that are on teams through certain points throughout the year. We need to see that payout and fix the length of the block.
- i. *Valentino (In response to Callahan)*: I agree that a lot of the C level team races don't go fully filled. Splitting the season might help that, because fleet racing is used as a crutch, in that [teams] don't need to learn how to team race, but a split season may cause more buy in for them to learn.
- j. *Kalin*: Greg, you said while it's getting harder and harder, it's my understanding that the new qualification system, it will allow for 12-13 New England teams, compared to the 8-9 that qualify now.
  - i. *Wilkinson*: Looks like the new system will have a selection process that relies on a team's body of work throughout the entire season. Yes, we can presume a larger number of NEISA teams would qualify. 18 teams in New England that team race, those teams are just getting better and better and better. That's what I mean by getting harder.
    - 1. *Kalin*: Agreed, but I bring it up because currently Yale and BC are the only teams year in and year out suffering through that block. But in a couple of years, it could be 4-5 NEISA teams suffering through that issue.

- a. *Wilkinson*: It needs to be shortened. As soon as you break up the calendar, the split makes it complicated and the problem stays that the event is too long.
- k. *Kalin*: Justin brought up a 20-team idea that I want to socialize.
  - i. *Assad*: We need to recognize it's not just the Nationals block, but the Spring season that is a problem. March and April aren't good. We're looking at cramming 4 disciplines into around 6 good weekends of sailing in New England. 6 is a hopeful amount. We're kidding ourselves if we're saying this is good. People prioritize differently, and we've all set up ways to cope, but it's not a good situation. Secondly, we're going to a selection committee, and New England must realize, that for team race selection, we're not going to be getting selected on a body of work that's mostly done during a time when no one can practice consistently due to the weather. There are some things there we need to recognize. We can eliminate conference championships in April so we can maybe team race longer in April, but these are real problems that are easy to gloss over. If we're talking specifically about the Nationals block, there's a reasonable path to eliminate the Semis and get to potentially 8 days, if team racing is a 2-day event. I think it's realistic to get to 20 boat fleets for fleet racing. It's practical to get two fleets of 20 boats and have a 20 boat Nationals. We're looking at 14-15 at-large selection berths for that event. There's a little more bandwidth than an 18-team event with 12-13 at-large berths. To me it's about getting as many NEISA teams at that event as we can that deserve to be there. Fleet size can be looked at for fleet racing. Also, we probably don't need 18 races, we could shorten the length to 14 races for a regatta, or 15, but some lower number than 18. Team racing can be shorter too to help condense into 2-day events. These are the realities.
- l. *Charles*: Our time block is way too long, and that is the first thing that needs attacking immediately. We're asking too much of our student athletes, both at regular regattas and at championships. There's no way we need to be thinking in the old mindset that we need to rotate and get through everyone sailing in half the boats. There's nothing wrong with a 5-6 race championship. We need to impact students' lives a little less with our recreational activity.
- m. *Kalin*: Might reduce the number of NEISA berths to 5-6, but Jeff corrected me that it would be by qualification. What would be the realistic number of NEISA teams?
  - i. *Wilkinson*: Justin we ran a mock selection? Fleet race, 36 teams with 12-14 NEISA I'm guessing. Team race, 16 teams, with 6ish being NEISA.
    - 1. *Assad*: 36 teams for fleet racing coed, for women's we have 15. For coed, we'd get, for the 2018-19 season with 8 qualifiers, we'd

add 12 teams for semis. It's trickier to guess in the 18-20 team selection. Somewhere between 9-12 teams I'd guess.

ii. *Kalin*: I'd guess it's slightly more than half. I haven't looked at the results, but there's a bit of a competitive drop-off.

1. *Assad*: I think worst case is 5-6, best case is 8-9. This would go year to year based on how our New England teams sail. On the Team Race side, it's worth saying that for a lot of years, the MAISA teams 3 and 4, at least 4, have trouble making the top 8 at New England's. Those are spots that we're going to get back. 4-5 in a weaker year, maybe as many as 7 in an exceptional year for New England. I like the idea of getting rid of Semis because it shortens things up. But I know, and I'll use my team as an example. In 2017 we were better than Conn, but they beat us in the Semis. Same with Penn, we would've gotten in over them on paper, but they beat us in the Semis because it's a good thing for athletics.

iii. *Bresnahan*: When we did have a selection system in the past, there was a year we finished 5<sup>th</sup> in New England's, and we were skipped by the selection to get to the person below us. When we can sail in and give everyone the opportunity, I think that's better. I don't think the 20-team thing will give us 12 teams. We got rid of the two-semis in different places because there are different teams that come to Nationals to buy the t-shirt. That's one of the reasons why we added Semis. You can still do Semis with some at-large bids, some sail in bids. The 20-team thing scares me because New England is going to be the first ones to be cut short, and I think we'll leave more teams at home.

1. *Assad*: It's just an option. At least in the 36 team pictures with a selection committee, with 24-26 teams, I feel pretty confident that we'd all agree that the old at-large system was not a fair system. It's my hope that with 24-26 teams, and a committee, making the decision with a distinct set of guidelines, it will be right. There will always be teams that feel that they belong in and teams that shouldn't be there, but I hope it will be better.

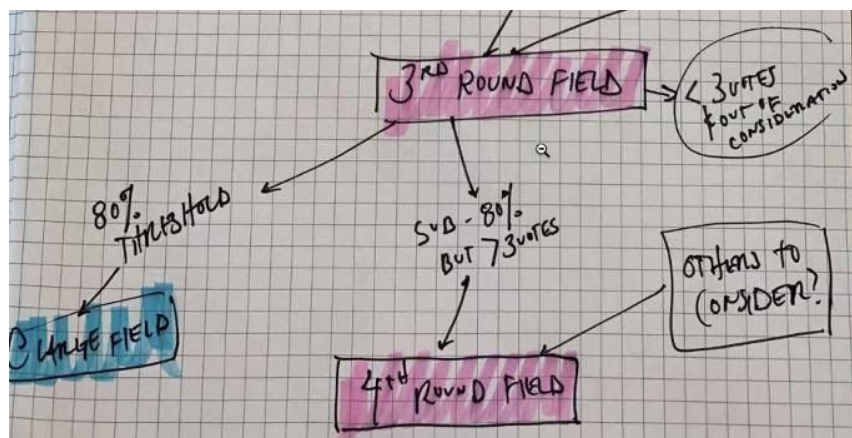
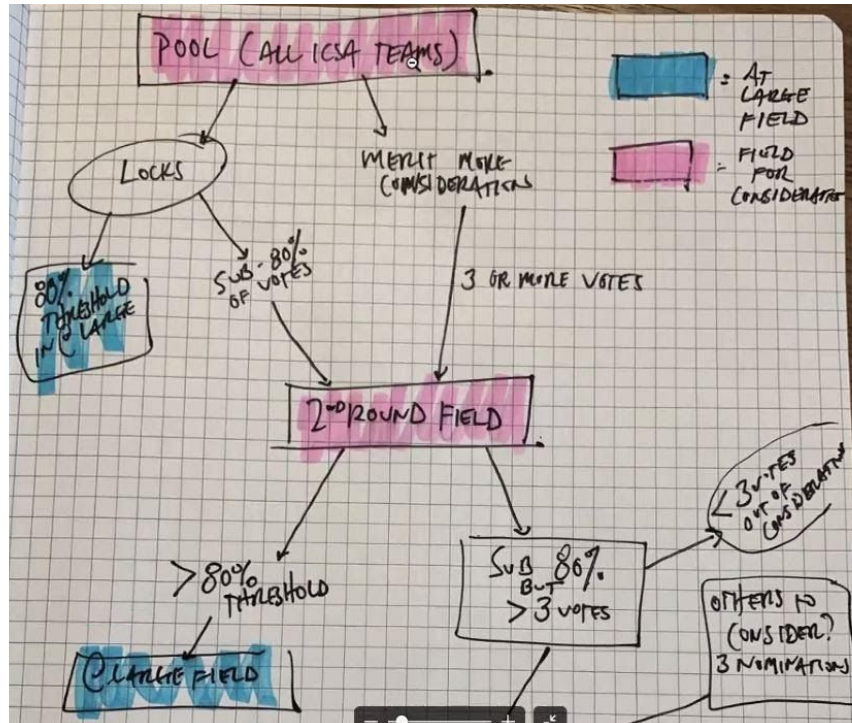
## **VI. Nationals conference qualifying procedure in 2022 – Update from Greg Wilkinson**

a. *Wilkinson*: Qualifying for Nationals, for Fall 2021 and beyond. There are basically only two options left for how we will be qualifying for Nationals. Both options have a lot in common. Here's what they have in common: conference champions from 5 conferences will qualify for Nationals, including Pacific Coast, New England, Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic. They also have in common a selection committee in both proposals to choose the remaining berths. Going discipline by discipline, Singlehandeds, we only have one option on the table

we're going to bring to the winter meeting, which is conference champions plus the rest of the pool are determined by selection committee. Match racing is conference champions plus the rest of the pool determined by selection committee. Team racing, I believe the system is conference champions plus selection committee, I believe this is the one option.

i. *Assad*: Yes, I believe that is accurate.

- b. *Wilkinson*: For Women's and Coed fleet racing, there are two options that remain on the table. The first option is conference champions plus selection committee, the second option is conference champions plus qualifiers from 5 regattas from around the country, plus selection committee. A variant of that proposal which is conference champions plus selection committee, but a selection committee directed to prioritize 5 events from around the country, one in each conference that teams that want to be considered will need to sail. I believe the proper way to go is conference champion plus selection committee. The 5-event around the country thing is riddled with problems. It creates another layer of qualifying for Nationals with a quarter-final for qualifying. There is no way in having these events be equal in terms of strength. This would identify teams to go to Nationals through events that don't look like championship levels. Jeff hit on when College Sailing used to have selection. Years ago, College Sailing had 2 at large berths available at fleet racing Nationals. The President of college sailing alone selected these at-large teams. The President could have chosen the at large berths for any reason at all, there was no criteria given for selection. There was nothing telling the President of College Sailing that the teams had to be chosen based on competitive strength. College sailing has a dislike of their past experience, but I can guarantee any future experience will at the very least be very different than past experience. Starting with, like you see in other sports that do it this way, the first problem was most teams qualified in, but very few teams were selected. When that gets flipped around, it gets easier to tolerate. It's a very structured process.
- c. *Wilkinson*: \*\*Shares screen of rough selection process\*\*



- d. *Wilkinson (continued)*: We start with a pool of all the ICSA teams. The selection committee chooses teams they believe to be locks on going to the National Championship, and they are structured on how a team becomes a lock. A team needs to get basically 80% of votes in the first round, and that allows them to become locks. If they get less than 80% of the votes, they can't get locked, and they get put in the second round of teams to be reviewed, provided that they got 3 or more votes. At this point, we now call teams "under consideration". Initially everyone is "under consideration". They become members of the at-large field, which means they have berths to the National Championship. After the first round, we vote again, and 80% of votes become part of the at-large field. Overall, 80% of the teams become part of the at-large field and get berths to the National Championship. At this point, teams with less than 3 votes leave



the “under consideration” field. It is possible for teams to be nominated back in, but they must receive a minimum of three nominations to be put back in. Repeat the process to reach the field size. All voting is based on competitive strength. We’re currently working on which regattas the committee is to consider. I believe it will be all regattas. There will be some direction given to the committee on how to address head-to-head comparisons on teams that do not meet. You have to be able to measure teams against one another without direct comparison. There will be some direction on how to do that. I hope people will see with this process, especially compared to a single person with no criteria, this is an actual selection process plagiarized from a variety of NCAA selection committee processes. We’re working now on the actual makeup of the selection committees. We landed on two selection committees, one for Women’s competition and one for Coed competition. Women’s singlehanded would have 5 voting members, at least three being females, and one non-voting parliamentarian/discipline expert to ensure the process is followed. Women’s Team Racing would have 5 voting with at least 3 females, with one non-voting parliamentarian. On coed, at least 2 females. There’s always going to be somebody in charge of overseeing the actual process that I just walked through. I’m hoping we don’t do the 5-regatta circus.

- i. *O’Connor*: Who can nominate someone to go back under consideration?
  1. *Wilkinson*: It’s all within the committee process. It’s a high bar to be thrown back in. It’s meant to be within “X” days of the conference championship. It’s a one or two meeting process, and meant to go kind of quickly.
- ii. *Martin*: What is generally the makeup for the committee?
  1. *Assad*: We’re still working on that. One thing that wasn’t clear, is that the committee on the women’s side would just be the same people. The same 3 women would make up the same committee.
  2. *Wilkinson*: It’s one women’s committee and one coed committee. We don’t have makeup nailed down.
  3. *Assad*: Some NCAA committees have coaches on them, some don’t. We envision having alumni and possibly former coaches of the sport that understand how the schedule plays out over the 9-month competition season.
- iii. *O’Connor*: I feel like there’s a lot of people that will want to be involved. Will there be term limits? Will it be the same 5 people?
  1. *Wilkinson*: Term limited initially but it would stagger out.
  2. *Assad*: The hope is for consistency over time.
- iv. *Callahan*: Something for consideration, in the past it’s like one person is making all the decisions with a mistrust of the decision makers. Maybe the first round is based on data rather than decisions? Automatically

qualify some teams with threshold – i.e., if you’ve finished in the top 20% of major fleet races. Take some things out of the hands of the committee to ensure trust.

1. *Assad*: Amanda, regarding that, we are working on what looks like a national performance rank system. This may be helpful for the committee to utilize to make decisions on this to make things fair. We’re advocating on what is fairest for everyone, and in particular NEISA.
- v. *Kalin*: When will this be finalized?
  1. *Wilkinson*: This will be finalized in the Spring. But hopefully between the Winter meeting and the Spring is just tweaks and polishing. Hopefully it will be approved in concept at the Winter meeting. It’s not clear to me if one or two systems will come to the Winter meeting. I hope two don’t come but they might.
- vi. *Martin*: Selection committee’s assumptions are based on current Nationals systems with 36 teams?
  1. *Assad*: Yes
- e. *Kalin*: Thank you Greg and Justin. Hopefully there are no surprises.
- f. *Assad*: Regarding the flying around the country system, this really is just best for the teams with the most resources that can go to the most events. I don’t see how NEISA benefits from this system.

## **VII. Old Business**

### **a. 2020 Singlehanded National Championship – Update from Moose McClintock**

- i. *McClintock*: I’ve been in touch with Sail Newport, and everything’s puttering along. A little bit is still contingent on state health. We’re assuming Rhode Island will be fine. We’re doing Sail Newport because they’ve been running regattas all summer and have all COVID procedures in place. I’m trying to get info from ICSA on how many support boats they want. We should have enough boats to be able to run it no problem. Basically, it’s been me and one other girl running 45 boat races on Sundays, I just need to do some organizational stuff with Sail Newport. We just need to wait on what the state will come up with in the near future regarding protocols. For right now, everything is on target and we should be good to go.
- ii. *Kalin*: Still May 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>?
  1. *McClintock*: Yes, because Sail Newport has other regattas they need to prep for on other weekends.
- iii. *Wilkinson*: Does RI current travel restrictions allow people to test out of quarantine?
  1. *McClintock*: We can go to Massachusetts or Connecticut without testing out, but it’s written that if you’re going to an institution of

higher learning, you need to quarantine for 14 days. But no one's going to an actual institution, so I don't think that's an issue. That's a question I have with our health services and should have an answer with that.

- iv. *Wilkinson*: Beyond university stuff, in Massachusetts you just need to quarantine or test so you can test out of quarantine. As long as RI does that, then ICSEA requirements will allow people to test out.

- 1. *McClintock*: I haven't been able to check that, but I think that if people come from out of state and follow testing protocol, then they're good with the state mandates. But that could change right after inauguration if the incoming governor changes the health protocols.

#### **VIII. Conduct Online Survey regarding Overlapping Championships**

- a. *Kalin*: Taylor and David made a survey for everyone for championships and splitting seasons. I'm going to hold off on that.

#### **IX. Additional Split Seasons Discussion**

- a. *Bresnahan*: Moose, just a question, you've been proactive about sending emails. Now that you're live, can we discuss what you're sending out?

- i. *McClintock*: People have been responding, and I listen to a lot of the arguments regarding split seasons. I agree that team racing and fleet racing championships shouldn't be held in the same block because it's too much time. People argue that sailing is terrible in the spring too, but that they need more time to prep. It makes way more sense to do it in the Fall. We need to train our people how to sail the boats. Well, not many freshmen sail on their starting teams anyways. If you sail for a couple of weeks before team race events in the fall, then you have more time. It makes sense to me to do team racing in the fall because the people that are team racing should already have that experience. If you have freshmen good enough to come in and sail, they're probably good enough to figure out how to sail the boats. With the current Nationals setup with 32 teams, we can figure out a 6- or 8-day block to have Women's or Coed together. Everyone wanting to team race in the spring makes less sense to me. I'd rather see the spring kept open. You have good days and bad days no matter the season. Mike added that California schools start classes at different times, so they probably have a head start on us, so I don't take that as a reasoning either.

- 1. *Leonard*: Factually, we've used the freshmen at the Team Race Nationals pretty much every year I've been here. That wouldn't have been possible if team racing was in the fall because we wouldn't have enough time to coach them. Team racing takes more time and skill, and more time to get competence, and I want

that time because that's what my sailors want to do. Most of my sailors have done a lot of fleet racing, but not as much team racing experience.

- ii. *McClintock*: That may be true for your team, but I polled my team, and most said they like to sail team racing. People with experience in team racing like the discipline, but I'm saying the reasoning to do it in the fall, if you have freshmen that are capable to do it in the spring, then they are likely capable to do it in the fall as well. I understand that it's a more complex thing to do, but you basically start doing it once you get in the boats, then that's almost the same timeframe as in the spring.
- b. *Kalin*: You bring up some good points, maybe Taylor and David can add that to their polling. It would be interesting to hear everyone's poll on team racing in the fall or spring.
  - i. *Assad*: I've been trying to reconsider the fall team racing a bit more, and it could probably work. But what it comes down to is this philosophical division in terms of what people's teams want to prioritize. We're in a funny spot right now, where we have 15 cross-regional teams in the conference, 11 or 12 where the students on the teams care most about team racing in the spring. They are most passionate about team racing and eager about the team racing championship. We're at a philosophical breaking point in terms of what people want to focus on when and what compromises we're making. I'm not saying anyone's wrong or right. I think a lot of the arguments presented over email are red herring arguments, and we can get around a lot of them with creative thinking. I'm open to anything. I'm just trying to consider every solution. I really think we get in a really tough spot. We're trying to balance everyone's needs and that just may not be possible. Maybe we need to try to do that more? I don't know. I just don't know exactly the answer, but the reality is widespread diversity in the conference and diversity of interest that leads us down hard avenues.
    - 1. *Martin*: I think we can come up with a schedule for team racing in the fall.
- c. *Clark*: Lots of really good points and arguments. Many of the emails back and forth about treating women's equally, or team racing being too cold or too short. When you take the disciplines, doublehanded, women's, team, and fleet, etc., they should all be equally important and equally prominent. I struggle with moving the fleet racing to the fall, because spring championships are the penultimate goal that are the culmination of a whole year. By moving it to the fall, you take the luster out of it. I'd like to see all championships equally prominent, and not to take away from the fleet race championship.

- i. *Anderson*: Thinking about team racing in the fall, I think that overlooks the whole team culture aspect as well. I think you'd have more inexperienced sailors feeling intimidated. Fleet racing in the fall gives more opportunity for lesser experienced sailors to get more comfortable which helps retention of sailors as well.
- d. *Kalin*: There's a lot of stuff we should cover with more discussion, I'm going to table this discussion for February 4<sup>th</sup>.

**X. Time of Next Meeting**

- a. February 4<sup>th</sup> at 11am