

Hard A Lee

*An occasional newsletter of
The Wichita Falls Sailing Club*

June 25, 2026

Commodore's Corner

Ahoy fellow sailors!

250 years! The United States has been around for a while, but it's young compared to other countries. Nevertheless we have a legitimate cause to celebrate. It's a good day for Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Cold Beer, or Sodas, and family fun. Fireworks are fun to watch from our boats and presents a perfect opportunity to get out and go sailing! We are a sailing club eh? Happy Birthday America, you're looking good!

Your Commodore
Rip



Early Season Update: Sails Up, Scores Down, and the Fleet's Already Making Waves

Ahoy, WFSC sailors!

The **2026 early season** is officially in the books, and what a splash it made! We wrapped up the Big Boat and Flying Scot series races through June, and the leaderboards are already hotter than a Texas parking lot in July.



Big Boat Fleet (Portsmouth handicap): Brandon Ohman and Matt Baker in their Catalina 22 are sailing like the wind owe 'em money — clean, consistent finishes have the sleek '22 sitting pretty much at the top. John Kidwell's chasing hard in second, while your secretary (Eclipse 6.7) is comfortably mid-fleet, claiming RC duty was a “brilliant tactical call on the floater race.” The rest of the fleet is generously padding the DNF/DNS column with “life happened” excuses.

Flying Scot Fleet (one design): Dave Brunner's leading with sharp, tactical sailing with Matt Chapman at the sheets and the Spadin father-daughter duo (and a few others) are keeping it spicy. Family rivalry is thriving — nothing says “quality bonding” like trying to bury each other at the starting line!



From “Ice Breaker” chills to June heat, the early season delivered everything we love about club racing: great competition, a few spectacular “learning opportunities,” and plenty of post-race storytelling at the pavilion.

What's Next on the Horizon

Don't forget the upcoming **4th of July Gathering** at the club. There was a glorious rumor by our Rear Commodore of fireworks, a full orchestra, Blue Bell ice cream truck runs, and free parasailing... until Treasurer Matt Baker stepped in with the cold, hard numbers. Turns out that dream would have sunk the club's reserves faster than a heavy gust on a broach.

So for the 4th, we're keeping it simple and seaworthy: plenty of club provided brats and burgers on our grill and plenty of seating on the deck. Honestly? With all the boats we have at the club, the best celebration might just be launching and letting the wind do the rest. The lake has the best fireworks display in the county! The grill is hot and open so if you're hankering to bring a porterhouse or even a lamb chop – bring it on!

The early racing season has been a blast — now let's keep the momentum rolling.



Ohman Family on a Father's Day Sail-abration

Then we shift gears into the **Hot Stuff Regatta on July 11** — all boats welcome, handicap scoring, and a Poker Run is in the works. Come ready to turn up the heat (and maybe bring extra water and shade).

After that we dive into the **late season racing** with fresh weather patterns: think August heat and lulls that'll test your hydration game, September breezes that might actually cooperate, and the possibility of those glorious October sailing days when the lake is high and the air feels just right. Different season, different challenges — but the same great fleet fun.

Early Season Racing Details: Leaders Emerge, Others Emerge... Wet

Spring has gone, the lake is up, and our 2026 racing season is already delivering more drama than a Sunday afternoon soap opera—except our version comes with spinnakers, occasional rubbing, and the usual banter at the pavilion. As your faithful secretary (and occasional Eclipse 6.7 driver), I've tallied the early season results so you don't have to squint at the clubhouse wall. Grab a cold one friends—here's how the fleets are shaping up.



Ice Breaker Regatta: In a masterclass of perseverance (or possibly just refusing to admit defeat), Dave Brunner was the only skipper to finish. Six boats started in what could generously be called “light air.” Five skippers made an attempt, some on their third beer by the first mark. Called it – motored back to the pavilion, and started stories early. Dave, however, chose “directed floating” and stubbornly drifted his way across the finish line alone — proving that sometimes the real victory is simply outlasting everyone else's common sense. 3 miles at 1kt hull speed can make you a winner!

Big Boat Fleet (Portsmouth Handicap) – “The Anything-Goes Armada”

Five races on the books and **Brandon Ohman** with the steady hand of **Matt Baker** in the Catalina 22 are sailing like they’ve got a direct line to Aeolus himself. Consistent low scores have ‘em perched comfortably at the top with a tidy **5 points**.

John Kidwell and **Rip Medlinger** are right on Brandon’s stern with **8 points**—even with a Hairy Bottom, the S2 is a threat. Rip is waiting on his new custom racing sails to come in, when they do - Watch Out! Your humble secretary (Eclipse 6.7) sits in third at **12 points**, proving that Race Committee duty doesn’t pay in points –yet, but *does* earn you goodwill at the end (and probably extra chili next cookoff).

Down the leaderboard we find the usual suspects: strong starts followed by “life happened” entries. Dave Brunner’s Venture 22 had a nice opening but discovered the joy of DNC/DNS. **Larry Ahlhorn** and **John Cook** are battling the “better luck next time” blues, while **Derrick Christoff** is lavishly donating to the “Racers+1” row.

Current Big Boat Standings:

- **Ohman** – 5 pts → *Current King of the Lake*
- **Kidwell** – 8 pts
- **G. Spadin** – 12 pts
- Brunner – 17
- Ahlhorn – 19
- Cook & Christoff – 20 (tie goes to the one who brought the most beer)

Flying Scot Fleet (One Design) – “The Speed Demons”

The Scots are living up to their reputation for tight, tactical racing. **Dave Brunner** (FS 3041) leads with **11 points** after some very consistent sailing.

I’m nipping at his transom in second with **13 points** (thanks to a couple of solid efforts), while **Brandon Ohman** (FS 5072) sits at **14**—clearly trying to pull off the double-fleet championship. **Matt Baker** jumped ship and roared back like a bullet on his (FS4813) in June, and the rest of the fleet is keeping things interesting.

Current FS Standings:

- **Brunner** – 11 pts → *Flight Lead*
- **G. Spadin** – 13 pts
- **Ohman** – 14 pts
- Baker – 20 → Can he make it to the Top?
- Christoff – 21
- Hyde – 22
- R. Spadin – 23
- Watkins – 25 (plenty of room to move up, J!)

The Takeaway (With a Straight Face... Sort Of)

If you’re sitting at the top, congratulations—you’re officially faster than most of us on a good day. If you’re further down, welcome to the club; the view from the middle of the fleet is great, the company is better, and there’s always next race (or a generous throwout). Fair winds, low points, and may your last three race days be victorious.



Early Season Racing Stats

Big Boat Racing						
Skipper	Boat	Apr 11	May 2	Jun 6	Approx. Points	Notes
Ohman	Catalina 22	1	1	1/2	5	Leading the fleet-Top Crew!
Kidwell	S2 – 7.3	2	2	3/1	8	Fleet Captain –Dang good!
G. Spadin	Eclipse 6.7	4	*RC	2/3	12	Your secretary's in the mix
Brunner	Venture 22	3	DNS	DNS	17	Strong start
Ahlhorn	Balboa 26	DNS	DNS	4/DNS	19	Heavy Iron - Lets Go!
Cook	McGregor 22	DNF	DNS	DNS	20	Better luck late season
Christoff	McGregor 26	DNS	DNF	DNS	20	Get in there!
	Racers+1	6	5	5/4		
FS Racing						
Skipper	Boat #	Apr 25	May 30	Jun 20	Approx. Points	Notes
Brunner	FS 3041	1/1	3/3	3	11	Race Chairman - Solid performer
Spadin, G.	4800	DNS	1/1	2	13	Gaining ground
Ohman	FS 5072	3/3	2/2	4	14	Fleet Captain – Competitive!
Baker	4813	DNS/DNS	DNS/DNS	1	20	Strong Late Start
Christoff	FS 1274	4/2	DNS	DNS	21	Strong Early Start
Hyde	FS 1273	2/DNS	DNS	DNS	22	Get Back in there!
Spadin, R.	2506	DNS	4/4	DNF	23	Family rivalry alive
Watkins, J.	474	DNS	DNS/DNS	DNS	25	Join the Fun!
	Racers+1	5/4	5/5	6		

Penalties

DNS — Did Not Start: Number of series races + 1 boats at starting line.

DSQ —Disqualified, Number of boats at starting line + 1.

DNF — Did Not Finish: Number of boats starting + 1 (or more on race days with ½ or more of the fleet).

Requirements and Adjustments

Series Racer — A boat must start in ½ or more of the races in the series to be considered a Series Racer.

Throwouts — To be determined at series end by number of races in series: 1 if 7 or more, 2 if 12 or more.

El Niño Crashes the Party & Our Summer Wind Siesta Routine

If you've been wondering why the lake sometimes feels like it's napping after lunch and then wakes up full of energy around 3 p.m. while we are landing - you're not imagining it — and this summer's developing **El Niño** is throwing its own twist into the mix for our late-season racing.

First, the Big Picture: El Niño 2026

NOAA officially declared El Niño underway in mid-June. The Pacific is running warmer than normal, and forecasts say it'll likely strengthen into a solid (maybe even “very strong”) event through fall and into winter. For North Texas, this usually means **cooler and wetter conditions** as we head toward the end of late season — great news for Lake Arrowhead levels after the usual summer thirst. Fewer Atlantic hurricanes is a bonus too.



Late-season racing outlook (Aug–Nov):

- **August – into September:** Hot, classic Texas scorchers with scattered storms. Ye olde early afternoon mega lull.
- **September–October:** Warmer early, then cooling later with better rain chances and variable winds — perfect for sporty Harvest Winds and series finales.
- **November:** Chilly fronts possible, more active weather. Rig for everything and pack the thermos.

El Niño's basically that uninvited guest who shows up with extra rain for the punchbowl. The lake will thank him.

Fashionably Late Breeze— as always

The Lake Breeze Special: Land heats up like a frying pan while the water stays cooler. Hot air rises along the shore, cooler air from over the lake rushes in to fill the gap — our very own afternoon lake breeze. It organizes after lunch and hits full stride mid-to-late afternoon. Classic timing for Arrowhead's size.

The Daily Mixing Show: Morning stability keeps things light. Afternoon heating stirs the boundary layer like a good spoon in the chili pot, mixing stronger winds down from aloft and adding convective punch (hello, pop-up gusts). Then late afternoon we have the cool lake air flowing back to land to fill the gap.

Result? Light-air patience right after the skippers meeting, then the real breeze shows up fashionably late — Mother Nature's way of keeping us humble and testing our light-air tactics.

On the International Front: Kieler Woche going on this week -Standout US Performances

- **49er (Men's Skiff): Andrew Mollerus & Trevor Bornarth** (US Sailing Team) — **9th overall**. They qualified for the medal race and finished 8th in it. Strong showing in a very competitive fleet.

Other US 49er teams (mostly ODP/development) are further back:

- Jordan & Grant Janov — 31st
- Nicolas Muller & Duncan Williford — 41st
- Logan Mraz & Steven Hardee — ~55th range
- Liam Walz & Abie Griggs — lower in the fleet
- **49erFX (Women's Skiff): Maddie Hawkins & Lilly Myers** and **Paris Henken & Helena Scutt** are in the fleet (entries noted), but specific mid-regatta standings are not as prominently highlighted in early reports. The women's skiff has been competitive, with strong European teams leading.
- **ILCA 7 (Men's Singlehanded): Leo Boucher** (ODP) — 19th
Robby Meek (ODP) — 30th

Kiel Week is a massive event with thousands of sailors across many classes. The US contingent is focused on Olympic development (USST and ODP athletes), using it as key preparation toward future international goals. The 49er class has been one of the brighter spots for Americans so far.

Medal races for several Olympic classes are happening toward the end of the week (around June 24–26), so more final results will roll in soon.

July 2026

Early Cowes Week (Isle of Wight, UK – early August overlap, but peak racing often starts late July) The historic highlight of the British summer calendar. Massive fleets, celebrity sailors, and huge shoreside spectacle. It's the one everyone follows.

August 2026

Cowes Week (main week ~August 1–7/9) Still the standout — often considered the world's most famous regatta week. High-visibility racing across many classes with massive public and media interest.

September 2026

Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup (Porto Cervo, Sardinia – early September) The premier superyacht regatta of the year. Stunning visuals, elite big-boat racing, and Rolex-level production make it the most watched high-end event in the fall.



2026 WFSC Board of Directors

Commodore: Rip Medlinger – 940/867-2550

Vice Commodore: Sandy Shawver – 940/704-3704

Rear Commodore: Derrick Christoff – 940/781-5856

Club Treasurer: Matt Baker – 940/923-7387

Club Secretary: Maja and Glen Spadin – 940/500-0478

Harbor Master: Bink Davidson - 940/782-6147

House Chair: ***Need a Volunteer - This could be you!***

Grounds: Steve Priester 781-7106 & Mike Gillis 867-3753

Racing Chair: Dave Brunner – 940/237-3334

Past Commodore: John Kidwell – 940/781-1310