

Frequently Asked Questions About the Cayuga Lake Cruising Fleet

What is the CLCF?

The Cayuga Lake Cruising Fleet is a group of sailors who have banded together for the purpose of promoting the enjoyment of sailing.

What kinds of activities does the CLCF promote?

The CLCF organizes cruising and social events as well as races for both keelboats and smaller centerboard boats (dinghies).

Can I sail with the Cruising Fleet even though I don't own a boat?

Certainly! Our skippers are always looking for crew.

What are the cruising and social events like?

The premier cruising and social event is a 20-mile cruise to a dinner that the Red Jacket Yacht Club hosts each year in honor of the Cayuga Lake Cruising Fleet. That cruise is always combined with the "Red Jacket Race" whose winner gets to embroider the name of his or her boat on a red jacket (vest) that holds the names of all the previous winners.

Four other cruises scheduled this year are combined with Johnson Cup Mid-Distance races. The destinations are raft-up parties at Taughannock and Milliken and dinner parties at Kidder's Landing and the Sheldrake winery.

There will also be raft-up parties at Taughannock Park on Saturday evenings to coincide with the concert series there (July 8 thru August 19).

Additional social events are "Keg & Barbie" parties (barbecues with free food and drink) on the last days of the spring, summer, and fall series of keelboat races.

What kinds of races does the CLCF organize?

Skippers and crews of centerboard boats can race on Thursday evenings from June 1 to September 7, plus on Sunday mornings from June 11 to August 13. For skippers and crews of keelboats, the CLCF has scheduled three racing series: The Spring Series, the Summer Mid Distance Series, and the Fall Series (First race Apr. 30; last race Oct.15).

Dinghy races tend to be relatively short (usually well under an hour). Keelboat races in the spring and fall usually run just over an hour (two per Sunday). Keelboat mid-distance races in the summer can take up several hours (only one per Sunday).

To equalize the chances of boats of different sizes and designs, two types of handicap systems are used, the Portsmouth system for dinghies and the PHRF (Performance Handicap Racing Formula) for keelboats. Learn more about those two handicap systems on our website (www.cruisingfleet.org).

Do I need an experienced crew to race?

Not at all. As of this year, the CLCF gives a substantial short-handed bonus to skippers who sail solo or with just one crew member and who do not use a spinnaker. This Short-Handed Rule is explained in detail in the fleet's Sailing Instructions. The Sailing Instructions contain the rules by which the CLCF conducts its races. They have been sent out to everyone on the fleet's mailing list and can be requested from the fleet's secretary (Contact info below).

Why race?

First and foremost because it's fun! Moreover, by matching your skills in sail trim and helm balance against the skills of other sailors, you will improve your seamanship and become a better sailor.

Where do the races take place?

All races begin at the Ithaca Yacht Club, on the west shore of Cayuga Lake. Most races also end there after the boats round one or more buoys, with the course to be announced before each race at the skippers' meeting (at the South Pavilion of the Yacht Club). Mid-distance races end at a finish line away from the Yacht Club, with the location also to be announced at the skippers' meeting.

What is the relationship of the CLCF and the Ithaca Yacht Club?

The Cruising Fleet is an independent organization. Because many of its members are also members of the Ithaca Yacht Club, the CLCF is allowed to start and end its races at the Yacht Club and to use the Yacht Club's racing buoys (for an annual fee). Also, end-of-the-series "Keg & Barbie" parties are held at the Yacht Club and so is the annual Spring Banquet/Fetch and the Awards Dinner in the Fall. More information about the Ithaca Yacht Club is available at www.ithacayc.org

What does it cost to join the Cruising Fleet?

Between \$ 10.00 and \$ 75.00 per year, depending on how involved you want to get.

If you don't own a boat, you can join as a crew member for \$ 10.00 per year.

If you own a boat and want to participate in the social events but not the races, you pay only the base membership fee of \$ 25.00. This allows you to attend the spring and fall banquets, the raft-up parties, the Red Jacket Cruise, and the three "Keg & Barbie" parties with free food and drink.

If you would like to race, a full first-year membership of \$75.00 entitles you to participate in the spring, summer, and fall series (plus all the above social events). If you would like to find out what it is like to race with the Cruising Fleet, you may sail two races for free.

Returning skippers pay the base membership fee of \$ 25.00 plus \$ 50.00 for each of the three series they want to race in.

(The membership dues go to pay the Yacht Club for the use of its facilities, to pay the starters & time-keepers (Race Committee), to pay for the CLCF's membership in US SAILING and PHRF, and to pay for food and drink at the "Keg & Barbie" parties.)

Do you have additional questions?

If so, please contact the CLCF Fleet Captain or the Fleet Secretary:

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