

Fleet 34's 2025 racing season got off to a great start in Niantic Bay with a strong wind out of the north.



After a great 2024 sailing season, the Niantic Bay Yacht Club youth boat couldn't wait to head out on the racecourse.

With six competitors on the line, the Niantic Bay Yacht Club Race Committee set a windward, leeward, finish racecourse.



All six boats crowded the starting line for the first race, with the Youth Team rolling out their genoa with less than 30 seconds before the start of the race. They timed the line perfectly; but soon had a good laugh as they realized their genoa sheets were inboard of their shrouds. The crew quickly reran the sheets and continued with the race.

As it was the first day of racing, there were a few other boats, including team Firebird, that had some twisted and tangled lines. Oh, the joy of shaking off the winter cobwebs.





On the downwind leg of race one, Firebird was trailing Tailgunner skippered by Mike Murin, Smoke skippered by Ward Woodruff, and Summer Breeze skippered by Ken Shluger.

After rounding the leeward mark, Firebird held onto the port tack just a little longer than Smoke and Summer Breeze and benefited from a slight wind shift to overtake both boats and finish in second place.



Tailgunner easily took the first race of the two-day series as Smoke and then Summer Breeze followed Firebird across the finish line.

The race committee quickly restarted the fleet for race two. Again, all the boats had good starts, but it wasn't long before the entire fleet was once again trying to chase down Team Tailgunner.

At the windward mark, Tailgunner was first around followed by Smoke, Firebird, Summer Breeze, Brimdyr skippered by Mike Moulthrop, and Sea Note.





After rounding the windward mark, team Firebird takes a team picture before focusing on chasing down the two boats ahead of them. Tailgunner easily rounded the leeward mark in first place and the rest of the fleet implemented their last-ditch efforts to pick up a boat before the finish. Smoke and Firebird tacked near each other, and to their surprise, both ended up having tangled genoa sheets. They struggled for a little, but after the recovery, Firebird was now slightly ahead of Smoke and proceeded to the finish line.

After day one, Tailgunner is clearly in the lead with two first place finishes and in a great position to defend their possession of the Memorial Day Bob Jones Trophy.