Welcome to US Sailing’s 2018-2022 Strategic Plan -

Sailing is at an interesting turning point – we have a successful and storied past, but a somewhat unclear future. We can see areas of innovation and success, which many of you who are reading this document are leading. However, I believe we can agree that the sport overall has been sliding sideways for some time. Generational changes, socio-economic shifts, changes in family structure, youth sports specialization, time starvation, and the battle for attention in a digital world are having a disruptive impact on participation. These challenges, however, present opportunities, and at US Sailing we believe strongly that sailing can have a spectacular next chapter.

In 2017 US Sailing began a significant shift in our organization. We restructured our operations to create a customer-facing organization committed to delivering first-class solutions and service to local sailing organizations and sailors. We also undertook the development of a roadmap for US Sailing to address the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. We involved a broad array of stakeholders from across the sport – in all, hundreds of sailors, organizational and industry leaders, staff, volunteers and other thought leaders from across the sailing community participated. We would like to thank everyone involved for their time and valuable input.

The following pages present our strategy, the roadmap for building a strong future for sailing. The plan respects the past but focuses on the future. Our approach is to be bold and embrace change and the disruption that is the norm today as we work with the sailing community to pass on the sailing DNA we all have in our blood to the next generation. Our challenge is to create a future that is diverse, inclusive and accessible. We must make it easy for new sailors – regardless of age – to get involved and at the same time keep the passion of current sailors alive. We need to cultivate and celebrate success and excellence while not forgetting about having fun.

As with any strategic plan, this one will evolve and be refined. A bright future for sailing requires all of us working together, aligning our efforts, sharing our successes and learning from our stumbles. We look forward to input from the sailing community as we implement this plan and we encourage your involvement.

Let’s trim for speed!

Jack Gierhart
CEO, US Sailing
Serving the sport of sailing since 1897

Originally organized in 1897 as the North American Yacht Racing Union to encourage and promote yacht racing and to unify the racing and rating rules, US Sailing today supports a broad spectrum of sailing activities, ranging from casual recreation to high-level international competition. We could not achieve our goals without the faithful support of our members and volunteers, who share a deeply-held passion for our lifelong sport.

“Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.”
– Kenneth Grahame, The Wind in the Willows

Our Mission:
Increase sailing participation and excellence through education, competition and equal opportunity, while upholding the principles of fair play, sportsmanship and safety.

Our Vision for the Future of Sailing:
Sailing has become a rapidly growing sport in the US, driven by innovations in access and education, and inspired by American success in international competition. The diverse sailing community is aligned around common goals for the sport. Sailing has been embraced by the public as being inspiring, inclusive and accessible.

Our Values:
Respect
Integrity
Excellence
Collective Success
Clarity and Transparency
Sustainability
Create opportunities for life-long participation in sailing

We will develop a rich knowledge base about sailors and their interests to understand what they want and need in all stages of their journey. We will listen to sailors and work together to create programs and communications that meet those needs, engaging and re-engaging them through a lifetime of sailing experiences.

We support youth and adults as they develop their skills in safe environments and pursue their diverse sailing interests. We support coaches and officials who provide critical infrastructure for competitive sailing, as well as top-flight athletes who compete internationally.

I. How we will do it:

• Engage sailors through their lifetimes by offering a variety of sailing activities and roles
• Understand sailors’ needs through technology and data analysis, focused communication and customer service
• Develop targeted communication channels and content that reflect sailors’ interests and lives
• Make it easy for sailors to rejoin sailing in a variety of roles at any time in their life

II. How we will measure progress:

• Sailing participation trends
• Health of local sailing organizations
• Event and training participation
• Career progression of competitive athletes; athletes entering the training pipeline
• US Sailing membership
II. Provide sailors with a broad spectrum of activities, ranging from casual recreational sailing to high-performance competition

Sailors want opportunities to sail that reflect their interests and aspirations and fit their lives. We will broaden the concept of sailing beyond traditional racing and offer opportunities to experiment with many types of sailing. We support grassroots engagement with the sport and a commitment to sustainable environmental practices.

We train instructors and coaches, produce curricula and promote best practices for teaching sailing and offer learn-to-sail, cruising, racing, adaptive and powerboat programming. We provide programs and services that support racing sailors, train and manage the US Sailing Team and promote a culture of success in high-performance international sailing.

How we will do it:
- Offer First Sail, learn-to-sail, keelboat, passage-making, safety and adaptive programs
- Administer rating rules and data for racing sailors
- Develop new programs in response to sailors’ changing needs and interests
- Weave sustainability best practices into our programs
- Distribute information and facilitate members’ engagement with each other and the sport

How we will measure progress:
- Membership in affiliated organizations
- Event participation
- Diversity of participants
- Engagement with digital platforms
III. Capitalize on regional sailing expertise to encourage the development of shared programs that reflect the interests of local sailors

By tapping local and regional expertise and making it widely available, we will establish a useful, accessible presence across the country that visibly supports sailors and provides common resources to sailing programs.

We support and facilitate local and regional sailing, including education, recreation, community access and competition. We develop networks and training opportunities for officials, facilitate competition and support area championships. We identify promising competitive sailors, provide training opportunities and encourage participation in highly competitive events.

**How we will do it:**
- Identify successful local practices, share them widely and assist organizations in implementing them
- Develop regional ambassadors and experts to support new and existing programming
- Coordinate activities, training and events through shared calendars and other vehicles
- Offer regional and national gatherings, such as Sailing Leadership Forum and National Sailing Programs Symposium
- Provide customer service by connecting sailors with regional experts

**How we will measure progress:**
- Participation in local and regional programs
- Development of officials to meet the needs of local and regional competition
- Sharing of best practices and curriculum materials; strengthening relationships among sailing organizations
- Attendance at conferences and symposiums
- Social media engagement
IV. Make volunteering with US Sailing easy, rewarding and mutually beneficial

We will build a culture of volunteerism and service to sailors. Members can choose from a variety of rewarding experiences, and US Sailing and local organizations will benefit from their energy, commitment and expertise. Well-trained and effectively-supported volunteers extend the reach of US Sailing services far beyond what the staff alone can provide.

We engage and develop volunteers who are dedicated to serving the sport of sailing through Association committee work, community access, sail training, adaptive programming, fund-raising and competitive events.

How we will do it:
• Clarify volunteers’ roles and responsibilities to ensure they contribute successfully
• Train, mentor and support volunteers effectively
• Provide transparent qualification requirements for certified volunteers and clear and accessible pathways for advancement
• Actively recognize and reward outstanding volunteers at all levels

How we will measure progress:
• Volunteer satisfaction and effectiveness
• 100% training of volunteers in athlete protection programs
• Steady supply of qualified volunteers to meet organizations’ needs
• Reconnecting volunteers
• Advancement of volunteers into Association leadership roles
Achieve American success in sailing and tell the story

We will inspire participation, a desire for greatness and pride in national accomplishment by telling the stories of sailors who distinguish themselves in their local communities, athletes who represent the United States at the highest levels of competition, and leaders who contribute exceptional service to the sport.

We recognize sailors who demonstrate exceptional grit in accomplishing their goals, who perform at championship levels nationally and internationally, and who give back to their peers and the sport through service and leadership.

How we will do it:
- Recognize outstanding local and regional programming
- Celebrate members who make exceptional contributions to the sport through training, community sailing, race administration and association service
- Develop programs that promote excellence in sailing, such as the National Coaching Symposium and Youth and Olympic Development programs
- Gather resources and funding to support high-performance programming

How we will measure progress:
- American sailors on the podium at top-flight competitions such as world championships, Pan-American Games and the Olympics
- Awareness of exceptional sailors at all levels
- Excitement and pride in US sailors at international competition
- Financial and material support for programs that develop high-performance athletes