

The Chase Race Around New Bedford Harbor



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The Chase will be on around New Bedford Harbor this Saturday, September 22, as the city and New Bedford Community Rowing host a 2½-mile rowing race for youth, collegiate, and adult rowers.

Beginning on the New Bedford side of the southern end of the harbor, the course heads north through the Route 6 swing bridge, takes a sharp turn around a big buoy south of Route 95, proceeds south under Route 6 on the Fairhaven side, and ends at Pope's Island.

With crews launching from and returning to a Pope's Island dock, the island will also be the best place for spectators to see the race in two different spots.

Among those competing will be crews from Roger Williams University, Merrimack College, Bryant University; East Bay Rowing in Rhode Island, Style Driven Rowing and Community Rowing in Boston and, of course, New Bedford Community Rowing.

The oarsmen and women will be variously competing in singles (one-person boats), doubles, fours and eights.

Racing begins at 8:30 a.m. and is scheduled to conclude by 11:30 a.m.

All racing will be "head style:" Boats are sent across the start line at 20-second intervals and timed over the course. Racers work to catch up to boats that started ahead of them and to hold off those that started behind.

While that itself might explain the name “Chase,” it has a second meaning in New Bedford. “The Chase” is the name of the final section of “Moby Dick” in which Captain Ahab and crew chase Moby Dick.

The race is a collaborative effort of New Bedford Community Rowing, the Harbor Development Commission and the City of New Bedford – with Fairhaven officials assisting with provisions for course safety.