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TWO-THIRDS REPORT DISCRIMINATION ACROSS SAILING AND THE MARINE INDUSTRY. MINIMAL CHANGE SINCE 2019

Landmark Study by The Magenta Project Exposes Gap Between Elite Progress and Everyday Reality

LONDON, Wednesday 4 March 2026—The Magenta Project, in collaboration with 11th Hour Racing and World Sailing, has today released the results of the 2x25 Review.

The findings reveal a stark gap between high-profile progress at the top of the sport of sailing and persistent discrimination, exclusion and inequity across the broader sailing community and marine industry. Sixty-five percent of all respondents report experiencing some form of discrimination.

Sexism remains the most prevalent form, reported by more than 85% of women. While 67% of all respondents see gender imbalance as a significant issue, the picture for women specifically has barely shifted — 75% still believe gender balance is a problem, down from 80% in the World Sailing Trust's 2019 Strategic Review.

There is some feeling of headway being made. Eighty-three percent of respondents believe female representation has improved over the past five years, and events such as the Women's America's Cup, SailGP and the Vendée Globe showcase inclusive competition at the highest level. But the deeper data shows that many of the structural, cultural and behavioural barriers identified in the 2019 Strategic Review remain largely unchanged.

Drawing on approximately 2,500 responses from 68 countries, combined with expert panel analysis and original academic research by Dr Rachel Scarfe of the University of Stirling, the 2x25 Review is the most comprehensive examination of equity, inclusion and lived experience in sailing and the wider marine industry since 2019. It assesses progress against the nine original recommendations and sets out a new framework for action across inclusion, officiating, coaching, mentorship and leadership.



Key Findings

- Women earn a median of \$35,000 annually compared with \$49,000 for men – a 29% gap
- Almost 60% of women and more than 60% of non-binary respondents do not believe sailing clubs are inclusive to people from all backgrounds
- Nearly 60% of women and 64% of non-binary respondents have had to adapt their behaviour to feel accepted, compared with half of all respondents overall
- More than 40% of women believe women are not represented in leadership roles within the sailing industry, compared with 25% of men
- 49% of respondents are unaware of any reporting structure for violence, abuse or harassment
- 42% say they are aware of incidents of non-accidental violence within the sailing community
- Over 42% say their organisation has no one responsible for diversity and inclusion

Victoria Low, CEO of The Magenta Project, said:

“The 2x25 Review delivers an uncomfortable truth. The look and feel of our sport is changing, but the lived experience for too many people within it is not. In recent years, sailing has achieved something remarkable at the top. We’ve seen women compete in the America’s Cup, lead Vendée Globe campaigns, and shape SailGP teams. These moments matter. They change what’s possible. But our data shows that this progress has not yet reached the clubs, the pathways, or the day-to-day culture that shapes whether someone enters our sport, stays, and thrives.

“The majority of respondents report experiencing discrimination. More than half of women have had to change who they are to feel accepted. And nearly half of the sport doesn’t know how to report violence or harassment. These are not edge cases. They are defining patterns.

“This Review is not a criticism. It’s an invitation. We now have the evidence, the partnerships, and the roadmap to move from visibility to belonging. The question is whether our industry has the courage to act on it.”



Michelle Carnevale, President of 11th Hour Racing, said:

“For over a decade, 11th Hour Racing has backed efforts to make sailing more welcoming and accessible. We’ve seen first-hand that when you remove barriers and create real opportunities, the entire sport becomes stronger, more innovative, and more resilient. The 2x25 Review confirms what we have long believed: you can’t fix what you don’t measure. This honest look at where the industry stands today gives us something we can hold ourselves accountable to. Our hope is that this isn’t an endpoint, but a starting line.”

David Graham, CEO of World Sailing, said:

“Ensuring sailing is a safe, welcoming place for everyone is a shared commitment we all hold if we truly care about the future of our sport. I’m grateful for this report because it not only highlights the progress we’ve made, but also gives voice to the experiences of people who haven’t always felt included or protected.

“Sailing has achieved meaningful change in recent years: I was proud that World Sailing led the way for international sport in ensuring a gender-balanced board through our constitution. But the 2x25 Review makes it clear that progress at the top doesn’t automatically translate to a sense of belonging for everyone. We still have work to do before every person can step into our sport and feel valued, respected, and safe. This report is a reminder that we must continue to listen, learn, and act in the best interests of sailing.”

A Framework to Act

Beyond highlighting the challenges, the Review sets out a clear framework for action. Key priorities include:

- **Tie funding to inclusion.** Require clubs and federations to demonstrate inclusive practice as a condition of funding or affiliation
- **Fix the pay gap at source.** Introduce transparent, standardised pay structures and appointment criteria across the sport
- **Go beyond entry-level programmes.** Embed structured mentoring and sponsorship that supports women through mid-career stages, not just at the start
- **Redesign pathways for modern lives.** Make progression routes flexible and compatible with caring responsibilities



- **Measure what matters.** Shift from representation-focused metrics to indicators of belonging, retention and progression, and require federations to publish this data

The full Review contains detailed recommendations across inclusion, officiating, coaching, mentorship and leadership.

[Download the full Review](#)

ENDS

Note to editors: “Marine industry” in this release refers to the professional ecosystem around sailing – including yacht design, boatbuilding, sailmaking, race management, coaching and marine technology – rather than the broader maritime sector.

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Key Findings at a Glance: Sailing and the Wider Marine Industry

Progress and Perception

- 83% believe female representation in sailing has improved over the past five years
- 36% perceive increased opportunities for women and under-represented groups in recreational sailing
- 75% of women still believe gender balance is an issue, down from 80% in 2019

Discrimination and Bias

- 65% have experienced some form of discrimination in sailing or the wider marine industry
- Sexism affects 55% of all respondents, rising to more than 85% for women



- 38% believe racism remains an issue; 30% cite ageism; 35% cite ableism

Belonging and Culture

- Almost 60% of women and more than 60% of non-binary respondents do not believe sailing clubs are inclusive
- Nearly 60% of women have had to adapt their behaviour to feel accepted (64% of non-binary respondents; half of all respondents overall)
- 43% have felt out of place or unwelcome at a sailing club or event, with women and non-binary individuals disproportionately affected

Gender Pay Gap

- Women earn \$35,000 median annually vs \$49,000 for men (29% gap)
- Women earn \$180 median daily vs \$232 for men (22% gap)
- Gap driven primarily by access to experience and roles, not pay discrimination within equivalent positions

Leadership and Representation

- More than 40% of women believe women are not represented in sailing leadership (vs 25% of men)
- 59% of women believe women are not represented in marine industry leadership
- 67% are unaware of any industry mentoring programme
- 55% of respondents do not have a mentor in sailing

Safeguarding and Accountability

- 49% are unaware of reporting structures for violence, abuse or harassment
- 42% are aware of incidents of non-accidental violence
- Over 42% say their organisation has no one responsible for diversity and inclusion
- 30% say their club lacks an Equality Policy

About The Magenta Project



The Magenta Project is a global initiative committed to equity and inclusion in sailing. Founded following the all-female Team SCA campaign in the Volvo Ocean Race, it exists to create pathways, dismantle barriers, and drive systemic change through research, mentoring, partnerships, and advocacy. Now in its eleventh year, the organisation continues to expand its mission and strengthen its commitment to lasting inclusion across the marine industry.

Learn more at themagentaproject.org

About 11th Hour Racing

Inspired by the dynamics of sailboat racing and the urgency for climate action, 11th Hour Racing is committed to the health and resilience of ocean systems. Supporting innovative, sustainable solutions in the maritime industry and beyond through sport, storytelling and grantmaking, 11th Hour Racing works to build healthy planetary systems and strong communities. Under the 11th Hour Racing umbrella, activities are provided through 11th Hour Racing, Inc., which serves as the impact entity and provides programmatic direction to its philanthropic partners, including 11th Hour Racing Charitable, LLC, which engages in charitable work, and 11th Hour Racing Action, LLC, which engages in social welfare programs and advocacy.

Learn more at 11thhourracing.org.

About World Sailing

World Sailing is the world governing body for the sport of sailing, officially recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). Founded in 1907, World Sailing's vision is for a world in which millions more people fall in love with sailing. Inspired by the unique relationship between sport, technology and the forces of nature we all work to protect the waters of the world. World Sailing is made up of 149 Member National Authorities, the national governing bodies for sailing around the world and over 100 World Sailing Class Associations.

Visit sailing.org or contact communications@sailing.org to find out more.