

## 2014 Lightning North American Championships



Photo by Chris Gribble

### Final Report, Championship Racing: Races 4-6 (August 15, 2014):

The warning signal for the last day of racing at the 2014 Lightning North American Championships was moved up again to 0900 in hopes that the breeze on Lake Michigan for the 107 boat fleet would show up. It started out slowly, with two shifty, light air races. The local team of Todd Wake, his wife Kristine and Neal Fowler won the first Championship Fleet race of the day. Jody Starck, Ian Jones and Skip Dieball won the second.

Going into the last race, the sea breeze developed for the first time all week - a nice 12-15 knot breeze from the south. A perfect stage was set for the 6th and final race of the series. **10** different boats or a 1/3 of the fleet mathematically had the opportunity to win the Championship! The first start was a general recall and the race committee, pressed for time, hoisted the Black Flag.

The strategy for Greg Fisher, his wife Jo Ann and Zeke Horowitz was to keep an eye on certain teams that they felt might excel in the sea breeze conditions. They didn't have a very good start, explained Fisher. They dipped the fleet on port and were able to find a good lane. They kept passing a few boats, but couldn't catch the lead group. They crossed the finish line with 7 boats ahead of them and felt confident that without a high throw out, they likely had finished in the top five.

Jody Starck and her team of Ian Jones and Skip Dieball sailed a great race and crossed the line first. This would have clinched the title for the team, but they received a black flag penalty. The Chilean Team of Tito Gonzalez, his daughter Trinidad and longtime crew of Cristian Herman also crossed the line in the top five, but received the same black flag penalty. With the starting penalties of Starck and Gonzalez, Fisher's team moved up to a 6th place finish. Their consistency throughout this regatta equaled a first place finish for Greg and his team.

The team from the University of Vermont, Michael Zonnenberg, Michael Booker and Adam Ceely posted a 18-29 in the final two races to let their overall lead slip and finish in 2nd place. A fantastic achievement for these newcomers in this field of veteran competitors. Current Lightning World Champion, David Starck and his team of Debbie Probst and Sarah Paisley won the day with a 6-2-5 to move from 28th to 3rd overall.

This fleet had to be one of the most talented in recent one-design racing, reported Fisher. "With at least 16 World, 19 North American or National Champions, 3 Olympians and 3 Rolex Yachtsman/woman winners competing, we felt fortunate our consistency helped us survive some of the tough breaks our friends faced." This is Fisher's second Lightning North American Championship, 24 years later.

In the President's Cup Division, the team of Will Brown, John Faus and Matty Schon won the day with some impressive racing posting a 1-1-2 to take the President's Cup Title. Justin Coplan, Danielle Prior and Timothy Crann also had a good day, winning the final race to finish tied for second with the family team of brothers - Steve, Dave and Mike Constants.

In the Governor's Cup Division, the all family team of Peter Jones and his two daughters, Leeanne and Kendra kept nearly all single digit finishes after their discard to win their division. Daniel Reichelsdorfer, his wife Michou and Bailey Dolson won the day with a 5-1-7 to move up into second place overall. The Junior Team of Abbie Probst, Becca Jordan and Mikayla Ward remained consistent with top 10 finished after the discard to finish in third.

This series qualified 3 countries for the 2015 Pan American Games in the Lightning Division. The United States, Chile and Brazil all secured slots along with the host Country of Canada. The final three qualifying slots will be filled at the South American Championship at the Salinas Yacht Club in Ecuador December 3-7. The US will choose the Lightning Team to represent the US during the Lightning Winter Championship March 14-17, 2015 at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club.

Sail Sheboygan and the Sheboygan Yacht Club hosted an event second to none. PRO Rich Reichelsdorfer did a great job all week under tricky conditions. The large group of AMAZING volunteers made all the difference. Many teams were housed by locals and every detail was planned out with great thought. There was even a week long Sail Camp that competitors could enroll their younger children in. The Regatta chairs Todd Wake and Bill Faude worked endless hours to make sure the regatta was a success and they succeeded - times ten!

With 107 boats we had a very diverse field. In addition to Fisher's statistics: 15 teams were all under the age of 30, 2 teams were under 20. 14 teams were comprised of all family members and 8 females were at the helm. The Lightning Boat Grant program produced 19 competitors.

Good times, great friendships and world class competition continues in the Lightning Class!

### Championship Racing: Races 1-3 (Aug 14, 2014):

Michael Zonnenberg, Michael Booker and Adam Ceely will all be starting their senior year at the University of Vermont in just a few short weeks but before they do they handed out a lesson to veteran Lightning sailors today at the first day of Championship racing at the 2014 Lightning North American Championships. Zonnenberg and his team started sailing Lightnings this summer and this is their 4th Lightning regatta. He is the Grandson of the late Joseph Disette, longtime Lightning sailor and supporter from Michigan. He credits his experience with lots of college starts for his success today. He also said by keeping things simple and not over thinking each tactical decision or maneuver helped today. Zonnenberg posted a 10, 3 and 8 today and leads the fleet with 21 total points. Defending NA's Champ Alan Terhune sailing with Marguerite Kohler and Nicole Breault were able to skip the qualifying series and without a warm-up were still able to win the first race and are sitting in second place. With a fleet this deep most of the top teams spent a bit of time looking at many transoms today. Jody Starck and her team of Skip Dieball and Ian Jones are tied for third with Greg Fisher, Jo Ann Fisher and Zeke Horowitz with a total of 32 points. Two of our under 30 teams took home race winner flags today. Adam MacDonald, Abby Bennett and Sam Jones won the second race and Tim Scanlon, Sam Williams and Bernie Roesler won the third race.

Ernie Dieball sailing with his wife Jacqueline and Bryan Bahler showed again that you didn't need to win a race to be leading your division. Dieball leads the President's Cup Division with 18 points. He is followed closely by Ed Roseberry, Jr, Erin Gregory and Julian Fraize who won the first race in their division. Mark Schneider sailing with his wife Lucinda and Jake Ellis are in third with 25 points. The Canadian Team of Richard Walsh sailing with his wife Tina and Alex Cox won the second race and are in fourth. The under 20 team of Nick Sertl, his sister Katja and Mike Marshall won the third race today.

The 2nd place Junior Team from last week, Abbie Probst, Becca Jordan and Katie Braungart are leading the Governor's Cup Division with 16 points. The all family team of Peter, Leeanne and Kendra Jones won the second race today and are one point behind Team Probst. Gerry Paoli, Carson Menges and Ian Moriarty won the first and third races today and sits two points out of first.

The racing is tight within all three fleets. Racing concludes tomorrow (Friday) with 3 possible races. An earlier start time is scheduled with a 0900 warning. The top three Countries are in competition for Country qualifying spots in the 2015 Pan American Games. Sail Sheboygan and the Sheboygan Yacht Club are hosting a top notch regatta. Their volunteers are second to none!