

Women's, Junior's and Masters' Report
August 7-9, 2015
Tawas Bay Yacht Club - Tawas, Michigan

Tawas Bay Yacht Club in Tawas, Michigan hosted 53 teams for the Lightning Women's, Junior's and Masters' North American Championships August 7-9. The hospitality of the TBYC was second to none. This was a terrific event executed with precision and pride.

Tanner Probst and his crew of sister, Jenna and Maya Weber came to defend their title of Junior North American Champions and they did just that. The team from the Buffalo Canoe Club sailed really consistent with all top five finishes. Going into the last race, Team Probst was one point ahead of Doug Wake and his team of Noah Bartlet and Isabelle Buerger. Wake and his team from Sheboygan Yacht Club had won three races already, Race 2, 5 and 6. Wake commented, "The top boats were all quite fast, so it was a match of tactics and positioning. The lightning class has a lot of talent coming up, shown off at this regatta." Probst was able to finish 5th, while Wake sailed his discard race (14). Probst won with 21 points, Wake finished in second with 24. Abbie Probst, Becca Jordan and Mikayla Ward also from the Buffalo Canoe Club finished in third with 29 points, averaging just over 4 points over the 8 race series. Chris Schon with his team of brother, Teddy from Metedeconk Yacht Club and Julian Fraize added two more bullets to their scores by winning the final two races of the series. Team Schon also won race 1 and finished in 4th with 31 points. Allie Jones, Julianne MacDonald from the Buffalo Canoe Club and Jonathan Lutz finished in 5th place with 39 points. 8 of the 20 teams competing in the Junior Division were first time participants. The regatta qualified the top two eligible Junior teams (Tanner Probst and Doug Wake) for the 2016 Lightning Youth Worlds to be held July 2016 at the Salinas Yacht Club in Salinas, Ecuador.

The youngest skipper and youngest sailor were not part of the Junior Division, they were sailing in the Women's Fleet! Meghan Dieball (North Cape Yacht Club, age 13) and her team of Jody Starck and Sabrina Starck (9) sailed a brilliant regatta. Going into the last race, Team Dieball was tied with 2015 Lightning Boat Grant Recipients Sarah Somes, Elizabeth Chambers and Marcie Levey. Team Dieball played the light and shifty conditions well and posted their 6th race win of the 8 race series. The favorite part of Dieball's regatta was "sailing fast, having fun and learning a lot from Jody going around the race course." Somes and her team have had an active summer sailing in the MI District and have showed that they are understanding the Lightning quite well and can make the boat move. Lorrie Walsh from Thunder Bay, Ontario and her team of Tina Corness and Jean Evans sailed very well to finish 3rd in this talented Fleet. 5 of the 8 Women's skippers were steering in their first Women's NAs. Many of these teams were formed from veteran crews. Many sailors are looking forward to next years' WJM Championships to be held at the Rochester Yacht Club, Rochester NY in August 2016.

The Masters' Division was also determined by the final race of the 6 race series. Don Barrett (Niantic Bay Yacht Club) sailing with his wife, Donna and David Corcoran won race 5 to lead the fleet with 7 points going into the last race. Josh Goldman (Cedar Point Yacht Club) and his team of Will Jeffers and Dominique Wright trailed by just 2 points while Bill Mauk (Coral Reef Yacht Club) sailing with the husband wife team of Jim and Lori England were just 4 points behind. Team Barrett was able to leverage the left side of the course to a 4th place finish and win the series with 11 points. Team Mauk finished in third with 14 points to edge Team Goldman out of second place by one point. John McCree sailing with brothers, Kevin and Matt Morin sailed consistent to finish in 4th place with 18 points. Steve Davis, sailing with wife Jan and Skip Dieball won race 6 to finish just one point behind Team McCree with 19 points. Don Barrett also captured the Grand Master title. Barrett and his wife were drawn back to Tawas after enjoying the fresh water sailing on Tawas Bay and great local hospitality they enjoyed back in 1985 when TBYC hosted the North Americans. During the awards presentation Barrett encouraged everyone to "keep sailing because you are never too old to enjoy the thrill of victory." Billy Allen won the Great Grand Master Division sailing with his crew of Jeff Schmahl and CJ Szeplaki.

Just two weeks ago, the Lightning Class held its International Masters (63 boats) and World Championships (67 boats) at the Buffalo Canoe Club in Ridgeway, Ontario. The Class is fortunate to have such gracious hosts for these events. A full schedule of fall regattas including the Lightning North American Championships, October at the Southern Yacht Club in New Orleans, LA is posted on the ILCA Class Website (www.lightningclass.org).