

California District Championship
Mission Bay Yacht Club – Fleet 194
San Diego, California
May 28, 2005
4 Races – 1 Throwout

Pos	Skipper/Crew	Total
1	Jeff Coppens, John Lyon, Larry Schmitz	3
2	Scott Finkboner, Jennifer Lyons, Bruce Cameron	7
3	Pete Bellin, Tim Jehle, Richard Hoffman	9
4	Ed Petit de Mange, Paul Tarantino, Tom McKenzie	11
5	Mike Brewer, Dick Brewer, Katie Ham	12
6	John Northrop, Jolene Northrop, Jolee Northrop	12
7	Kirk Johnson, Edna Johnson, Mike Kirk	19
8	Dan Gravatt, Donna Gravatt, Valerie Bilbo	24

A picture perfect Memorial Day weekend greeted the San Diego fleet for the 2005 California District Championship. Early morning coastal overcast kept the temperatures in the low eighties throughout the day.

The clouds burned off on cue at 10:30 am allowing the ocean breeze to fill at 7-10 knots from 215 degrees, left of the 270 degree prevailing ocean breeze. In the first race, the majority of the fleet sailed left along the Mission Beach shore to the filling wind. It paid and the leaders emerged from the port layline. The left corner paid for the first three races until the cloud cover returned in late afternoon along with a 40 degree right shift.

Jeff Coppens, with crew John Lyon and Larry Schmitz, teamed up to win the event scoring three bullets and one second. Scott Finkboner, winner of the past 10 district championships, finished second, with Jennifer Lyons and Bruce Cameron as crew.

Three East Coast Lightning sailors recently moved to Southern California: Ed Petit De Mange, Tim Jehle, and Paul Tarantino. Tim crewed for Pete Bellin and finished third. After winning the third race, Pete could have tied the event in the last race with a bullet, but an OCS put him deep in the fleet and fighting back the entire race. Ed Petit De Mange teamed up with Paul and they were competitive in each race and finished fourth.

STORY TWO

Fifty thousand spectators lined Mission Beach on Saturday to view the 2005 California Districts. Ok, so maybe they all showed up to the beach due to the typical perfect San Diego beach weather, low eighties, breeze from the SW at 7-10 knots, and not a cloud in sky; but they did have a great view of the California Districts. The ocean course starts 1/2 mile offshore Mission Beach directly out from the historic wooden roller coaster constructed in the early 1920s. The coaster is joined with an arcade, pool, and shopping center all within walking distance from the club. A good evening hangout, and a bonus, the coaster makes a good reference point when trying to find the leeward mark!!

We had eight boats from Mission Bay compete in four races for the championship. Competing in my third Districts, I was able to recruit John Lyon to crew. Before he and his wife started their family ten years ago, John was an active participant in the Lightning fleet and has won several District and Circuit championships. Our other crew, Larry Schmitz, is a successful PHRF skipper. Having three skippers on the boat is a big plus given one condition, everyone can get along!!! We did, and in the process, captured first place. Our chemistry worked with John calling upwind tactics, Larry downwind tactics, and I chimed in when a spinnaker takedown was called, "Hey guys, this is only the jibe mark!!" Their takedown changed quickly to a crash jibe and disaster was averted.

We had a great day of close racing on a course with a wind out of the Southwest. Scott Finkboner placed second and Pete Bellin placed third. Ed Petit De Mange, a recent East Coast transplant, finished fourth and was competitive all day. He, along with two other East Coasters who recently moved to Cali, Tim Jehle and Paul Tarantino, all had the same thing to say, "The West Coast is a great place for Lightnings, we need to get more boats out here." Guys, we couldn't agree more.