

## Lagos, Nigeria Lightning Lab and National Championship

Skip Dieball and Steve Davis



For over 60 years, the members of the Lagos Yacht Club Tarpon and Lightning Fleets (they have been importing fiberglass boats since the 80s) have been sailing in the Lagos Harbor and have set their boats up based on experience, written tuning guides and articles written by sailors of the Lightning around the world. With multiple Nigerian teams attending the World Championship in Greece and the purchase of twelve new boats over the past two years, Steve Davis and Skip Dieball decided to visit the Fleet, organize a multi-day Lightning Lab and participate in the Lightning/Tarpon Nigerian National Championship.



Traffic to Lagos Island

In 1946, the Lagos Yacht Club was searching for a new one-design boat to sail and race. Their venue consisted both of inland harbor and ocean water racing. They chose the Sparkman/Stephens designed Lightning. Since it was built from local materials (rainforest mahogany), it was PAINFULLY heavy. That's OK, because there were about twenty more built shortly thereafter... all pretty much the same weight. To get these overbuilt boats through the water, the locals developed a Genoa (about 120%) that helps power them through the varying conditions. It also puts them on pace with the modern fiberglass Lightnings, so they all can sail together. Interestingly, the "Tarpons" (named after the first boat) have a Genoa winching assembly in the middle of the boat.

**Day 1:** We arrived in Lagos, Nigeria this morning after an uneventful ten-hour flight from New York. Upon our arrival, we were greeted by a friendly local that works with the local Lightning Fleet to greet visitors. He took care of all the details on our arrival, and we quickly proceeded to Lagos Island where Lagos



Tarpoon #1



Airport escort

# Lagos, Nigeria



Yacht Club and our hosts are situated. The drive from the airport was eye-opening. We saw first hand the mass population that exists and the vast need for infrastructure. With no structured public transit, it is full chaos on the streets during rush hour. Fortunately for us, we were seated in a bullet-proof vehicle, and our police escort and chase car "blocked and tackled" through the melee. Our leader carved out our path like Greg Fisher on a starting line!

Our host family, Ian and Lindy Edwards, made sure we were well fed and rested for our first afternoon in Lagos. After a quick nap, we went into town to a local market. It truly was an experience. With vendors of every conceivable good vying for your business, it was hard to stay focused. Our hostess, Lindy Edwards, was a master of market negotiation. Her expertise enabled us to effectively procure family gifts.

The Lagos Yacht Club is situated directly on the Lagos Harbor and overlooks the shipping ports, downtown and the immediate racing area. Truly a prize spot.

We started the Lightning Lab with a brief outline of what we'll cover in the coming days, which for today included a rig tune session. We wanted participants to hit the water so we could quantify our settings and video our handy work. The session gained more and more participants as the day wore on. It is truly



Tarpon rigged with Genoa

an inspired group and we are very happy to help them understand the Lightning and its intricacies.

Our first day was great. It was capped with our host Lightning Fleet members treating us to Lebanese dinner in downtown Lagos. The camaraderie was spectacular, and they are truly great hosts and appreciate us helping them figure out the Lightning... until tomorrow.



Lindy Edwards & Skip

**Day 2:** We started the day with a "harbor cruise" with our hostess, Lindy Edwards. We traveled in a very nice (fast) Whaler and headed up a river to visit a local village. Our journey took us west toward Benin, and we passed many different villages. Fishing, boat building and markets all lined the shore as the landscape went from the urban "downtown" Lagos to a very peaceful area lined with mangroves and palm trees.



# Lagos, Nigeria



Once arriving at our destination, we were greeted by the "locals" from Ishahayi Beach. This village had just received (with the help of many Lagos Yacht Club members and the Yacht Club itself) a new school, the Light Nursery & Primary School. It was truly a treat for Steve and I to visit and sit in while watching the kids were learning. The stretch of land where the school is situated is between the "river" that we traveled and the Atlantic Ocean. The ocean beach went for miles and provided some great surf.



The amount of attention the local Fleet is giving to us and our Lightning Lab has been inspiring. Today we had even more people involved in both "water" activities and our debrief. They are hungry for Lightning knowledge, and we are happy to provide what we can.



Thursday evening, the local fleet and our hosts had a wonderful dinner party in honor of both of us. We talked with many about our Lightning travels and answered even more questions on how to make our boats faster. It has been great fun helping these folks get better. The dinner also featured an introduction to the sponsors of our trip and of the regatta, North American Airlines and Heineken, both of which were delighted to meet us and made sure we were having fun.

**Day 3:** What an interesting day...it is the "rainy season" here, which we found hard to believe since we've been here—until this AM. The storm came and lasted for more than eight hours. With limited infrastructure, this creates a mess in terms of traffic and drainage. Grid-lock is an understatement, but we have had the good fortune of having some extremely savvy drivers that negotiated the roads to our benefit of keeping to our busy schedule.



Today we went to a small town called Kaytu, where we visited an orphanage that takes in local children. Having limited experience with this, both Steve and I were fascinated with the detail and care given to the children. Many expats help support the cause, and our host, Lindy Edwards, visits this orphanage quite regularly. The kids know her well, and you can see their excitement when she enters the room.

From Kaytu we proceeded to Lackey Market, which is a more modern marketplace where you can buy souvenirs and other touristy goods. With the storm and continuing rain, we were only a few of the customers, and we had the vendor's attention. It was fun, and we saw some amazing art and other native African goods.



## Lagos, Nigeria



*Note: the lever adjustment to relax the shrouds*

Lindy made sure that we were on schedule for the purpose of our trip...supporting the Lightning sailors. We arrived at the Lagos Yacht Club precisely at 1:00 PM to more rain. It subsided enough that we were able to tune more boats and even go for a brief sail (both Steve and I had been in motor boats exclusively until this point). After our sail, we reviewed the video from the previous day and previewed today's drills.

We concentrated on Rig Tune (Wednesday), Sail Trim (Thursday) and Starts/Marks/Strategy/Tactics (today). We've had great

interaction with these sailors, and they are keen to learn more and more. There are five teams headed to the Athens World Championship, and these teams are soaking in any/all information they can get. Their equipment has been upgraded and they have impressive goals for their Nigerian Lightning Team.

The official kick-off to the Nigerian National Championship was this evening (after our on-the-water drills). The dignitaries for the event spoke, and everyone had fun socializing before the big event.



**Day 4:** After a terrific party at Ian and Lindy Edwards' place Friday Night, Saturday morning started EXTREMELY early. Our plan was to be at the boat park between 7:30 and 8:00 AM, and we succeeded, barely by 8:00 AM!! ;-)

More tuning, more talk, more tips/techniques and we were through most of the boats in the fleet. Everyone was appreciative and we all looked forward to sailing!

The Nigerian Nationals was due to start at 11:00 AM, but as with most venues, we were postponed on land for a while. Many launched and sailed around, only to be swept downtown in a 5-knot flood tide! The tide here RIPS, make no mistake. It makes Savannah look like the Junior Varsity of current. You'd think that, like Savannah, you'd establish your strategy 100% around the current, but as we found today, you can't. You must honor the volatile wind shifts in the Lagos Harbor in order to succeed.



# Lagos, Nigeria



The RC fit in four nice races (three were shortened and one was full length). With Lightnings and Tarpons all over Lagos Harbor, it was quite a site. I couldn't help but think that this concentration of Lightnings only occurs in a few areas of the world...Pontiac, Buffalo, Pymatuning, etc. Make no mistake, Lagos Yacht Club understands which fleets have the most boats, and they are keen to be the biggest fleet in the World. With many more new boats being imported, the second-hand boats are being gobbled up quickly. One of the guys that is getting a new boat at the Worlds in Greece this summer explained that he had four buyers for his existing 15xxx series boat! Talk about fleet building!!

At the end of the day, the scores were tight but only discussed socially, as there were a few protests still being heard. My team, I'm crewing in the middle in a Carson 143xx series boat, should be close to the top with 7,2,3,1 (one throwout already). I believe after our six points, there are three or four boats with 8-10 points. I can't help but think of my good friend Dave Starck at this point in the regatta, "You have to be winning at the cocktail party!" What's worth noting is that the Nigerian National competitors have embraced many of the ILCA standards, particularly in the number of crew for their championship. Our team is sailing well over 600 pounds! I believe that the enforcement of the ILCA rules is in our favor, as most teams are coping with the switch from sailing 2-up to 3-up. My take—more people, more fun!



Tonight's party was themed as "Greeceed Lightning" as a way to promo the World Championship. Many of the folks, including yours truly and Steve, broke out the togas! Talk about a blast from college!! We all looked great and had a ball at the dinner party!

An additional treat for Steve and I was being interviewed for a television production sponsored by Heineken. They have a few outlets where they sell their football (soccer) team's coverage and in return they produce and broadcast a "reality" series for sporting events. They are going to feature the Nigerian Lightning Nationals, and we might make productions (or on the cutting room floor!). It was fun, and we made friends with Henry Okafor, Brand Manager for Heineken in Nigeria.

Tomorrow we will sail out of Lagos Harbor and attempt three races in the Atlantic. Steve and I are looking forward to the type of racing we know in the Lightning; however, we've had some fun in the harbor with the current, shipping traffic, volatile wind, etc.



**Day 5:** The final day of sailing at the Heineken Lightning Nigerian Nationals would take place in the ocean. After spending Saturday in the volatile bay, I personally looked forward to the type of racing I am more used to.

Skip's team, with Alan Emslie (skipper) and Peter Jarvis (forward), held a slim three-point lead going into the last day. They had a throwout already in play with four races Saturday.

The sail out was fun. We were battling the current and going upwind, so we tacked along the shoreline breakwater. There is a village situated on the breakwater with plenty of activity!

The sailing in the ocean was delightful. A nice southwesterly wind was very consistent, and the water state was similar to a medium wind day in Con Con, Chile, or a heavier air day in San Diego. We had chop in between the swells, which made boathandling and driver concentration a premium.

Alan did a fabulous job with the boat focusing on speed, and we started the day with a 1,2 in the first two races. This sealed the championship as he could now use the 7th as a counter and take it easy in the last race. Congratulations to my teammates. They worked really hard all weekend, and I think we were dialed in!

The prize giving ceremony was top-shelf. Heineken really added some flare and to the winners were great trophies and BEER!! How about that...worth the hard work!

# Lagos, Nigeria



*Nigerian Nationals Champions  
Alan Emslie, Skip Dieball, Peter Jarvis*



*Nigerian Nationals—2nd Place  
Mark Haas, Knut Engebretsen, Tess Hottenroth*



*Nigerian Nationals—3rd Place  
Andrew Barton, Geir Skarstein, John Chaplin*



*Tarpon Champions  
Paul and Elaine Harrison & Don Third*



*Andrew Barton and Julian Calvin presenting thank-you gifts  
on behalf of the Fleet to Steve and Skip*

We had some time to reflect on the trip home. Everything the local fleet did for us was above and beyond the call of duty. They really made us feel right at home and made sure we were comfortable. Special thanks to North American Airlines for giving us an upgrade to first class on the way home. It made the ten-hour flight not only comfortable, but when we got to New York we were in/out of customs/baggage within ten minutes. Truly appreciated!!!

Lagos Yacht Club is a special place. Both of us have asked to come back, and we've put some plans in place to do another Lightning Lab with a slightly different format to build on what we've accomplished on this trip. We can't wait!!

# 2007 Lightning Winners

## **Brazilian Nationals, Niteroi**

Claudio Biekarck, Gunnar Ficker, Marcelo Silva

## **Deep South Regatta, Savannah Yacht Club**

David Starck, Tom Starck, Joe Starck

## **Miami Midwinter Regatta, Coral Reef Yacht Club**

Skip Dieball, Ernie Dieball, Anne Marie Shrewfelt

## **Winter Championship, St. Petersburg Yacht Club**

Jeff Linton, Amy Smith Linton & Mark Taylor

## **Winter Championship — Masters**

George Fisher, Joann Fisher & Tom Emch

## **Southern Circuit, St. Petersburg Yacht Club**

Ched Proctor, Jay Mueller, Jim Barnash

## **California Circuit, Mission Bay Yacht Club**

Jeff Coppens



## **Mid Continent Regatta, Carlyle Sailing Association**

Todd Wake, Kristine Wake, Jim Walker



## **49th Annual Long John Regatta Monmouth Boat Club, Fleet 70**

Jack Huntsman

## **Southeastern District Championship Lake Murray South Carolina**

Lenny Krawcheck

## **Ecuadorian District Championships Club Nautico San Pablo**

Carlos L. Lecaro, Manuel I. Granja, Samuel Herrera

## **45th Annual Burl Harmon Memorial Regatta Indianapolis Sailing Club**

Craig Cobbum, Mark Kilbey, Rick Lemberg

## **Doc Gilbert Potomac Cup, Washington DC, Fleet 50**

Joanne Fisher, Todd Johnson & Katie Terhune

## **Nigerian National Championships, Lagos, Nigeria, Fleet 510**

Alan Emslie, Skip Dieball, Peter Jarvis

## **No Gas Regatta, Severn Sailing Association, Fleet 329**

Allan Terhune, Katie Terhune, Dave Perkowski

## **Florida District Championships, Davis Island YC, Fleet 502**

Jeff Linton

## **Early Bird Regatta, Cedar Point Yacht Club, Fleet 126**

Dave Peck, Don Barrett, Chris Vann, Kelly Stannard & Gaelen Phye Adam

## **Lake Lansing 42nd Annual Regatta, Fleet 387**

Chris Jacobson, Gus Dey, Tom Hernick

## **Pymatuning Spring Classic, Pymatuning Yacht Club**

Ched Proctor, Jay Mueller, Matt Ayers



## **MBBC Spring Regatta, Malletts Bay Boat Club, Fleet 301**

Peter Hall, Jay Deacon, Jamie Allen

## **Magnus Pederson/Metropolitan District Championships, Nyack Boat Club, Fleet 75**

Jon Schwartz

## **Fond du Lac Lighthouse Regatta Fond du Lac Yacht Club, Fleet 442**

Todd Wake, Christine Wake, Dan Moriarty

## **Wrightsville Beach Lightning Regatta Carolina Yacht Club, NC**

Pierce Barden

## **Windshift Regatta, Leatherlips Yacht Club, Powell, OH**

Steve Weeber, Donna Weeber, Stam Cummins

# 2007 Lightning Winners

## **Central Atlantic District Championships Riverton Yacht Club, Fleet 228**

Bobby Martin, Ben Spiller, Erin Kilcline



## **Dixie District Championship Susquehanna Yacht Club, Fleet 253**

Allan Terhune, Katie Terhune, Dave Perkowski

## **Mississippi Valley District Championships Carlyle Sailing Association, Fleet 266**

Matt Burridge, Ian Schillebeeckx, Caleb Leonard

## **Finnish District Championships**

Kimmo Aromaa, Mike Aromaa, Juha Aromaa

## **Caz Flash Blast, Willowbank Yacht Club**

Mark Sertl

## **Texas District Championships Dallas, Corinthian Sailing Club**

Scott Anderson

## **California District Championships Mission Bay Yacht Club**

Scott Finkboner

## **Connecticut/Rhode Island District Championships, Cedar Point Yacht Club**

David Peck

## **Michigan District Championships Higgins Lake Boat Club**

John McCree



## **Dave Fitch Memorial Regatta, Lake Spofford, NY**

Ben Wallace, Karen Wallace, Tris Wallace

## **Midwest District Championships, Sheboygan Yacht Club**

Brian Phelan



## **Indiana Districts, Wawasee Yacht Club**

Craig Cobbum, Jim Wellington, Mark Kilby

## **Ohio Districts, Pymatuning Yacht Club**

Ryan Ruhlman, Nick Turney, Matt Schon

## **Canadian Open Championships Royal St. Lawrence Yacht Club**

Peter Hall

## **Brian Hughes Memorial Leukemia Cup Regatta American Yacht Club**

Brian Gibbs

## **Tawas Bay Lightning Regatta, Tawas Bay Yacht Club**

Tom Klaban

## **Bay City Yacht Club Regatta, Bay City Yacht Club**

Ernie Dieball

## **New England District Championship Malletts Bay Boat Club, Colchester, Vermont**

Patrick Zachary, Kika Bronger, Joan Shannon

## **New England Women's, Juniors' and Masters' District Championship, Malletts Bay Boat Club Colchester, Vermont**

**Masters':** Mark Gardner, Arnie Tran, Marilyn Johnson

**Juniors':** Peter Hazelett, Derrik Deming, Ben Lawson

**Women's:** Meredith Powlison, Suzie Coburn, Kay Tran

## **International Masters Championship Yacht Club of Greece, Athens**

Bill Mauk, Vladimir Kulinichenko, Michel Sumpton

## **World Championships, Yacht Club of Greece, Athens**

Jeff Linton, Amy Linton, John Tihansky

# 2007 Lightning Winners

## **European Championships, Yacht Club of Greece, Athens**

Urs Wyler, Walter Durr, Gilbert Durr

## **European Open Championships Yacht Club of Greece, Athens**

Allan Terhune, Katie Terhune, Dave Perkawski

## **Pan American Games, Rio de Janeiro, Brazils**

Chile: Alberto Gonzalez, Diego Gonzalez, Cristian Herman

## **2007 Wooden Lightning Get Together Onondaga Yacht Club, Syracuse, New York**

# 7603 Bob Astrove, Matt Klise, Billy Astrove



## **Atlantic Coast Championships, Cedar Point Yacht Club**

Bill Fastiggi, Suzy Coburn, Kolby Kruger

## **New Jersey State Junior Lightning Championship**

Mike Warren, Christian Geary, Alexander Loboazzo

## **Evans Regatta, Green Bay Wisconsin, Fleet 112**

Ric Larson, Mike Elmergreen, Lori Jost

## **2007 Buffalo Canoe Club Youth Invitational**

Connor Godfrey, Adam MacDonald, Larry MacDonald



## **1st Annual Boyne City Regatta Fleet 512, Boyne City Yacht Club**

Dan Norton

## **North American Championships, Severn Sailing Association, Fleet 329 & Eastport Yacht Club**

Geoff Becker, Dan Rabin, Bill Ward

**Presidents:** Steve Davis, Colin Park, Karen Park

**Governors:** Mike Beaver, Joanna Beaver, Chris Raubacher

## **Masters' North American Championships Fleet 50, Leesylvania State Park**

George Fisher, Greg Fisher & Tom Emch

## **Juniors' North American Championships, Fleet 50, Leesylvania State Park**

Frederick Strammer, Justin Doane & Michelle Thomas

## **Woman's North American Championships, Fleet 50, Leesylvania State Park**

Carol Park, Rhea Consentino & Sharon Sleiker-Jay

## **Squam Lake Annual Regatta, Squam Lake Sailing Association, Holderness, NH**

Dwight Gertz/Ginny Welles

## **Skaneateles One Day, Skaneateles Country Club, Fleet 1**

Daniel Pope, Jim Barnash

## **2007 Pennsylvania Governor's Cup Lake Wallenpaupack Yacht Club**

Richard Hallagan



## **2007 Ed Hinds Memorial Bow Lake One Day Lightning Flash Regatta**

Ken Deyett, Ali Deyette, Jeannine McKay

## **2007 CAZ One Day Regatta Willow Bank Yacht Club, Cazenovia Lake, Fleet 164**

Clay Murphy, AJ Murphy, John Steiner

# 2007 Lightning Winners

## **Red Flannels Regatta Chicago Corinthian Yacht Club, Fleet 5**

Matt Fisher, Dan Moriarty & Tobi Moriarty

## **Pacific Coast Championships Richmond Yacht Club, Fleet 372**

Dan Gravatt, Donna Collins, Sara Manaan

## **2007 Lightning Fall Classic Fontelieu, Cedar Point Yacht Club, Fleet 126**

Dave Peck, Gailen Adam, Ellen Starck

## **Manahawkin Bay Cup & NJ State Championship, Surf City Yacht Club, Fleet 196**

Allan Terhune, Katie Terhune, Dave Perkowski

Mitch Hnatt, Tara Schon, Matt Ward—*NJ State Champions*

## **53rd Annual Hoosier Regatta Lake Wawasee, Indiana, Fleet 154**

Bill Faude, Ernie Dieball, Jacqueline Voigt

## **Chilean National Championship, Lake Rapel**

Victor Lobos, Sebastian Lobos, Hugo Perrin

## **Last Blast Lightning Regatta, Nyack Boat Club, Fleet 75**

Joan Hurban, Peter Jadrosich, Judy Hanlon

## **Leaf Peeper, Malletts Bay Boat Club Fleet, 301**

Jamie Allen

## **Frigid Digit, Severn Sailing Association, Fleet 329**

Larry MacDonald, Joy MacDonald, Adam MacDonald



## **Fall in Regatta, Cowan Lake Sailing Association, Fleet 303**

James Taylor, Jim Diemar, George Auer

## **Bluenose Regatta, Harbor Island Yacht Club, Fleet 262**

Allan Terhune, Katie Terhune, David Starck

## **Hampton Fling, Hampton Yacht Club, Fleet 509**

Travis Weisleder

## **South American Lightning Championship Club Nautico Muna, Fleet 73, Bogota, Colombia**

Santiago Uzcategui, Jochen Raute, Delio Delgado

First Finisher: Jeff Linton, Amy Linton, Steve Davis

