

# LIGHTNING *Class*



ASSOCIATION

YEARBOOK

1941



MORRIS ROSENFELD





# *The* **LIGHTNING CLASS**

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## *Contents*

	Page
History of Class.....	2
Description of the Boat.....	4
Officers' Directory.....	6
Measurers — Directory.....	7
Information — General.....	8
Measurement Information.....	9
Championships — Record.....	10
Championships — for 1941.....	15
Fleet Directory and Reports.....	18
Owners' Directory.....	42
Constitution .....	61
By-Laws .....	70
Rules for Championships and Sanctioned Events	76
Specifications .....	82
Plans — Recent Changes.....	100
Specifications — Measurers' Explanations.....	102
Builders' and Sailmakers' Notice.....	Inside Back Cover

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## LIGHTNING'S FIRST TWO YEARS HAVE MADE CLASS RACING HISTORY

**IDEA FOR LIGHTNING IS BORN**—Inspired by the suggestions of small boat sailors over a wide area, an idea is taken to leading designers for a small yacht that would serve both as a safe, comfortable day-sailer with plenty of room for a large party and as a responsive racer with big boat performance.

**LIGHTNING DESIGN IS CREATED**—Early in 1938 the design is completed by Sparkman and Stephens and given the name "Lightning."

**EXPERIMENTAL LIGHTNING BUILT**—The first "experimental" Lightning was built at Skaneateles in October, 1938, and was immediately followed by many tests and searching trials by the designers and other qualified experts.

**ENTHUSIASM DISPLAYED FOR LIGHTNING IDEA**—First announcements in leading yachting publications arouse unusual interest and enthusiasm. Many inquiries received from all parts of the country.

**FIRST LIGHTNING EXHIBITED**—An enthusiastic reception, little short of sensational, greets first public exhibit of Lightning at New York Boat Show in January 1939. Many place orders for boats.

**NEW LIGHTNING CLASS STARTS**—A meeting of the first group of Lightning owners at the N. Y. Boat Show in 1939 votes for Class organization, elects temporary chairman, names committee to draw up constitution and racing rules.

**LIGHTNING CONSTITUTION RATIFIED**—At a second general meeting of owners in April, 1939, permanent officers are elected, constitution and racing rules are ratified. Records show 117 paid registrations. Representatives come from widely separated areas. Many interested in formation of fleets.

**TITLE ACQUIRED TO PLANS**—First official act of the Association is to acquire title and rights to Lightning plans and establish means and machinery for regulating use of these plans. Publication of information for builders, owners and prospective owners is authorized. First national championships are planned.

**FIRST YEAR IS ACTIVE**—Although activity was restricted due to newness of the Class, there was individual participation in the Central New York Y. R. A. and Larchmont Race Week. High point of the first season was the first National Championships at Barnegat Bay, where 14 Lightnings participated. By January, 1940, registrations had reached the 400 mark.

**ONE-DESIGN PRINCIPLE REAFFIRMED**—The second annual meeting of the Class in New York at the New York Boat Show finds an enthusiastic representative attendance determined to maintain the one-design feature of the Class.

**FIFTEEN FLEETS START SECOND SEASON**—Significant of the interest in the Class is the fact that 15 active fleets start the second season and the first District organization composed of six fleets in Central New York forms, elects a secretary and holds a district regatta at Lake Delta.

**CONTINUED GROWTH IN SECOND SEASON**—With fleets, unorganized groups and individual owners in a large percentage of the country's leading yachting centers, the second season was marked with Lightning activities too numerous to mention. Scores of prominent regattas recognized Lightning Classes and there were reports of many interesting inter-fleet races. The keenly contested second National Championships was held at Riverside Y. C. on Long Island Sound in September. To assist the large number of amateur builders a book, "Building the Lightning", was written by Yachting's Rufus Smith, and published by the Association.

**THIRD ANNUAL MEETING HELD**—New York, during the Boat Show Week, was again the scene of the annual Class meeting and banquet. One-design features were again reaffirmed and revisions in specifications and drawings were voted in order to clarify details and avoid builders' errors.

**BRIGHT PROSPECTS FOR THIRD SEASON**—Opening of the third Lightning season finds the Class with nearly 700 registrations and 30 fleets. Several additional Districts are being planned and the third National Championships is scheduled for Skaneateles Lake in September. Up and down the Atlantic Coast, West to Chicago, and South to Louisiana and Texas interest in the Class is growing. The coming season is predicted to far outshine all others in Class activity, fleet competition and participation in national regattas.

## PICTURE OF A REMARKABLE CLASS RACER AND DAY-SAILER

For the benefit of those to whom this book may be a first introduction to the class—what of the boat which has been so largely responsible for its sensational popularity?

First glance at a Lightning always gives the impression that she is a big boat—roomy and thoroughly capable under all sailing conditions. It is a fact that she is remarkably roomy, and her capability has been quite adequately demonstrated during the past seasons. But she is still classified among the "small one-designs" by virtue of her 19 feet over all length and 6 feet 6 inches of beam.

With a water line length of 15 feet 10 inches, Lightning carries 177 square feet of working canvas. Her chine and arc bottom construction means sawn frames, with no steam bending. Good freeboard, combined with unusual stability, permits a wide cockpit with a side deck which is ample. The cockpit measures 8 feet 6 inches by 4 feet 9 inches and is designed for real comfort. The racing crew of three has plenty of leg room, and for day-sailing, a party of six adults may be accommodated without overcrowding. A thwart runs from the centerboard case to the sides of the boat at a point 2 feet abaft the forward end of the cockpit. Wide, comfortable seats, 12 inches high, extend aft from this thwart on each side and around the stern.

A long V-coaming extends from the cockpit sides forward of the spar, enclosing that part of the deck through which the spar passes. The after end of this deck is finished off to form a handy pin rail for belaying halliards. Forward of the thwart and abaft this pin rail is a convenient and wholly unobstructed space in which to stand and work while making sail, handling light sails, or doing other jobs forward. It is, in reality, a separate little cockpit.

Aloft, the rig is very simple and well proportioned. Upper shrouds lead over spreaders that attach to the mast well down from the head. The jumper stays lead from the spreaders to masthead, giving something of the appearance and much of the staying effect of a double diamond rig. There is a permanent backstay from the masthead to a chain plate just off center at the transom, where it clears the tiller nicely and avoids the

necessity of a boomkin. This staying has been worked out so that a spar of very light proportions is permissible. With a length of 26 feet above the deck, it has a maximum section of only 2 by 3  $\frac{1}{8}$  inches. It is a box section with  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch walls. Through strenuous sailing, it has stood straight, with no buckling tendency whatsoever.

The remarkable stability of this boat is noted immediately upon stepping aboard. Two or three persons walking freely around the deck, fore or aft or all on one side, have no occasion to catch hold of any support to keep their balance.

When under way the first and strongest impression one gets is that of perfect balance. This is apparent as one takes the tiller. In light air there is no helm at all. The boat seems to sail herself. As the breeze increases, she noses up into it as a real boat should. In a stiff breeze she comes up nicely when the tiller is let go. At no time in the winds in which she has been sailed has she shown any tendency to be hard bitted. She responds sensitively to the slightest pressure on the stick.

The long, narrow pivoted centerboard is efficient and can be raised a considerable amount from the extreme lowered position before the effective area is materially decreased. In this way the center of lateral plane is moved aft, making the balance a matter of nice adjustment, no matter what crew is aboard nor the position of their weight.

In spite of the roominess, comfort, safety, and stability which the designers were required to put into Lightning, an equal requirement was that she be fast. That this has been accomplished far beyond normal expectation is well established by reports from all parts of the country during the first two seasons. Perhaps this rather surprising speed is best summed up by the results of Larchmont Race Week in 1939, where the Lightnings conclusively beat all other classes sailing the same course on each of the six days. This included racing boats much larger and carrying more sail.

The parachute spinnaker, a feature of the Lightning Class design, offers every opportunity to express the skipper's racing skill, and makes this boat an ideal training school for handling the big kites of larger boats later on. Like all parachutes, it must be set and handled properly, but the size of the foredeck and the boat's great stability facilitate proper handling.