

LIGHTNING LAB UPDATE & SURVEY RESULTS

Annual Meeting Report from Lisa-Marie Lane, VP Lightning Labs
April 20, 2024

We have been working hard since last October to find ways to make the Lightning Lab Program stronger. Our committee identified the following topics to enrich this program:

Phase 1: What Is a Lightning Lab Survey (To help us understand the missing information we need to share with our members). (Completed)

Phase 2: Make the information about Lightning Labs easy to find on the Class Website and have information for resources to help host Lightning Labs or Fleet Building

- Lightning Lab Email: lightninglabs@lightningclass.org which can be posted on the class site so people will know how to reach out to get for more information on a Lightning Lab. (Completed)
- Lightning Lab Section on Class Page: We are working with Laura to finalize the Web Tab (In Process)
- Resource Center: Create a space where the Lightning Lab VP cross reference / help identify documents/posts/social/past recordings as a resources for Lightning Labs / Fleet Building (In Process)
- Create Sample Lightning Lab Formats to encourage creative thinking and engagement from Fleets (Completed)
- Highlight Recent Lightning Labs for Inspiration & New Ideas, Member Write-Ups after an event (In Process)

I'd like to thank the outstanding volunteers on the Subcommittee for Lightning Labs who have generously given their time and talent to develop this survey & provide feedback/assistance to bring you these results! *Please be sure to thank the following members who made this happen, it truly takes a village:*

Jeffrey Hayden, Co VP Lightning Lab, **Laura Jeffers**, Executive Secretary/Class Representative, **Bertie Werley**, Treasurer, **Joe Buczkowski**, Chief Measurer, **Bob Bush**, **June Neuman** and **Kayla Neuman**.

Most importantly, I would like to thank the 76 class members who took the time to participate in the survey. This survey could not have happened without you—and your involvement is a great indication of how invested our members are in striving to making our class better.

Below is a **brief summary** of class participation stats and responses for the many open-ended questions. Our Subcommittee does not have any final recommendations yet, but have heard you and we will continue to find ways that continue to improve this program. Please remember other than National Regattas, all Lightning Labs are hosted by the Regatta Chair of the event. This is a great opportunity to volunteer to be Regatta Chair or make sure you are involved and share what type of learning would be most helpful to your event. If you have any questions or would like to see the complete survey results, please send me an email: lightninglabs@lightningclass.org.

Lightning Lab Survey Highlights:

Age of Participants	# of Responses
30 + under	4
31-45	9
46-60	17
61-70	27
71+	17
Total	74

Familiarity w Lightning Labs	# of Responses
Very familiar, and comfortable explaining it to fleet members	19
Reasonably familiar	22
Somewhat familiar	13
I've heard of it but that's about it	12
Total	74

Racing Experience	# of Responses
National Level +	38
District Level	19
Fleet/Local Level	16
None	1
Total	74

Prior Attendance of Lightning Lab	# of Responses
None	31
1 - 5	33
6 - 10	8
10+	2
Total	74

Position in Boat	# of Responses
Skipper	45
Crew	9
Both	20
Total	74

More likely to regatta if on the water coaching?	# of Responses
Yes	50
No	12
NA or Blank	12
Total	74

What Worked Well

Experienced Experts

Sail Makers Discussion on Boat Tuning

Panel Discussions/Pairing up of different style speakers to gain different advice.

Speakers that keep the audience engaged (success is dependent on the presenter, they must have a good and fun personality to keep the audience engaged.)

Top Sailors-Getting top sailors to agree to conduct the clinic, share their tips.

Hearing from the Pros, it's always good to hear from the pros as to what they see or expect - particularly when linked to a regatta.

Having a high-level Lightning sailor come out and present was a big draw and got more people than a local expert might have. I also think that the events that happen as part of a regatta are wonderful and provide an excellent incentive to spend the time and money to travel to events.

Nick Turney Clinics_- Weather Briefings: Labs with Nick T before the races going over weather, strategy and alternatives were very good. Outstanding Presenter: Nick Turney is outstanding.

Online Zoom Session/Recorded Topics for Refresher

Online Labs for participants who have time/cost constraints that prevent them from attending a regatta.

Topics Ideas

Rules Review & Examples, New Rules

Upwind / Downwind / Mark Roundings

Steering with sail adjustments both upwind/ downwind

Formats that focus on particular topics followed by practice are the best idea. The US spend millions on youth training and racing thru college, then nothing. I have seen only a few YCs with adult sailing classes, and think this is a huge opportunity for the Lightning class to step into, as a class/fleet at the local level

On the Water/On Shore/Hands On/Practical Skills

On the Water Coaching; It really improved my sail trim and boat handling.

Invaluable feedback for sail trim and boat handling.

On the Water Coaching during an event, as part of a Mentor Fleet.

Small Group Sessions with an Expert

Proper Boat Set-up/Tuning demonstration at a boat; Greg Fisher really helped our fleet get their heads around setting up the boat.

Tuning Refresher/Demonstration of turning and trimming around a fully rigged boat .

Q&A about boat setup takes place while standing near or at a boat-otherwise it may be difficult to communicate details.

Physical fitness is critical for competing in the Lightning, so there might be a way to incorporate some dryland movement (basic calisthenics, warmup, etc.) into a session prior to sailing, or at least a discussion about how to achieve the endurance required for sailing performance.

Take Advantage of Fleet Events; In person short evening events trainings would be an effective and good way to help instruct at the local level and encourage participation in events.

Crew Position Discussions

Experienced Crew Discussions

Hearing from skilled and experienced crew members about how they contribute to overall boat speed and communication; steering isn't everything, and it's really the two crew who make the boat go at full speed.

Post-Race Briefing Sessions with good crew after the race about what they did and why, showed what they did compared to the expected conditions, and assisted correcting and analyzing performance of our crew.

Making the Crew feel part of the Team; Involving a crew member is extremely helpful.

Technical

Create more of a teaching atmosphere.

Early Morning Weather Briefing/Local Knowledge Talks

End of Day Wrap Up; I think it should be at the end of each day.

Labs that are not too long and had a clear agenda.

Utilizing down time during an event - postponements. A great time to add in a little extra enrichment.

Discussions and lectures with concrete solutions and materials.

Open-End Talk so questions can be part of the discussion, the lack of a rigid course of study so that things can be fluid. Q&A The freedom of any participant to ask a question at any time. The freedom to revisit topics until the group understands...

Ability to find past Labs/Recorded Information

Making Sure Speaker Can Be Heard; Helping everyone to hear is sometimes tricky (with wind, competing noises, speaker's soft voice, etc.). Keeping this in mind is worthwhile.

What Did Not Work Well

Experienced Experts

A plan for on the water training is really needed, otherwise things can become disorganized fast.

it's sometimes hard to get 'expert' sailors to be part of the program - their involvement draws quite a few more participants. Maybe we consider reimbursing costs for such marquee level sailors to share their experience.

The lab tended to be dominated by the better skippers talking very fine points in rapid fire. I think the lab benefitted the best skippers in the fleet the most . . . although my intent was to inspire the more marginal motivated skippers to show them a path to better racing. It requires a great instructor to

ensure the message is delivered appropriately to all levels . . . and favoring the lower level to inspire them.

The Right Speaker(s) for the Audience-The labs are inconsistent in quality. Most of the leaders are excellent sailors and committed to their cause, but they might not be the best teachers or the best for the audience they are speaking too. The assessment of what the lab audience wishes to see emphasized is very important. If not done well, the content does not match skills need ideally.

On the water coaching

Needs better organization; Without a organized plan, the on the water part never seems to work well from my perspective.

Lab Format/Topics

Multiple Topics: open discussions with several topics and too many teachers/coaches at one time were hard to follow in one session.

Need Time/Info on back-to-basics, tactics, strategy, boat on boat dynamics, routine 'drills' and generic discussions.

Longer Format and follow-up; I think the format was too short and there was no follow-through to see if sailors were able to apply any of the learnings. Sometimes topics were too nice. In my thinking is good to start certain level and then go deeper.

More Q&A time; In the end leave some time 10-15 min to questions to answer very deep questions.

Not being able to hear the speakers. Need PA system in large crowds; No mic or too much outside noise.