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WORLD YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP

by Duncan Stewart — Canada



World Youth Champions Jarvis, Stewart and Twigg

Once upon an August 1st, in a land far, far away (that's Finland) 30 young sailors gathered for the 1988 Lightning Youth Worlds. Crews from the United States, Canada, Italy, Greece, Chili and even as far away as Finland took part in the event held in the city of Tampere, Finland. We sailed on Lake Nasijarvi whose waters had just been graced with Lightnings of the European Championships.

Ten crews meant ten borrowed boats and a boat rotation system to match. All ten boats were generally in fine condition and ranged from a nice old rolled foredeck Allen to a new state-of-the-art Nickels which we were lucky enough to draw for the practice race on August 1st. This race had the most consistent breeze we saw all week and with a new boat, we were able to reach the first weather mark with a comfortable lead over the second place Americans. Very broad reaches were not much fun but as we were still in the lead at the second weather mark, we decided to obey that old Canuck superstition about not finishing practice races. In other words, we quit while we were still ahead. The Americans, Finnish and Italians all had shown good speed. The boys from Greece had retired early from the race as well.

August 2nd was the first real day of racing with winds from the west varying up and down from 10-13 to start and down to 2-8 with gusts to 12 knots from various directions. Any way you look at it, our poor brains would take a beating!

The Americans crew (from henceforth the "Heavy Americans" at 500 Plus) were thinking hard and came roaring in from the top left to snatch the lead with the fast Finns and Italians also up there. On the next upwind leg, the Italians slipped into first with us also moving up in the pack. The Heavy Americans had an obvious power failure on board

their boat as they slowly dropped back despite their best efforts. Those slippery guys from Greece beat us up the last buck so we had to be satisfied with a third.

We all went ashore to switch boats and gobble down a snack before the lighter air second race. This was a slower race with some fun at the leeward marks but things finally settled down on the last beat. The wind also settled down leaving a small chop. This was not much fun! The top four on the last leg consisted of the Fast Finns, the Heavy Americans, the Italians and with a small lead, us, the crazy Canucks. The Finns and Americans went hard left with great aspirations while we sailed conservatively going up the middle just ahead of the Italians. It all turned out well with a nice sounding gun for us followed by the Americans, Finns and the Italians in that order. The crew from Greece had a bad race which turned into a PMS anyhow. Unfortunately, we were forced to disqualify our Italian friends due to some rather prolific violations of Rule 54 making us all unhappy.

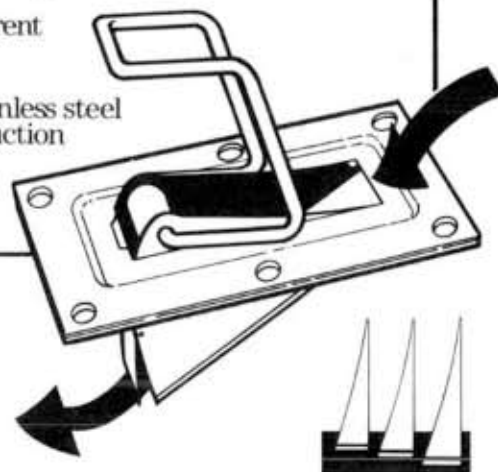
The new day dawned with some very uncertain weather and a new wind direction with rain and clouds passing over. Greece won the start and quickly set up a small lead. We were immediately dropped into last place due to a brief and

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unfortunate incident involving us and the Fast Finn (something about a port vs starboard). After two quick spins, we saw a cloud to the left, sailed for it and by some turn of luck were sixth at the weather mark. With this small toehold, we continued to work our way past the Italians, Chileans and Heavy Americans to end up second. Some fancy gybes helped as did some solid hiking on the second reach of each triangle. We could not catch the Greeks as they were sailing great. The Italians and the heavy guys were also fast to finish third and fourth consecutively.

The fourth race saw the Heavy Americans maintain a lead over the course including an exhilarating planning reach and some more fancy gybes inside others. A 135 degree shift right made the last beat a run in light winds and the Greeks managed a sixth to third comeback. We pulled off another second to clinch the lead after two days of racing followed by the Greeks, Heavy Americans and Fast Finns.

The fifth race saw more of the same kind of conditions with winds around 8-10 knots. This was a very, very bad race for us. We couldn't get the boat set up how we wanted it and allowed this to cloud our thinking. A terrible first beat put us in eighth with our arch-rivals, the Greeks already building a H.J. sized lead. The Finns were also in top form hanging onto a second around the course followed by Fidler from the U.S.A. Lightning 13436 was also in there but unfortunately ended up a PMS. The Italians finished directly ahead of us after an entire leg of close covering. Kinzel had an even worse race than us to finish seventh. Oh well!

Lunchtime break and results pegged the Greeks winning by one point after our poor showing in the last race, the

Finns third and the Americans in fourth. After a bite to eat and handshakes all around, we stepped into our last boat. It was here that Lady Luck smiled upon us for this boat was a spanking new Allen, one of the two best boats in the fleet. We decided upon a revived strategy for this last race on the way out. No more "pussy-foot conservatism" said my crew! "Attack the Greeks"!

When we finally started in 2-3 knot breezes, we set up a lee bow on the Greeks and then two quick tacks as soon as we could cross their bow. We sailed very squarely (and nastily) on their face as the wind died. The fleet spread out a lot in the next 20 minutes and when a very solid wind line finally filled in, it was from the right where naturally, the American contingent was hiding out.... It finally reached us and then the Greeks and we rounded sixth and seventh. Unfortunately, we were still behind the Italians in fifth place. Our speed on the first reach (actually a run) was good but the Italians wouldn't let us pass. A douse and then a close reach to the leeward mark followed in the same order. We started to get nervous about this time and frustrated too as the Italians countered our every move upwind. We finally got past them after a tacking duel and also caught Fidler on the run. We were now looking good in fourth with the Greeks seventh up the last beat. Just when we thought we were safe, the Italians and Americans began a tacking duel slowing both of them down immensely. The Greeks were now looking good on the opposite side of the course and we started sweating again, worried that the Greeks would finish right behind us and win with a tie-breaker. Under pressure again, our crew started to perform superbly and managed to pass

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the Finns just at the finish line to be third behind Lahtinen and Kinzel. It turned out that all that worry was for nothing because both the Italians and Americans finished ahead of the Greeks.

And so our Regatta came to a close. My crew, Geoff Jarvis and Stewart Twigg and I had managed to win the World Youth Championship for Canada. Greece with skipper Dimon Alexandros was second, Finland with skipper Ville Lahtinen was third, the USA with skipper Philip Kinzel was fourth and Italy with skipper Vito Tripoli was fifth. We all had a celebration that night and we Canadians flew out on Sunday, August 7th with good memories and many new friends.

From World Youth Championship Chairman: Pentti Laitinen

The World Youth Championships were sailed in very demanding conditions. The winds were very shifty and demanded all the skill these young Lightning sailors possessed.

For the very first time, we had an all female crew participating in this Championship. The young ladies are already planning their next season and hope to participate in the North Americans.

We hope that all the contestants had a good time and will have fond memories of their sailing experience in Finland.

World Youth Championship — 1988

Pos.	Sail #	Skipper & Crew	Country	Races						Pts.
				1	2	3	4	5	6	
1	11631	Duncan Stewart, Geoff Jarvis, Twigg Stewart	Canada	3	1	2	2	(5)	3	11
2	11459	Alexandros Dimou, Stefano Handakas, Jacovos Kikianis	Greece	2	(PMS)	1	3	1	7	14
3	14018	Ville Lahtinen, Juha Ruskeepaa, Antti Lahtinen	Finland	4	3	(9)	4	2	2	15
4	14180	Philip Kinzel, Owen Carolan, Mitchell Hnatt	U.S.A.	(9)	4	4	1	7	1	17
5	13481	Vito Tripoli, Francesco Parrinello, Fabio Spano	Italy	1	(DSQ)	3	10	4	5	23
6	14280	Sean Fidler, Jon Bennet, John Lauderbach	U.S.A.	7	2	6	(7)	3	6	24
7	13436	Ari Nissinen, Antti Nissinen, Ransu Salovaara	Finland	6	6	5	6	(PMS)	4	27
8	13413	Miimu Matilainen, Outi Haila, Maija Pyy	Finland	5	7	8	5	(PMS)	8	33
9	13282	Juan Carlos Ramirez, Pablo Ramirez, Hernan Holch	Chile	8	5	7	8	6	(10)	34
10	13734	Anssi Lilja, Katri Kupiainen, Tuomo Hintikka	Finland	10	8	(PMS)	9	8	9	44

() Throw-out PMS, DSQ = 12



The World Youth Championship, 1988. Tampere, Finland. From left to right: Skipper Vito Tripoli, Italy, 5th; crew Jacovos Kikianis, Greece, 2nd; skipper Dimou Alexandros, Greece, 2nd; crew Stefano Handakas, Greece, 2nd. Crew Geoff Jarvis, Canada, World Champion; skipper Stewart Duncan, Canada, World Champion; crew Stewart Twigg, Canada, World Champion; Crew Juha Ruskeepaa, Finland, 3rd; Crew Antti Lahtinen, Finland, 3rd; skipper Ville Lahtinen, Finland, 3rd.
Photo Credit: Pentti Laitinen