

# Harris Clan Involved In Big Way At Their First North American Championship

## *Five of Six Boats from Fleet 54, Pontiac Yacht Club Qualify for Yellow Fleet*

by Greg Harris/Jim Harris

The Harris clan got involved with the Lightning North Americans in a big way for the first time. Greg and Meghan along with brother Steve were registered on our boat (13909) and Jim and Connie raced with Dr. Jim McCoy on his boat (14363). We all converged on Rochester, New York at different times and from different places. Jim and Connie trailered our boat along with Jim McCoy and his boat on Friday, August 17 while Steve flew in from Houston, Texas. Greg, Meghan, and Anna (our future crew member) drove in from Cape Cod, Massachusetts on Saturday, August 18.

Saturday morning of the North Americans Championships was weight in, registration, and measuring for the Lightnings. There were 130 boats neatly jammed into two parking lots at Rochester Yacht Club. By 1:00 p.m., all 130 boats were through the assembly line and ready to launch. The gun went off for the tuning race and 40-50 boats were dumped into the water and quick to head for sea. The McCoy/Harris/Harris team had reached 30 minutes to the start and then made their first tack only to realize that the upper shroud was not attached to the boat. They decided to limp back to shore with a jib and a mast bowed to lee from the spreaders up.

There was tension in the air on Sunday morning as the wind gusted to 25 knots and the waves crashed over the breakwall. The wind was from the northeast, straight in to the harbor channel. It was cold, rainy, and blowing like stink. Welcome to Rochester, New York, where it never blows hard. This was the start of the weather limited North Americans. At noon, the races were officially postponed for the day. Many of the crews spent the afternoon at a nearby bowling alley. It was entertaining to watch a bunch of sailors launching cannonballs down the alleys. Not many scores were seen in the triple digits.

Even though the races were cancelled, one crew from Vermont felt it necessary to show the rest that they could conquer mother nature. They made it out the channel and into the lake without trouble. As they made their way out into the lake, they attracted a large audience of previously bored sailors watching from the local Coast Guard station. They turned around and headed back toward land screaming at incredible speeds. Just when we thought they knew what they were doing, a brightly colored spinnaker arose and quickly filled. Are they Crazy? The crowd all watched in amazement as they occasionally disappeared in the shadow of the huge swells that had built. It was enough that they popped the chute, but they decided to enter the channel with it up, between two big breakwalls. The waves became chaotic and just inside the breakwall, an unfriendly wave sent them in to the dreaded "death roll" and it was capsized city or time to sail the centerboard trick. This incident sent a shock wave through Rochester as the coast guard, at first hesitant, mustered the courage to attempt a rescue. On land, police

cars, firetrucks, and ambulances converged out of nowhere. The crowd increased in size as word spread and two local newscast teams arrived. The boat was spit back out of the channel due to current and they floated to the beach without mast or mainsail, but all crew members were intact except a coast guard member who did a face plant in the rescue boat after it slammed into a wave.

Monday was cool, cloudy and windy. The storm from Sunday had inverted the water in Lake Ontario changing the surface water temperature from 74 degrees to 41-44 degrees. Three qualifying races were run one after another. With 130 boats swarming the starting area, it made for an unbelievable sight and quite a task to miss them all. The legs seemed extraordinarily long, about the length of one Cass Lake race course per leg. The McCoy/Harris 2 team got quite dizzy during the second qualifying race as they had to do a record three 720's. They seemed to have an undying attraction for the first mark as they hit it the first two roundings and then after hitting the mark the first time, they ran into another boat after they floated below the mark. Such a deal! There were three fleets for each race and each race was set up so that you would race against different boats. In the end, five of six PYC boats qualified (or defaulted) for the Yellow or third fleet; Whatley, Humphrey, Hess, McCoy, and Harris. Sean Fidler found himself on the bubble, the grey area between the Blue (1st) fleet and the Green (2nd) fleet. He ended up in the Blue fleet made up of 37 boats, the Green fleet with 45 boats, and the Yellow fleet with 45 boats.

Tuesday was the start of the action as the wind and waves were moderate. There was great anticipation in the air at the start of the first race, but toward the end of the first leg of the yellow fleet race it had worn off in the heat of the battle. The McCoy/Harris 2 team and the Harris 3 team exchanged goofy looks and "thumbs up" signs as they frequently crossed tacks. We both were in the top ten at the first mark with the other PYC boats keeping good company. It was amazing to look back on that first reach and see 40 spinnakers. The Whatley team showed everyone how to get around the course and took first with the Hess team taking second after a strong final leg. The generous McCoy/Harris 2 team finished in fifth place. The Humphrey team followed in sixth place. Not a bad performance from PYC! Five of the top six places! The second race began shortly after and at the first weather mark both of our boats tried to round at the same time 20 other boats were attempting to round. The Harris 3 team made it around cleanly, however the McCoy/Harris 2 team's attraction for the first mark was unfulfilled as they hit it. After the second weather mark, the Harris 3 team worked its way up to second place. On the final reach leg with the Whatley team leading the way again, a gun was sounded twice. As the Whatley boat began to round the leeward mark, an addition gun was sounded. Hey, is that the finish?!

am not sure. Just keep racing. The Humphrey team had pulled even with the Harris 3 team and eventually rolled past to the sound of a horn at the leeward mark. Yep, that's the finish. Hey, we took third! The McCoy/Harris 2 team was in the recovery mode throughout this race due to their love affair with the first mark and managed a 20th. The Hess team had to make use of the human spinnaker pole after their primary pole frapped slowing them to 27th place. Sean Fidler and crew had taken a 30th in the first race and an impressive 10th place in the second race of the Blue Fleet.

That evening, all Michigan Lightning crews were invited to a barbeque at Jill Meyerson's parents house. Jill who now lives in Michigan and was racing with Jim Scoffield is originally from Rochester. It was a great time and the food was exceptional. After a few sailors mistook their screen door as air some tape was put on the door in an attempt to control traffic. A big thanks to the Meyerson's for their superior hospitality.

This article is almost over, don't quit now! Wednesday brought warmer weather. Now what happens when you mix warm air and cold water? FOG! This was a day to hurry up and wait. All morning and up to 2:00 p.m. when all races for the day were cancelled. To keep everyone awake, a 16-team match race series was set up to run in the harbor/channel area for fun. It was a single eliminations series. There was some very impressive boat handling displayed throughout this "First Annual Fogged-in Match Race Championship." Brad Read of Shore Sails won the championship match with the remaining Lightning crews sitting around on the break-wall cheering and sipping beverages of the foamy type. Steve Harris had to fly out on business that evening and thus reducing the Harris 3 team to the Harris 2 plus "whoever we could find" team. There was a barbeque at the Rochester Yacht Club that evening with a 50s/60s band. Karen Park was decked out for the occasion looking dressed to kill. The fog finally lifted in time for the RYC regular Wednesday night races for the big boats. How Convenient!

Thursday brought much of the same as Wednesday morning had. MORE FOG! It appeared as though the fog was burning off so the race committee had all Lightning crews launch their boats all sail to the mouth of the channel to standby to standby. Everyone tied up to the breakwall as we waited for the fog to burn off. Sean thought it might be a good idea to use his anchor to hold his boat off the wall.

When he went to launch the anchor he missed a critical step in the process, to tie down the anchor line. He received a standing ovation from all of the crews nearby watching. As he made his way to the marine store to buy another anchor, he questioned where he might find the funds. Well, the fog finally cleared enough to start the races. The wind was light to void. After the first mark of the Yellow fleet, the fog moved back in and we were lucky to see the boats next to us. We had to jibe a couple of times to find the jibe mark. Again the fog cleared slightly, but the wind died except a breath here and there. After the leeward mark, the fog thickened and the wind was patchy. With the McCoy/Harris 2 team in with the leaders, the Yellow fleet race was cancelled due to the time limit. Their redemption was very short lived. As for the Harris 2 "plus a local high school student" team, hurray for the race committee, we were in the proverbial tank at the time. By now the fog was thicker than a churned up Cass Lake as boats flocked around various motorized committee boats to be towed in. A few lost ducks were found sailing toward land. Both the Blue and Green fleets had completed their races in time with Sean taking a 30th in the Blue.

Friday, the final day, what do we have for weather conditions? FOG! This hurry up and wait business is starting to get on our nerves! It apparently got on the race committees nerves too, because they lined us up in rows of 35 and towed us around Lake Ontario for a better view of the fog. Yep, more fog out here and look there's more fog over there. Hey wait, looks like its starting to lift. No, I think its filling back in. So they towed us back in and called it a day, a week, a very short Lightning North American Championship! Two races in four days for the Yellow fleet and three races for the Blue and Green fleets. Friday evening was the awards banquet. The Harris 3 team accepted the third place award after tie breaker rules and the Humphrey team was awarded second place. It ought to be illegal for Joel to operate a microphone! Congratulations to Mark Whatley, Bob Mathers, and Leslie Fink on their first place in the Yellow Fleet, they had Green fleet speed easily. The McCoy/Harris 2 team ended up in ninth place and the Hess team in 12th. Sean Fidler and crew ended up taking 26th place in the Blue fleet. A fine turn out for the PYC crews although we bet that next year will be an even stronger turn out when the N.A.'s are held at Newport, Rhode Island.



## SCOTT SAILS

**HIGH SPEED WITHOUT THE HIGH PRICE!**

**SAVE ON SUMMER DISCOUNTS!**

MAIN ..... \$395 + \$20 ROYALTY  
 JIB ..... \$225 + \$20 ROYALTY  
 SPINNAKER ..... \$375 + \$20 ROYALTY  
**(MAIN & JIB TOGETHER \$595)**



**SCOTT SAILS**  
 P.O. BOX 7832  
 San Diego, CA 92167  
 (619) 222-8788

**CALL OR WRITE SCOTT FINKBONER NOW!**

### SCOTT SAILS RACE RESULTS

- 1987** North Americans  
 2nd President's Fleet  
 2nd District Championships
- 1988** North Americans  
 2nd Junior Championships  
 1st, 5th District Championships  
 1st Mission Bay Yacht Club  
 Championship
- 1989** 2nd Pacific Coast  
 Championships  
 1st Inter-Fleet Championship  
 2nd Fleet Championship  
 3rd District Championships
- 1990** 1st, 4th S.C.Y.A. Midwinters  
 Olympic Classes Regatta  
 2nd, 3rd, 5th, & 8th

# Understanding Jib Sag

by Dave Starck

Many of us Lightning sailors (or any One Design sailor) spend an exorbitant amount of time making sure our sailplan and rig is tuned properly using the adjustments available to us. Centering the mast side to side, making certain it is straight, butt position, and paying attention to rake are usually the criterion we abide by. Further, mast blocking for the existing conditions is also a common tuning step we take to induce prebend. There is however another important ingredient which we may not always have on the top of our "things to tune" list....Jib Sag.

Jib sag may be the single most important gear we have on the Lightning to help power-up/depower the rig. Utilizing the tools available for power (backstay, mainsheet blocks, cloth, etc.) are essential to control the entry and fullness of the jib. Hence, jib sag may be that missing ingredient to your tuning and racing success.

Wouldn't it be great if we could add cloth to a sail when the winds were light and the seas choppy and, in an instant, reduce the amount of cloth when the weather turned. In essence, this is exactly what we are accomplishing with the idea of jib sag. In light to moderate winds and chop, inducing jib sag accomplishes many other things on our "wish list". First of all, in these trying conditions, it seems we are constantly hunting for power. That is, driving the boat through the water becomes more important than pointing and concentrating on gaining lateral distance on the competition. Secondly, induced jib sag allows the sail to be much fuller and more powerful as well as forgiving. Hence, your groove to steer through the water is wider and easier.

Now, the flipside to this is moderate to heavy winds and rough weather. When these conditions are witnessed, depowering the jib (and entire sailplan for that matter) is our primary goal. Straightening the headstay (jib luff) through the use of the tools available to us will "reduce" the amount of cloth in the jib, making it flatter and less efficient. Pointing higher will also come about at this time.

In understanding jib sag and how it relates to your setup, the two most important tools we have to control sag are mainsheet tension and backstay mainsheet tension will suffice in conditions where you do not have to depower the boat. When sailing with two on the rail and sometimes three, these conditions do not necessarily warrant backstay. If you feel your jib is too full and powerful, utilizing the wire and cloth controls can be helpful. Likewise, jib lead position can also be controlled without altering the shape on your mainsail.

In conditions where sailing overpowered is the norm, the entire sailplan must be changed. In this case, your backstay adjust now becomes critical. Using all your other controls to straighten and flatten the jib aren't enough. Constant backstay adjustments will enable you to point high in the puffs with a straight luff entry and bladed sails, and will give you that needed power in the infrequent lulls. It's just amazing



*Speed testing with a partner is the best way to judge your best setup and speed. I suggest setting up your boat in various ways to see which feels the best.*

how well the boat sails through the water when both sails are working together. The trick is to be able to "change gears" with variations in the wind velocity and waves.

Finally, I think it's important to touch on prebend, and its effects on both the jib sag and mainsail shape. There are a couple of reasons for inducing prebend into our Lightning mast. In moderate breeze, blocking the mast forward (putting blocks behind the mast) will give you more control and feel over your jib sag and effectively allow you to sail your jib independent of the mainsail. Prebending your mast also affects your mainsail, making the lower third section of the sail flatter.

When we are sailing in heavier winds (15+ knots) with prebend, it is tough to control the jib sag. That is, to straighten the headsay (jib luff) we have to pull on maximum backstay. This situation is not necessarily good because, with maximum backstay, our mainsail becomes too flat and depowered for the conditions. Therefore, to find a happy medium in these conditions, we must change our blocking configuration and change our prebend. Removing the blocks from behind the mast and blocking the mast aft is recommended. Now we are able to pull on the backstay and control both sails effectively, not just one of them.

I hope this article helps you to understand jib sag. It is too easy to set up your boat on land and get caught up with all the measurements which are drilled into our heads. Granted, mast rake, butt position, side to side measurements, etc. are important, but I think it is important to channel some extra effort towards jib sag. I guarantee it will be helpful to you.



# Regatta

By Julie Moore

*(Crew on Blue Thunder 11368 owned and skippered by David Gall. Forward crew is Richard Jacobs.)*

Below the feathery pine boughs cars are parked haphazardly in the Skipper's drive. There were no visible skid marks, but I could have missed them. Each license plate bears a different county, each car's a different style, but the crew bears the same label — Lightning. We're mulling around packing some last minute things, repairing taillights, making small talk, kicking stones, smiling, laughing. Anxiety is high. All a prelude. There is nothing quite like it when we meet to regatta.

Regatta is one of those sailing words that may be used as a noun, verb, or adjective. For example, you could be going to a regatta or you could be regatta-ing or you could say it was a regatta. Only sailors can begin to understand the true significance of this multi-purpose word. Regatta. It stirs up images of tall ships gracefully floating along the shore; of parking lots packed with boats and cars and gear; of parties, good times, escape.

The laughter and partying in the dimming driveway's light is a far cry from the day's start. It's a perfect fall day. The wind's up, the clouds float by like lonely tankers on an endless sea of shining blue sky. I peer out my narrow office window. It's not time yet. I glance at my watch. My foot begins to twitch under my desk. Did I pack everything? There's something I must have forgotten. It's Friday and tonight we pack it in and move it out. Regatta time is almost here. My eyes glide back to the pages in front of me.

After a concerted effort to get in the car, the last door slams and we're off like a race horse from its starting gate; a slow race horse. The gray Subaru mare lumbers down the road fading into the approaching nightfall. Clip, clop. Its back deck is packed with the essentials — foul weather gear, dry clothes, tent, sleeping bags, food and the fruit that we never seem to eat, but feel obligated to bring.

"Are you ready for the 'thang' called love/ Don't come from me and you it comes from up above/ I ain't no porcupine take off your kid gloves ... Push comes to shove, shove comes to touch, touch will come to love..." sing it Bonnie. The smell of Snyder's chips, Genny Cream and Paramount peppermint schnapps fills the air. Crunch. The bag of peanut M & M's has just been attacked. Sailing food. Regatta music. Three lawyers out for a land sail; a weekend of adventure, escape.

Behind the wagon the ting, ting of the mast's shrouds occasionally hit a beat in time with the music. The boat seductively sways to the rhythm, her bow tucked tightly under dirty canvas pajamas spattered with road grime, her deck covered with army canvas strapped to her with extra spinnaker line, like a corset, to keep her from being exposed. The corset jumps a bit, testing to see if it can fly down the highway behind us.

In the dusk she looks like some giant reptile that has been killed by some unknown predator with four wheels, that is proudly dragging its kill along mile after mile of asphalt. But she is a ballerina; tomorrow she will dance.

Ahead, deep purples and blue paint the sky while swashes

of gold pierce their bond, silhouetting the pines along the roadside. With every passing second the viewing screen before us intensifies in color, slowly fading its picture into the night. The horizon begins to swallow the car, but the sun's setting remains captured in the orange glow of the dash and the passing yellow lines that bounce from the asphalt, nudged by the oncoming headlights. Bright green signs scream out the distance we must yet travel, but nobody cares. "...Don't need no long Cadillac...Don't need a man with a monkey on his back...I want a real man..." Bonnie's hot tonight. We're on a regatta.

People in the neighboring lane pass us as if we're standing still. Some look into the car, squint at the driver, turn their heads back at the boat, look at the driver again, and shake their heads in disbelief. These are usually old folk, affectionately referred to as hats and wigs. Others, who understand, look at the driver and smile. We usually look back and smile. They know about regattaing.

Regattaing is a toast to life, a way of life. There's regatta music, regatta food, regatta clothing, regatta time. It's the sound of people gathering, of water, of words on the water, of party music rising from beyond the clubhouse or tent, the tapes in the car that say we're on our way. It's a special kind of music — upbeat rock, Zeppelin, Bonnie, clogging music. If you can't hop to it in the car, then it's not regatta music.

The food is a mixture of whatever's available, and it's always got that down home flavor; always good. The clothing has to be warm and dry at times, but at others, lightweight and day-glo. Fun clothes for fun times. And regatta time, well, before a regatta we're on regatta time, the "hours 'til" countdown, but once we meet, there is no time, only regatta.

We do a starboard tack to the Frisch's Big Boy. Skipper's low on grease and needs to fill his tank. We all take a booth at the end of the line. We're laughing a bit too loud over recent Far Side cartoons. The waitress thinks we're drunk. Skipper's disappointed; his paper wrapper didn't fly off his straw. Don't make 'em like they used to. Spoon trick didn't work either. We pay our bill, grab a handful of suckers and climb into the land cruiser, proudly counting the twelve plus parking spaces we have unabashedly consumed.

This is the point in our journey where our forward crew usually educates us about some simple topic that turns into a brief reading of Encyclopedia Britannica. Weather? Yep. Done that one. Milking cows? Yep. Done that one too. He's an endless well of knowledge. We're always fascinated by him. I quietly whisper to the Skipper, "Where does he pick up all this stuff?" Skipper smiles and shrugs.

As our destination approaches, the conversation turns to the next day's races. Strategy is discussed, suggestions are made, we contemplate who will show, who will win, where we could hope to place and what time everyone should be ready. The results of this "serious talk" never materialize. We carry out little of the strategy, rarely win and usually find ourselves running to the boat just before the gun.

The music has become noticeably softer. It's been a long day and we're all starting to crash and burn. The silhouettes have disappeared.

The land cruiser crunches over the gravel road that leads to the next sea of battle. It's cold outside and we spend a few moments at the clubhouse fire to warm our chilled bones for the night. It's gonna be a cold one.

Miraculously, the tent is up, the crew is down and forward crew is snoring before the rest of us can get the sleeping bags untangled and zipped. There's nothing around but the stars, the moon and the whisper of the wind singing us its lullaby.

Morning is trumpeted by forward crew's noisy rattle of ripstock nylon as he unzips the tent to go out for a stretch. I roll over.

"What time is it?"

"Six."

I roll back and pull the pillow over my head begging for the mercy of sleep. Denied.

One by one, like scavengers, looking like something that even the cat would have reservations about dragging in, we hit the clubhouse; bathrooms first, kitchen next. Coffee, the fuel of champions. "Yeah, I'll have some of that. Thanks." My eyes still can't focus and my back's a bit stiff from the tent, but give me that coffee. Sailor's aches. But it's a beautiful day and we be sailing....

The day's races end; we hit the showers. The warm water streaking down my tired, hiked-out body feels good. I peel some blistered skin from my palms. "Chute was a little tough today," I think. The sea sludge is draining into the basin below my feet in a soapy gray mass. Slowly, I begin to feel human again. That warm feeling is short-lived. I'm out of hot water. I grab a towel and swab the decks to prevent totally freezing, but at least I'm clean. Besides, can't stay in

those showers too long after being on the water all day — the walls move.

Dinner and drinks and stories follow under the amber lights of the pavilion, but already there is a change in the air. Tomorrow we must go home. The unspoken reality of the upcoming departure is masked by laughter and gossip about famous sailors, by the Reds' game, by other sub-parties. We have already packed some things in the land cruiser.

I venture alone into the darkness and seat myself upon a Laser under a barren tree, clutching my legs against my chest in the frosty evening air. In the distance, the clubhouse is alive with roars cheering on the Reds and it glows against the emptiness I feel. Above me, thousands of stars puncture the sky, each one trying to win my affections. But it is the barren tree that wins as it wraps its branches around me in comfort. The regatta is almost over and I am melancholy; I will be leaving my friends soon.

The final day of racing concludes; awards are distributed; some are in a hurry to go back; we start to pull down the tent. It looks defeated, helpless, dead upon the pavilion's cement floor. It just lies there in a silent, curled mass of turquoise and gold. Just one more race? The car is packed to the gills, gasping for air, and reluctantly, one by one we climb in.

The journey out is nearly silent, all of us taking one last look, reflecting upon the events of the last hours. There is no music playing. The dust brushes along the car's lower panels, puffing back to the boat as a ray of sunlight sparks upon our trophy resting quietly, proudly, upon the dashboard. It will be a long drive home. Another regatta has ended. The land cruiser sails down the road.

The golden trees sprouting from the corn fields wave goodbye.

Division of Cooper Color Graphics  
567 East Hudson Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43211  
(614) 268-2844



## SCIOTO PRINTING COMPANY

*A Full Service Printer*

*Serving the International Lightning Class Association  
for many years.*