

GYA Lightning Championship
Fairhope Yacht Club
September 24-25, 2016

Pos	Skipper	Sail#	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	Total
1	Tommy Meric	15329	5	2	2	3	1	13
2	Lawrence Frost	15211	2	3	1	6	2	14
3	Jeanne Herman	15306	3	1	3	7	6	20
4	Ben Herman	14136	4	8	5	2	3	22
5	Clarke Newman	15360	1	5	6	5	5	22
6	Clerc Cooper	14737	7	6	7	1	4	25
7	Robert Bernhardt	15201	6	4	4	4	7	25
8	Buddy Clark	13957	8	7	8	8	8	39
9	John Buziak	14507	10	9	9	9	10	47

GYA Gulf Coast Lightning Championship

The GYA Gulf Coast Lightning Championship was held at the Fairhope Yacht Club on the weekend of September 24-25, 2016 at the Wadewitz Regatta. Tommy Meric, daughter Hartley Crunk and Ross Kirk were the eventual winners of the Championship after very competitive racing. The regatta ended with five races sailed and five different winners of each of the races.

Clarke Newman, a long time competitor in the Lightning class from Texas, started the series with a win in race 1. Then there was Jeanne Herman in race 2 and Larry Frost in race 3. New to the fleet was Clerc Cooper, a distinguished collegiate sailor, showing her strength in race 4. Robert Bernhardt also showed his wisdom by getting to the weather mark in the top of the fleet in all of the races. Ben Herman showed spurts of speed and sailed well. Let's not forget John Buziak from Pensacola and Buddy Clark from PCYC, both of whom were true Corinthians and showed some sparks of brilliance. The Meric Team managed to maintain consistency in the challenging conditions with two seconds and a third in races 2, 3 & 4 and a fifth in race 1, after being over early at the start. Going into the last race, the Meric Team was tied with Larry Frost who also suffered with a sixth place finish in race 4 after also being over early at the start.

The series was now down to the wire with who beat who in the last race. With a good start and good upwind positioning, Meric rounded in the top of the fleet at the first mark with Larry behind. It was not until the second weather mark that the Meric Team rounded the top mark in first place, holding off Larry on the final leg, to gain a win in the final race and clinch the Championship. Along with the victory came the coveted Eugene Taylor Trophy and the recently rediscovered Overton Trophy from Fairhope Yacht Club.

Comments after the regatta from the winning team were as follows:

Hartley Crunk and Ross Kirk acknowledged that the racing was tight for the entire regatta and each leg brought on a new challenge. We kept to the adage of maintaining pace and being steady and consistent, which was a good template to win. The results proved this to be true, with only one race out of the top three and a win in the pressure race, which clinched the Championship.

Plenty of tuning went on before hitting the water on Saturday and our boat was set up perfectly for the conditions. Crew work improved after the first race as we worked through the cobwebs. Meric noted that the regatta was won on three beautifully executed roll tacks at critical moments during the series. The Lightning Class in the Southern District is tight and growing with good interest and great venues for racing, including one of our favorites, Fairhope Yacht Club.

It was a well-run regatta, with good decisions on the water, resulting in good competitive racing. This was Hartley's first time sailing since sailing in the Lightning North American's in October of 2015 while pregnant with her daughter, Elsie. This was also the first time our crew sailed together. A huge thank you to Tommy's wife Mina and Hartley's husband Blair for supporting us. Elsie was our good luck charm and you can look forward to seeing her at many regattas in the future.