

Southeastern Lightning District

Under 30 Regatta

Colombia Sailing Club, Colombia, SC

October 4-5, 2019

The day of the 1st annual Under 30 Lightning Regatta dawned under cloudy skies that turned to a cold drizzle while everyone was setting up their boats. We beat a quick retreat to CSC's big porch, where George Scarborough and I discussed some boat-handling skills with the teams, and I threatened to toss both boats out of any incidents involving a collision. Coach Hamm, our PRO, went over the (verbal) SI's for the day, which were basic high school/collegiate sailing rules: 3-minute whistle starts, 1 whistle in lieu of the X flag, and 2 whistles for a general recall. We wanted to keep it simple. Windward-leeward, twice around, with the pin end of the line doing double time as the leeward mark. Winds were shifty from the NE at 7 – 10, with gusts to 15, which made things exciting at times. For the last race of the day, it was a steady 12 – 15.

By and large, the sailors took to it like ducks to water. I think all the boats had at least one person on board with spinnaker experience, but many had never sailed on a Lightning before, some crews had never sailed together at all, and 4 of the teams only had about 1 -2 hours experience on the boats. We provided some sail trim advice during the first race, but after that only gave suggestions if it appeared that a boat or crew was in potential trouble. After the first 3 races, Jack McKenzie, Mason Baird, and Carson Shaw, Jamestown High School sailors, were tied with USC sailors David Manley, Ellis McLaughlin, and Ian Street. These two teams are shown going upwind below:



winners)

Jack, Mason, Carson (eventual

Unfortunately, a breakdown on Manley's boat put them out of the running as they struggled to sail without working jib cleats for Races 4 and 5, and finally had to retire before the 6th race.



David, Ian, Ellis

Wheeler Sutton, who has been sailing middle for Team Reddaway, took the helm for this regatta, along with two other Ga Tech sailors, Caroline Speir and Robert Beauchamp, and showed that consistency works, finishing 2nd overall.



Wheeler, Robert, Caroline

USC sailor Sarah DeLoach, with her crew of Jared Cronin and Hunter Damon, were close behind in 3rd. In fact, the 2nd – 5th place boats were separated by a point each.



Sarah, Hunter, Jared

A third team of USC sailors, Ryan Hargrave, Chris Chaplin and Britton Durst came on strong in the last 3 races with a 1-4-1, but fell a couple of points short of equaling McKenzie's team's finishes of 2-1-2.



Ryan, Chris, and Britton

What really surprised us in this regatta was how competitive the boats were even without a spinnaker. Wheeler's team had to sail a race without one because the halyard came untied and skied, and Grace O'Hare's team (also from USC), shown below, elected not to fly one, a decision made respectful of the fact that they were sailing a borrowed boat. Nevertheless, these two teams managed to hold their own downwind.



Grace, Jessica, Jack

I can't begin to tell you how exciting it was to watch this group of sailors. The racing was often as tight as it is in a regular Lightning regatta, and breath-taking at times to watch, as can be seen in the photos below.



Shortly after a start



McKenzie, DeLoach, Hargrave at offset



Approaching leeward mark

One time, we clocked a group of 3 boats going upwind at 7 ½ knots! Coming into the leeward mark, I usually was beside myself with anxiety, (as the people on the safety/coach boat could attest), because the boats were so close together (as seen above), and no one wanted to be the first person to hoist their jib or take down their chute. Bruce Seiffert, CSC Vice Commodore commented, “While we had only 6 boats the energy level and excitement they were having was truly fun to watch and the learning curve in such conditions was only accelerated. The sportsmanship was something I was looking for as they are the future of our great sport and they exemplified this with their overall attitude towards each other. We had a protest that was turned into a teaching moment which was a great idea having it be an open protest format....and speaking for CSC we would love to do it again.”

It was a little chaotic at times. But many of the spinnaker sets were great, going up within a boat length of the offset mark, and quickly fixing hourglasses, etc. Some of the finishes were so close that we had to ask Coach Hamm for the results.

One image that Wendy and I won't soon forget was watching Sarah DeLoach (120 lb) single-handedly fish her middle crew, Hunter Damon (190 lb) out of the water just after a leeward mark rounding.

But the photos, taken by Walter Everett of CSC, say a lot more than I can. You can see them all here, https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipMd4tgs-WOvDo47CFrETe-38ORZaOP162D1nluSJDjfb00k2doxnZ_ESdv4w7e66w?key=Q0hrbTh0WlpLaVZDRTNvTFd3bFRBbmxmTWfLVk9n. More can be seen here (taken by Lisa and Chris DeLoach): <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1uquyv-457eaBfk1S510SQVOtFMcdKNUP>

All in all, I think the regatta was a success, due in large part to the people who volunteered to help with it. The unforgettable RC team, headed by PRO Ryan Hamm, ably assisted by CSC members Roger Dougal and Jim Edwards (Rear commodore), and Heather Hamm, helped Wheeler's team retrieve their spinnaker halyard.



RC: Roger, Heather, Ryan (PRO), Jim



Halyard retrieval by RC (which almost turned into a disaster as the main halyard looped around the antenna on the RC's mast)

David Mosely, CSC commodore, assisted by 2 USC students, ran the weather and offset marks, CSC member Mike DeHart and Briggs Monteith ran the leeward mark/pin, and Bruce Seiffert (CSC vice commodore) captained the safety/coach boat (and put up with my running commentary and excitability). George Scarborough made the trip up from Charleston to help with onshore rigging/de-rigging, and trailered Ryan Davidson's boat back to Charleston, as well as providing on-the-water assistance to sailors. Wendy McKenzie came up to help with RC, but at that point we had plenty of people, so she got to enjoy watching her son's performance. Maria DeHart (Ryan Hargrave's mother) got together the refreshments and trophies, assisted by my mom, Judy, and her husband Fred Williams. Many thanks to CSC for letting us host this regatta there, and thanks to all the boat owners who lent their boats: Briggs Monteith, Lesesne Monteith, Ryan Hamm, and Ryan Davidson.

I hope that this is the beginning of an (at the very least) annual event, with the maximum age trending downwards. It was exciting to watch these teams improve so quickly, under conditions that were tricky for the best of sailors. And I love the short race format (although I know that George and I differ on this). It was hard for me to watch sometimes too, but now

that it's all over, I feel like I went through a character-building experience. I didn't realize how painful it would be to watch my boat being put into potentially damaging situations. But these folks did an extraordinary job of sailing in positions new to them, on boats not familiar to them, and if the worst thing that happened was a couple of breakdowns (not of their own making), or a skied halyard, or a capsize, well, that's just sailing.



2019 Under 30 Competitors, with Regatta Chair Elaine Parshall



2019 Under 30 Winners: Carson Shaw, Jack McKenzie, Mason Baird

Full Results

Sail #	Skipper/Crew	Race						Final Score	Position
		1	2	3	4	5	6		
14728	Jack McKenzie, Mason Baird, Carson Shaw	1	3	2	2	1	2	8	1
15387	Wheeler Sutton, Caroline Speir, Robert Beauchamp	3	2	3	4	3	3	14	2
15147	Sarah DeLoach, Hunter Damon, Jared Cronin	2	4	4	3	2	4	15	3
14455	David Manley, Ellis McLaughlin, Ian Street	4	1	1	5	5	DNS	16	4
14728B	Ryan Hargrave, Chris Chaplin , Britton Durst	5	6	DSQ	1	4	1	17	5
14780	Grace O'Hare, Jessica Craft, Jack Drury	6	5	5	6	DNF	DNS	29	6