

Nigerian National Championships Lagos Yacht Club - Fleet 510 Lagos, Nigeria May 5-6, 2007

Pos	S/N	Boat#	Name	Helm for Nationals	Crew		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	Sat+Sun Total
1	13	T55	Orieoda	Alan Emslie	Skip DieballPeter Jarvis		7	2	3	1	1	2	DIS	16
2	17	T59	Just In Time	Mark Haas	Knut EngebretsenTess Hottenroth		6	6	7	4	DIS	1	1	25
3	19	T61	Shango	Andrew Barton	Geir SkarsteinJohn Chaplin		2	3	9	8	4	DIS	2	28
4	20	T62	Constant Care	Mike Barnes	Nick Woodall-MasonJaleh Barnes		4	4	1	DIS	6	5	12	32
5	22	T64	Scud	Ian Edwards	Gary SchwantClaudia Labs		8	5	2	2	9	6	DIS	32
6	21	T63	Lizard	David Krut	Alan ParkeIan Mainprize		1	1	14	DIS	7	7	4	34
7	4	T37	Bavaria	Julian Calvin	Steve DavisJohn Thompson		5	10	5	DIS	5	4	8	37
8	14	T56	Kiwi Magic	Helmut Braun	Dolly BraunMartin Woller		3	DIS	6	5	12	11	3	40
9	23	T65	Now Now	Richard Willmott	Mark & Heather		DIS	24	4	3	2	3	7	43
10	12	T54	White Swan	David Use	Wendy ForsterEric Roper		12	DIS	8	7	10	8	6	51
11	15	T57	Spellbinder	Paul Fay	Sharon Fay		13	8	13	6	3	9	DIS	52
12	16	T58	Never Say Never	Laurent Couderc	Andrew FraserEmily Thomas-Ndukwu		10	7	12	9	DIS	18	9	65
13	3	T36	Nuance	Steve Chapman	Iain CaseAnna Edris		15	9	10	10	DIS	12	14	70
14	10	T51	Standfast	Naill Wallace	Collin ButtLindie Rudover		14	11	DIS	16	15	13	11	80
15	1	T34	Spetters	Kevin King	Tony BarlettaAndi Monari		11	12	11	15	16	DIS	16	81
16	6	T43	Sorry-O	Nick Anderson	Colin & Bare		9	14	DIS	17	11	14	20	85
17	2	T35	Khartoum 2	Mike Jones	Steve ForsterWarren Walhaug		16	DIS	15	13	13	16	15	88
18	18	T60	Otitan Diran	John Andersen	Reidun AndersenTjeerd		DIS	20	19	18	14	15	5	91
19	8	T49	Lady Eleanor	Mike Newton	Wei YeohYoung		18	DIS	18	20	17	20	17	110
20	9	T50	Twister	Tom Cardale	Paul Gillette		19	16	16	12	DIS	24	24	111
21	5	T39	Gamba	Winfred Hirmer	Ann Van NiekerkAndrew Van Niekerk		17	18	21	19	DIS	21	18	114
22	7	T48	White Star	Mike Bowen	Kelvin CatesDan SmithBruno Jardin		DIS	19	24	14	20	19	21	117
23	11	T52	Tanimola	Tony Taylor	Ron LansdellMalcolm Burns		21	21	22	DIS	21	24	22	131

Purpose for the trip:

In 1946 the Lagos Yacht Club was searching for a new one-design boat to sail and race. Their venue consists both of inland "harbor" racing and racing in the open waters of the Atlantic Ocean. They chose the Sparkman/Stephens designed Lightning, but for reasons related to the gross weight of the boat (built from native materials), the boat wasn't classified as a "Lightning", rather it was called a "Tarpon". Tarpon was the name of the 1st boat built from the Lightning Plans.

For over 60 years, the members of both the Tarpon and Lightning (they have been importing fiberglass boats since the 70s) have been sailing in the Lagos Harbor and have set their boats up based on experience, written tuning guides and articles written by sailors of the Lightning around the world. Never was there a visit from the class association until May of 2007, when Steve Davis and Skip Dieball decided to visit, help and sail in the Lightning/Tarpon Nigerian National Championship.

Nigeria – Day 1

Skip Dieball

Steve Davis, Lightning Class President, and I arrived to Lagos, Nigeria this morning after an uneventful 10-hour flight from New York. Upon our arrival, we were greeted by a friendly local that works with the local Lightning Fleet to greet visitors. He took care of all the details on our arrival and we quickly proceeded to Lagos Island, where Lagos Yacht Club and our hosts are situated. The drive from the airport was eye-opening. We saw first hand the mass population that exists and the vast need for infrastructure. With no structured public transit, it is full chaos on the streets during rush hour. Fortunately for us, we were under police escort/chase. Our leader carved out our path like Greg Fisher on a starting line!



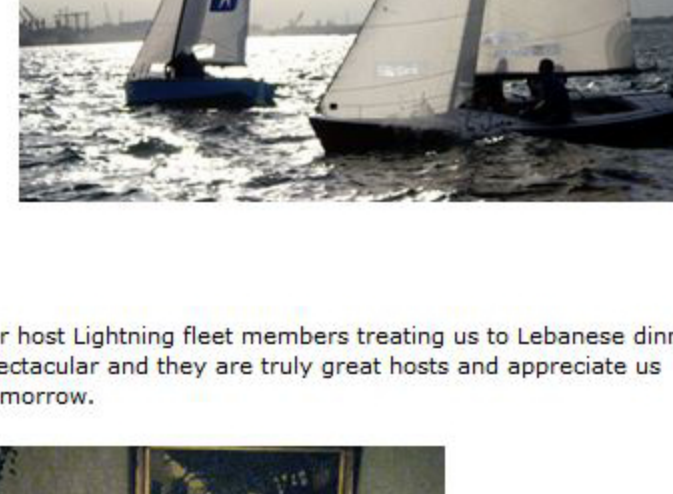
Our host family made sure we were well fed and rested for our first afternoon in Lagos. After a quick nap, we went into town to a local market. It truly was an experience. With vendors of every conceivable good vying for your business, it was hard to stay focused.



The Lagos Yacht Club is great. It is situated directly on the Lagos Harbor and overlooks the shipping ports, downtown and the immediate racing area. Truly a prize spot.



What's interesting about the history of the Lagos Yacht Club is a boat called the TARPON. It is/was the first Lightning built in Nigeria about 60 years ago. Since it was built from local materials (Rainforest Mahogany), it was PAINFULLY heavy. That's ok, because there were about 20 more built shortly thereafter...all pretty much the same weight. To get these overbuilt boats through the water, the locals developed a Genoa (about 120%) that helps power them through the varying conditions. It also puts them on pace with the modern fiberglass Lightnings, so they all can sail together. Interestingly, the "Tarpons" (named after the 1st boat) have a genoa winching assembly in the middle of the boat. I can't really speak to its efficiency, but hope to try it out before the week is out.



Our first day was great. It was capped with our host Lightning fleet members treating us to Lebanese dinner in downtown Lagos. The tamaracene was spectacular and they are truly great hosts and appreciate us helping them figure out the Lightning....until tomorrow.



An e-mail note to the Class Office: Steve and Skip arrived safe and sound. They put on a superb clinic with tuning, on the water comments, and video recap. We had 24 attendees take off work on a Wednesday afternoon to hear the experts help us improve our sailing. Truly exceeded all that we had hoped. Looking forward to two more afternoons of training and coaching, then two days of Nationals and we'll send them back to you!

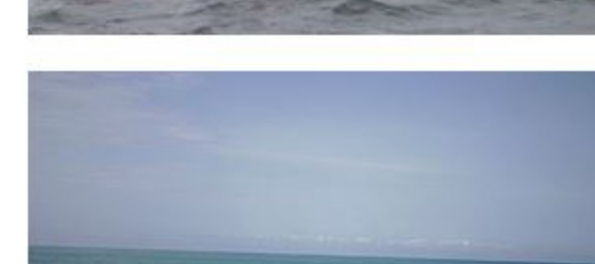
Thanks again.

Gary Schwantz

Nigeria – Day 2

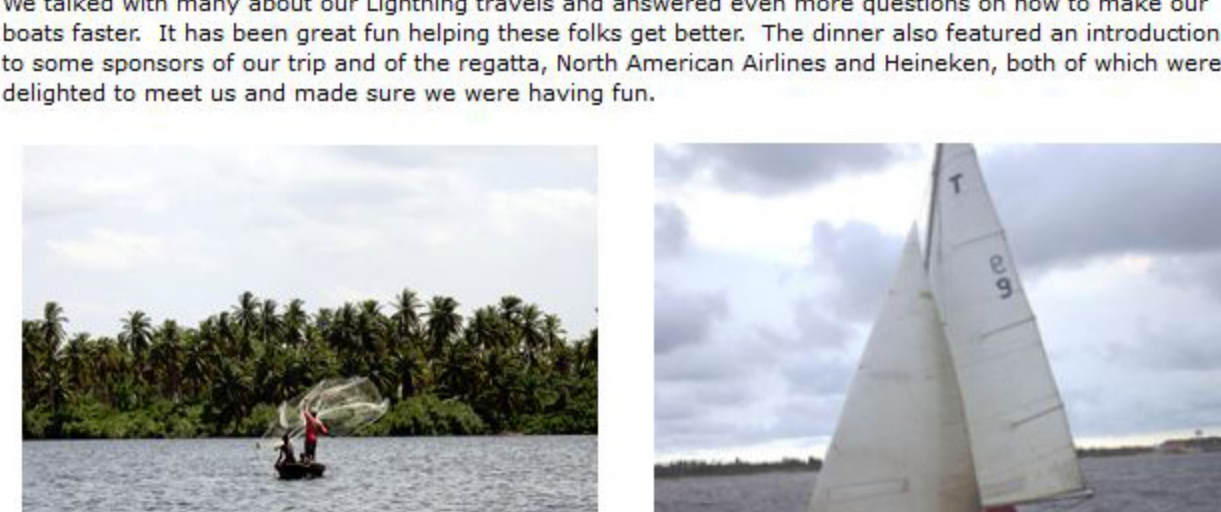
Skip Dieball

The amount of attention the local fleet is giving to us and our Lightning Lab has been inspiring. Today we had even more people involved in both "water" activities and our debut. Due to a technical "issue" on my part, we were unable to review the video, but that didn't stop everyone for soaking in good instruction and asking some great questions. They are hungry for Lightning knowledge, and we are happy to provide what we can.

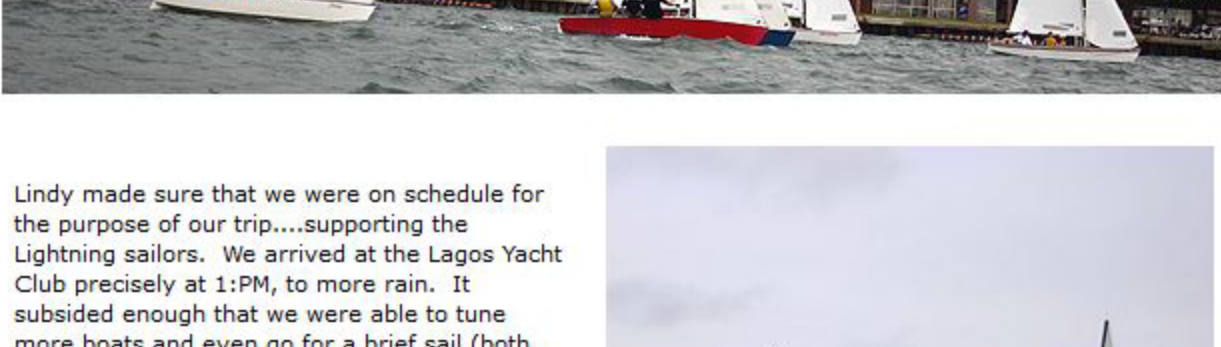


Steve and I started the day, however, on a "harbor cruise" with our hosts. We traveled in a very nice (fast) Whaler and headed up a river to visit a local village. Our journey took us west toward Benin and we passed many different villages. Fishing, boat building, markets all lined the shore ways as the shore went from the urban "downtown" Lagos to a very peaceful area lined with mangroves and palm trees.

Once arriving to our destination, we were greeted by the "locals" from Ishahayi Beach. This village had just received (with the help of many Lagos Yacht Club members and the YC itself) a new school, the Light Nursery & Primary School. It was truly a treat for Steve and I to visit and sit in while watching the kids learn. The stretch of land where the school is situated is between the "river" that we traveled and the Atlantic Ocean. The ocean beach went for miles and provided some great surf (Steve is the man!). They were very hospitable and we had a great visit.

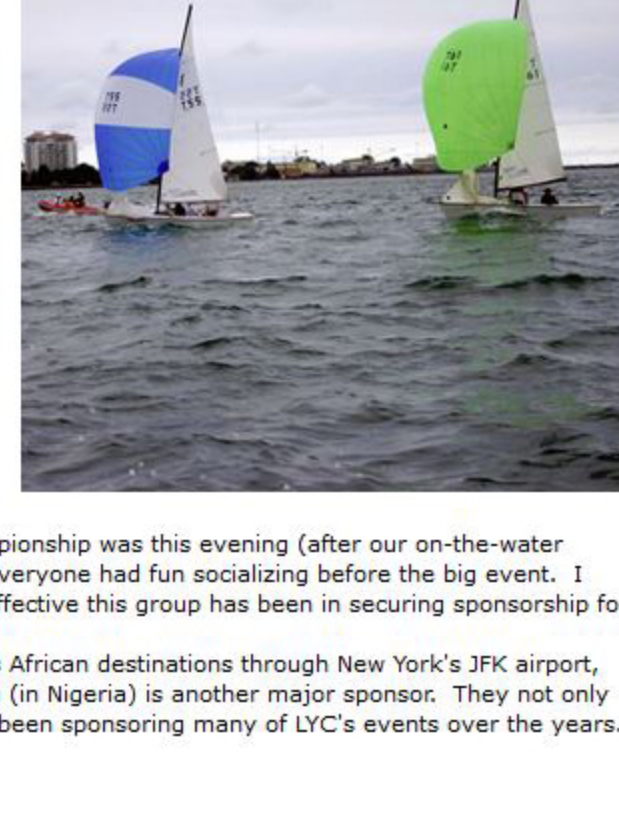


Thursday evening, the local fleet and our hosts had a great dinner party in honor of both Steve and me. We talked with many about our Lightning travels and answered even more questions on how to make our boats faster. It has been great fun helping these folks get better. The dinner also featured an introduction to some sponsors of our trip and of the regatta, North American Airlines and Heineken, both of which were delighted to meet us and made sure we were having fun.



Lindy made sure that we were on schedule for the purpose of our trip....supporting the Lightning sailors. We arrived at the Lagos Yacht Club precisely at 1:PM, to more rain. It subsided enough that we were able to tune more boats and even go for a brief sail (both Steve and I had been in motor boats exclusively until this point). After our sail, we reviewed the video from the previous day and previewed today's drills.

We concentrated on Rig Tune (Wednesday), Sail Trim (Thursday) and Starts/Marks/Strategy /Tactics (today). We've had great interaction with these sailors, and they are keen to learn more and more. There are five teams headed to the Athens World Championship, and these teams are soaking in any/all information they can get. Their equipment has been upgraded and they have impressive goals for their Nigerian Lightning Team.



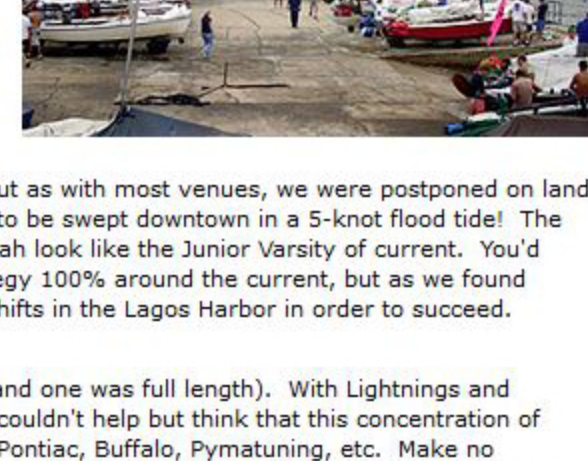
The official kick-off to the Nigerian National Championship was this evening (after our on-the-water drills). The dignitaries for the event spoke, and everyone had fun socializing before the big event. I would be remiss if I didn't properly explain how effective this group has been in securing sponsorship for their events(s). North American Airlines, which services African destinations through New York's JFK airport, has been extremely generous. Heineken Brewing (in Nigeria) is another major sponsor. They not only stepped up for the 2007 Nationals, but they have been sponsoring many of LYC's events over the years.

Nigeria – Day 4

Skip Dieball

After a terrific party at Ian and Lindy Edwards' place Friday Night, Saturday morning started EXTREMELY early. Steve and I had the plan to be at the boat park between 7:30-8:00 AM and we succeeded, barely by 8:AM!!!! :-)

More tuning, more talk, more tips/techniques and we were through most of the boats in the fleet. Everyone was appreciative and we all looked forward to sailing!

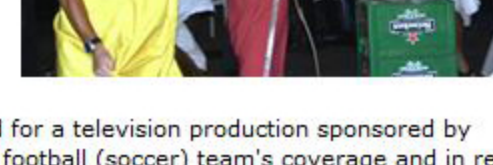


The Nigerian Nationals was due to start at 11:AM. But as with most venues, we were postponed on land for a while. Many launched and sailed around, only to be swept downtown in a 5-knot flood tide! The tide here RIPS, make no mistake. It makes Savannah look like the Junior Varsity of current. You'd think that, like Savannah, you'd establish your strategy 100% around the current, but as we found today, you can't. You must honor the volatile wind shifts in the Lagos Harbor in order to succeed.

The RC fit in four nice races (three were shortened and one was full length). With Lightnings and Tarpons all over Lagos Harbor, it was quite a site. I couldn't help but think that this concentration of Lightnings only occurs in a few areas of the world....Pontiac, Buffalo, Pymatuning, etc. Make no mistake, Lagos Yacht Club understands which fleets have the most boats, and they are keen to be the biggest fleet in the World. With many more new boats being imported, the second-hand boats are leaving and are being gobbled up quickly. One of the guys that is getting a new boat at the Worlds in Greece this summer explained that he had four buyers for his existing 15xxx series boat! Talk about fleet building!!!!

At the end of the day, the scores were tight but only discussed socially, as there were a few protests still being heard. My team, I'm crewing in the middle in a Carson 143xx series boat, should be close to the top with 7,2,3,1 (one throwout already). I believe after our 6 points there are three or four boats with 8-10 points. I can't help but think of my good friend Dave Starck at this point in the regatta...."you have to be winning at the cocktail party". What's worth noting is that the Nigerian National competitors have embraced many of the ILCA standards, particularly in the number of crew for their championship. Our team is sailing well over 600 pounds! I believe that the enforcement of the ILCA rules is in our favor as most teams are coping with the switch from sailing 2-up to 3-up. My take....more people, more fun!

Tonight's party was themed as "Greece Lightning" as a way to promo the World Championship. Many of the folks, including yours truly and Steve, broke out the togas! Talk about a blast from college!!!! We all looked great and had a ball at the dinner party!



An additional treat for Steve and I was being interviewed for a television production sponsored by Heineken. They have a few outlets where they sell their football (soccer) team's coverage and in return they produce and broadcast a "reality" series for sporting events. They are going to feature the Nigerian Lightning Nationals and we might make productions (or on the cutting room floor!). It was fun, and we made friends with Henry Okafor, Brand Manager for Heineken in Nigeria.

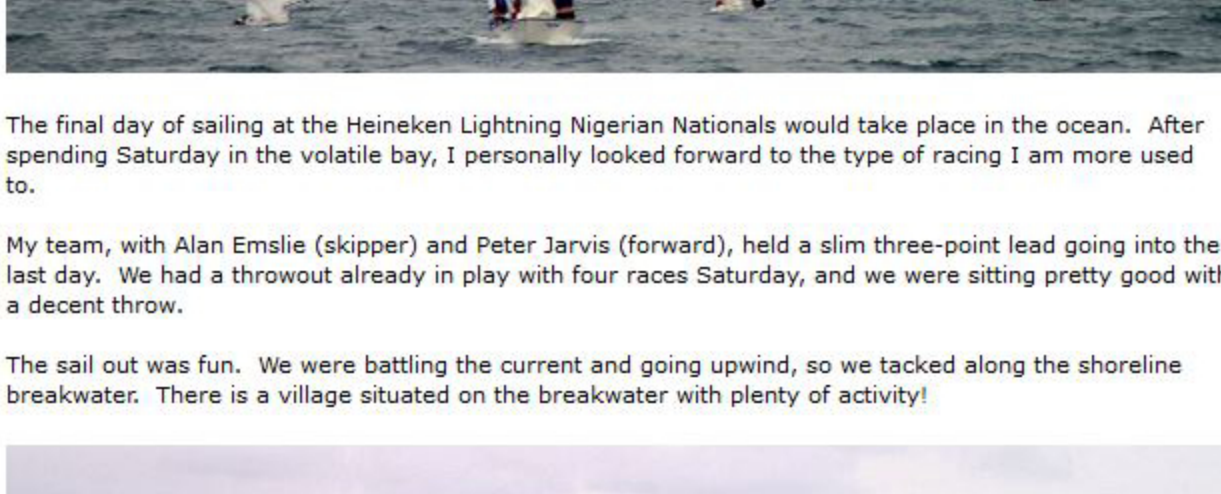


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Tomorrow we will sail out of Lagos Harbor and attempt three races in the Atlantic. Steve and I are looking forward to the type of racing we know in the Lightning; however, we've had some fun in the harbor with the current, shipping traffic, volatile wind, etc.

Nigeria – Day 5

Skip Dieball



The final day of sailing at the Heineken Lightning Nigerian Nationals would take place in the ocean. After spending Saturday in the volatile bay, I personally looked forward to the type of racing I am more used to.

My team, with Alan Emslie (skipper) and Peter Jarvis (forward), held a slim three-point lead going into the last day. We had a throwout already in play with four races Saturday, and we were sitting pretty good with a decent throw.

The sail out was fun. We were battling the current and going upwind, so we tacked along the shoreline breakwater. There is a village situated on the breakwater with plenty of activity!



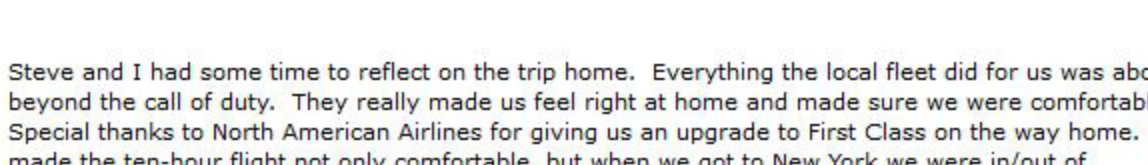
The sailing in the ocean was delightful. A nice southwesterly wind was very consistent, and the water state was similar to a medium wind day in Con Con, Chile, or a heavier air day in San Diego. We had chop in between the swells, which made bothhandling and driver concentration a premium.

Alan did a fabulous job with our boat focusing on speed, and we started the day with a 1,2 in the first two races. This sealed the championship as we could now use our 7th as a counter and take it easy in the last race. Congratulations to my teammates. They worked really hard all weekend, and I think we were dialed in!



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The prize giving ceremony was top-shelf. Heineken really added some flare and to the winners were great trophies and BEER!!! How about that....worth the hard work!



Steve and I had some time to reflect on the trip home. Everything the local fleet did for us was above and beyond the call of duty. They really made us feel right at home and made sure we were comfortable. Special thanks to North American Airlines for giving us an upgrade to First Class on the way home. It made the ten-hour flight not only comfortable, but when we got to New York we were in/out of customs/baggage within ten minutes. Truly appreciated!!!

Lagos Yacht Club is a special place. Both Steve and I had asked to come back, and we've put some plans in place to do another Lightning Lab with a slightly different format to build on what we've accomplished on this trip. I can't wait!!!