

# Who's Who

Who's Who of LMSA  
Featuring: Jeff Hayden!

LMSA: Hi Jeff Hayden could you tell us a little about how you got in to sailing:

Jeff: My family has a long history of sailing, so I've been around boats since I was born. My first major regatta was the 2009 Lightning North American's doing the bow for my Dad. We didn't own a Lightning for about 5 years after that and I played basketball a lot. We still raced occasionally on my Grandpa's S2 7.9 and then San Juan 21. I didn't really start steering and being more serious about sailing until 2014. I was 16. I did many Lightning regattas and raced at Lake Monroe a lot during this time leading up to college. I went on to sail for Florida State where we qualified for Nationals for the first time in 33 years (2018). And then again the next year (2019). I've been fortunate enough to race a bunch of different boats from Lasers to a Swan 42.



(Jeff posing in the Trophy cup)

LMSA: Where did you learn to sail?

Jeff: I learned from sailing with my Grandpa and Dad, but my real single-handed learning experience was at Opti/Sunfish summer camps at Fort Walton Beach Yacht Club. We would go there for a few weeks most summers. I did the two-week summer camp 3 years in a row starting in 2007 at age 9. I didn't like it at all my first year especially when it was windy. By my last summer my friends and I were sailing Sunfish across the bay to the beach.



(Jeff sailing with Grandpa Fisk)

Now, I always learn something at every event. I try to write down notes after every regatta about what happened and what I learned. Asking the good people questions and attending debriefs are always beneficial.

LMSA: Who are some of your mentors and how did you come to sail at LMSA?

Jeff: My family and many people in the Lightning Class. I definitely also learned from sailing the various boats with different people at LMSA. I think that sailing different boats with different people is one of the best ways to improve. We started sailing at LMSA since it was the closest lake to us and had a surprisingly active club with good wind.



LMSA: What's your most memorable race?

Jeff: The 2018 Lightning Youth World Championship in Greece. Specifically winning the last 2 races to win the regatta. We were in 5th or 6th going into the last day because of a capsize. We knew the points would be close with a throw-out coming into play so we just focused on finishing strong. It was a great feeling to bring home the win knowing that so many people supported us financially.



LMSA: What are your future sailing goals?

Jeff: I'd like to win a Lightning North American and World Championship. I'd also like to do well in other classes I've been sailing in such as the Etchells, J70, Melges 24 and 32, Viper etc. Major goal is to have the chance to join a Grand Prix or Super-maxi team.

LMSA: Where do you see yourself sailing in the next 5 years?



(Jeff driving the Swan 42)

Jeff: I'm planning on doing a good amount of Lightning sailing since the 2021 North Americans in Cleveland is the qualifier for the 2022 Worlds in Wrightsville Beach. Also sailing in other classes as much as possible. I'd like to learn more about offshore racing and do some long distance races. I want to continue to get better at windsurfing and learn how to kiteboard.

LMSA: Your Lightning is named Gen 5 please elaborate:

Jeff: The boat is named Gen 5 because I am the 5th generation of Lightning sailors in my family. My Great, Great Grandfather bought one in the 1940s and we've raced them ever since.



(Gen 5)



LMSA: Thank you Jeff for your time and comments. Good luck and safe travels!

Comments from the reporter: Jeff Hayden is an outstanding young man. I have had the pleasure of watching his sailing career develop and sailed with him on a variety of boats. Jeff has what it takes to be on a winning team in any class. I have the utmost respect for him. Best of luck Jeff, LMSA strong.

Members that concludes our Who's Who of LMSA for November 2020. LMSA will be reaching out to sailing members and crew for interviews every month over the coming year. Please share your story (s) when LMSA comes tapping on your hull. Sharing knowledge and sailing information has been a long standing tradition here at LMSA. Let us know how you got here and where your sailing is going!

Cheers ,  
2020 LMSA Reporter  
Jim Goempel

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