
From: RMStraubinger
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2023 10:24 PM
To: astrove@hotmail.com
Subject: Mast stepping

Hello- I just caught this challenge tonight as I subscribed today to a feed that picks up Lightning news (I just became Fleet Captain at the Buffalo Canoe Club and obviously need to follow the news).

This Fall I found some of us have joined the demographic that could - but doesn't jump at the chance to - step or de-step a lightning mast single-handed — when a more senior competitor at BCC was asking for help de-stepping his mast.
(Kevin Robinson stepped in and spared us the indignity)

So- we've been sailing J24s for the past 8 or so years, with fair number of travel regattas, and have stepped/de-stepped masts that are bigger than that of a Lightning.
We do this on a trailer, or on a boat in the water (waiting for the hoist out) - sometimes in pretty choppy water.

We use a stub of a lightning mast that is not too much higher than the main spreaders of the J24 mast - which is about where we hoist from.
The hoist point just needs to be above the balance point of the mast, and high enough to raise the mast above the deck.

We don't actually hoist from the spreaders, we have a small sling (bowline) just under the spreaders to hold the mast close to the hoist line, which actually lifts from the topping lift bale.
That sling keeps the lift line close to the mast during hoist, keeping the mast vertical.

On a Lightning this gin pole could triangulate with the spinnaker sheets attaching just below the top of the pole, with a fixed line/wire forward to the forestay tang.
Clip them on, tension down the spinnaker sheets, and it's very stable.

It simply steps on a pad in front of the mast, and at the top there's a block for the hoist line (on the J24 we have a block system for leverage- it's a bit heavier than a lightning mast).
It's small enough to just toss on the trailer for transport.

I know that lightning sailors have a lot of experience in other classes, and I'm sure this idea has been contributed.

Happy to provide a picture to clarify.

When we started sailing J24s it was the biggest mast we stepped without a hoist, but these J24 folks really have this simple method down, and it's quick.

Best wishes -Bob

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