



Gold Cup goes to Madison, no race for the Motor City.

The sport's oldest race site will not host an unlimited race this summer. The race organizers at Detroit reached an impasse with the officials at H1 Unlimited with regard to holding an event in the Motor City, so both have announced that the unlimiteds will not be seen on the Detroit River this year.

The Gold Cup, the oldest trophy in motor sports, which was first held in Detroit over 100 years ago and has been held on the Detroit River in 27 of the past 28 years, will move to the Ohio River and Madison, Indiana.

According to a statement released by H1 Unlimited in late February, H1 and Detroit Riverfront Events, Inc., the organizers of the Detroit race, had been discussing since December the terms of sanctioning an event at Detroit in August. Progress in those negotiations had reached what the H1 Board of Directors felt was a contractual impasse.

"H1 believes that the parties cannot come to an agreement that would assure a quality competition in Detroit for the coming season, and as such, H1 will not be sanctioning a race in Detroit in 2019," the statement said.

During an interview on Detroit's WJR Radio a couple of weeks later, Doug Bernstein of Detroit Riverfront Events said that in their mind, H1 hadn't exactly

been invited. "This is a case where we were not satisfied with the show that the unlimited hydroplanes put on for each of the last two years," he explained. "There weren't enough boats and the teams they sent weren't all of the best ones."

Only six unlimited hydroplanes appeared for the Gold Cup held in Detroit last summer and eight boats were parked in the pit area for the 2017 race.

In negotiating for a sanction, H1 typically asks a race site to pay about \$160,000, which is used to cover the cost of tow money for the race teams that bring a boat to the race and for other costs, such as for the use of H1 equipment and of officiating the event. According to a source close to the negotiations, the organizers of the Detroit event offered H1 a sanctioning fee that was far short of what the organization needed.

"We were insisting on a performance clause, that we weren't going to pay a full fee if we weren't getting the best teams or of there weren't enough of them," Bernstein



Chris Denslow

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said in his WJR interview. “We felt that we weren’t about to go to a potential sponsor and ask them for a pile of money to sponsor an event which we couldn’t guarantee would deliver the quality that we wanted.”

Bernstein, who was the chairman of H1 Unlimited through most of the 2017 season, said he understands the challenges that H1 is facing. “It’s an expensive sport. I get it. But, at some point you have to deliver,” he said.

The tradition of hydroplane racing in Detroit dates back to 1915 when a group of civic boosters campaigned a boat named *Miss Detroit* in that year’s Gold Cup race, which was held in Manhasset Bay, New York. With Jack Beebe and Johnny Milot sharing the driving duties, the boat won the race and gave Detroit the honor of hosting the race the following year.

That first Gold Cup on the Detroit River in 1916 was won by the *Miss Minneapolis*, but after the race, a local millionaire named Gar Wood purchased the *Miss Detroit* and would go on to become one of the most famous competitors the sport has ever known.

Gar Wood won five straight Gold Cups from 1917 to 1921, thus making the Motor City the hotbed of speedboat racing. He later won the Harmsworth Trophy and attracted tens of thousands of spectators to the shore of the Detroit River in the 1920s and early-30s as he defended

that title against a series of challengers from France and England.

In the meantime, thanks to competitors such as Horace Dodge, Clell Perry, Danny Foster, and Bill Cantrell, Detroit remained at the center of the hydroplane racing world through the 1940s.

On the heels of H1 Unlimited’s decision that the big hydros wouldn’t race in Detroit this year, the race organizers in Madison, Indiana, were excited to learn that H1 had awarded them the 2019 Gold Cup. The event will be held on the city’s Ohio River course July 4 through 7.

Just a year ago, the people who hold the event in Madison were relieved to learn that Midwest Tube Mills had stepped forward to sponsor their race, which had been beset with financial woes in recent years because of weather calamities.

The Madison race was canceled in 2013 and modified to an exhibition race in 2015 because of floods on the Ohio River. In both cases the race organizers had to pay the cost of docks, cranes, and other necessities, but received very little revenue from ticket sales.

In an effort to climb out of the financial hole they were in, Madison race officials decided to cut their expenses by inviting only four boats to their race in 2017, thus reducing the amount of tow money they paid to race teams. As a result, the event they held that year did not earn the

competing boats any points toward the national standings.

Last year, the Madison Regatta earned a profit of over \$112,000, which allowed race organizers to pay off debts of more than \$62,000 that dated back to 2013 and end the year with \$50,000 in the bank.

Winning the Gold Cup came as welcome news to the Madison Regatta organization.

“This speaks volumes to the entire committee for their hard work and commitment to this event,” said Madison Regatta President Matt True. “We have come together, focused on the event and with everyone doing their part, we are a powerful team doing great things for Madison. We are listening to our fans and delivering the things they think are most important.”

The Gold Cup returns to Madison after an absence of nearly 40 years. This summer will mark the 69th year of unlimited hydroplane racing in the city and the fourth time that the prestigious Gold Cup trophy will be presented to a Madison race winner.

Perhaps the best-known of the Madison Gold Cups came in 1971, when the low-budget hometown boat *Miss Madison* won the race with Jim McCormick driving. The storybook result was the basis of a feature-length motion picture about the sport titled *Madison*. ♦

by Andy Muntz

THE 2019 H1 UNLIMITED RACING SERIES

May 31 Spring Training; Tri-Cities, Washington
 June 28-30..... Guntersville Lake HydroFest; Guntersville, Alabama
 July 4-7.....APBA Gold Cup; Madison, Indiana
 July 26-28 HAPO Columbia Cup; Tri-Cities, Washington
 August 2-4Seafair Cup; Seattle, Washington
 September 13-15 HomeStreet Bank Bayfair; San Diego, California

Bernie Little's T-Boats

When hydro fans get together, the conversation will sometimes include references to the T-5 hull or the T-4. What does that mean?

by Lon Erickson

As most die-hard unlimited hydroplane fans know, there is a hull numbering system that is commonly used to identify and track specific hydroplane hulls through history, regardless of the boat's owner or sponsorship. That numbering is used in Jim Sharkey's *Hydro's Who's Who* book and in the R/C club master rosters. It generally consists of the year a hydroplane hull was built and entered competition, along with the first U number used that year. A hull with the ID #9988 would represent a hull built in 1999 that first carried the number U-88.

Almost as prevalent in a lot of hydro conversations is the reference to a "T" hull, such as T-1, T-2, T-3, etc. You may wonder just what that "T" really means or how it came about.

Simply put, when Bernie Little and the Budweiser Racing team made the decision to convert to turbine powerplants, they started with the Turbine-1 designation for the 1984 U-7 *Lite All Star* (hull #8407) that Little acquired from "R.B." Bob Taylor in 1985. The boat, which was designed and built by Jim Lucero, was the first *Budweiser* to be powered with a turbine and is therefore designated as T-1.

Here are the six T-boats, what they first appeared as, and where they are today. Numerous sponsor

names appeared on four of the six hulls throughout the years, and still to this day might be referred to by some, using their original "T" number.

Along the way a few of these hydros underwent some major re-builds, updates, and repairs. That always leaves some room for the never-ending discussion of when or if a boat gets a new hull ID number and what extent of rebuild qualifies it for a new hull number. We won't get into that discussion here, but I'll try to give an overview of where the T-boats have been and ended up. All are still with us in one form or another. A few are still racing, some have been retired, and some can be seen on display duty.

Budweiser T-1

The T-1 hull (#8407) was a Jim Lucero-built hull that started out as R.B. "Bob" Taylor's '84 *Lite All Star*, powered with a GE T-64 turbine. In 1984, it wasn't actually referred to as the T-1. That designation came after Bernie Little acquired the hull and debuted the boat as U-11 *Budweiser* in 1986.

The team had never intended to enter *Miss Budweiser* (Turbine-1) in competition. It was to be strictly a test bed for the new Lycoming turbine engine program. But when the new *Miss Budweiser* (Turbine-2) wasn't ready in time to start the 1986 season, Turbine-1 was pressed into service.



Bernie Little

Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

The T-1 raced as *Miss Budweiser* from 1986 to '88 and won three races plus the 1986 national title. During that time, the boat was driven by Jim Kropfeld (1986 and 1987) and Tom D'Eath (1988).

After retirement, the boat was displayed at Race Rock Café in Orlando, Florida, until that restaurant closed in 2007, and is now stored at BLL/Bernie Little Distributing in Lakeland, Florida.

Budweiser T-2

The T-2 hull (#8701) the first true Budweiser-team-built turbine, raced as the *Miss Budweiser* for its entire racing career, which spanned from 1987 through 1994. This hull earned the nickname "Thumper" for its

Rick Sullivan



Brad Haskin



Race Rock Cafe



THE T-1: [Top] Before it was a *Budweiser*, the boat first appeared in 1984 as the *Lite All Star*. [Middle] During a test run as the *Budweiser* in 1985. [Above] The hull hanging from the ceiling of the Race Rock Cafe in Orlando, Florida.

unique handling and turning characteristics.

During its career, the boat collected 25 race victories, including two Gold Cups, and won four national titles (1987, 1988, 1991, and 1993). It's drivers during that time were Jim Kropfeld (1987 and 1988), Tom D'Eath (1988 and 1990), Scott Pierce (1991 and 1992), and Chip Hanauer (1992–1994).

The T-2 is now owned by Joe Little and is still active as a *Budweiser* display hull. The boat is now in Lakeland, Florida.

Budweiser T-3

The T-3 hull (#8901) was originally built as the *Budweiser* T-3 in 1989. The hull underwent a 99-percent rebuild / modification in 1995, at which point it became designated by some historians as hull #9501, and continued racing through 2000. While racing as the *Miss Budweiser*, the boat won an amazing 43 races, including five Gold Cups, and won six national titles (1989, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1997, and 1998).

Sitting in the cockpit during this time were Jim Kropfeld (1989), Tom D'Eath (1989–1991), Scott Pierce (1991), Chip Hanauer (1992–1996), Mike Hanson (1994), Mark Evans (1995 and 1996), Dave Villwock (1997–2000), and Mark Weber (1997).

After Budweiser and the Little family stopped racing, Kim Gregory of U-10 USA Racing team bought

the hull for the 2006 season. For USA Racing, the boat carried the names *Emcor*, *Al Deeby Dodge*, *Solution Plus*, *Fairweather Masonry*, *Designer Shower & Glass*, *Ahern Rentals*, *Hoss Mortgage*, and *Dover Environmental*, among others.

Driving the boat were Nate Brown (2006), J.W. Myers (2006), and David Bryant (2007 and 2008).

The U-10 team withdrew from racing after the 2008 season when Kim Gregory passed away, but the boat returned in 2012 when Gregory's son, Matt, entered it as *88 Degree for Men* with Scott Liddycoat at the wheel.

It hasn't raced since 2012 and the boat had been owned by Joe Little, but late-breaking news has the hull recently being sold to Dave Bartush of Detroit.

Budweiser T-4

The T-4 hull (#9401) started out as an innovative multi-wing hull that appeared at a few races in 1994 and '95 with Chip Hanauer, Mark Evans, and Mike Hanson doing the driving. It didn't win any races in either season. Bernie Little gave up on the project when it wasn't successful out of the box and it was seen mostly during that time as a *Miss Budweiser* display hull.

The T-4 hull was sold to Bill Wurster in 2002, his team rebuilt it,



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Barron Oglesby



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THE T-2: [Top] The *Budweiser* made its debut at Miami in 1987. [Middle] The T-2 as it currently looks, doing display work in Florida. [Above] The T-2 *Budweiser* runs with its new sister, the T-3, when the latter was launched at Seattle in 1989.

Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum



Chris Denslow



Lon Erickson



Karl Pearson



and it became the U-8 *LLumar Window Film* from 2003 to 2005. It's drivers were Mark Evans (2003), Nate Brown (2003), J.W. Myers (2004), and Jean Theoret (2005). The team earned three victories during the three-year period.

Wurster then sold the U-8 equipment to Billy and Jane Schumacher to start the 2006 season and the Schumacher Racing team entered the boat as U-37 *Miss Seattle, Beacon Plumbing, Hoss Mortgage, Bel-lo's Pizza, D.Y.C., Renton Coil Springs, and Peters & May*.

Jean Theoret and J.W. Myers shared the driving duties and won four races, including the 2006 Gold Cup. The boat was damaged severely in 2010 when Myers collided with a bulkhead while driving at Detroit.

The T-4 hull was acquired in 2012 by Scott and Shannon Raney's Unlimited Racing Group, the boat was rebuilt for the 2013 season and returned to action as the U-11 *Peters & May*. They raced the T-4 hull from 2013 to 2016 with Tom Thompson at the controls. The boat is currently the back-up hull for the U-11 URG team.

Budweiser T-5

The T-5 hull first raced in 1996 then was extensively rebuilt the following year, so it goes by two

THE T-3: [Top] The third turbine Budweiser racing in 1989. [Upper Middle] The boat when it appeared in the Tri-Cities as *Hoss Mortgage* in 2007. [Lower Middle] The boat as it appeared most recently. [Above] The boat raced as *Degree Men* in 2012.



Kirk Johnson

hull numbers: #9601 and #9712. It was while driving this hull in 2004 that Dave Villwock set the kilometer water speed record for propeller-driven boats at 220.493 mph in Oroville, California.

The T-5 was one of the two active *Miss Budweiser* hulls that raced from 1996 to 2004 (the other being the T-6). The Budweiser team brought both hulls to each race and would test and qualify both. Then, depending on the course size, race set-up, and driver preference, the team would select one of the two hulls to compete in that event.

With that arrangement, the T-5 *Miss Budweiser* would win 21 races, including one Gold Cup, and shared in winning four national titles (1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002). Mark Evans drove the boat during its maiden season in 2006, then after the rebuild, the boat was driven by Dave Villwock.

After the passing of Bernie Little in 2003 and after Anheuser-Busch ended its sponsorship at the end of the 2004 season, Bernie Little's son, Joe, left the sport and sold both *Budweiser* hulls to Ted Porter / Precision Performance Engineering LLC for the 2006 season.

Porter raced the two hulls through 2016 before leaving the ownership ranks. In the years that Porter owned the T-5, it carried the



Lon Erickson



Lon Erickson

THE T-4: The boat first appeared with an innovative, multi-wing design, but it didn't win any races and Bernie Little soon gave up on the project. [Middle] The hull was sold to Bill Wurster in 2002 and raced as the *LLumar Window Film*, among other names. [Above] The boat when it competed as the *Peters & May* in 2016.



Karl Pearson



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum



Ron Harsin



Lon Erickson

FormulaBoats.com and Graham Trucking sponsorship names and collected two more race victories. Driving the boat were Mike Allen (2006–2008), Jeff Bernard (2007, 2011, and 2016), J. Michael Kelly (2009, 2010, and 2016), Cal Phipps (2014), and Jesse Robertson (2015).

In 2017, Dave Bartush purchased the T-5 hull from Porter and has raced in Detroit the past two seasons carrying the *Spirit of Detroit* name with Bert Henderson and Jeff Bernard driving.

Budweiser T-6

The T-6 hull (#0001) debuted in 2000 and raced under the *Miss Budweiser* name, along with the T-5, until the Little family left the sport at the end of the 2004 season. During that time, the boat was credited with six race victories, including one Gold Cup, and the national titles in 2003 and 2004. Dave Villwock did all of the driving.

Along with its sister the T-5 hull, the T-6 was the second half of the deal that sent both boats to Ted Porter Racing in 2006. This hull carried the *FormulaBoats.com*, *Valken.com*, and *Graham Trucking* sponsorship during the years that Ted Porter ran his team and collected 18 race victories, including one Gold Cup, and the 2013 national championship.

THE T-5: [Top] The boat as it appeared when it first raced in 1996. [Upper Middle] In 2002, Dave Villwock set a kilometer speed record in the rebuilt *Miss Budweiser*. [Lower Middle] The boat as it appeared when racing as the *Graham Trucking* in 2011. [Above] The boat was the *Spirit of Detroit* at last year's Gold Cup race.

Sitting in the driver's seat during this time were Mike Weber (2006), Mike Allen (2006), Jeff Bernard (2006–2010), Scott Liddy-coat (2011), and Jimmy Shane (2012 and 2013).

Long-time sponsor Rob Graham, owner of Graham Trucking, purchased the T-6 hull, hauler, and equipment in 2017 and is still racing the boat in the H1 Unlimited Racing Series as the U-12 *Graham Trucking* and with J. Michael Kelly driving.

The T-series race boats ended with the T-6 hull, though there were plans on the drawing board at Bernie Little's Hydroplanes Inc. for the next generation T-7 hull. Molds for canoes/sponsons exist and some parts were fabricated, but after the death of Bernie Little, the new T-7 hull never came to fruition. The subsequent withdrawal from the sport after the 2004 season by sponsor Anheuser-Busch/Budweiser and Joe Little selling the T-5 and T-6 equipment to Ted Porter/Formulas Boats ended the "T" series evolution of hydroplanes at Budweiser Racing.

The designs and concepts that evolved from the many years of success of the "T" series boats are still with us today and are seen in the new hulls that have entered the sport since the T-6 hull was built. ❖



Michael Phophet



Lon Erickson



Ron Harsin



Lon Erickson

THE T-6: The last of the turbine *Budweisers* as it leaves the dock for a test run in Seattle in 2000. [Upper Middle] The T-6 was parked next to its sister, the T-5, at every race. Can you tell the difference between the two? [Lower Middle] Racing as the *Valken.com* while at Madison in 2011. [Above] The T-6 hull currently competes as the U-12 *Graham Trucking*.

Cindy Shirley talks hydroplanes.

Last month, Cindy Shirley talked about her initial involvement with unlimited hydroplane racing and how she joined the Miss Madison crew. This month in part two, the conversation focuses on her increasing role on the team and how she became crew chief in 2018. The interview was conducted by Craig Fjarlie on December 14, 2018.

UNJ: In 2018, when you were named crew chief, what went through your mind?

Shirley: I knew I was crazy to accept that. I went through this whole thing. I had a long talk with Charlie [Grooms], long talk with Jimmy [Shane], a long talk with Dan [Walters]. It was gonna impact him even if he hadn't been on the crew. It was gonna impact him [Walters] and I kidded myself and said, "Sure, I can make this work. I can do this." I mean, I knew how bad the job was

going to be, but I think I tried to kid myself to tell myself that it wouldn't really be as (pause).

Yeah...

Yeah, it was awful. (Laughter.) It was awful.

Because of the pressure and the work requirements?

Well, not knowing what I didn't know yet.

Oh, yeah.

I don't like to be in situations where I don't know what's going on. I knew the outcome I was

looking for. I knew things we were wanting to do. Making sure I had the right people to do the job and that kind of stuff. Actually, we have a wonderful crew. I love my crew. Love them. They're fantastic, I mean, from top to bottom.

To jump ahead, they're staying on board for 2019?

I don't know. I hope so. Some of them I don't think so.

OK, well, when you got the crew chief job, the new boat was almost ready, but not quite.



Chris Denslow

Cindy Shirley poses in front of the *Miss HomeStreet* at the spring training session in the Tri-Cities before the season started.

Yeah, it was really only about half-way there.

So, a lot of work had to be done. You had kind of a thrash to get ready for Tri-Cities.

Oh, certainly, it was a thrash. The real problem is, though, when they realized that the new boat was not going to be ready and the old boat wasn't ready.

This was just before the season.

Around April or so, when I was named crew chief. Then, you know, looking at everything and realizing that the boat was not going to be ready. There was no way the new boat was gonna be ready. We had to get the old boat ready and when we got it out here it wasn't ready. We had to take the strut off and re-glue it back on. That is so tedious, but wow, did I learn so much. Dan and I working on that, and we stayed 'til it was after midnight working on that.

Did you have to go to work the next day?

Well, it was a Friday or Saturday night. I can't remember. So, we were coming back to the shop the next day, but not as early as we had been the day before.

Yeah.

We put in, I remember on a three-day weekend I put in enough hours to have worked full time. It was like 42 hours or something.

Oh, wow.

I would look over at the other boat and it's sittin' there, kinda side-by-side. But I had to get the other boat ready, the old boat. I wasn't really in on the build process as much with the news boat as I was with the 2007 hull. And, I guess that's why I still have an affinity for it. I still love that boat 'cause I really helped more on it than I did on the new boat. However, when you put the new boat in the water in Tri-Cities, and she's not totally race-



Chris Denslow

Being the sport's first woman crew chief in the turbine era brought its share of attention from the media.

ready and she kicks off a 160-miles-per-hour lap, she starts to grow on you!

Yeah.

Pretty fast. So, after that, after Tri-Cities, it was everything geared toward getting' that boat race ready.

So, just from a curiosity point of view, what are the most significant differences between the two boats? Are there things you can point to that are obvious?

You know, it has a little bit lower profile, the cowling and everything, than the '07 boat. The cockpit is totally different. They look similar. In my world, they are not. They are different as night and day.

'Cause you're in there.

Night and day. Yeah, they're race boats, look very similar to one another, but when you're working on them, you just hit some real differences between the two. The bottom's a little different on the new one, the way the deck pattern is on the new one, and the sponsons are sloped much more on the new boat. This is just an aside, this has nothing to do with the features,

there are a thousand deck hatches on that thing. They go nowhere, but that's the way the deck, it was already built. There was a lot of it that was already built that we couldn't change.

Yeah.

I would go back and change a bunch of stuff, the first one being the cockpit roll cage.

Oh!

I got a call from Dan Hoover. He said, "I think we have a problem." He said, "I can't get the air bottles in." He said, "Can you get down here and see what's wrong?" I went down there and I looked at it. I had the bottle and I said, "Oh, my God. The roll cage is in the wrong spot." It wasn't as wide as the roll cage on the '07 boat. So, what we call our missile silo system in the '07 boat was not gonna work on the new boat. So, that was a huge challenge, huge.

Yeah.

And it's still not the way I want it. That's one of the things I plan to do this winter. Try to figure out a different way to get that in a better shape.

Like the old boat?

I can't make it any bigger. I'm gonna have to do something different, the tying down and stuff. I just didn't like it. There's gotta be a better way to do something in there. But, you know, Jimmy has a little bit more room in the cockpit, I think, although his knees are a little higher to the dash than I think we would all like to see. But it's a longer cockpit that way, which is interesting. Well, when we changed to the new boat it seems like our propellers and shaft and motors and gearbox, pretty much everything else was new and different, including the computer system.

Oh, yeah?

On the dash. We went from gauges to these computer screens in the middle of the dash. That was interesting.

Did you get a digital readout that way, then?

Yeah. And it took a while to get it to run right. To just figure out what we didn't have. We didn't have data for a while, except for what came out of the boat, what came out of the black box, 'cause our computer wasn't working. All of our runs. We always look at the data anyway, but Jimmy had no idea what was going on.

OK.

And we're at the Gold Cup and he still has no idea what's going on. Jimmy Gilbert was working super hard on it trying to track down the problems. And then a kid from the Grand Prix's stopped by to say hi to Mike and Aubree [Hanson]. He knew them from something else, working with boats. Mike built their GP. So, the kid, his name's Michael, came down to talk to Mike and Aubree, and Mike gets this look in his eyes like, "What computer system do you use in your GP?" "Oh, we use this such and such." And Mike says, "Oh, my God, we



Chris Denslow

Shirley and her *Miss HomeStreet* crew in action.

need you on the hull."

So, Michael got up there with Jimmy Gilbert and this was a Saturday. I think it was Saturday, raining. And they trailer-fired the motor, and we've got the cockpit lid down on Dan. Dan's in, trailer-firing. So, we've got the cockpit lid down but I'm trying to look underneath the glass and look in and I see numbers that make sense. I jump up and then Trey, I didn't know he's right behind me looking over my shoulder. I almost hit him and knocked him off the boat because I was so excited to see numbers that made sense. It was so funny, though. We all stopped, we talked about it. Then we trailer-fired again.

That night I texted Jimmy and I said, "I hope you're ready 'cause we have lights and numbers." I was scared to death the rest of Saturday night. What if something went wrong? What if he came in and we didn't have any numbers? What if it went bad over night? We narrowed a bunch of the problems down to a bad sensor. What if that sensor went bad overnight? So, of course I went through all the gremlins that I could think of in my head all night Saturday night. I didn't sleep much and because it's the Gold Cup.

Sure.

And then Sunday we had numbers and lights and from there that part only got better. It's totally different, you know, going from the gauges to suddenly we're with this digital readout and, you know, to just trailer-fire we were putting some gauges back in the bilge to check oil pressure of the engine and gearbox and that kind of stuff. Because we had the numbers, we had nothing.

Now, this cockpit set-up, that's what *Budweiser* was going to use, or was that something you... How did that come about?

I don't know, to be honest. I think it had to get a new computer and that's what Racepac had now.

Oh, OK.

And, uh, we can move the numbers around when you program it. You can tell what numbers you want, where, and it has lights that go above it. It ended up they weren't bright enough. We had to add our own lights on the dash for Jimmy. But, yeah, it was different to see the digital readout up there. It's like, wow, OK. You know, I used to, when I'd give cockpit tours I would say, "Oh, look at that speedometer over there. It goes up to 200 miles an hour. How many speedometers do

you get to see that go to 200?" I can't show that speedometer any more.

Oh, wow.

Yeah.

Well, if we can talk a little bit about the 2018 season.

It had some highs. It had some lows.

Some things didn't go quite as well as you were obviously hoping.

No.

Some of it was technical things, a couple driving errors maybe that might not have been called right.

Right, yeah. When you're in that you just know everybody's watching you, so you can't be emotional, you can't get mad, you can't say any kind of thing. But, yeah, it didn't go... Guntersville, right off the bat, ran into problems. Madison, we figured out some of the problems from Guntersville, got them fixed for Madison. Mike helped me. We had one new prop, I think, that he'd worked on, and he said, "Save this for the final."

Mmm.

He said, "Save it." And he said, "Everybody else is gonna want to run it early." He said, "I'm tellin'

you, save it." So I did.

Yeah.

And they did, they wanted to run it earlier and I said, "No. We're saving it for the final, we're saving it for the final." And, uh, although we had the red motor, the *Bud* motor, and we call it big red. So we had that. Bianca couldn't remember what it's called. It is red. Just remember that she called it "red biscuit."

Oh.

Some reason, I don't know, and then we had our new propeller and when we won the race, we ended up calling it "biscuits and gravy." The propeller was gravy. So, we had biscuits and gravy and that was the best moment. That was awesome. We had what, four top qualifiers out of six? I think we had four out of six.

Yeah.

Fast boat. Just trying to get it all put together at the right time. There were tech issues we were dealing with, but they weren't necessarily crucial tech issues. They weren't going to affect our speed any, really. They were just in the rule book to keep you from blowin' up your motor, because people were blowing up their motors.

Yeah.

So that rule was just put in there. And I understand that, we didn't want to blow it up, either. That's the last thing we could've afforded was to do something like that. And my whole season, I knew, that's the last thing we could do was tear something up major. Tear up a motor, tear up a gearbox, or the boat. Every time it came back to the dock and everything was OK in it, even if we didn't win or whatever happened, Jimmy would say, "And the boat was OK." Those were my first, you know...

Yeah.

That had to be enough.

That was the first criteria.

That was the first criteria and everything else after that was gravy. But the win in Madison, hometown for the boat. It was close to my hometown of Louisville. That was really neat, that was fun. And then, to move on from that, Tri-Cities. We thought everything was going fine until Sunday, I guess, when I was called into the tech truck.

Oh.

They called me and Jimmy Gilbert into the tech truck and said, "We're throwing you out of your other two heats on Saturday." (Long pause.) OK, great. And what do you do? We fixed the problem and didn't have that problem again. But it was an uphill battle the entire season. You know, when you're building that boat and you're also trying to get your other boat back in good working order and that kind of stuff, we felt like we were behind the whole season. We were coming from behind the entire time. You can only do that for so long.

If the new boat had been ready at Guntersville, would that have made a difference, do you think?

For focus, yes. We were focused, once we got the old boat running,



Celebrating the victory in Madison with team driver Jimmy Shane.

and it's a great boat. The 2007 boat, still a great boat. And we were focused on it. But it just felt like, you know, everybody was focusing, what's going on with the other boat, when are we gonna get that one done.

Yeah.

And, yeah, it was just, it divided the focus. Any time you do that it's not gonna be successful.

There's always a price to pay.

There's always a price, and that's what it was. Once we were able to settle down, and between Tri-Cities and Seattle, man, that was a thrash that week. I don't even remember that week, 'cause I had to work, too.

Your day job?

The day job. And then, all this, there was so much stuff going on. There's one thing getting it in the water to run a couple laps. Totally different thing to actually race it. To get it ready to race, uh, it was tough. And Mike, man, he's awesome. I mean, he's just awesome, there's no other word for it. He's fantastic. It's a good thing with him doing it, the quality. And it's safe.

Yeah.

Those are actually opposite order. The important thing, it's safe. And it's a good piece. So that new boat, it's really, really neat. After we ran that 160-mile-an-hour lap in Tri-Cities, I realized we didn't have the gearbox for San Diego that I wanted.

Oh.

Or for Detroit, to be honest. And we weren't able to get that done, either, because I knew what was in the new boat when we took it out there, when we shipped it out for the session. All the good stuff was in the '07 boat, 'cause that's the one we were racing in Tri-Cities. The new boat, we had all the secondary stuff in it. It wasn't the right gear ratio, it wasn't the best engine. And when

it did, I said, "Oh, OK, we need a taller gearbox for Detroit." We weren't able to get that done, but it ran well in Detroit. I would like to know what it would have done with a taller gear ratio.

You didn't have it for San Diego.

Yes.

But you'll have it for next season, 2019?

Fingers crossed. Although all you're doing is building. That box would only be used for qualifying. But as a competitor, you want to win everything, so if that's what it takes, that same box can be used multiple races, even if it's only for qualifying. Trying to get it where we don't have to change a lot of ratios, in and out of boxes. We see our ratios done and then just change the box in and out of the boat and we won't have to, in between races, try and go from a two-mile ratio to a two-and-a-half-mile ratio. There are some that overlap and some that don't.

OK. Do you have propellers that are any good for that, or do you have to change if you want to make that?

No, the propellers, actually, we've had some really good ones this year that we really liked the way they ran, the way they lasted,

and we're pretty sure "gravy" was taken out by a cowl bolt. The bolt took a nick out of it. We're missing a cowl bolt, too. Great, so it probably went right through it and nicked it. You know, there were times this season as a team we really had fun, but it's just, not everything fell our way. And, honestly, I think we had been lucky for so many years. We really had a lot of problems racing like that and my hope is we got it all done in this one season. How many igniter boxes have you seen fail?

It's tough to remember.

That's my second one. I knew exactly what it was when it happened. On the dock, I knew it. There's nothing you could do with it. So, yeah, there's, like, you got to be kidding me. That just doesn't happen. So I'm hoping we got all of this bad stuff out and that we can turn it around for 2019.

We're getting close to the end. Is there anything we haven't discussed yet?

You haven't asked the big question.

What's the big question?

Are we running two boats?

Oh.

Everybody wants to know if we're running two boats, but I don't have an answer.

If HomeStreet wants you to



The new *Miss HomeStreet* leaves the dock in Seattle.

Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow

The HomeStreet team watch their boat circle the Lake Washington racecourse.

do that.

Right, if HomeStreet wants us to do that, naturally we would, but there are other reasons, or other ways, we would do that.

Make sure there are enough boats at the races? Hate to say that, but ...

But, it's true.

It's a concern.

The thing is, I told somebody I don't want to go up against that boat [the old boat—Ed].

That too, racing yourself.

It's still a really good boat, you know, I'm not sure I would want to really, although the new boat is great. I don't know how fast it'll go.

Jimmy just gushed about the new boat.

It's so easy. It's just sitting out there and just zip in the water. Goes over the rough stuff so well. You know, we now have a lot of... It seems like back in the day we had some smoother courses, but now they're all rough. All of 'em, just rough. A turn, or, you know, depending but that boat just gets over it. It doesn't still sit, the side heavy. The '07, it could use some work, naturally, as all boats that are 11-plus years old.

Sure.

But it's not as stiff as it used to be, so it starts to really kind of...

Getting a little flexy?

Gets more flexible. Where the new boat doesn't so it just stays, flies on top of it, and it is amazing.

Yeah.

I mean, just, it is. And the good thing about this off-season is we can really concentrate and make sure everything is tied down the way we want it, to make sure it's all in. The foam is really nice anyway and it looks like it fared well even after San Diego and salt and all that kind of stuff. So far, it's lookin' OK, but we'll concentrate on getting the motors checked out. We have one motor had some problems there at the end. And gearboxes. We had gearboxes, going through them and then putting them in the case halves. We had one case half that was cracked. Those are our pretty popular ratios. We have a couple new case halves that we're gonna arrange and put some new gears in these and just try to get that organization done a little bit better. The truck and trailer are back in Madison being worked on. There's a lot of stuff going on back there, too. But right now, just concentrate on

one thing and make it the best we can.

Well, the last item, in the history of unlimited hydroplane racing, there haven't been a lot of women involved in one capacity or another. Do you see opportunities so that women could or should apply and get involved?

Absolutely. You know, there are so many talented women out there that could jump in and be successful. Really, right now with all of our people and stuff it's such a family sport that women are always around. So, women aren't looked upon as if...(pause)

What are you doing here?

Exactly. Kip Brown's daughter is our up and coming, is starting to race and they do all kinds of sheet metal work in the shop with them. So it's not uncommon now. I think it's more common and I think it's a really good time for women to come and get started. There are lots of women in other sports, different auto racing, other motor sports, that are crewing. They might as well come on over to boat racing 'cause we are much more fun and exciting.

Yeah, yeah.



Chris Denslow

Shirley, Jimmy Shane, and the Miss HomeStreet team at Seattle.

I think our sport is way more entertaining than watching a car go around in circles for 500 miles. So, I think we need some drivers, too.

Sure. They race outboard and inboards.

Yes, they do. I'm just waiting for some of them like Marina Bartels and some of those people to come on up here and, you know, stick their stuff in and then keep goin' up. I'm really excited she and her sister, Marisa, you know, they're up and coming drivers. It's really fun to know that there are some women out there that might, maybe, one day be in the unlimiteds. If they have unlimiteds.

Yeah. Long view, do you have any thoughts about the status of the sport right now? Have you heard what may or may not be happening?

I don't believe those rumors yet, but I do worry that we won't have events, that we won't have enough boats. That, you know, we've got to change something to get the younger crowd in. Not sure totally what that is, yet. Shorter days, I don't know. I know there are a lot of options being thrown around and it's just gonna take a lot of dedicated people to say, "Yes, we're gonna go this direction, we're

gonna try something different," and everybody's going to have to follow along. And all of us old timers are not gonna want to go, maybe, that direction, but we're gonna have to try it and see if it actually works. I think there's going to have to be a lot of trial and error to find a format.

In some ways it might be like when they went from step boats to the three-point hulls. It was big changes that not everyone was anxious to see.

Right. And there are a lot of changes, you know, probably on the horizon, and probably more on the horizon right now that a lot of people aren't anxious to see. But I

think we've got to figure out how to reach that next group of people out there that want to come and hang out on a Sunday, Saturday afternoon. 'Cause we all did it.

A lot of young people don't seem to have any grasp of what's going on out there other than maybe a Sunday afternoon at the lake or river watching it. Then they go away and don't think about it for another year.

Exactly. And not only is that fan-based, we actually need them to come work on the boats.

Get their hands dirty.

It must not be attractive to a lot of people these days. Also, the crews are getting older. We need some young blood in there.

That's right.

And maybe the young blood will bring some ideas on format changes, or I don't know what. But we've got to get them in not just as fans but into the actual sport itself.

Yeah, yeah.

And it's a tough sell. Never thought it would be such a tough sell, but to me, this just makes it fit, but it is.

OK, have we covered it?

I think so. If you'd told me when I was 10 years old I'd be sitting here doing this, I would have laughed. ❖



Chris Denslow

HydroFile

Race Team News



Lon Erickson

Go3 Racing Team

Ed Cooper's attention is on the engine shop (right) during the winter months. As the weather warms, the repair of some damage that occurred to the hull last year in Detroit will begin to be done.

U-6 HomeStreet Racing/Miss Madison

Jimmy Shane has been spending time at the HomeStreet Racing shop in Tukwila, Washington, working on manufacturing and welding spare hardware, uprights, and skid fin mounts. Team Manager Charlie Grooms tells the UNJ that several crew members are spending time in Tukwila preparing the primary hull and engines for the 2019 season.



Go3 Racing



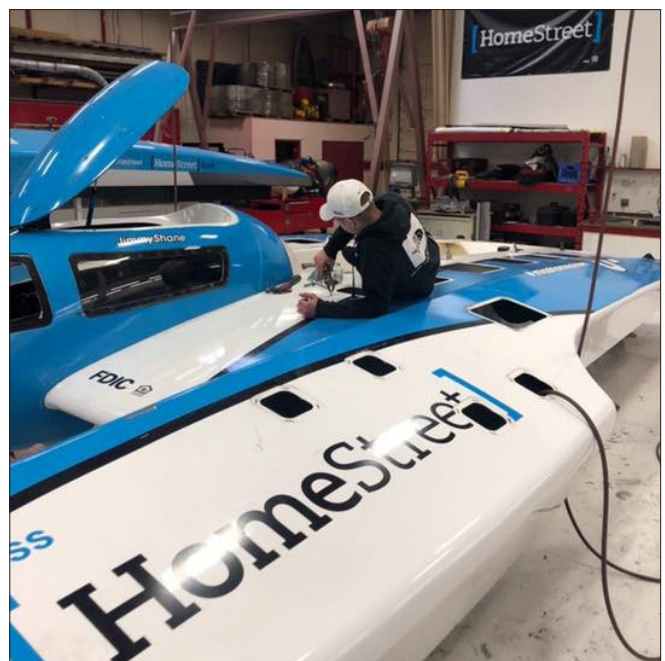
HomeStreet Racing



Jimmy Shane



Trey Holt



Trey Holt

U-7 Spirit of Detroit

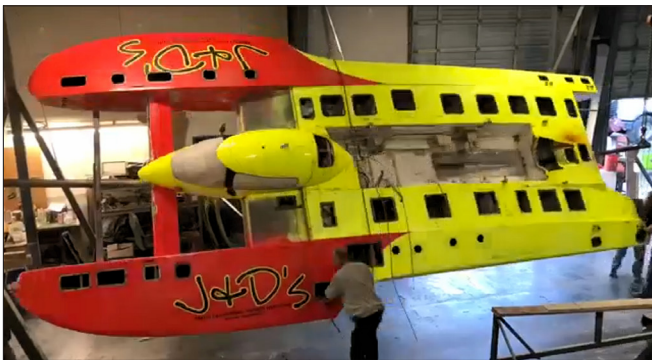
Spirit of Detroit driver Bert Henderson was asked recently about the U-7 and the upcoming H1 season. "Looking forward to going to Madison, Gunter'sville, and the entire H1 unlimited racing season," he said.



Lon Erickson

U-11 Unlimited Racing Group

The process of manufacturing and curing parts is underway at the U-11 shop as off-season work continues. Among the recently completed repairs now done was damage from the San Diego race that one team member described as "catastrophic." The boat has been rolled over and the team's focus is now to the top side.



Unlimited Racing Group

U-12 Graham Trucking

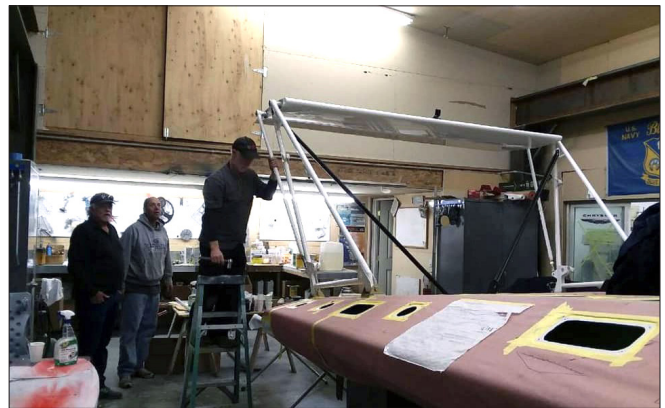
Rob Graham reports to the UNJ what's been going on at Graham Trucking Racing in Milton, Washington. "The U-12 crew has been working on all of the usual off-season repairs and planning, the boat is actually almost ready to start putting things back together," he said. "As plans stand today the U-12 (right) will start the season in Gunter'sville, hoping all things are in place for a fun race season." The team recently acquired the former Leland U-99.9 *CarStar/Miss Rock* and that hull is also getting specific attention at the shop. It will possibly see action this coming summer in the Northwest. As things progress, more details will be firmed up on the U-99.9 hull.

U-21/48 Go Fast Turn Left Racing

Preparations for the 2019 season continue on the new U-48 hull. Below, crew members gather at the Go Fast, Turn Left shop on a crew night. Also below is the upright being fitted onto the new U-48 hull. Specific race commitments are not firmed up at this time, however. The new U-48 hull is planned for spring testing in the Tri-Cities at the end of May.



Go Fast Turn Left Racing



Go Fast Turn Left Racing



Lon Erickson

440 Bucket List Racing

The Bucket List team has wrapped up repairs to the bottom of the hull, rolled the boat back over, and are ready to install the new rudder hardware and make other off-season changes.



Bucket List Racing



Bucket List Racing



Bucket List Racing

Dave Bartush/Spirit of Detroit Racing

Dave Bartush has recently acquired from Joe Little the former *Budweiser* T-3 hull (#8901) along with two engines. The boat last ran as the 88 *Degree Men* in 2012 while under the Gregory family ownership and driven by Scott Liddycoat. The hull is currently in the HomeStreet Racing shop in Tukwila. Veteran unlimited builder and crew chief Jim Harvey has been hired full-time to work on the hull and run the team. Sponsorship, the makeup of the crew, and who will be in the driver's seat is still to be determined. While the hull is still intact, much of the racing hardware is missing and will need to be replaced and/or updated. At this point, the plan for the hull is to see action this summer in the Tri-Cities and Seattle.



Lon Erickson

Spring Testing Friday, May 31 in the Tri-Cities Neil F. Lampson pits at Columbia Park

The annual H1 spring testing date is scheduled for Friday, May 31, pending any significant weather or river issues. While it is a bit premature to have specific team commitments this early, indications are that six unlimiteds have expressed interest in attending. As we get closer to the event, we will update you about official commitments from teams and the Tri-City Water Follies organization.



Lon Erickson

My \$0.02 Worth

Editorial Comment



Andy
Muntz

With the news that Detroit will not be hosting an unlimited hydroplane race this summer, I'm reminded of the story of how the long tradition of racing on the Detroit River began. You see, it all started with a dream.

Christopher Columbus Smith, the proprietor of the C.C. Smith Boat & Engine Company of Algonac, Michigan, had earned an excellent reputation for building fast runabouts and, by 1914, had developed a solid business relationship with J. Stuart Blackton, a neighbor of former President Theodore Roosevelt at Oyster Bay, New York, and a mogul in the infant motion picture industry.

Blackton loved boat racing and had hired Chris Smith to build him several race boats. In 1914, he entered two of them in the Gold Cup race held at Lake George. One of those boats, the *Baby Speed Demon II*, turned out to be the winner.

But there also was a dark cloud over the affair. War was brewing in Europe. Germany declared war against Russia the day after the race was held and, by the time the Gold Cup trophy arrived at the Blackton home in Oyster Bay, World War I was underway.

Germany had been a lucrative market for Blackton's movies, so anticipating the impact the war would have on his American Vitagraph Company, he felt compelled to let Chris Smith know that no new boat orders would be coming his way. The news was devastating to Smith. He went to a bar to drown his sorrows, was skinned to his last few cents in a poker game, collapsed into his bed back at the hotel, and fell asleep.

There, he had a dream. He saw himself in downtown Detroit near the Pontchartrain Hotel. A speedboat was on display in Cadillac Square and hundreds of beautiful

flower girls were throwing baskets filled with dollar bills into the boat. "That's it," he said when he woke up. He would build a boat for Detroit and the money for the project would be raised by popular subscription.

So, that's how the Miss Detroit Powerboat Association was born. Some of the city's wealthiest, civic-minded people became involved in the effort and their boat went on to win the 1915 Gold Cup at Manhasset Bay, New York, which gave Detroit the right to host the event the following year.

The effort to win that race was quite an adventure in itself, but that's a story for another time. We're just hoping at this point that the story that started with Chris Smith's dream hasn't finally come to an end 105 years later. ❖

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Letters may be edited for clarity and space.

PLEASE JOIN US AT THE NEXT MEETING OF UNLIMITEDS UNANIMOUS.

2 p.m. on Sunday, April 14, 2019

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