

December 2014



# ***A Report from the 2014 Doha Qatar Oryx Cup***

***November 20 - 22***

***By Jimmy Gilbert***

***George Franke photos***



Again in 2014, the H1 Unlimited Hydroplanes and crews traveled to Doha, Qatar, at the invitation of Sheikh Hassan bin Jabor Al-Thani. All of the teams were looking forward to the Qatar experience and on many teams there were crew members who were making their first trip to Doha. The excitement was high for everyone, whether they had been to Qatar before or not.

Ten unlimited teams were selected to participate in the Oryx Cup based on their points standing following the September Bill Muncey Cup in San Diego, California. The Go Fast Turn Left team elected not to make the trip because of the extensive hull damage received at the Tri-Cities race earlier in the season. In their place, the Schumacher Racing team filled in, keeping the number of participating teams at ten.

In anticipation of future oceanic shipping requirements, three teams were selected to undergo an experiment whereby the boats were loaded on specially constructed rigs that would serve both as transportation berths while at sea as well as platforms for the boats at the race site in Doha. All supporting equipment for each boat was off-loaded from the three race teams' trucks into shipping containers. In the Doha pits, three large tents were set up adjacent to the containers so that the teams could have more space and have easier access to their equipment. We teased the teams, asking them if their tents were air conditioned – they weren't.

The rigs were constructed of angle iron, forming a cradle to support the center section of each boat. The rigs were designed to position the boats high enough above the ground to provide clearance for the skid fins and rudders in a race-ready configuration. The height turned out to be quite a bit lower to the ground than normal so it meant less climbing by the crews, a welcomed feature. In order to facilitate access to their equipment that was stored in containers, a couple of the teams transferred their tools to roll-a-round tool chests for easy transfer between the containers and tents.



Above, the view looking back at the corniche and Doha skyline. The large barge is a cultural museum near the pits and accessed by a dock along the waterfront/corniche. Below right are the plastic wrapped hydroplanes on shore, soon to be on their way to the pits.

For the most part, the container/boat rig venture was successful albeit quite different from what the teams were accustomed to. All commented that it was handy having the boats closer to the ground. However the Centurion Team expressed concern that because there was no provision for tilting or tipping the boats once they were on the rig, draining water out of the hull might present a problem. Another somewhat negative comment concerned the difficulties encountered when long shafts needed





to be removed and/or inserted in the boats. The close proximity of the hulls to the ground required some ingenuity by the crews to get that job done. These problems will surely be addressed in the next generation of support rigs should H1 elect to pursue this method of trans-ocean shipment. At right a truck with a plastic wrapped unlimited moves into the pits. ~ Peters & May facebook photo

Below the unlimiteds in the Doha pits Thursday November 13th. Below right the #12 *Miss DiJulio* sits in the pits waiting for the engine to show up. Bottom left, owner/driver Mike Webster stands on the deck of the U-22 *Boitano Homes* with the beautiful city in the background.



Chris Denslow photo



U-22 Facebook photo

At right, the Centurion crew about done installing the engine in the #12 *Miss DiJulio* Friday, just in time for their first heat. ~ Sheraton photo



H1 photo



Most of the Oberto/Miss Madison team elected to travel to Doha on Sunday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. The trip required a minimum of 16 hours of flight time and with a lay-over it became a minimum of about twenty-four hours to get there. Because of the eight hour time difference between Doha and the eastern seaboard of the United States, it was the evening of the following day (Monday in our case) before we arrived. This year, the Madison team flew KLM Royal Dutch Airways to Amsterdam and from there, KLM to Doha. In the past years, most of us flew on Qatar Airways non-stop from the United States direct to Doha. The stop-over in Amsterdam this year was actually a welcomed respite. It provided a chance to stretch our legs, get something to eat, and interact with each other (other than from one airline seat to another). All the flights carrying the H1 crews were thankfully uneventful.

Once we cleared Qatari Immigration and Customs in Doha, a large bus met us at the airport for transportation to the hotel. There were members of others teams on the flight with us (as well as H1 Officials), and once we were assembled, we proceeded to the hotel. This year, we stayed at the Doha Hilton, a fairly new hotel that is quite close to the pits. The rooms were quite nice and provided a great view of Doha Bay and the surrounding environs. The hotel's amenities included a complimentary breakfast for guests, complete with omelets, waffles and eggs made to order. A buffet of hash browns, cheeses, cold cuts, fruits, nuts, juices, vegetables and breads accompanied the breakfast. It was all very good.



Internet photo

In addition to the restaurant that served breakfast at the hotel, there was a pool side lounge, an upscale piano bar and a Trader Vic's restaurant. Several of the unlimited team members dined at Trader Vic's during their stay in Doha. Trader Vic's also had a large dance floor with a band that played lively Salsa music in the evenings. It was a busy scene almost every night. I'd never really seen Qataris interact socially before so I was getting a new perspective of their culture. There didn't appear to be many Qatari women present but there were quite a few western women about. I would assume that they were western because most were quite blond and dressed in western fashion. As the couples danced, I noticed that their style of dance differed somewhat from what I've seen here in the United States. The men twirled their partners with joined hands overhead frequently during each dance. All were very accomplished dancers and they seemed to really be enjoying themselves. I was struck with the rather humorous tongue-in-cheek notion about "twirling" while dancing – the land of Arabia is known for whirling dervishes! There just might be something to it ... but I have my doubts.



Jimmy Gilbert on deck, and the crew working on *Oberto* in pits. ~ Oberto facebook photo

Tuesday morning arrived and the Madison team journeyed to the pits to begin setting up the boat for the Oryx Cup.

Because of work commitments, several members of the Madison team were unable to make the trip this year. That left a fairly skeletal crew so job assignments were rearranged and in many cases, doubled up. The team adapted to their new assignments quickly and became skilled at their new tasks during the six days that we were there in Doha. The boat was made ready to race and the team adjourned to the hotel fairly early in the afternoon.

The City Center Mall is within walking distance from the Doha Hilton so most of the Madison team elected to go to the Mall Tuesday evening. The Mall was as magnificent as ever. We shopped for souvenirs and for forgotten toiletries. A few of us elected to eat at the Italian restaurant that is a part of the Doha City Center Marriott Hotel. From previous visits, we knew food there would be excellent and it was again. After a most satisfying meal, we gathered up our purchases and journeyed back to the Hilton.

On Wednesday, the Madison team went to the pits to finish prepping the boat for the upcoming racing. There wasn't much to do because we'd accomplished most of the set-up work on the boat the day before. We did finalize the alignments of the rear wing and the skid fin. Steve David and his father-in-law Duane Sheehy came by to say hello. I hadn't seen Duane in several years so it was good to get a chance to visit with him. In early November, my wife and I attended Super Boat International's Off Shore World Championship in Key West so Steve and I discussed some of the results of that race. Most of the off shore racers know Steve from his days racing with them and all expressed their satisfaction with Steve's appointment as Chairman of H1. Incidentally, Sheikh Hassan has scheduled an off shore race in Doha in February of 2015 so while we were in Key West many of the off shore racers questioned me about my Qatar experiences, asking what they could expect in the way of facilities, lodging, food and so forth. I gladly obliged their queries and assured them that they would be well cared for while in Doha.

On Thursday, Oryx Cup testing and qualifying were scheduled. In the first test session, Jimmy Shane and *Oberto* ran well but it was determined that our fuel flow was above H1's 4.10 gallons per minute limit. The fuel was "dialed down" for the qualifying session. The qualifying session was to begin at 1:00 PM and last until 4:00 PM, quite a lengthy period that would allow each boat at least two attempts to qualify. When the Madison boat went out to qualify, our driver Jimmy Shane reported that there was a missing buoy on the course. He piloted the boat around the oval at a 139+ miles per hour lap. That was faster than the speed posted by J. Michael Kelly in the U-1 *Graham Trucking* entry and all other qualifiers. However, the H1 officials nullified Jimmy's attempt because of the missing buoy but made arrangements for him to make another attempt. The second time out, Jimmy achieved 143.042 miles per hour for the run. Kelly later improved his qualification speed but not enough to surpass Jimmy. By being Top Qualifier at Doha, Jimmy became Top Qualifier at every race during 2014 — quite a nice accomplishment, to say the least.





However, netting Top Qualifier wasn't without incident. A small crack on the right rear canted area of the boat (the so-called shoe on the non-trip) was found. The Madison team went to work on the repair. Even Jimmy Shane was grinding fiber glass to help in the effort. The team worked past the 8:00 PM last-bus-to-the-hotel schedule so we had to walk when the work was done. It was only about a half mile but we were tired, so it seemed that the walk was much longer. Because of the lateness of the hour, most of the Madison team chose to retire rather than socialize that evening. The crew working on *Oberto*. ~ Oberto facebook photo-The Ellstrom team also ran into trouble Thursday. Jean Theoret broke the rear wing and the strut during a run. ~ Ellstrom facebook photo

I should also mention that when we were walking back to the hotel, we passed a new construction site near the Doha Sheraton Hotel. We'd passed the site before and noticed that there were an inordinate number of workers that always seemed to be present. As we passed the site returning from the pits after dark, we saw hundreds if not thousands of workers still there, toiling under lights. An interesting thing we noticed was that the workers appeared to be wearing color coded shirts to indicate their assignments. Cement workers had on one color shirt, iron workers another, electricians yet another and so forth. The United States Navy used color coded uniforms on aircraft carrier deck operations to simplify identification of assignments in a similar fashion. It seems that in any project involving a large number of people, a quick identification method would be most handy for management to oversee and run the activity better, whether it's a major construction project or operating aircraft from a flight deck. We weren't sure what the project under construction was but there certainly was a bee hive of activity surrounding it the entire time that we were there. As a matter of fact, construction was happening all over Doha in preparation for the Soccer World Cup in 2022.

Before the 2014 Oryx Cup began, H1 Chairman Steve David appointed Dr. Katie Wildman (H1 photo) to serve as liaison and ambassador for the boat teams. Katie previously had been, for several years, associated with the Qatar Education Foundation's consortium of universities from the United States with campuses in Doha, so she is very familiar with Qatar. During the 2014 Doha trip, Katie made arrangements for the teams to visit Old Town (at left), a reconstructed site reminiscent of an early Arabian market place. It is always a hit with the boat teams. Also, most of the teams expressed interest in visiting the "pearl man," a vendor who sells pearl jewelry out of a shop that seemed to have materialized out of





Internet photo

Scheherazade's tales in *A Thousand and One Nights*. On my visit to the pearl man a couple of years ago, the scene was so surreal that I fully expected Aladdin to come flying through a window on a magic carpet at any moment! Alas, the pearl man's shop was undergoing some sort of renovation at that moment so Katie made arrangements for the pearl man to come to the Doha Hilton to present his wares to the boat teams. The Madison team was busy with the repair on the non-trip so we missed the entire event. I should also add that Katie was most helpful in arranging transportation in order that the teams could visit whatever they wanted to see in Doha. We owe her a debt of gratitude for her

efforts on our behalf.

I would really be remiss were I not to mention the wonderful lunches that Sheikh Hassan provided every day to the H1 crews and officials. The lunches were opulent and as tasty as ever. Daily, there was always a wide variety of food made available to us. Lunch was served in a huge air conditioned tent so not only was it great to get away from work for a short time, it was most appreciated to be fed so well in cool comfort. Our gratitude can never be expressed enough.

Heat racing for the Oryx Cup began on Friday. Testing for the H1 fleet was also scheduled for Friday morning should any of the teams require additional time on the water. The Madison team elected not to test but began to prepare the boat for the first heat race.



Internet photo



Above left the teams launch for 1A. The only boat not shown is the one that wins the heat in photo at right, *Graham Trucking* and J. Michael Kelly.

In heat 1B, Jimmy Shane and Jon Zimmerman were early at the start and incurred a one lap penalty – not a good way to start out the weekend. On following page at left, *Graham Trucking II* follows *Les Schwab/RedDot* in 1B, but the #9 is really behind. At right is the winner Jean Theoret in *Qatar* in a fierce battle for the lead in 1B with Cal Phipps and *Graham Trucking II*.





Chris Denslow photo



Chris Denslow photo



Two boat failed the start 2A, *Tony Romas/Sahara Pizza* and *Miss Dilulio*. The #100 never left the pits but the #12 did; it broke down before the start. Another suffered an engine fire and failed to finish. Tommy Thompson shut the gbr11 *Peters & May* down when the engine caught fire and was towed in as you can see at right. Above right the *Graham Trucking* and *Miss DiJulio* heading out to the course above. ~ #12 facebook photo-It was a fairly easy win for J. Michael Kelly and *Graham Trucking* above center right (Ed.)



In Heat 2B, Jimmy was able to lead the heat for a wire-to-wire finish, providing the Oberto/Madison team with a much needed points boost. But again the gremlins seemed to have struck. The front bottom surface of the left sponson (on the so-called “recovery area”) suffered some delamination of the carbon fiber construction. The team went to work repairing the area and completed the work fairly quickly. However, we couldn’t help think that perhaps this might be some sort of bad omen ... it turns out that it wasn’t, but we were on edge nevertheless.

Dave Villwock and *Miss Seattle* ran into trouble in 2B. He had to shut down and be towed it and suffered a DNF. On following page left, Villwock walks on the deck of *Miss Seattle* in frustration. To the right the winning Jimmy Shane and *Oberto*.

Following the second heat action of the day, the pits were opened to everyone. Opening the pits has become a tradition in Doha every year and literally thousands stream in to see, touch and be photographed with the boats. It certainly is a hit with the fans and teams alike. If there were trophies for heat or qualifying action present, most fans wanted their photographs taken holding the trophies. Since the Madison team was repairing the boat, a lot of fans avoided our area because of the





Oberto Facebook photo

dust from grinding but some folks didn't seem to mind it whatsoever. I suspect that those brave souls wondered later in the evening what caused that extreme "itching" they were experiencing!

Earlier on Friday before the racing began, I noticed an individual standing just outside the fence that delineated the pits from the spectator area. From my observation, he seemed to have a genuine interest in the boats and I made mental note of that. As it turns out, I observed the same individual the next day, standing almost in the same position as on Friday. Over the years I've come to realize that unlimited hydroplanes somehow or the other have an overwhelming appeal to a certain "select" group of people – I wish that were the case with everyone. I thought that perhaps this person might belong to "our fraternity." After a short period, I approached the guy and spoke with him briefly. His name is Bálazs Gábor and he is from Hungary. He'd never seen anything like the boats and was most impressed. He admitted that following the first day of action, he'd used Internet to ascertain "exactly what's the deal with these boats." He returned the following day better informed and after some conversation, I offered him my pit pass so that he could come into the pits to meet everyone. Bálazs is a nutritionist and physiology instructor at the Police Academy in Doha. I introduced him to the team and told him to make himself at home. He really seemed to enjoy his time in the pits during the racing action. He declared that he'd become a "life-long" Oberto/Madison fan! Let's hope that we've recruited a permanent friend and fan of the sport.

Before racing got underway on Friday, Charlie Grooms, the Madison team manager held a brief meeting to inform everyone that if we could secure 600 points during Saturday's action, the team would wrap up the National Championship. That would have been true excepting the possibility of any infraction that might involve the loss of previously accumulated points. Nevertheless, 600 points seemed to be the "magic number" at the moment.

In the first round of heat racing of the day (3A), Jimmy captured second place behind Kelly and a much coveted 300 points ... we were halfway there! It was good to learn that there was no additional damage to either the right transom "shoe" or to the left sponson "recovery area." Below left, *Graham Trucking*



leads *Oberto* and *Miss DiJulio*. *Les Schwab/RedDot* and *Tony Roma's/Sahara Pizza* are buried in their roostertails. At right *Graham Trucking* wins another heat



In 3B only four boat started the heat, *Graham Trucking II*, *Peters & May*, *Boitano Homes*, and *Qatar*. Only three finished. *Graham Trucking II* and Cal Phipps crossed the line first followed by *Peters & May* and *Boitano Homes*. Jean Theoret and *Qatar* went dead and were towed in, seen above right. Top left, *Peters & May* and *Graham Trucking II* are launched. At right the winning *Graham Trucking II*. Bottom left the crew works on *Miss Seattle* trying to get it ready for the race, but failed and sat out the rest of race. (Ed.)

In Heat 4A, Jimmy was able to win the heat and garner an additional 400 points to secure the National Championship, barring some unlikely catastrophe in the final. Below left *Les Schwab/RedDot* and *Graham Trucking II* head out for 4A. At right the winning *Oberto* and new National Champion trailed by Tom Thompson in *Peters & May*. ~ George Franke photos





It was another four boat heat in 4B with J. Michael Kelly and *Graham Trucking* coming in first followed by Jean Theoret and *Qatar*. Below left, *Graham Trucking* leads up the backstretch followed by *Qatar*, *Boitano Homes*, and *Miss DiJulio*. At right the winning *Graham Trucking* and and third place *Boitano Homes* and Mike Webster.



Initially on Saturday, all racing action was moved up fifteen minutes from the original Oryx Cup schedule because of sun glare on Doha Bay. The Final was additionally proposed to be moved about 30 minutes ahead of the published schedule. That schedule was later re-amended to start the Final at approximately the original time in order to accommodate the arrival of Sheikh Hassan and his entourage. The delay wasn't a problem because it would still be early enough in the day that the sun wouldn't be at such a low angle on the horizon to cause the glare to become worse. The problem with the glare on Doha Bay seems to be caused primarily because of dust blowing from the desert. There isn't much vegetation in the desert to hold the soil and sand in place, so winds tend to lift the fine grains of dust into the air and spread it for miles around. Diffraction of the sun's rays penetrating through a dust layer over a reflective body of water makes it difficult to see, especially at 200 miles per hour. At low solar elevation angles that occur near or about sundown, the problem becomes acute. For the Final it was still early enough in the afternoon that low solar elevation wouldn't be a problem.

It was time for the Oryx Cup to begin!







As the boats started out for the final, anticipation was high. After much jockeying, Cal Phipps grabbed lane 1, leading at the start. Kelly was in lane 2 and Jimmy Shane was in lane 3 (seen above). At the end of the first lap, Phipps had faded back a bit so Kelly moved into lane 1. Shane was ahead at the end of the first lap but on the outside. After the second lap it was obvious that Kelly had the lead and he wasn't about to relinquish it. Unfortunately, Jean Theoret in *Qatar* stalled his engine and wasn't able to restart. He performed well in heat 1B, winning in championship style. At the finish, J. Michael Kelly was once again the Oryx Cup winner and thus the World Champion! Kudos to Mike. But once again, the National Championship was ours! Below left *Les Schwab/RedDot* with *Graham Trucking II* in background. In the rest of the photos *Oberto* and *Graham Trucking* put on a real battle, but J. Michael





Kelly comes out ahead and wins the Oryx Trophy again one more time. Congratulations were offered all around and the teams retired to the hotel to prepare for Sheikh Hassan's Gala Awards Banquet scheduled for 8:00 PM.

The Gala Banquet was held on an outdoor deck at the Doha Hilton. The weather was perfect as we sat down to a most elegant spread. Qatari drummers presented their rendition of the traditional Qatari greeting that is offered to honored guests. In the wings of the deck, a falconer was present with his prized hunter while ladies prepared and offered a local dish that seemed to be much like our pancakes. They were quite tasty. Following the drum presentation, the program began.

First, Ms. Mona Nasser was recognized for her contributions to the Qatar Marine Sports Federation organization. It was also noted that Ms. Nasser had just completed her university degree, achieving a perfect 4.0 grade point average for her last several semesters while at the time serving as Events and Race Coordinator for QMSF, a very trying job unto itself. Let's hope that she stays with QMSF for a long time. She really is appreciated by all.

Following an elegant meal and the presentation of trophies for the Oryx Cup, a video of Sheikh Hassan's 244 miles per hour record run on the Lake of the Ozarks in August was shown. Sheikh Hassan and his throttle man, Steve Curtis, obliterated the previous record of 224 miles per hour that was established just one year before. Back in 2004, *Miss Budweiser* set the record that stood for years on the Lake of the Ozarks at 204 miles per



hour. Both Sheikh Hassan and Steve Curtis were presented to the assembled guests. Another video detailing the progress QMSF was making in introducing J-Hydro racing in Qatar was shown. It was also entertaining to see a video of off shore action at the 2013 World Championships in Key West. Peter Butler's video detailing the action of the just competed

2014 Oryx Cup was shown as well. Peter always does a wonderful job with his videography and his editing is superb. Everyone present at the awards dinner expressed their interest in obtaining a copy of Peter's video. It was a great evening for all, especially for J. Michael Kelly and the Formula Boat team. At right the soon to be #5 *Formula* and teams Qatar trophies sitting on deck. ~ Nelson Holmberg photo



Unfortunately and all too early, the Gala Awards Dinner was over and it was time to get back to reality ... packing the truck and preparing the boat for shipment back to the United States. On Sunday morning the Madison team began cleaning the boat, plus removing and storing the wing and skid fin. Because Doha Bay is saltwater, all of the boat's hatches were removed and each compartment thoroughly washed with soapy water and rinsed with fresh water. The long drive shaft was removed, cleaned and greased to prevent rust. The main batteries in the boat were removed and packed in the truck for transportation back to the United States. The engines were rinsed with water and all internal parts liberally coated with oil. The propellers were removed from their short shafts, cleaned, oiled and stowed in transportation boxes before being packed on the truck. Finally after hours of cleaning, oiling, and packing, the boat was washed and then wrapped using a transshipment tarpaulin. Our work was done until the boat returns to Madison.

The Madison team was scheduled to leave Doha early Monday morning ... actually at one minute past midnight Sunday so when we returned to the hotel, we showered and began packing for the trip. Some team members expressed an interest in seeing Old Town, so a quick trip was scheduled by Katie Wildman and away they went. The balance of the team dined at Trader Vic's and socialized.

The trip home was without incident and I arrived home on time after a layover in Amsterdam. I'd recently applied for and received membership in the U. S. Customs' Global Entry Program, so getting through immigration and customs was a breeze. I certainly can recommend the program and a side benefit is that as a Global Entry Program member, you're automatically enrolled in the Transportation Safety Administration's Pre-Check program for domestic flights. I can certainly recommend both programs; they make traveling much easier.

I would like to thank Sheikh Hassan, Mona Nasser and all of the QMSF staff for making the 2014 Oryx Cup such a success. The race has become the highlight of the unlimited hydroplane season and we all look forward to participating every year. Qatar is always a great venue and it provides us the opportunity to show the world just how great our sport is. Once again, thank you Sheikh Hassan for everything and we look forward to the 2015 Oryx Cup.







Above one of our photographers, "Germany George Franke. Middle Jean Theoret and Jesse Robertson



## STAT BOX

### ORYX CUP UIM WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Doha, Qatar, November 21-22, 2014

2-mile course on Doha Bay

**QUALIFICATION** (1) U-6 *Oberto*, Jimmy Shane, 143.024, 100 points; (2) U-1 *Graham Trucking*, J. Michael Kelly, 142.803, 80; (3) U-9 Les Schwab/*Red Dot*, Jon Zimmerman, 137.158, 70; (4) U-7 *Graham Trucking II*, Cal Phipps, 134.363, 60; (5) U-96 *Qatar*, Jean Theoret, 134.010, 50; (6) U-11 *Peters & May*, Tom Thompson, 130.229, 40; (7) U-21 *Miss Seattle*, Dave Villwock, 127.779, 30; (8) U-22

*Boitano Homes*, Mike Webster, 124.135, 30; (9) U-100 *Tony Romas/Sahara Pizza*, Dave Warren, 121.169; U-12 *Miss DiJulio*, Jesse Robertson, DNQ, 0 (used test speed 128+ to enter race).

**HEAT 1A** (1) *Graham Trucking* 130.857, 400 points, 480 cumulative points; (2) *Miss Seattle* 119.146, 300, 330; (3) *Peters & May* 107.608, 225, 265; (4) *Tony Romas/Sahara Pizza* 103.259, 169, 199; *Boitano Homes* DSQ — flagrant fuel violation, 0, 30. Fast lap (3) *Graham Trucking* 131.490. **HEAT 1B** (1) *Qatar* 119.994, 400, 450; (2) *Graham Trucking II* 115.518, 300, 360; (3) *Miss DiJulio* 96.226, 225, 225; (4) *Oberto* 95.854 (penalized one lap for jumping the gun), 169, 269; (5) Les Schwab/*Red Dot* 91.297 (penalized one lap for jumping the gun), 91.297, 127, 197. Fast lap (2) *Oberto* 129.900.

**HEAT 2A (rerun)** (1) *Graham Trucking* 108.878, 400, 880; (2) Les Schwab/*Red Dot* 106.944, 300, 497; *Miss DiJulio* DNS — changing engine, 0, 225; *Tony Romas/Sahara Pizza* DNS — , 0, 199; *Peters & May* DSQ — stopped first running when the boat died and engine flamed trying to restart, 0, 265. Fast lap (1) *Graham Trucking* 112.487. **HEAT 2B** (1) *Oberto* 115.750, 400, 669; (2) *Qatar* 112.405, 300, 750; (3) *Graham Trucking II* 109.385, 225, 585; (4) *Boitano Homes* 99.935, 169, 199; *Miss Seattle* DNF — compressor stall, 0, 330. Fast lap (1) *Oberto* 120.034.

**HEAT 3A** (1) *Graham Trucking* 131.980, 400, 1280; (2) *Oberto* 125.907, 300, 1029; (3) Les Schwab/*Red Dot* 116.051, 225, 722; (4) *Tony Romas/Sahara Pizza* 99.907, 169, 368; (5) *Miss DiJulio* 96.649, 127, 352 Fast lap (2) *Graham Trucking* 135.386. **HEAT 3B** (1) *Graham Trucking II* 122.944, 400, 985; (2) *Peters & May* 117.848, 300, 565; (3) *Boitano Homes* 114.005, 225, 424; *Qatar* DNF — , 0, 750; *Miss Seattle* WD — engine problems, 0, 330. Fast lap (2) *Qatar* 126.622.

**HEAT 4A** (1) *Oberto* 124.761, 400, 1369; (2) Les Schwab/*Red Dot* 122.836, 300, 1022; (3) *Graham Trucking II* 116.775, 225, 1210; (4) *Peters & May* 104.142, 169, 734; (5) *Tony Romas/Sahara Pizza* 101.503, 127, 495. Fast lap (2) *Oberto* 127.076. **HEAT 4B** (1) *Graham Trucking* 131.167, 400, 1680; (2) *Qatar* 124.795, 300, 1050; (3) *Boitano Homes* 114.885, 225, 649; *Miss DiJulio* DNF — , 0, 352. Fast lap (2) *Graham Trucking* 131.528.

**FINAL** (1) *Graham Trucking* 130.039, 400, 2080; (2) *Oberto* 126.006, 300, 1669; (3) Les Schwab/*Red Dot* 120.241, 225, 1247; (4) *Graham Trucking II* 116.179, 169, 1379; (5) *Peters & May* 113.672, 127, 861; (6) *Boitano Homes* 109.654, 95, 744; *Qatar* DNS — fuel system problems, couldn't restart , 0, 1050. Fast lap (2) *Graham Trucking* 133.200.

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**HydroFile**  
**Lon Erickson**

With the 2014 H1 Unlimited season wrapping up in Doha last month, it is a relatively quiet time for owners, teams, and related news. There are a few noteworthy items to report

The race boats, equipment, haulers, H1 support equipment are U.S. bound now aboard two vessels, the container vessel Maersk Denver and the ro-ro vehicle vessel Liberty Promise. The ETA for each vessel is as follows: The Maersk Denver is expected into Charleston, S.C. approximately January 15th, 2015 & the Liberty Promise is expected into Jacksonville, FL. approximately February 1st, 2015. Below left the Maersk Denver and at right the Liberty Promise.



Chris Denslow photo



Tri-City Herald photo

While there has been mention of 2 additional boats for 2015, one possible hull has now been eliminated from contention. The former Leland hull that last appeared in 2005 at Seafair as the U-60 *Miss Thriftway* and was later planned for auto-power, has been acquired from Mark Evans by the Tri-Cities Water Follies. It will become the new "Hydroplane On A Pole" greeting visitors to Columbia Park, site of the annual Tri-Cities race. ` Chris Denslow photos above. At right Mark Evans and the former U-60 *Miss Thriftway*. Evans facebook photo



Mark Evans facebook photo





Around the Circuit from Chris Tracy

As we start to look toward the 2015 season, what seems to resonate strongest is that it may be the year of change. The Sam Cole era is gone and Interim H1 Chairman, Steve David, seems to be charting a new course. ~ Karl Pearson photos



Karl Pearson photos

**Race Sites.** H1 announced that a 2015 event/race schedule will not be announced until February. Read below, and one can understand why.

Recently H1 severed relations with the **Coeur d'Alene, Idaho** promoter that staged the 2013 race. H1 is still owed money from the 2013 race and the promoter has had issues with the local government. The status of a 2015 race in Idaho is uncertain, although H1 is attempting to organize a race with a different sponsoring group.

All has not been well in **Detroit** for a few years. Promotion and attendance has not been great for the Gold Cup. And while Detroit signed a ten-year deal to host the Gold Cup, *UNJ* sources indicate that DRRA (the group that conducts the race) may have wanted a two-day event in the future, rather than three-day event, which would be hard to pull off with the extra heats in a Gold Cup race format. Money has been tight and the relationship between H1 and DRRA has been, at times, strident. Things appear to have come to a head around the 2014 Gold Cup. Reports indicate that DRRA was disappointed with the show that H1 brought in 2014; some bluntly have stated that the show was not worth the sanctioning fees. In addition, DRRA announced that they would not race that same weekend in 2015 and wanted an August race date, likely forcing the boats to head to the mid-west twice and causing some teams to complain about the costs. And then—pretty much by surprise to most, including Detroit race volunteers—H1 announced that DRRA decided not to conduct an unlimited event in 2015. Shortly after the H1 announcement, DRRA confirmed that they would not host an unlimited event in 2015. DRRA relinquished the agreement to hold the Gold Cup and announced a Grand Prix race, with other events, and scheduled all for August. H1 Chairman David apologized for the 2014 race, including the small boat count, plus relayed support for the DRRA and their new event. But the H1 Chairman announced plans to organize a 2015 unlimited event in Detroit around the same traditional date and is meeting with unlimited enthusiasts and Detroit Yacht Club supporters in mid-December. An H1 Unlimited event in Detroit for 2015, as I write this, is hopeful, but not certain.



What is certain is that the Gold Cup has been awarded to **Tri-Cities**, Wash. for 2015. The Tri-City Water Follies had expressed interest in hosting the Gold Cup in 2015, in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of racing in the Tri-Cities of Richland, Pasco and Kennewick. Their title sponsor HAPO Credit Union is on-board and the Tri-Cities are excited to host the 2015 HAPO Gold Cup.

Plans appear to be underway for an exhibition in **Owensboro**, Kentucky, maybe around the **Madison** race date. In any case, H1 has indicated that there will be an incentive to attend the Madison race.

The Blue Angels will be back for the Albert Lee Cup in **Seattle**. While some diehard boat racing fans object to a lengthy air show with the unlimited race, the combination program draws the largest crowd and contributes to the overall success of Seafair weekend.

All is quiet about the **San Diego** race. One former event director told the UNJ that the event could be in jeopardy unless additional sponsorship can be found for 2015. The season ending **Doha, Qatar** race will be back in 2015.

**Tow Money/Prize Money.** Past practice was for all boats/teams to get the same tow/prize money at each event. The H1 Chairman announced that all boats/teams will *not* get the same race money in 2015. Largely resulting from early season event low boat count complaints, the goal is to bring boats to each event that are prepared and ready to race and provide financial incentives for boats that place higher.

**TV?** Times are a changing. **Steve Montgomery** has indicated that H1 is pursuing communication with newer and/or emerging media. YouTube, social media and a partnership with GoPro maybe be the future, instead of a traditional TV cable package. ` Karl pearson photo

**H1 Leadership.** Transparency is important for Interim Chairman **Steve David**. David commented that the only race he planned to attend as the official Chairman was the 2014 Doha, Qatar race. He indicated that he and a small group were looking for a permanent Chairman and the person would be on-board before the first race in 2015. Running the series as



a successful business appears to be a primary goal and candidates for the permanent Chairman position will likely come from outside the sport and have marketing, business or related experience. Lastly, long-time H1 race announcer, media coordinator and go-to person, Steve Montgomery, announced his retirement from H1 Public Relations and Communications. Montgomery is open to doing some future hydro projects, but is retiring from most duties he is currently responsible for. Montgomery has been helpful to the UNJ and we sincerely thank him for his support. ~ Chris Denslow photo





# “The Nelson Diaries” a Crewmember’s Look at the Doha experience

*Nelson Holmberg is in his third year as a member of Team Porter Racing, having started with the team as a volunteer at Seafair in 2012. He is the team’s skid fin and wing specialist on the #1 Graham Trucking, and provides ground support to the crew on the deck. He just completed his second full year working in those two positions, and he’s more than proud to be a part of this team. These blogs are intended to give the casual – or first-time – unlimited hydroplane fan some insight into what happens in the pits, and on the road to the World Championship.*



## Part 1: Getting Ready

The final few days before leaving home for the 2014 Oryx Cup UIM World Championship in Doha, Qatar is a bit of a blur.

While celebrating my 48<sup>th</sup> birthday with family, making sure my team uniforms were in order, laundry done, taking care of a sick dog (with two trips to the vet), finishing up projects at work, and packing – complete with all of the things that are needed for an international trip – the time went by very quickly.

Ted Porter, owner of Team Porter Racing, mailed each of us checks to cover per diems to each of us on the team making the trip to Qatar to make sure we had what we needed in terms of cash for

Internet photo



meals, customs & immigration fees when we enter Qatar and more. Ted is a great owner who cares about his team and takes good care of us. He pays us a nice per diem and provides lots of food and all the water, Gatorade, grapes and bananas, and pop for us in the pits throughout each race weekend.

Being prepared, despite the blur of days passing me by, paid off as it not only made the travel easy, but the trip stress-free.

Getting ready for a trip to Qatar isn’t so bad once you’ve already been there for the first time, especially because you already know what to expect, but in February 2013, I honestly had no idea what to expect and it was a little bit intimidating. Back then, when I got the call from Ted to go to the Oryx Cup, I wasn’t even sure my passport was still valid.

This time around, I knew my passport was in good shape, and I even took time to explore photos of the new Hamad International Airport in Doha, so I knew a little bit about what to expect there.

Preparation always pays off, and my travel turned out to be easy and fun because I was ready for it.

## Part 2: The Trip Itself

Monday, November 17 came quickly, considering I'd only finished all of my preparations the day before. I had a couple of meetings for work scheduled on Monday morning, and the excitement of the Oryx Cup trip certainly kept me focused on completing those meetings punctually, so I could keep my schedule of being to Portland International Airport by 11 a.m. for my 1:30 flight to Seattle.

I was a little worried about making sure I got there early because I had been unable to check in for my flights online, and really wanted to make sure nothing went wrong. When I checked in at the Alaska desk for my first flight, I was told that because it was an international trip, I couldn't be checked in all the way through to Doha, but they would indeed check me in for the short hop to Seattle and I'd have to check in the rest of the trip when I got to the Emirates gate in Seattle. When I got to the desk, I asked for an exit row seat on the big Boeing 777 that would be "home" for the next 14.5 hours. It worked out for me, and the exit row seat was a blessing. Very cool, and I highly recommend an exit row if you're ever traveling overseas on a 777.

The "East Coast" guys from our team – Ted Porter and his sons Danny and Chris, Randy Doughty, Cal Phipps, Brooke Tyler IV, Michael Adams, Kent Block, John Leschinski, and Tony Scharf – caught a Qatar Air flight out of Washington DC. Poor Bryan Pyziak had trouble with some connections and had a long trip, not arriving until Wednesday. Andrew "Goober" Werling, had left a couple of days earlier, through Germany, to get to Qatar in time to help the H1 logistics team move all of the boats into the pits and get them set for the big event.

On the same day, we "Seattle guys" – Tom Anderson, J. Michael Kelly, Jim Bakke, Kevin Stoltz, Jerry Bowers, Bob Allen and I – left from SeaTac International on an Emirates Airlines flight. But first, I needed to get from PDX to SeaTac. That wasn't a big deal, though, since Alaska Airlines flies shuttles between Seattle and Portland daily on the half hour and our Emirates flight direct to Dubai, then on to Doha, didn't leave until 5:40 p.m. That meant there was time for some pre-flight fellowship between teammates in the seafood restaurant in the S Gates.

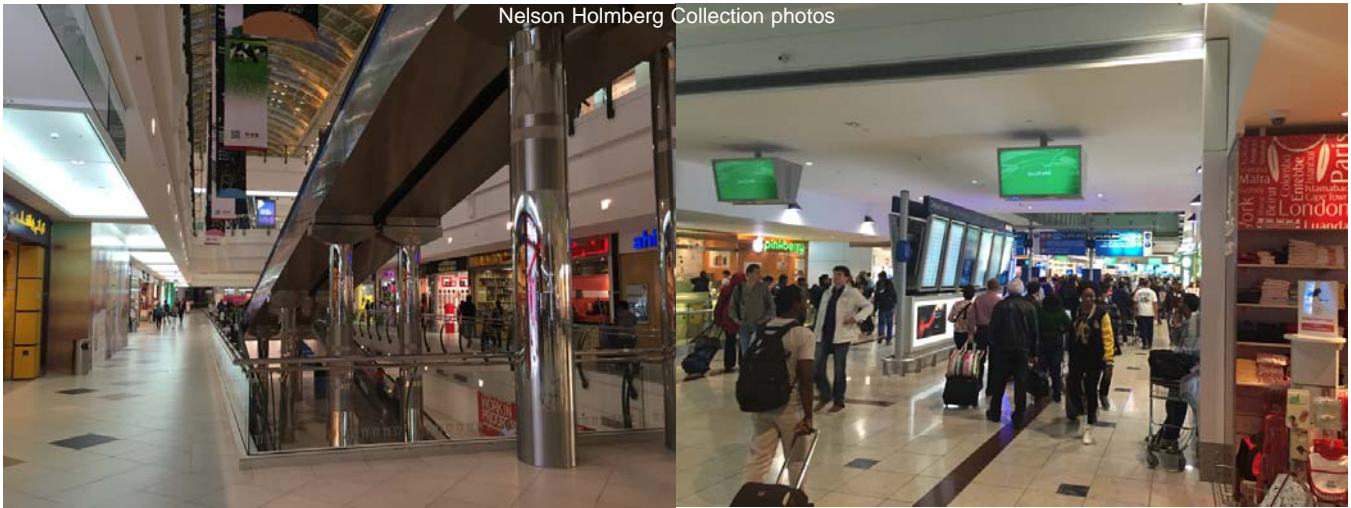
The length of the flight from Seattle to Dubai is brutal. It's 14 and a half hours on the same airplane, but thankfully the folks at Emirates Airline really do it right. Not only did I have an exit row that provided LOTS of leg room and the opportunity for my row-mates to just stand up and walk forward when they needed to get up made it comfortable and easy, we were given hot towels before takeoff and then again shortly before landing, but they also served



Nelson Holmberg Collection photos







us two actual meals during the flight, and luggage and adult beverages were included in the cost of the airfare. Very different than the airlines here in the U.S. Even the in-flight wireless internet was almost included. It cost me just \$1 US for 600GB of wireless internet use. I didn't even come close to using all of it.

Upon landing in Dubai, we had to switch planes for one last flight – a little over an hour long – to Doha, but we had a layover of a couple of hours to explore the Dubai airport a little bit. Among the massive Duty Free shopping mall that exists inside the secure area at DBX are some good old favorites for Americans, and paid a visit to the Golden Arches of McDonalds for a late night snack between flights.

Upon landing in Qatar, we deplaned into the fabulous new Hamad International Airport, which opened since the last time I was in Doha in February 2013. Just walking through the airport was a treat. This place is not only massive, but also extravagant, as one would expect in this ultra-modern and quickly growing business center.

Shortly after we all grabbed our bags, we were loaded on to a QMSF shuttle, and off to the Doha Hilton, another new – and very nice – facility, and home to all of the teams for the week of our visit. My roommate, Bob, and I got settled into our fourth floor room and I chose to head for the pool bar and join Tom and JMK for a beer before going to sleep in preparation for setup day on Wednesday.

Jesse Robertson and Glenn Raymond from the #12 joined us in Trader Vic's as we ended the night there with a couple of cold ones.

### **Part 3: On the Ground in Qatar**

Wednesday is usually the day that boats begin arriving in town on race weekends, but in Qatar, the finals are typically run on Saturday, so the boats were already set in the pits by the time we arrived at the Corniche on Wednesday morning. Our "wheels up" time, as set by #1 Graham Trucking crew chief Tom Anderson, was 8 a.m., which meant that's when we were to leave the hotel.

We were in the pits a short bit later, and with both boats already down off tilt and set in the pits, we knew we were in good shape for set up day.

For me, Set up consists of hanging the skid fin, and helping to put up the horizontal stabilizer, and helping out where needed around the boat. I washed the insides of the three cowling pieces, making sure there was no salt on them so we were ultimately ready for the first test run of the weekend. This was another job I would handle all weekend.

On Wednesday, I also learned that I was going to be helping Jim Bakke help strap JMK into the cockpit through the weekend, as Jeff Kelly – who normally works with Bakke to get this job done – was unable to make the trip. That was exciting, so before we ended the day, I spent some time before we left getting used to the cockpit, and going over the steps and instructions with Bakke.



We also had a short team meeting with Anderson and talked about our strategy for testing and qualifying, as well as our general approach to the weekend and how our goals for this race related to the approach.

As usual, we worked very efficiently, and were done with set up pretty quickly and were the first team out of the pits, leaving a little after 2 p.m.

Once we were back to the hotel, several of us agreed to meet in the lobby to walk over to the City Center Mall in the heart of downtown Doha. The walk over was great. Not only was it some good exercise (I've been working on my fitness for most of this year), it was fun camaraderie between teammates. Many of us stuck together once we got to the mall and visited a number of different shops, for various reasons. #7 *Graham Trucking* crew chief Brooke Tyler IV bought a Qatar Airlines soccer jersey for his son, and some other souvenirs to take home for his family. Some guys bought cigars, others picked up minutes for their Vodaphones, so they could call home without paying expensive international rates on their own cell phones.

Some guys cruised around the mall for a while checking out the sites of the big "American-like" mall. It really wasn't much different than a mall we'd see here in the states, complete with an ice skating rink on the ground level, a Starbucks and a full-on food court with Burger King (there are THREE Burger Kings in this mall, by the way), Pizza Hut, Arby's, KFC and a number of other fast-food outlets. There's also an Applebee's and Chili's in this mall. So, for a bunch of Americans (some who weren't feeling too "exploratory" for food options, there was more than enough to choose from.

By about 7:30, all of us were back to the hotel and ready to relax by the pool. By 10:30 or 11, most of us were in bed. Wheels up for Thursday morning was 7:30 a.m.

## **Part 4: Thursday – Testing & Qualifying**

I should have mentioned the breakfast buffet at the Doha Hilton yesterday. It can be described with a bunch of different adjectives: Amazing. Awesome. Delicious. Huge. Diverse. Beautiful. All of those words work, and there are probably more, as well. My favorite was the extensive omelet bar, where we could get fresh omelets made for us with whatever ingredients we chose. There was a vast selection of different breads, pastries, fruit, yogurts, cereal, eggs, sausage, potatoes in different preparations, and so much more. And the coffee...wow. The coffee. I love coffee, so to have the rich, strong coffee they serve in Qatar is always a treat. The best part, though, is our team sat outside on the dining patio every morning. Getting to enjoy breakfast outside with a light breeze, sunny skies and temps in the low 70s, at 7 a.m., in mid-November, is pretty amazing. Especially knowing that it was cold and gray back home.

Once we got to the race site on Thursday morning, we got right back after it. Both boats needed to be trailer fired because we weren't allowed to do so on Wednesday during set up. Once we'd completed



that, we were ready to go, and cowed up both boats, getting them on the slings to get J. Michael Kelly and Cal Phipps on Doha Bay for the first time on this trip.

It was Cal's first trip to Doha, so he'd never run this course before. Measured out to be a replica of the Seattle course, Cal at least had that familiarity as he worked on his timing marks and finding his way around the 2-mile oval by spotting different landmarks on the shoreline, while also getting familiar with the rollers that come in off of the Persian Gulf and the wind that comes across the front straightaway from between the Doha skyscrapers.

Coming into the Oryx Cup, our work was cut out for us. We had to win every heat, and the final heat, and hope for some help, in order to repeat as national champions. Missing out on one heat and the final at Tri-Cities, and missing a heat in Madison due to an electrical issue, really hurt us in that regard.



George Franke photos

Cal's #7 was the first boat on the water for the weekend, followed closely by JMK in the #1. Things seemed to go well for Cal, but J. Michael brought the boat back to the pits after just two laps. He was concerned about a problem with the steering that he'd encountered in turn two.

When he got back, Mike told me about the issue and what it was doing. Fortunately, his dad (Jeff Kelly) and I had worked on a similar problem while we were in Detroit, so I knew where to go and what to look for. Sure enough, once I'd opened the deck hatch to the steering quadrant and inspected it, I noticed a broken heim joint, which caused the quadrant to drop and jam when J. Michael tried to turn left. I still had work to do on "my" wings, so after pointing out the problem to Tom Anderson, he had Goober get started on that repair while I completed my normal maintenance duties, and checks on the wings and the skid fin. Mike was happy with the ride and alignment of the boat, so there were no changes to make to the wing or the fin.

Once I finished my normal duties, I again made myself available to help Goob finish the steering repair, and then shifted to help with addressing some radio issues. We first checked all of the wiring connections to make sure there weren't problems there. One of Chris Denslow's photos shows me working inside the front of the snorkel, which was when I was inspecting the wiring connection to the antenna. It is a lot of fun to be one of the guys who can actually help with pretty much anything when asked.

We didn't go out again for testing on Thursday, as we still had qualifying coming up in the afternoon. It was scheduled to be a three-hour qualifying session, so we were grateful for that. After some delay in order to reset some of the course buoys, the green flag came out and teams started making qualifying runs in inverse order of the high points standings. Due to rough water conditions, the high density of salinity in the water, and winds during the early hours of the qualifying session, H1 Chairman Steve David lowered the minimum qualifying speed from 130 to 120. All of the teams qualified for the race during the session, and only a handful actually chose to run in the second and third rounds of qualifying.

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Our second qualifying runs netted us the second and fourth fastest-qualifier slots on the ladder. We were OK with that, even though J. Michael was less than a half a mile per hour behind Jimmy Shane in the *Oberto* for the top spot. Being fastest-qualifier is great, but the race isn't won in qualifying. And for us, everything is done one run at a time.

Unfortunately, all of the teams qualified, with the exception of the #12 *Miss DiJulio*, which was pitted right next to us and was frustrated due to their turbine engine still being held up in customs. They, unfortunately, didn't receive their turbine until 5 p.m. on Thursday, but wasted no time in getting it into the boat and were first out on Friday morning to get qualified and into the show, with new driver Jesse Robertson.

After cleanup, we were off to the hotel again, back by about 5:30 and ready for showers and some grub. I ordered from the room service menu and joined some of the guys down on the hotel's Persian Gulf beach for a little while.

## Part 5: Friday & Saturday – Big Race Days

Our game faces were really on when we arrived in the pits shortly before 8 a.m. on Friday morning. This was, after all, the first day of racing action on Doha Bay. And we had our work cut out for us. As I mentioned in Wednesday's blog, we had to win all of our heats and hope for some help in order to "Keep the #1", which had been our goal all season.

We had also hoped to draw the #6 *Oberto*, and our former driver Jimmy Shane, as often as we could over the weekend, in order to try and close the by beating him head-to-head, too.

With the draw of heats 1A & 1B, we saw we didn't get the *Oberto*, and figured the best we could do was draw with them as both the #1 and the #6 were favorites in those two heats. True enough, it worked out that way in our heat, 1A, when J. Michael drove the boat great and outlasted the #21 *Miss Seattle* (Dave Villwock), the gbr11 *Peters & May* (Tom Thompson), the #100 *Tony Roma's/Sahara Pizza* (Dave Warren), and the U-22 *Boitano Homes* (Mike Webster, which was DQ'd for a fuel flow violation after the heat).

In heat 1B, we got some of the help we'd been hoping for, and Cal Phipps got a shot in the arm. As Jimmy Shane exited turn two and headed down the front straightaway with Jon Zimmerman in the #9 *Les Schwab Tires/RedDOT* on his outside hip, they both appeared to be way early. Turned out they were, and both jumped the start and were both penalized a lap. That put Jean Theoret in the U-96 *Qatar* in first, and Phipps in second with the #7 *Graham Trucking II*. We were not only excited about that, but also seeing Jesse Robertson in the #12 *Miss DiJulio* running third for the full three-lap heat. While Jimmy definitely had the speed to catch up to the #12, and he did catch up, Robertson kept his right foot mashed to the floor and just barely held off *Oberto* for the third, and final, spot on the podium. I've got to admit, we were rooting for Jesse. More important to us was the gap between 400 points and 169 points, which helped draw us just a little bit closer to our season-long goal of "Keep the #1".



Chris Denslow photo



Chris Denslow photo



The draw for 2A and 2B again didn't do us any favors. We drew the #9, which was good for competition sake, but we didn't get the #6 as we'd again hoped for that head-to-head match up to try and gain another 100 points on them if we could finish ahead of Jimmy.

As it turned out, it was a draw when we beat Zimmerman in a re-run of 2A after it was red-flagged due to a small fire in the hot end of the 11 *Peters & May* turbine. In the re-run, neither the 100 nor the #12 were able to start and the gbr11 was DQ'd so we had a dual between the #1 and the #9. Both Mike and the Rocket Man (Zimmerman) just kept the boats running over the bad slop and finished 1-2, safely. Jimmy won 2B fairly easily, so there was no gain in points made and we were still mathematically alive for a second straight national championship, though we knew our star was admittedly dimming. At left the #1 leading the #9 in 2A. At right the 2B winner *Oberto*.



Chris Denslow photos

On Saturday morning, we were again in the pits by 8 a.m., and once we finally heard the draw, we learned we'd finally drawn the 6 in our heat A chance to gain a few more points on them, and if we got some help, maybe we'd be able to pull even a little closer than that. We were excited. Guys put in just a tiny bit extra effort. We loaded up a special prop, and J. Michael ran a great race in lane one and beat the *Oberto*, which finished in second place.

Before the day's racing started, we were told by the officials that they were going to advance the schedule by 15 minutes for each heat and the plan was to run the final at 2:45 p.m.

In 3B, Cal got another break while running second behind the U-96 *Qatar* boat, when Theoret's steering column broke and he was forced to shut down before the end of the heat, and *Graham Trucking II* finished out front in back-to-back heats. That was encouraging and fun for everyone on the team.

After not finishing 3B due to turbine issues, and making an engine change that still didn't give them the power they'd hoped for, the #21 *Miss Seattle* team withdrew from the event before the draw for the fourth flight and packed up to go home. Below left the #1 beats #6 in 3A. At right the #7 and gbr11 launched for 3B



Chris Denslow photo

George Franke photo

Less than 90 minutes later, though, Jimmy won heat 4A and finished us off when he won his second-consecutive drivers' championship, bringing the #1 back to the *Oberto* team when he held off Jon

Zimmerman in the #9. I won't lie, it did hurt just a little looking down the dock from the deck of our boat knowing that the #1 had slipped away from us. As Jim Bakke and I were putting JMK into the cockpit, the three of us agreed there was, "only one thing left for us to do: Win the race". And that became our mantra the rest of the day.

Mike did go out and take heat 4B, and we were all pumped about sweeping victories in our four heats, and four podium finishes (a first, a second and two thirds) for Cal in *Graham Trucking II*; and we swiftly got both boats ready for the final. We had a minor fairing issue to repair on *Graham Trucking* before the final, but Tom Anderson and I made quick work of that and after loading up another different prop, both boats were ready for the final.

Below left *Les Schwab/RedDot* chases *Oberto* in 4A. At right the winning *Graham Trucking* and third place *Boitano Homes* in 4B.



Chris Denslow photo



George Franke photo

Having been of the understanding the final would go early in the afternoon, we did work quickly to get ready. But during our work to prep for the final, we were given word that the final would be pushed back to 3:30. When the officials told us to get ready for the final, the #7 was the first boat into the water, followed quickly by ours. As I said, we were ready to go.

We waited for about 30 minutes at the dock while the rest of the final heat fleet was lowered into the water by the two cranes. While we waited, Mike, Jim and I talked over the cockpit and again agreed there was only one thing left to do. Mike admitted later to being nervous before the start of the final – for the first time all weekend.

We were also told, before the final, that the winner of the race should drive past the pit docks to another dock on the west end of the Enrichment Center that's on the barge just off of the Corniche. Jim reminded Mike of that, just in case, as he slipped into the driver's seat.

It's a move that's now already famous in press coverage of the race, but JMK pulled off a great cut of the course in order to secure lane one as the field approached the 1-minute mark of the mill. With teammate Cal Phipps in the #7 in lane two, the start was looking pretty good for our team, and if Cal could just give Mike a bit of a cushion coming out of turn one, the race might just be ours. below left the race begins, but without the *Qatar*, seen dead in the infields. At right *Graham Trucking* takes the lead.



George Franke photos



But Jimmy had amazing speed down the front chute and beat Cal to turn one, and turned it in to one heck of a race for the first lap and a half, before Mike was able to use lane one – and some really good speed of our own – to his advantage and pull away, and the rest is history. Randy, Jim, Goob and I were ecstatic on the dock. We literally ran to the dock in front of the audience, closer to start finish to meet up with Tom (who was spotting for Mike at start-finish), and Kevin (who was in the corral), in greeting the race winner at the “special dock”, where we all celebrated the team’s fourth-consecutive Oryx Cup UIM World Championship win, and fifth in the six race-history.



Chris Denslow photo



H1 photo

It was a party on the dock, and on the boat! JMK, as has been his consistent message this year, said he’s just happy to be a part of this team again, and that really means a lot to each of us.

Keeping in mind we still had the Oryx Cup Gala Banquet to go to at 8 p.m., back at the hotel, I think we made record time getting the two boats broken down and cleaned up, as well as getting the trucks loaded up and ready to go home again. We were out of the pits early enough to be back to the hotel by 7 o’clock to get showered and changed into our suits. I gotta tell you, the guys on our team really clean up well. I think I’d only seen Goob and Michael without a hat once before in more than two years on this team. They both looked good in a suit and tie.

## Part 6: When it was all said and done

Going home with a combined five heat victories, nine podium finishes and a UIM World Championship didn’t feel too bad, for Team Porter Racing, and it was kind of fun seeing commenters on Facebook suggest things like renaming the cup after Ted Porter.

The Gala Banquet was really fun. A dinner area was set up outside, on one of the Hilton’s rooftops, complete with a stage and a Qatari welcome dance with traditional music. It was pretty cool to see. After that, awards and recognitions were paid and the annual banquet video, put together by Planet Powerboat’s Peter Butler was shown. While attendees enjoyed a Qatari dinner, served in four courses, other Planet Powerboat videos played, including one about Sheikh Hassan bin Jabor Al-Thani crushed the Lake of the Ozarks straightaway record with a 244 mph pass this past summer.

Us “Seattle guys” had an Emirates flight out of Doha that departed at 3:40 a.m., so we checked out and left the Hilton at midnight. Most of us just stayed up all night. For me, staying up all night, then sleeping on the long flight home from Dubai turned out to be a good thing. For the second year in a row, I didn’t fall victim of the dreaded jet lag. I was back to work on Monday morning.



Internet photo



Heritage  
Craig Fjarlie

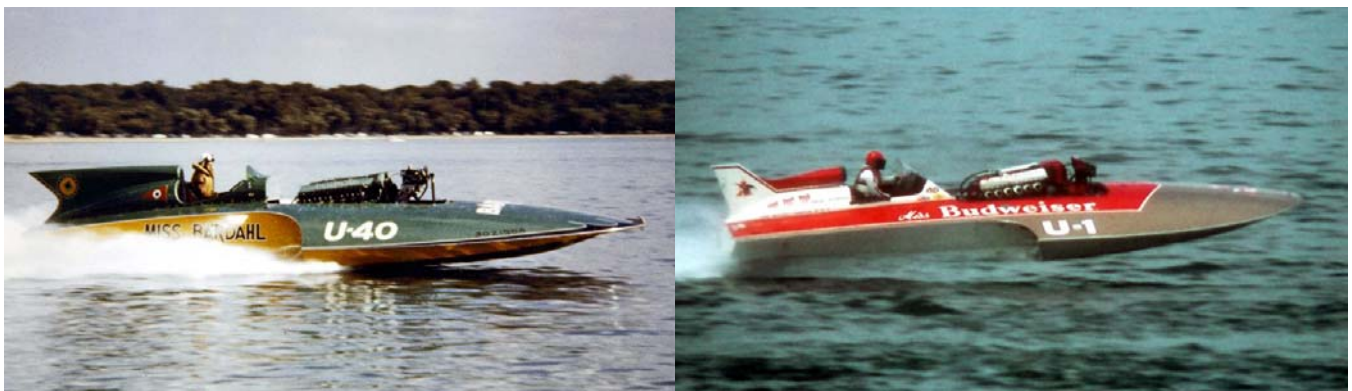
## Making the Point

About 30 years ago, when I started racing outboards, I sought out veteran racers for advice. I specifically remember something Bob Wartinger said: "Always try to get points." Races are won on points, advancing from elimination heats to the final depends on points. If you have a sick engine, try to nurse it across the finish line. Make sure your set-up complies with the rules, void jumping the gun, and watch your overlap. It was good advice then and it applies today. When I won my first region high point award, I told the late Dan Schwartz that I hadn't won a lot of races. "Lots of seconds and thirds, huh?" he asked. I told him yes, that's how it happened. I was fortunate that my chief rival had a habit of jumping the gun.

Jimmy Shane drove to get points in 2014. It was one of those rare seasons. J. Michael Kelly won more races with *Graham Trucking*, but *Oberto* scored the most points and earned the national championship. The big difference occurred at Tri-Cities. Kelly jumped the gun in heat 2A. Following the heat, the crew discovered hull damage that kept the boat on the trailer the rest of the day. *Oberto* continued to accumulate points throughout the afternoon and won the race.



There have been other seasons when the national champion took the title on the basis of consistency. In 1955, Lee Schoenith and *Gale V* won only one race, the Gold Cup. Guy Lombardo's new boat, *Tempo VII*, had a bad day at the Gold Cup, but came on strong and won the last five races. *Tempo's* effort fell short, however, and *Gale V* was awarded the national championship.



*Miss Bardahl* won three races in 1958 and took the national championship by a few points over *Miss U.S. 1*, which won four events. It should be noted that *Maverick* also won three races that year.

In 1971, Dean Chenoweth won two races aboard *Miss Budweiser*. The early part of the year was full of frustration for *Pride of Pay 'n Pak*, but Billy Schumacher drove the boat to victory in the last three regattas. It was too little, too late, however, and *Bud* held on to claim the national championship.



Things went the other way in 1973. The new winged *Pay 'n Pak* won four races, so did *Miss Budweiser*. The *Pak* had the most points, however, and owner Dave Heerensperger claimed his first national championship.



1973-H&RM Collection photos-1977

Bill Muncey knew how to win races and accumulate points. The new *Atlas Van Lines* won six races in 1977. That should have been enough to take the national championship with ease, but that's not what the season point total shows. *Atlas* had bad days at Madison and San Diego. *Miss Budweiser* won three races and secured the national championship on the basis of consistency.



1983-Don Mock photos-1986

In 1983, *Miss Budweiser* won four races. It looked like Jim Kropfeld would claim his first national championship, but a bad day at Houston gave the title to *Atlas Van Lines*, winner of three races.

Things worked the other way in 1986. The T-1 *Miss Budweiser* was a handful to drive. Jim Kropfeld drove the boat to three wins and the national championship. *Miller American* won five, including the Gold Cup. Consistency was the key for Kropfeld. *Miller* scored no points at Miami, and was unable to qualify at San Diego.

Years passed before the top point boat again failed to win the most races. In 2001, national champion *Miss Budweiser* captured one race. *E-Lam Plus* only raced in the west, but won two of the three regattas it entered. It should be noted *E-Lam* finished seventh in season standings.

There was a tie in the number of race victories in 2003. *Miss Budweiser* captured three races and the national championship. Ed Cooper's piston-powered U-3 also won three events.



Things have been more interesting in recent years. Who remembers the national champion boat in 2006? It was *Formulaboats.com II*, driven by Mike Allen. The boat won one race, at Valleyfield. *Beacon Plumbing*, which finished fourth in point standings, and *Ellstrom*, which finished fifth, each won three races.

Steve David drove *Oh Boy! Oberto* to one win and the team's first national championship in 2008. *Formula* won two races that year.

*Oh Boy! Oberto* finished on top of season points again in 2009. Steve David won one race. By comparison, *Ellstrom* took three wins but missed the point title.



Chris Denslow photo



2008-Karl Pearson photos-2010

*Oh Boy! Oberto* earned its third national championship in 2010. *Oberto* and *Ellstrom* each won three races that year.

*Spirit of Qatar* took the national championship in 2011. Driver Dave Villwock scored three wins, as did Steve David in *Oh Boy! Oberto*.

The Oberto team captured its fourth national championship in 2012. Steve David guided *Oh Boy! Oberto* to two victories, the same number as *Qatar*. That was the year Jimmy Shane won his first race in *Graham Trucking*.



2011-Karl Pearson photos-2012

The record is obvious, and it thoroughly confirms Bob Wartinger's advice all those years ago. Race to get points. One never knows when a single mark will make a big difference. Now that the 2014 season is over, the Oberto team will verify that point.



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## NEXT MONTH: 2014 Season Review

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