

January/February 2011

UNLIMITED newsjournal

A Chronicle of Speed

Doha, Qatar II

2010 Oryx Cup V.I.M. World Championship
by Jimmy Gilbert -- Part 2



Jim Simpson photo

This close encounter may have cost Dave Villwock and the Ellstrom/Spirit of Qatar team the 2010 National Championship. Fortunately, a spin-out, a lot of spray, and a dead in the water *Spirit of Qatar* was all that resulted for the incident.

In the draw Thursday for the first heats on Friday, we didn't draw *Spirit of Qatar*. However we did draw Jeff Bernard, J.W. Myers, Ken Muscatel, and rookie Al Christensen in the U-22 Webster boat. After finishing our day's work, we adjourned to the hotel and ate at the Italian restaurant, one of many theme restaurants in the hotel. We shared the table with several of the *Spirit of Qatar* crew and had amostenjoyable time. On Friday morning, we arrived at the pits early but most of the other teams were already there, preparing for additional testing and the first round of heats.

Finally, it was time to go racing. Because we had qualified faster than the other boats in our heat, we got lane choice in 1A and Steve David chose lane 1. At the start, Steve assumed the lead and managed to hold off the balance of the field to receive the checkered flag. Jeff Bernard was second and J. W. Myers finished third.

Chris Denslow photo



trouble holding his boat in lane 1 and slid into lane 2, behind Kelly and into his roostertail and *Spirit of Qatar* almost went over. I later saw photographs showing the boat's right sponson canted up at about a 45 degree angle. Villwock did a magnificent job keeping the boat upright.

However, it did ingest a lot of saltwater in it's engine. He was unable to restart and received a "did not finish" for the heat, thus zero points. Suddenly, *Oh Boy! Oberto* was in great shape to retain the National Championship because we had just picked up 400 points on Villwock and the Qatar team.

Again before leaving the pits for the evening, the draw for heats 2A and 2B was held and once more we were fortunate, because we weren't matched against Villwock and *Spirit of Qatar* (and because the second set of heats have "inverted" lane choice; the teams with the least number of accumulated points during the course of the event receive preference). Villwock had zero points from the first heat so had first lane choice in the second round.

On Saturday we were again in the pits early. At this point, the Oberto team really needed to be careful not to make any mistakes so that the National Championship might be ours once more. We were also mindful of the World Championship Oryx Cup that would be awarded to the winner of the final, a prize the Oberto team surely wanted.



Jim Simpson photo



Chris Denslow photo

In heat 2A, Villwock had the inside lane on the field of J. Michael Kelly, Greg Hopp, Brian Perkins, and Al Christensen. He took the lead from the start and didn't relinquish it. Kelly was second and Hopp was third.



Sixty-four boats were entered in the competition. Villwock led the heat from start to finish with David second and Perkins third. Again, Brown failed to start the race. We had just lost 100 National Championship points to Villwock but there were only a couple of races remaining, so we were in pretty good shape, still with about a 450-point lead.

Heat 3B had Kelly, Bernard, Hopp, Muscatel, and Myers as contenders. Hopp led and apparently won the heat, but an N2 violation caused him to receive a disqualification. Hopp had a competition lap of over 153 mph in the heat, by far the fastest during the competition. Because of the disqualification, Kelly was awarded first, Bernard second and Myers third.

In 4A, Villwock was matched against Kelly, Webster, Myers, and Perkins. I must confess that we were having a computer battery problem so I didn't manage to see the heat action. I can report that Kelly won the heat, Villwock was second, and Perkins was third because Myers and Webster both were early at the start and both received a one-lap penalty.

The Oberto team was matched against Bernard, Muscatel, and Hopp in 4B. David led the race from start to finish. The heat win virtually secured the National Championship for the Oberto team. In the final, we would have to get a "DNF" plus receive an infraction that mandates a reduction in accumulated points in order for us to be denied the championship. The final heat became the center of our focus at that point.

Steve David had lane choice, per the accumulated points from the preliminary heats, and chose lane 1. Kelly chose 2, and Villwock chose 3. Myers, Perkins, Bernard, and Webster (because Ken Muscatel failed to start), completed the field. Again, Myers was early at the line and received a one-lap penalty. David took the lead through the first lap. However, something in the steering failed and

In heat 2B, Steve David was on the outside because of accumulated points from the first heat. J.W. Myers was early on the start and received a one-lap penalty. Kip Brown didn't start and Jon Zimmerman in Muscatel's *Peter's & May* didn't finish. *Oh Boy! Oberto* won the heat with Jeff Bernard second and Myers third.

In heat 3A, we drew Villwock in *Spirit of Qatar* as well as Brian Perkins and Mike Webster (back driving the U-22 *Matrix Systems*).



Jim Simpson photo

Jim Simpson photo

he had to back out of the throttle in order to handle the boat. Kelly and Villwock both passed him on lap 2. By lap 3, Villwock had established a lead over Kelly and Steve was faltering badly. Villwock held on to win the race, Kelly was second and David in *Oberto* was third. We really would have liked to have won the race but we were quite pleased to win the National Championship again.

For Villwock, the victory tied him with Bill Muncey for all-time unlimited driver wins. Congratulations were certainly in order to Dave. It is quite an accomplishment. Also not to be overlooked is the World Championship for the Spirit of Qatar team and its sponsor, Sheik Hassan. At the awards ceremony following the race, the Sheik expressed his gratitude to the team and Dave for the victory. We left the pits fairly quickly for the hotel to prepare for the Oryx Cup gala banquet that was to be held at the Marriott that evening. The Sheik's banquet was again superb, matching and even outdoing the tradition established at the 2009 banquet. Sword-wielding dancers and drummers performed traditional Qatari pre-battle ritual dances (it was explained that the dances are now usually performed at formal ceremonies like weddings and other celebratory gatherings). Again there were craftsmen in native attire demonstrating how goat and sheep wool is prepared for weaving. The occasion was quite festive, to say the least. Wonderfully prepared food was served and enjoyed by all. Sam Cole introduced dignitaries and made presentations to all owners and to the top three teams. The Oh Boy! Oberto/Miss Madison team was recognized for winning the 2010 National Championship. Minted medallions were presented to the team sponsors as well as all the crews. Again, the Sheik and the Qatar Marine Sport Federation outdid themselves to provide a magnificent banquet that was appreciated by all. In bottom photo at right; a sheik, Steve David and Sam Cole.

Following the buffet breakfast the next morning the Oberto team left for the pits to prepare the boat, trailer and truck for shipment back to the United States. I missed the Oberto team bus so I took the next one that departed about fifteen minutes later. While in route, Bob Ross of the Spirit of Qatar team and I saw a unique sight. Near a building that we (probably erroneously) called the "Presidential Palace" there were a dozen or so riders in native attire atop camels on the building's parade grounds. The riders' flowing white robes trailed the camels' easy gaits and it was a sight to behold. We never did ascertain the purpose of the ceremony but it was certainly impressive. We were told that the "Palace" is the one building in Qatar that is forbidden to be



At far left our author Jimmy Gilbert, U-1 Oh Boy! Oberto/Miss Madison crewman, celebrates locking up another National Championship.

Chris Denslow photo



Chris Denslow photo



Chris Denslow photo

photographed so a picture of the camels and riders was out of the question. Perhaps one day we will again see the camel ceremony at some other venue where they can be photographed.

At the pits the inside and outside of the boat's hull was washed and rinsed, as were the truck and trailer, in preparation for the long voyage back home. Because we were the end boat in the pits, we would be the last out. By late afternoon, several of the Formula One (tunnel hull) boat racers were venturing into the pits to observe the boats and talk to the teams. A team from Sweden came by the Oberto camp and struck up a conversation. They expressed amazement at the size of the boats. They even stayed around to observe the engine being trailer-fired after the de-salting procedure was completed by the team. The sound of the turbines impressed them tremendously. After completing our cleaning and packing work, we went to the Doha City Center Mall for some lunch and some quick shopping. We returned to the pits, covered the boat with the transport cover, and finally moved the boat to the departure area of the pits.

That evening, Sue and I visited a vast shopping mall featuring everything from canals with Venetian gondola rides to amusement park rides to even a hockey rink.

Sue and I had been told about another mall in Doha called The Villagio, so we made plans to journey to there Sunday evening. We departed the hotel in five o'clock traffic. Sunday in Doha is a work day since Friday is the Islamic equivalent of our Sunday. Getting to the mall took 40 minutes or so in heavy traffic. We toured parts of Doha that we'd not seen before. We saw quite a few apartments, individual homes, and many strip shopping centers along the way. It was already dark in Doha at that time so our observations were somewhat limited, but nevertheless interesting. The motif of the Villagio Mall is Venetian. There is a river through the center of the mall with gondolas carrying passengers and poled by gondoliers. The ceiling of the mall was arched and painted with clouds. As you walk along, you almost got the illusion that the clouds were moving! About every hundred feet along the river there was an arched Venetian style bridge connecting the two sides. At

STAT BOX

ORYX CUP UIM WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Doha, Qatar, November 19-20, 2010
2-mile course on Doha Bay

QUALIFICATION (1) U-96 *Spirit of Qatar*, Dave Villwock, 143.249, 100 points; (2) U-1 *Oh Boy! Oberto*, Steve David, 142.059, 80; (3) U-5 *Formula*, Jeff Bernard, 138.795, 70; (4) U-7 *Graham Trucking*, J. Michael Kelly, 137.891, 60; (5) U-17 *Red Dot*, Kip Brown, 136.348, 50; (6) U-100 (no name), Greg Hopp, 134.539, 40; (7) U-25 *Peters & May*, Ken Muscatel, 133.091, 30; (8) U-21 *Go Fast Turn Left Racing*, Brian Perkins, 128.617, 30; (9) U-37 *Miss Peters & May*, JW Myers, 125.825, 30; (10) U-22 *Matrix System*, Mike Webster, 120.856, 30.

HEAT 1A 1) *Oh Boy! Oberto* [1] 128.074, 400 points; 2) *Formula* [2] 122.335, 300; 3) *Miss Peters & May* [4] 119.146, 225; 4) *Peters & May* [3] 113.724, 169; 5) *Matrix System*, Al Carstensen [5] 105.394, 127. Fast lap (1) *Oh Boy! Oberto* 133.291. **HEAT 1B** 1) *Graham Trucking* [2] 127.679, 400; 2) *Red Dot* [3] 108.939, 300; 3) U-100 [4] 79.768 (penalized one minute for missing a buoy), 225; 4) *Go Fast Turn Left Racing* [5] 77.348 (penalized one minute for dislodging a buoy), 169; *Spirit of Qatar* [1] DNF — hooked on lap one turn two damaging hull (penalized one lap for destroying a buoy), 0. Fast lap (1) *Graham Trucking* 134.360.

HEAT 2A 1) *Spirit of Qatar* [1] 128.127, 400, 400 cumulative points; 2) *Graham Trucking* [4] 126.496, 300, 700; 3) U-100 [3] 126.333, 225, 450; 4) *Go Fast Turn Left Racing* [2] 110.751, 169, 338; 5) *Matrix System*, Al Carstensen [5] 104.288, 127, 254. Fast lap (1) *Spirit of Qatar* 132.944. **HEAT 2B** 1) *Oh Boy! Oberto* [5] 130.192, 400, 800; 2) *Formula* [4] 124.431, 300, 600; 3) *Miss Peters & May* [2] 81.236 (penalized one lap for jumping the gun), 225, 450; 4) *Peters & May*, Jon Zimmerman [1] DNF —, 0, 169; *Red Dot* [3] DNS — fuel flow, 0, 300. Fast lap (2) *Oh Boy! Oberto* 132.870.

HEAT 3A 1) *Spirit of Qatar* [1] 134.628, 400, 800; 2) *Oh Boy! Oberto* [2] 126.289, 300, 1100; 3) *Go Fast Turn Left Racing* [4] 120.389, 225, 563; 4) *Matrix System* [5] 108.577, 169, 423; *Red Dot* [3] DNS — fuel flow. Fast lap (1) *Spirit of Qatar* 140.312. **HEAT 3B** 1) *Graham Trucking* [1] 128.754, 400, 1100; 2) *Formula* [2] 125.059, 300, 900; 3) *Miss Peters & May* [4] 120.215, 225, 675; 4) *Peters & May* [5] 107.350, 169, 338; 5) U-100 [3] DSQ — changed lanes without overlap in turn one, lap two for a one lap penalty, then repeated in turn two to escalate the penalty, \$250 fine and 250 point deduction, -250, 200. Fast lap (1) *Graham Trucking* 133.340.

HEAT 4A 1) *Graham Trucking* [4] 129.170, 400, 1500; 2) *Spirit of Qatar* [3] 127.362, 300, 1100; 3) *Go Fast Turn Left Racing* [1] 118.069, 225, 788; 4) *Miss Peters & May* [2] 89.572 (penalized one lap for jumping the gun), 169, 844; 5) *Matrix System* [5] 81.159 (penalized one lap for jumping the gun), 127, 550. Fast lap (3) *Spirit of Qatar* 133.489. **HEAT 4B** 1) *Oh Boy! Oberto* [3] 130.349, 400, 1500; 2) *Formula* [4] 123.853, 300, 1200; 3) *Peters & May* [2] 71.767, 225, 563; 4) U-100 [1] DNF —, 0, 200; *Red Dot* W/D — fuel flow, 0, 300. Fast lap (1) U-100 139.578.

FINAL 1) *Spirit of Qatar* [4] 133.215, 400, 1500; 2) *Graham Trucking* [2] 130.992, 300, 1800; 3) *Oh Boy! Oberto* [1] 127.155, 225, 1725; 4) *Formula* [3] 121.569, 169, 1369; 5) *Go Fast Turn Left Racing* [6] 115.019, 127, 915; 6) *Matrix System Automotive Finishes* [T] 102.082, 95, 645; 7) *Miss Peters & May* [5] 94.044 (penalized one lap for jumping the gun), 71, 915; *Peters & May* [T] W/D —, 0, 563. Fast lap (1) *Oh Boy! Oberto* 139.146.

COMPILED BY ALLEN STILES

(Continued on page 11)

UNLIMITED NewsJournal

2010 Season Summary Table

Boat Name	Hull I.D.	Driver	7/3-7/4	7/11-7/12	7/24-7/25	8/7-8/8	9/18-9/19	1/19-1/20	San Diego	Seattle	Wash. Tn-Cruises	Madison Indians	Detroit Gold Cup	APBA Gold Cup	Doha, Qatar Championships	Nearby High Points (South-to-North)	National High Points (Team)
1. U-1 Oh Boy! Oberlo	(0706)	Steve David	1	2	1	1	2	3	3	2	3	9,444					
2. U-96 Spirit of Qatar	(0116)	Dave Villwock	5	1	5	2	1	1	1	1	1	9,053					
3. U-7 Graham Trucking Air Guard	(9712)	J. Michael Kelly	2	3	2	5	///	2	2	2	2	8,207					
4. U-5 Formula	(0001)	Jeff Bernard	7	5	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5,574					
5. U-21 Albert Lee Go Fast Turn Left Racing	(0721)	Brian Perkins	4	9	7	3	///	5	5	5	5	4,894					
6. U-37 Miss Peters & May Miss Peters & May Degree Men	(9401) (0001) Degree Men	J. W. Myers Jon Zimmerman J. W. Myers	3	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	4,295					
7. U-22 Matrix Systems	(9703)	Mike Webster Mike Webster, Al Carstensen	6	8	10	12	10	10	6	6	6	3,183					
8. U-17 O'Brian Law Red Dot	(0717)	Kip Brown Nate Brown Kip Brown	DNF ///	6	///	///	///	///	///	///	///	3,161					
9. U-100 (no name) Jarvis Property Restoration Fleury Auto & Truck Parts Miss Lay's Kettle Coked	(9899)	Greg Hopp	DNS	4	4	8	8	11	9	9	9	3,030					
10. U-25 Boyland Nissan (no name) Miss Car Pros Peters & May	(010)	Jon Zimmerman Ken Muscatel	DNF	10	10	W/D	W/D	W/D	W/D	W/D	W/D	2,550					
11. U-13 Miss DYC Miss Jillian's Alternative Automotive Technologies	(8700)	Cal Phipps	9	7	8	10	10	12	—	—	—	2,306					
12. U-57 Formula II WTD	(9010)	Mark Evans Jimmy Shane Mark Evans	—	—	11	///	///	6	6	6	6	1,383					
U-3 (no name)	(0203)	Jimmy King	W/D	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0					

With the H1 Unlimited fleet recently back in the U.S., returning from the 2010 Doha Oryx Cup, the race team news has been relatively quiet, with the major exceptions of the U-37 Schumacher Racing Team and the newly formed U-11 Unlimited Racing Group.

The H1 Fleet was delayed in the journey returning from Doha, Qatar. Before reaching the Suez Canal, there was a major change of plans with the Hoegh Autoliner-Alliance St. Louis, and the vessel was acquired by the U.S. military for use in transport of other equipment. Peters & May then made changes in the shipping of the fleet. The H1 fleet transferred to the vessel Alliance Beaumont, continued thru the Suez Canal and completed its trans-Atlantic journey, arriving in Jacksonville, FL. on Feb. 17th. The boats and equipment have gone through inspection, customs, and cleared for their respective journey back to each team's home race shop. Now the regular off-season prep work begins for the upcoming 2011 season.

U-1. The display *Oh Boy! Oberto/Miss Madison* has been on display in Louisville and coming up in Indianapolis. The U-6 back-up hull #8806 has been in the Madison shop recently getting some updates and attention.

U-5. Ted Porter's PPE, LLC team has their display boats hitting the U.S. boat show circuit, representing Formula Boats.com, AirGuard, Peters & May Racing, and H1 Unlimited. They are appearing at boat shows throughout the months of Jan., Feb., and March.

U-11. The biggest development of this winter came with the formation of a new racing team, the U-11 Unlimited Racing Group (URG). The new team is owned by **Scott and Shannon Raney** along with driver **J.W. Myers**. With guidance from **Dave Bender**, a former champion boat racer and President of a large international aerospace and defense electronics company. URG has assembled an experienced team, located a state of the art facility, and is finalizing the acquisition of a hull they plan to be competitive with in the upcoming season. They have secured Peters & May as their title sponsor, along with several key associate sponsors that were previously with Scott Raney's former team.

U-22. Webster Racing has kept busy during the off-season working on a Peters & May sponsored SST Formula class tunnel hull to compete in the APR Superleague Circuit, as the unlimited schedule allows. That tunnel hull will be on display for the Miami Boat Show in February.

U-37. The other big off-season development, even before the H1 fleet returned from Doha, was the major shakeup with Billy Schumacher Racing. Mid-January Crew Chief **Scott Raney** was released from the team, with owners **Billy and Jane Schumacher** citing they didn't agree with his leadership style and, "decided to go another direction". "Pyro" posted later that, "Today ends the U8/37 chapter in my life, won some races with my friends; had some tough

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Lon Erickson



times together also. Really excited about my next Grand Adventure!"

With the future of Schumacher Racing uncertain, it was reported on the H1 Unlimited website that a new crew chief and driver would be announced in the near future and they are moving ahead with plans for a new boat for 2011. As the week of U-37 team developments came out, it was learned that **J.W. Myers** was made aware of his status with the team after seeing it posted on the H1 Unlimited website. Subsequently, due to contractual arrangements, driver Myers also left the

team and the majority of the crew resigned from Schumacher Racing, citing philosophical differences. The next day **Dave Holley/Peters & May Racing** announced they would no longer be sponsoring the U-37 team for the upcoming season; however the company will continue its involvement with H1 as a series and team sponsor. Additionally, long time sponsor **Chuck Pepka** of RCS/Renton Coil Spring released a press announcement withdrawing his sponsorship of the team and noting, "*The owners Billy and Jane Schumacher do not meet the moral and ethical standards of RCS in the management of the team*"

The U-37 website has not had any updated news posted or any press releases from Billy & Jane Schumacher concerning any developments or announcements on the 2011 season.

On another unrelated note concerning Schumacher Racing, there is a complaint filed in the King County Superior Court system involving former sponsor Beacon Plumbing/**Bill Cahill** and Billy Schumacher Racing. This complaint involves sponsorship agreements and the details made for a timeframe starting back in late 2006/early 2007 up through a yet to be determined ending date. The disposition of this case has not been decided upon.

Dave Holley, Managing Director/President of Peters & May USA, announced a greater involvement in boat racing throughout many different classes. They will still be involved with H1 as a series sponsor, exclusive logistics carrier for the H1 fleet, QMSF, and involved as title sponsor for the newly formed U-11 Unlimited Racing Group. Peters & May Racing has also provided their sponsorships to offshore racing, outboards (including **J.W. Myers** and **Jamie Nilson**), Formula class tunnel boats, ERCU/Radio control hydroplane club, GASS (Great American Stockcar Series) shipping & logistics provider, the 5 liter inboard hydro campaigned by **Jeff Bernard** and **Kip Brown**, and other classes of racing.

The H1 Unlimited Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet is scheduled for Feb. 25-26 at The Palms Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, NV. Along with the 2011 race schedule, they will update the 2011 H1 Unlimited Rulebook regarding revisions to qualifying, on-board cameras, and starting procedures including "fight for lanes". Look for more details to be outlined in upcoming editions of the **UNJ**.

“BETWEEN TWO”

2010 Season Review

by Brian Anderson



The 2010 unlimited hydroplane season shaped up as a battle between two teams, the Ellstrom team out of Seattle and the Madison, Indiana based team of *Oh Boy! Oberto*. These two teams have fought it out for the past few seasons and this year would be no different. Defending driving champion Steve David would once again be driving the U-1 *Oh Boy! Oberto*. Dave Villwock with his 59 career wins would be driving the Ellstrom family's U-96 (ex U-16) which had recently signed a new sponsor and would be known as *Spirit of Qatar*. The bright orange paint gave way to light blue, red and white.

With a mere six races on the circuit it would come down to the team that would make fewest mistakes. In the end the team from Madison, Ind. would triumph but not without plenty of controversy, crashes, surprises and some of the best racing seen in years.

When the teams arrived in Madison for the season opener, now sponsored by Lucas Oil, back in July a large field of 13 pulled into the pits. In addition the U-96 & U-1 there were the U-37 *Peters & May*, J.W. Meyers; U-13 *Miss DYC*, Cal Phipps; U-17 Our Gang Racing, Kip and Nate Brown; U-21 *Albert Lee Appliance*, Brian Perkins; U-100 Leland Unlimited, Greg Hopp; U-25 Superior Racing, Jon Zimmerman and Ken Muscatel; U-22 *Matrix Systems*, Mike Webster; U-5 *Formula*, Jeff Bernard; U-7 *Graham Trucking*, J. Michael Kelly; U-3 Cooper Racing, Jimmy King, and the U-57 with Jimmy Shane.

Controversy erupted right away during qualifying. The U-3, owned by Ed Cooper had its lap of 143.24 disallowed after it was discovered Mr. Cooper never joined the APBA or signed his entry form. Ed Cooper withdrew his boat, citing what he said was H1's refusal to follow the written rules of the organization. He also went on to say the actions of the leadership of H1 were no longer tolerable. The boat did not race and ultimately sat out the entire season.

The U-57, owned by Ted Porter of *Formulaboats.com* never made it to the water and the field for racing stood at eleven.

After the top two it was apparent the fastest players were going to be J. Michael Kelly and J.W. Meyers. Kelly won heat 2A and Meyers took 1C and 3B. Either *Oberto* or *Qatar* won the balance of the prelims setting up a big



Chris Denslow photo



Jim Simpson photo

showdown in the final. In that final, hometown favorite Steve David took the *Oberto* into the lead at the end of lap 1 and never looked back. Kelly in *Graham Trucking* served notice he would right there all season by finishing a strong second. J.W. Meyers took a solid third. Surprisingly, *Qatar* never mounted a challenge and came home fifth.



Karl Pearson photo
Meyers' boat lost its skid fin (seen in photo at left), in the tight Roostertail turn and was suddenly pointed at the pit area. He then cranked the boat as hard right as possible but with nowhere to go and too much speed, the U-37 struck the sea wall next to the Roostertail Restaurant at a 45-degree angle. The left sponson was blown totally off the boat. J.W. quickly climbed out, suffering injury to his left ankle.

The final was delayed by wind. The lane assignments in order were Villwock, David, and Kelly, which is how they stayed as Dave Villwock won his eighth Gold Cup.



at 157.199.

In the prelims, the only team other than the U-1 & U-96 to win a heat was Brian Perkins in *Albert Lee* in 2A. 2B turned out to be one of the best heats all season. Starting on the outside Dave Villwock drove around the field and out-dueled J. Michael Kelly to the line.

The final heat saw the U-96 *Qatar* open up a commanding lead. All seemed to be going Villwock's way until he was penalized for encroaching on *Oberto* in the final turn of the final lap. It was David's third straight win on the Columbia River.

A quick cross-state trip to Seattle for the annual race, now titled the *Albert Lee Cup*, promised more of the same action. The top two were now really flexing their muscles and it was apparent the *Qatar* team was the one to beat by posting a qualifying time 4 mph ahead of *Oberto*. Once again the big two dominated the prelims but both Brian Perkins and Greg Hopp pulled off victories in their second heats.

The opening round of the series had been hugely successful in terms of boats, racing and fans. Round 2 in Detroit was up next and it was for the Gold Cup, the biggest prize in hydro racing.

The historic Detroit River is the toughest place to race and once again this was the case. Four heats would determine who would make the final as well as the river. In heat 1B, J.W.

After the quick-two race stint in the Midwest, the series moved to Washington State for its two traditional regattas. Warm weather greeted the teams in Tri-Cities as Schumacher racing had leased a Fred Leland hull to carry the Peters and May colors and hired Jon Zimmerman to drive. It was still evident the top two teams were *Oberto* and *Ellstrom*. Villwock laid down a 163.579 qualifying lap with Steve David very close behind at 162.928. The next closest team was Nate Brown's surprising U-17 *Red Dot*



Lon Erickson photo

The final was a classic. J. Michael Kelly in *Graham Tucking* led the field across the line but had jumped the gun. Steve David on the inside managed to just barely stay in front of Villwock the entire heat. Both boats got loose and bounced around. With the crowd cheering *Oberto* stayed ahead for the win. It seemed as though *Qatar* was the faster boat, but now *Oberto* owned a 506-point lead and picked up its third win to *Qatar*'s two.

It should also be noted that on Saturday morning, long before the first heats were run, young Kayleigh Perkins, who has numerous wins on the unlimited light circuit, was given the opportunity to test *Oberto*. She ran a few laps with a top speed of 147.058.

Somewhere during the season a deal was struck with sponsors Degree Men and the Air National Guard to bring the unlimiteds back to San Diego's Mission Bay. On September



Karl Pearson photo



Karl Pearson photo

19-20 they returned by playing a game of musical boats. First, the U-37 known as *Peters & May* became the U-37 *Degree Men* with a flashy color scheme featuring many shades of blue. The Peters & May sponsorship was transferred to Ken Muscatels U-25 and finally the U-7 *Graham Trucking* became the U-7 *Air Guard*, now in black.

Qatar and *Oberto* again led the way in qualifying by 5 mph over the field. When the final rolled around it was fairly predictable. *Qatar* got the inside and the early lead and stayed there. *Oberto* followed home second and *Air Guard* third. With one race left to go to decide the championship, it was virtually a dead heat.

For the second time in as many years the unlimiteds were put on a cargo ship and sent halfway around the world to Doha, Qatar. This race is rapidly becoming a true "event" in this part of the world, giving the series an international flavor and drawing in new fans that had never been able to see these boats up close.

If Dave Villwock was going to overtake Steve David and the slight lead he would have to have a perfect race. It started off well with the U-96 posting the fastest qualifying lap. In the first heat, things looked good for Villwock, then went haywire. Going in to the second turn with J. Michael Kelly in the U-7, once again *Graham Trucking*, on his outside Dave got into the roostertail of the U-7 and spun out. While not being eliminated mathematically, it came very close. Steve David stayed consistent



and wrapped up both the team and drivers championship after the fourth heat.

In the final, Dave Villwock ran down J. Michael Kelly and won the race for his "hometown" sponsor. Historically this now gives Dave 62 victories, tying him with the late Bill Muncey in the top spot for career wins.

For 2010 the battle all season was between the U-96 *Spirit of Qatar* and the U-1 *Oh Boy! Oberto*. While *Qatar* appeared to be the fastest boat it was *Oberto* that stayed consistent and won the championship. It should be noted that while both these teams made every final heat it was *Oberto* that never finished lower than third. *Qatar*, while winning three of the six events finished fifth in two of them, once being flagged for a penalty and once falling with mechanical problems. The way the unlimited championship is set up, it's about speed AND consistency.

After the top two, the best season was had by J. Michael Kelly in *Graham Trucking/Air Guard* as he finished in the runner-up position three times and like, the U-96 and U-1, made every final heat.

After suffering the horrendous crash in Detroit, the Peters & May/Degree Men team rebounded spectacularly with a leased hull and never missed a final with backup driver Jon Zimmerman.

The U-17 Red Dot team showed tremendous speed in qualifying and posted the third fastest time in two events (Tri-Cities and San Diego), but never reached its potential, making only the final heat at the Gold Cup.

Jeff Bernard in the U-5 *Formula* could only manage to win one heat and a third place in Tri-Cities—his highest overall finish. The boat just seemed a tick off the pace.

Brian Perkins, driving the U-21 *Albert Lee Appliance* had his best performance at home in Seattle, winning a heat and ultimately taking third in his sponsor's race, the Albert Lee Cup.

The boats now return from Qatar and the off-season work begins. In 2011 expect more of the same good, fast competition.

HOW BEST TO START?

If this were politics, I would be accused of being a flip-flopper. I'm just going to say I'm rethinking my position. A while back I wrote a piece about the starting procedure and that fighting for lanes is the ONLY way to do it. Lane assignments to me were taking the race out of the drivers' hands as a gimmick to create competition. Only problem is this gimmick has in fact created some of the best heats seen in recent years. You only had to watch heat 2B in Tri-Cities and 2A in Seattle to consider rethinking your position. This is what the fans come for, not a parade. While the purist in me says go back to fighting for lanes, another part of me wants to see a spectacular show and this is the best way to achieve it for both sponsors, fans, and maybe perhaps even television.

Maybe the solution is a hybrid: lane choice, as it is now for the prelims, and just turn everyone loose for the final. My mind is still flipping, or is it flopping?

(Continued from page 5)

one end of the mall there was a go-kart track. In the middle of the mall there was an ice-skating rink where an amateur hockey practice was underway. Another part of the mall contained an amusement park, complete with a Ferris wheel and roller coaster! The mall is so vast that we weren't able to see it all. However we did manage to find a kiosk where we purchased souvenirs for our grandchildren, relatives, and friends. The food court contained the usual fast food concessions you normally see here in the United States plus a few establishments particular to the Middle East. Sue and I opted to return to the Italian restaurant at the Marriott rather than eat at the mall so we hailed a taxi and were on our way. We had a nice meal at the restaurant and returned to our room to pack for our return flight to Houston.

On Monday morning we left early for the airport. The lines at the airport moved quickly and soon we were shopping in the duty-free shop for departing passengers then moved to the Qatar Airways departure area, again going through an additional security check point required of all flights to the United States. Belts and shoes had to be removed and then we all were subjected to a pat-down search. The half-filled flight to Houston was uneventful but really, really long. The plane arrived late in Houston, impacting many of the boat team members who were going on to Seattle. Sue and I were so tired that we almost had to flip a coin to see who had to drive home. Sue wasn't able to sleep on the return flight, but I had managed to sleep a little so I drove.

The 2010 Oryx Cup was a success for the Spirit of Qatar team, the Qatar Marine Sport Federation, the Oh Boy! Oberto/Miss Madison team, Dave Villwock, and Sheik Hassan. While there weren't the spills and thrills provided by the 2009 Oryx Cup, the Qatar team won the World Championship and there was a lot of very competitive racing. Again we thank Sheik Hassan Al-Thani for providing the opportunity for us to show to the world our unique sport. He certainly is to be applauded.



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