

February 2013



The 2012 Oryx Cup, from Doha, Qatar

by Jimmy Gilbert

Photos from Chris Denslow



The beautiful city of Doha, Qatar at night with all her lights.

Because of a schedule conflict, the date of the 2012 Oryx Cup for unlimited hydroplanes was changed from November, 2012, to January, 2013. Nine unlimiteds were transported from Savannah, Georgia, in late October to Doha, arriving in early November. The tenth entry, the U-11 *Peters May* had been shipped earlier to England for an attempt to establish the English and propeller speed record (which it did).

The race teams weren't scheduled to travel to Qatar until January 6th (or 7th) so the boats were stored at the Qatar Marine Sports Federation facility in Doha until the race date. A couple of the boats (including *Miss Madison/Oh Boy! Oberto*) were being displayed at the U. S. Army base, west of Doha for a few days, to create interest in the race among military personnel.

When the Oberto team arrived in Doha, the boat was still on display at the base so the team elected to go to the base on Tuesday morning to begin configuring the boat from the "travel" to the "race" configuration. A lot of the electrical components were out of the boat and had to be reinstalled before the boat could be raced. Included was the relay panel that switches the batteries from 24 volts (parallel) operation to 48 volts (series) for starting. The van transporting the team to the base had to be inspected before being allowed access to the base. The relay



panel we were carrying caused a lot of concern for the military police who performed the inspection of the van. Our crew chief, Michael Hanson, was asked to explain the relay panel's presence to the perplexed guards. Michael must have provided the right answers because we finally were allowed to proceed.

Once we arrived at the boat, we began work to install the rudder, relay panel, breathing airlines, skid fin attachment knuckles, air bottles, and all the equipment required to operate the boat. Because the boat had to be transported back to the race site from the Army base, and because there was no crane available to us at the base, the skid fin and the rear wing were not installed but delayed until the next day. Towing an unlimited with an attached skid fin through traffic really isn't a good idea anyway. Actually, the same can be said for an assembled rear wing even though the boat is on "tilt" during transport.

At noon, we were treated to lunch at the Army mess hall where we ate with the enlisted personnel. It quickly became the consensus of the team that the Army eats pretty well! Fresh vegetables abounded and there were plenty of entrees to choose from. We met several of the soldiers and the majority seemed to be from the Phoenix, Arizona, area. I would image that the duty in Qatar was much preferable to that in Afghanistan, but just being away from home for a long period of time is bad enough in any circumstance.

Later in the day, the Peters & May team came to the base to tour the Stryker vehicle facility. Having been at the base for most of the day, the Oberto team elected to forgo the Stryker tour and head back to the race site where there was still work to do before adjourning to the hotel. The U-11 crew said that the Stryker tour was instructive and very enjoyable so apparently we missed out on a good thing.

During this trip to Qatar, all the teams stayed at the Courtyard by Marriott, City Center Hotel. The hotel is adjacent to the Doha City Center Mall, a very convenient location for the boat crews. City Center Mall has always been an attraction for the teams in the past years and having the Mall next door to the hotel was a real plus. Also, there were several theme restaurants in the hotel including a New York style steakhouse, a Brazilian restaurant, an Italian restaurant, and a sports bar that serves food. The Oberto team dined at the Italian restaurant often during our stay in Doha. In the Mall, Appleby's and Chili's were also quite popular with the race teams.

The original schedule for the 2012 Oryx Cup called for testing and qualifying on Thursday with racing to commence on Friday. The Oryx Cup final was to be held on Saturday following the third and fourth rounds of heat racing. Because of a threatening weather forecast, all of this changed. Actually, the possibility of high winds on Friday

and Saturday was the problem. The schedule was revised to conduct testing and qualifying on Thursday morning and have three sessions of heat racing later in the afternoon — an ambitious schedule for six separate heat races in a short afternoon period. The reasoning for the schedule change is actually simple. Having three of an originally scheduled five races concluded was important to insure UIM's criteria that fifty percent or more racing activities be completed for an event to be considered fulfilled (in the event un-raceable conditions were to arise). In other words, a winner of the 2012 Oryx cup could be determined if there were at least three concluded heats of racing should weather conditions make it impossible to continue.

Testing began on Thursday morning. The water conditions were far from optimal (meaning, there were a fair amount of high waves on the back stretch), so testing was somewhat sporadic. Steve David took *Oh Boy! Oberto* out and managed to record a lap in the 140 mph range. Villwock ran about a mile an hour faster in the 1 *Spirit of Qatar* and Jimmy Shane in the 5 *Graham Trucking* entry was just about the same as *Oberto*. All of the teams participated in the early testing including: the 57 *FEDCO*, 37 *Beacon Plumbing*, U-17 *Red Dot*, 88 *Snoqualmie Casino*, 9 Jones Racing, U-100 *Fox Plumbing*, and U-11 *Peter & May*. Again, most of the returning drivers reported significant wave action on the back of the course.

Qualification began shortly after the testing session. Because the water was still somewhat rough, several teams elected to pass their qualification attempts. Finally, Mark Evans in *FEDCO* made his way to the water and managed to run 129.039 mph in his attempt at qualification. Jimmy Shane in *Graham Trucking* followed with a mark of 142.059 mph. *Oh Boy! Oberto* and Steve David were next out and achieved 142.267 mph, just slightly faster than Shane. Jon Zimmerman qualified at 138.878 mph in Jones Racing. Dave Villwock in *Spirit of Qatar* was able to up the qualifying standard with a lap

of 144.907 mph. Tommy Thompson in *Peters & May* ran 132.682 mph and Ryan Mallow piloted *Fox Plumbing* to a 133.682 mph lap. Finally, J. Michael Kelly in *Beacon Plumbing* ran 131.394 mph during his qualification run. The U-17 *Red Dot* and the 88 *Snoqualmie Casino* didn't participate in the qualification round.

Following the qualification session, the luck of the 1 *Spirit of Qatar* began to completely unravel. There were a couple of precursors that really aggravated and hampered their situation. First, the Ellstrom's gearbox expert, Danny Walters, retired from the sport following the race in San Diego in September. That single incident alone would be catastrophic for most unlimited teams. And, about a week before the team was to leave for Doha, Danny Heye received word that his daughter, a senior in college, had been diagnosed with cancer. Certainly, Danny would not be able to make the trip because his daughter was scheduled to begin chemotherapy during the week of the Doha race. Lastly, Bob Burke flew to Houston to board the Qatar Airways flight only to be denied because his ticket had been issued in the name of "Bob Burke" — his passport was entitled "Robert Burke." If the name on the ticket doesn't match the one on the passport, boarding is denied by international treaty. That left a skeletal crew for the Qatar team: Eric Ellstrom, Jeff Minar, Adam Bratvold, David Heye, Greg Jones, Joern-Oliver Pietzko (the U-1's German



crewman who has been with the team in Qatar since 2009), and Dave Villwock. That's a pretty thin crew for such an important race... six, plus a driver. But, with 100 qualifications points secured, things weren't totally bleak for the team - that is, until heat 1A.

Heat 1A included the *Spirit of Qatar*, *Graham Trucking*, Jones Racing, *Red Dot*, and *Beacon Plumbing*. Villwock took the early lead and stayed there until the finish. After three laps of racing, Jimmy Shane in *Graham Trucking* appeared to be in second, but had incurred a lap penalty for being early at the starting gun. In third place at the checkered flag was Jon Zimmerman in Jones Racing, followed by J. Michael Kelly in *Beacon Plumbing*, and



Kip Brown in *Red Dot*, in that order. Analysis of H1's monitoring equipment showed that both Villwock and Brown had flagrant fuel violations during the race, meaning the allowed 4.10 gallons per minute fuel consumption had been exceeded for more than 5 continuous seconds. The disqualifications (and the penalty to Shane), moved Zimmerman into first place, Kelly into second, and Shane (running an extra lap), into third. Villwock and Brown received zero points for the heat.

Heat 1B was contested by Steve David, Ryan Mallow, and Mark Evans, Brian Perkins and Tommy Thompson. Steve David led from the start to the finish with Mallow second, and Evans third. Perkins was assessed an additional lap for starting early and finished in fourth place. Thompson incurred a penalty for his incursion into one of the



so-called DMZ areas inside each turn on the course so not only was he held to zero points for the heat but he had an additional 50 points deducted from his accumulated season total (plus a monetary fine).

The racing was on schedule and Heats 2A and 2B were drawn and the boats made ready to race. The contestants in 2A included Dave Villwock, Brian Perkins, Kip Brown, Tommy Thompson, and Mark Evans. The undermanned Qatar team was quite late getting the boat into the water and Villwock managed to leave the dock only with seconds to spare before the start. He was quite late at the start and incurred a lap penalty for crossing into the DMZ inside the course turn and was also assessed a monetary fine for striking an exit pin buoy in the turn. Apparently in frustration, Dave began running over other marker buoys during the course of the race, an action that earned him a disqualification



from the heat. Perkins was awarded the heat win with Brown second, Thompson third and Evans fourth. After two heats of racing, Villwock had not managed to add a single point to his accumulated total (which stood at 100 for being top qualifier).

Needless to say, it took a while to replace the dislodged buoys that define the race course. It appeared that the ambitious schedule of six heat races in one afternoon might not be attainable. The H1 officials were able to get the course reset with sufficient time remaining to allow three more heat races to be held before sundown in Doha.

Heat 2B included Ryan Mallow, Steve David, Jimmy Shane, Jon Zimmerman, and J. Michael Kelly. David won the heat in *Oberto*, Shane was second, Zimmerman third, Kelly fourth and Mallow rounded out the field. Steve David's accumulated National Championship points total was just about out of the reach of any other team at that point.

The draw for Heat 3A included Villwock, Evans, Brown, Kelly, and Steve David. Villwock was unable to answer the start because of damage done to the boat's canard that was sustained when he struck the buoys in 2A. Mark Evans' boat apparently ingested a large gulp of saltwater (a real no-no for turbine engines), leaving the pits for the start of the race and flamed out the engine. He got the engine going again but was unable to finish the heat. Steve David won the heat with Brown second and Kelly third. After the third heat, Steve David appeared to have the National Championship wrapped up.

Heat 3B pitted Brian Perkins, Tommy Thompson, Ryan Mallow, Jimmy Shane, and Jon Zimmerman against one another. Shane lead from the start to the finish with Perkins second, Zimmerman third, and Thompson fourth. Mallow managed to make the start but was unable to finish the heat in the U-100. Three complete heats of racing on Thursday afternoon had been accomplished by the H1 officials. Were the forecast winds to arise on Friday or Saturday, the 2012 Oryx Cup could be awarded based on accumulated points because over half the scheduled racing heats had been completed.

On Friday morning in the Doha pits, it was evident that the forecasted high winds hadn't completely materialized. There was wind, but not of sufficient strength to halt any of the racing action. It was thus decided that there would be a test session in the morning followed by a round of heat racing in the afternoon. However, as the fleet made ready to begin the testing session, a new dilemma became evident - low tide. The water was so low that the skid fins and rudders of all the boats hit the bottom of Doha Bay. The portable dock to access the boats in the water was moved



Trailing way behind, the 11 *Peters & May* finished fourth and the U-100 *Fox Plumbing* last in heat 3B.

farther from the shore, to no avail. *Spirit of Qatar* was lifted into the water and began a test session only to return to the dock after one lap because of the very low water in the bay. The test session was scrapped and officials consulted tide tables. High tide was predicted somewhere around 2:00 to 3:00 pm, so it was decided to commence heats 4A and 4B then.

Finally there was sufficient water depth at the landing docks for heat 4A to begin. The draw for the heat featured Kip Brown, Brian Perkins, J. Michael Kelly, Steve David, and Mark Evans. David led the field from start to finish with Brown second, Perkins third, Evans fourth, and Kelly fifth. Kelly was assessed a lap penalty during the heat but was running second at the end of three laps.

Heat 4B included Villwock, Mallow, Thompson, Shane, and Zimmerman. A very unusual race was about to unfold. First, Shane drew a lap penalty for being early at the start. Villwock rushed into the lead and was well over a roostertail ahead of the second place boat when he struck a large wave at the start of the turn coming off the back straightaway. The boat sailed through the air for at least 30 yards and landed abruptly on the forward area of the sponsons, but at least it was upright.

The boat hit the water with sufficient force to break the motor mounts that support the engine in the hull. Apparently the engine dropped to the bottom of the engine bay and severed the lines that feed fuel to the engine. Immediately a fire started. Villwock appeared to be attempting to restart the engine when he realized the gravity of his situation. By then, fire had engulfed the engine tail cone area and appeared to be spreading. Red flares were fired to stop the race and rescue boats with firefighting capability converged rapidly. Quickly the fire was out but extensive damage had been done to the hapless *Spirit of Qatar*. Eventually, the remaining boats in the heat headed for the dock to refuel and get ready for a restart of 4B.

Because Jimmy Shane incurred a penalty during the initial running of heat 4B, H1 rules state that any and all penalties will be carried over to any restart of the heat. Ironically, it was Ted Porter, the owner of Jimmy Shane's *Graham Trucking* entry who had proposed and



Spirit of Qatar and Dave Villwock's day came to an abrupt end in 4B. This has to be the worst race performance the Ellstrom team has ever had.



championed the “penalty carry-over” rule with the H1 rules committee in the first place. It would seem that he would suffer consequences because of his own rule.

Since Villwock had caused the stoppage of the heat, he was ineligible for the restart (and the condition of his boat certainly would have prevented his restart anyway). The remainder of the boats in the heat were put into the water for the restart. Shane jumped into the lead, followed by Jon Zimmerman in Jones Racing, and Tommy Thompson in the U-11 *Peters & May*. Ryan Mallow in the U-100 *Fox Plumbing* failed to make the restart of the heat. After three laps, Zimmerman received the checkered flag followed by Thompson in second place. Shane ran an extra lap to capture third. The teams retired to the hotel still with a cloud of a possible crippling wind forecast still looming for Saturday, the day of the Oryx Cup World Championship.



As you can see above, serious damage was done to the engine well of *Spirit of Qatar*. Getting it repaired for the next Qatar race will be problematic.

Before proceeding to relate the details of the events of Saturday, the final day of the Oryx Cup competition, a few words seem to be in order regarding some of the things that were happening in Doha when the unlimited teams were there. Sam Cole, the commissioner of H1, received several VIP passes to the Qatar Racing Club automobile drag racing events being held in Doha while we were there. The Oberto team decided to attend the races, courtesy of the passes provided by Mr. Cole. A U. S. ex-patriot named Katie Wildman, who is originally from Madison (Indiana) but now lives in Doha, volunteered to take the team to the drag races. Katie works for a consortium of several U. S. universities that have campuses in Doha, providing educational benefits to the Qataris as well as to other students from the region. After a bit of searching (our GPS’s didn’t work very well there), the Qatar Racing Club drag strip was located and we proceeded to watch the action.

In the United States, two of the best top-fuel drag race teams are sponsored by Al Anabi, an organization that is headquartered in Doha. Al Anabi really is the essence of drag racing in Qatar. Just about every team carries the Al Anabi banner. While there were no top fuel teams competing when we were there, there was plenty of really high performance action. Supercharged, nitrous oxide injected cars were able to traverse the 1,000 foot course in just under five seconds, attaining speeds of over 200 mph! Impressive indeed!

One of the most interesting contested categories at the Doha drag strip was the “street legal” motorcycle class. At the starting line, the bikes would often (unintentionally) have their front wheels elevate to about a 30 degree (or higher) angle when starting from the stopped position. It appeared that the riders were hanging on for dear life! These motorcycles didn’t have the so-called “wheelie bars” that trail behind the rear wheel to prevent the front wheel from becoming too airborne. It would seem that it takes a special individual who is willing to risk life and limb to participate in a “street legal” motorcycle drag event. But it should be emphasized that the drag strip facility was absolutely first class, much like everything else in Qatar. Machines, like you see at drag races in the United States, were on hand to clean up any liquid spilled on the track and the grand stands had foam cushions permanently installed for the comfort of the spectators. Results were posted in miles per hour and the track was measured in feet, not meters. Large video screens replayed the action on the track for all to see. What a magnificent venue the Qatar Racing Club’s track is for contesting what is usually thought to be an American motor sport.

There is one other thing that should be mentioned about our endeavor to find the drag strip. We passed a rather “long” building in the southwest part of Doha, in the so called “industrial area”. The building seemed to continue for quite some time as we motored along. Finally the building stopped, but by then, we had bypassed the drag racing facility. We doubled back in order to find the track. Again, we passed the building that seemed to be quite a trek

to get past. After we left the drag racing strip on our way back to the hotel, we encountered the long building again. A mental note of the van's odometer reading was made and after 6.5 kilometers (over four miles!), we reached the end of the building.

While it's true that for every half mile or so, there was a break of about 50 feet in the actual building structure, it was almost one contiguous facility! And, it appeared that the building was mostly empty although a part of the structure was still under construction. From what we could see, the building appeared to be only 100 or so feet in depth but at the start and end of the structure, there was additional construction that continued as far as the eye could see at right angles to our direction of travel. Dr. Wildman said that she would try to find out more about the building and report to us on our return trip to Doha in February for the 2013 Oryx Cup World Championship. Qatar is truly a most interesting place.

Back to the 2012 Oryx Cup. Based on the accumulated points, the contenders for the final were to be Tommy Thompson in the U-11 *Peters & May*, Brian Perkins in the 88 *Snoqualmie Casino*, Jon Zimmerman in the 9 Jones Racing, Jimmy Shane in the 5 *Graham Trucking*, Steve David in the 6 *Oh Boy! Oberto*, and J. Michael Kelly in the 37 *Beacon Plumbing* entry as the "trailer." Again, there was a problem with the tide in Doha Bay. It required a great deal of maneuvering to get all the boats into the water. The crane lifting the Jones entry even "tipped" somewhat in its attempt to get the boat far enough out into the water to avoid dragging the bottom of the bay. Everyone's emotions were on edge. Ted Grange, the H1 official in charge of the dock and launch operations, did a superb job keeping order and tempers in check. Finally the signal to launch the boats was given.

At the start, Jimmy Shane grabbed the lead from lane 1 and Steve David was in hot pursuit. By lap 2, Shane had increased his lead to over a roostertail over the balance of the field. Tommy Thompson had engine problems from the start and was struggling. J. Michael Kelly was adjudged not to be at least fifteen seconds behind the starting signal (as required by a trailer boat), and was disqualified. Jimmy Shane's first lap was over 139 mph and a clincher! After five laps of racing the 2012 Oryx Cup World Championship belonged to Jimmy. Steve David finished second, Jon Zimmerman third, Brian Perkins fourth, and Tommy Thompson in a badly "salted" boat was fifth.

Following the action on Doha Bay, the teams refreshed at the hotel and made their way to the gala celebration that was arranged by Sheik Hassan. As in the past, the Qatar Marine Sports Federation out did itself in providing a most magnificent culmination to the events of the Oryx Cup. Winning teams were recognized, outstanding contributions to the sport by individuals, the media and officials were lauded and a wonderful dinner presented.

Members of the Qatar Marine Sports Federation were also recognized for their achievements during the racing past season. On hand was Steve Curtis, the throttle man for Sheik Hassan's Spirit of Qatar offshore racing team. *Spirit of Qatar* won the Superboat International World Championship in Key West, Florida, in November of 2012. Steve is a real gentleman and an asset to motor sports. All in all, a good time was had by everyone at Sheik Hassan's gala affair.



This is the fourth time in almost as many years that the unlimiteds have been in Qatar, and in that period, we the boat crews have become acquainted with several great people who seem to have “adopted” us and our sport. There is Joern-Oliver Pietzko, who travels every year from Germany just to participate with the Ellstrom team. There is Katie Wildman, the ex-Madisonian who often comes to our rescue whenever we are in need of anything - from hardware store items, to ice, (to you name it!). Always on hand to arrange trips in Doha to the Pearl Man, Old Town, and whatever else the teams can dream up are Scott, Donna and Mikey MacCracken. This year at Sheik Hassan’s gala dinner, the MacCracken’s were acknowledged by Sam Cole for their contributions to our sport. It was most worthy indeed. We can never say thank you enough to all the folks like Mona Nasser and Taryn Baze, who arrange our travel and make life a whole lot easier for us while we’re on the road. Thank you, one and all. It is appreciated.

A very special thanks is also extended to Sheik Hassan who believes in our sport and has made every effort to make our presence felt world-wide. Thank you, Sheik Hassan, for your support.



Sheik Hassan's 96 *Spirit of Qatar* offshore racer on display.



The Graham Trucking Team with the Qatar trophies. Owner Ted Porter at top left, Jimmy Shane top right.

STAT BOX

ORYX CUP UIM WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Doha, Qatar, January 10-12, 2013

2-mile course on Doha Bay

QUALIFICATION (1) 1 *Spirit of Qatar*, Dave Villwock, 144.907, 100 points; (2) 6 *Oh Boy! Oberto*, Steve David, 142.267, 80; (3) 5 *Graham Trucking*, Jimmy Shane, 142.059, 70; (4) 9 (no name), Jon Zimmerman, 138.878, 60 points; (5) U-100 *Fox Plumbing & Heating*, Ryan Mallow, 133.682, 50; (6) U-11 *Peters & May*, Tom Thompson, 132.833, 40; (7) 37 *Miss Beacon Plumbing*, J. Michael Kelly, 131.394, 30; (8) U-17 *Red Dot*, Kip Brown, 130.000, 30; (9) 57 *FEDCO*, N. Mark Evans, 130.000, 30; (10) 88 *Snoqualmie Casino*, Brian Perkins, 130.000, 30.

HEAT 1A (1) U-9 124.585, 400 points, 460 cumulative points; (2) *Beacon Plumbing* 116.138; (3) *Graham Trucking* 99.551 (penalized one lap for jumping the gun), 225, 295; *Qatar* DSQ — flagrant fuel violation, 0, 100; *Red Dot* DSQ — flagrant fuel violation, 0, 30. Fast lap (1) *Graham Trucking* 137.509. **HEAT 1B** (1) *Oh Boy! Oberto* 130.353, 400, 480; (2) *Peters & May* 120.733, 300, 340; (3) *Fox Plumbing & Heating* 119.843, 225, 275; (4) *FEDCO* 116.973, 169, 199; (5) *Snoqualmie Casino* 94.021 (penalized one lap for jumping the gun), 127, 157. Fast lap (1) *Oh Boy! Oberto* 134.539.

HEAT 2A (1) *Snoqualmie Casino* 125.883, 400, 557; (2) *Peters & May* 116.080 (50 point deduction for going through the DMZ, 250, 590; *Red Dot* DSQ — flagrant fuel violation, 0, 30; *Qatar* DSQ — penalized one lap for going through DMZ and dislodging the exit buoy, disqualified for hitting multiple buoys, 0, 100; *FEDCO* DNS — , 0, 199. Fast lap (2) *Snoqualmie Casino* 127.856. **HEAT 2B** (1) *Oh Boy! Oberto* 132.604, 400, 880; (2) *Graham Trucking* 131.757, 300, 595; (3) U-9 120.324, 225, 685; (4) *Beacon Plumbing* 117.341, 169, 499; (5) *Fox Plumbing & Heating* 103.768, 127, 402. Fast lap (3) *Oh Boy! Oberto* 135.292.

HEAT 3A (1) *Oh Boy! Oberto* 125.604, 400, 1280; (2) *Red Dot* 122.444, 300, 330; (3) *Beacon Plumbing* 117.221, 225, 724; *FEDCO* DNF — injected saltwater , 0, 199; *Qatar* DNS — repairing canard and steering cables, 0, 100. Fast lap (1) *Oh Boy! Oberto* 130.170. **HEAT 3B** (1) *Graham Trucking* 130.353, 400, 995; (2) *Snoqualmie Casino* 120.733, 300, 857; (3) U-9 119.843, 225, 910; (4) *Peters & May* 116.973; *Fox Plumbing & Heating* DNF — , 0, 402. Fast lap (2) U-9 127.159.

HEAT 4A (1) *Oh Boy! Oberto* 127.362, 400, 1680; (2) *Red Dot* 122.738, 300, 630; (3) *Snoqualmie Casino* 116.737, 225, 1082; (4) *FEDCO* 110.142, 169, 368; (5) *Beacon Plumbing* (penalized one lap for jumping the gun) 92.098, 127, 851. Fast lap (1) *Beacon Plumbing* 130.538. **HEAT 4B** (rerun) (1) U-9 117.611, 400, 1310; (2) *Peters & May* 104.798, 300, 1059; (3) *Graham Trucking* 94.905 (penalized one lap for lane encroachment in the first running, 225, 1220; *Qatar* DSQ — stopped first running when boat caught fire, 0, 100; *Fox Plumbing & Heating* DNS — , 0, 402. Fast lap (1) *Graham Trucking* 130.538.

FINAL (1) *Graham Trucking* 136.703, 400, 1620; (2) *Oh Boy! Oberto* 134.682, 300, 1980; (3) U-9 123.944, 225, 1560; (4) *Snoqualmie Casino* 121.078, 169, 1251; (5) *Peters & May* No time (black flagged after three laps, scored fifth), 127, 1186; *Miss Beacon Plumbing* DSQ — unsafe operation and interfering with the start of five qualifiers by trailer boat, 0, 851. Fast lap (1) *Graham Trucking* 139.681.

COMPILED BY ALLEN STILES

Jimmy Shane Interview

by Craig Fjarlie

Jimmy Shane won the UIM World Championship at Doha, Qatar, on January 12. It was his second victory of the 2012 season. His first came at Tri-Cities, when he powered *Graham Trucking* past J. Michael Kelly in *Beacon Plumbing* at the finish line. He also won the UIM World Championship again Tuesday February 12, once more in Qatar. Two in a row, this is the first time that has ever happened.

Shane just concluded his first full season as a driver in the unlimited class. He was born November 13, 1985, in Havre de Grace, Maryland. He hails from a racing family. His father, Stu, and mother, Robin, both raced, as does his sister, Kelly. Jimmy started in J class outboards when he was nine years old and moved through the ranks quickly. He took his first ride in an unlimited in 2006. In the following interview, conducted by Craig Fjarlie in the pits at Seattle, Shane reflects on racing from inexperienced rookie to international recognition.

You were born into a boat racing family.

Grew up around racing my entire life. My dad raced since 1969. He was a seven-time high point champion in 145.

Was he a first generation racer?

He was the first generation. He and his cousin built their first outboard boats when they were about 16 years old. Built it themselves. From that point on, he moved into inboards. Hooked up with a guy back in Havre de Grace named Phil Roberts, who made propellers and designed boats. They worked together for years and years, designing boats. Eventually they came up with the *Hijacker*, a 145 boat. That's the boat that they won those seven high points in a row, set a couple world records with it. So, I've kind of been born and raised in it.

They were actively involved when you were born.

Exactly.

And your mother got involved in it.

Yup. The entire family raced. We actually raced against each other.

And you have a sister that races.

My sister, Kelly, races. Right now she races the 5-litre class back east. But at one point all four of us were racing against each other in the T class, the 1.5 Stock class, back on the east coast.

What was your first race boat?

My first time in a race boat was in North Carolina, it was in a J Runabout. I ran a Mercury 60-J outboard motor. I think we probably did about 25 miles per hour!

That was about the time the new OMC motors were coming out?

Actually, the OMCs were out. Craig Dewald, a real famous guy in propellers, had a 60-J laying in his garage. We went up there to pick up some props for my parents' inboard boats and I saw the motor sitting there. Also, we were good friends with the Struziks. Walt Struzik ran the *Vagabond* back east. He had a J Runabout sitting up in his loft. I asked, you know, I love this boat racing, can I have that? I offered some money for the runabout, I offered Craig some money for the motor, and they ended up just givin' it to me. We went out and had a great time in J Runabout.

Did you ever run anything besides J class then?

Never ran anything up to that point besides J. Then, throughout the years I've run C Stock Hydro, 20 Hydro, D Mod Runabout, PRO outboards, 125, 250 Hydro. I've just run a bunch of different classes.



Jimmy Shane with the Oryx Cup after winning the U.I.M. World Championship in Doha, Qatar.

Karl Pearson photo

And inboards as well.

Inboards I've run everything from 1.5 Stock all the way up to Grand Prix boats and Jersey Speed Skiffs. And a Super Stock once. That I'll never do again.

Do you have a particular class among the inboards that you like best?

You know, I think all of 'em have their perks. Every boat, the size and the speed, everything's pretty much proportionate for each class. The modified classes are a little bit more fun, they have a lot more acceleration, the power-to-weight ratio. But, you really have to drive a stock boat to get it to go, so they both have their way of being exciting.

In the outboards, did you have a class that you liked in particular? Have you been in an outboard lately?

Last outboard I was in was in 2010 at the Worlds.

Down in Florida?

Down in Florida. I ran down in Lake Alford. I built my own 125 PRO Hydro. I was down there racing and actually won two out of three heats in the 125 Hydro class. That was pretty cool.

How did you get connected with Ted Porter? Did you know him from earlier racing?

Didn't know Ted. How it ended up happening, I drove a 5-litre hydroplane for Mike Weber, and the Weber brothers. That was probably 2005 when I started driving for them. I raced their boat for two years. Did very well in it. Mike came up after a year of driving the 5-litre saying, well, you know, we got the unlimited deal going. Wanted me to test the boat. Asked me to test the boat in Celina, Ohio. So, I did some test laps in the T-5 hull. That was in 2006, the year Mike Allen won the high point in the T-5 hull. That was my first unlimited experience.



Karl Pearson photo

The T5 U-7 Formula II (#9712) that Shane drove seen at San Diego in 2006 with Mike Allen driving.

You got to test it there, and then you worked on the crew, basically?

I did. The next year I kinda helped out. In 2007, I helped out at a couple races., but I was also racing my own stuff. I think I only made it to one unlimited race. Then Mike Allen blew over, and Ted decided he was going to run the back-up boat. Mike was still pretty hurt from the blowover so they ended up calling me and asked if I wanted to get qualified as a driver. Absolutely, you know? Wouldn't turn it down. That's how it all started.

You ran two races that year.

Ran Tri-Cities and Seattle. Got qualified in Tri-Cities, first weekend out. Then I also ran in Seattle. We made the final in Tri-Cities the first year, finished fourth in the final. Then I got to do



Karl Pearson photo

Jimmy Shane in the U-1 Formula II (#9299) at Tri-Cities in 2007.

it all over again in 2008 because Mike Allen blew over in Detroit. That's when I ran the 57 boat. Ran Tri-Cities and Seattle.

What boat did you run the first year?

The first year we ran the old Leland boat. We call it Mustang Sally. (Laughs.) It was a good boat to learn in, solid, gonna be a good ride. Wasn't gonna do anything stupid. We knew we weren't gonna be fast but we were gonna go out there and just get the name on the water. So, a couple years went by, didn't get to drive.

You drove in the provisional heat at San Diego in 2010.

Yup, I did run one heat.

To keep your license active.

Yeah, I literally hopped in the boat, went out, ran my three laps, came back in, and that was it. I was good for two more years.

You stayed with the crew and helped out.

Yeah, I was crewing.

And you continued to race smaller classes.

That whole time, between 2007 and the present, I've been running Grand Prix hydroplanes, which also took up a lot of my time. I've kinda focused on that.

Who built your Grand Prix boat?

The first one I ran, the *Long Gone*, the GP-7, was built by Bert Henderson, from Canada, based on Jamie Auld's molds. Then the second boat we built over last winter. It was just a kit boat that we bought. We actually designed it ourselves and put it all together.

That's the one that burned? (The boat burned at a race in Canada, while Jimmy King was driving – Ed.)

That's the one that burned up. Actually, both of them burned up, the *Long Gone* and this boat.

So you don't have a Grand Prix boat right now?

Right now it's in Lake Havasu. They cut all the decks off and they're gonna get it together.

Maybe you have more to tell about your interest in Grand Prix?

Yeah, the GP is probably my most exciting class to race in just because the power to weight is there. You have the acceleration, the instantaneous power with the supercharger. The boat's so lively it's a really, really fun class to race in.

This past winter, many people thought Ted Porter was going to be getting of it. Things didn't work out that way and you got a ride.

Yeah, that's why I was focusing on the Grand Prix boat. It turned out, I thought Ted was going to sell everything at one point. Like, well, this is good, I'll be able to focus on the Grand Prix boat, I won't have to worry about the



Ron Harsin photo

2005, the first year running as the U-5 *Formula* (#9299) seen at Nashville with Mike Allen driving.



Karl Pearson photo

Jimmy Shane back in the #9010 but racing as the U-57 *Formula* at San Diego in 2010.

unlimiteds. Then out of the blue, Ted goes, well, I think I'm gonna run one boat next year. I'd really like for you to drive it. Get back to me as soon as you can and let me know. I had to do a lot of thinking this winter to see what was going on. I kind of had a commitment with the Grand Prix boat but I decided, you know what, I'm gonna do it for this year, see how it all goes. See if I like it with a full time ride.

Did he offer you a choice as to which boat you wanted to drive, or did you say, "I want to run this one"?

We talked about it and I chose the T-6 hull, just because it's newer. Seems like it's a little bit more forgiving of a boat. Basically, that's it. I think both boats are pretty equal, but I kind of like the T-6 boat, just the way it rides, the way it handles. It's a little bit more to my liking, my driving ability. That's why we decided to go with the T-6 hull.

The boat seems to be performing pretty well.

So far this season we've been one, two miles an hour faster than any qualifying speed that they've ever gotten since Ted started the program. So, we think that focusing on the one boat is the main cause of that. Really concentrate. We can actually look at the data we have, all the equipment for the two boats, we can throw everything we have...

And Tom Anderson's your crew chief. He's been around a long time.

Absolutely. At first, we were getting' to know each other, on the radios, what we like talking about together. It just started meshing after that. We got our heads on the same page and it showed. It showed in the results at Detroit. We were really workin' together. It's fantastic. An experienced crew. Most of the guys have been with Ted since he started, so they know the boats, they know the equipment, they know what they're doing. I couldn't ask for any better situation to be in.

Tell about the win at Tri-Cities. Did you think you were going to catch J. Michael Kelly at the line, or did he fall in a hole and that helped?

You know, I can tell you, I honestly didn't think I was going to catch J. Michael comin' off the corner. He definitely had position on me stayin' on the inside. But I think Steve (David) could've helped with a lot of that wake there. He was running right in between us the entire time with his wake. (*Oh Boy! Oberto physically ran first, but Steve David was called for passing the score-up buoy too soon - Ed.*) So, Mike was having to worry about that everytime going through the course. I was just able to stay outside of it in the clean water, which is why I had a lot more chute speed than J. Michael did. But honestly, I didn't think I was going to be able to. When I saw him come off the corner on the inside I'm like, well, that's it, I'm not catching him. So the boat just kept on chuggin' and chuggin' and chuggin' and it was pretty exciting!

Everyone saw how close it was, but you did get him.

I think maybe a boat length. About a boat length.

Maybe not even that much.

Probably not even that much.

We understand you had a pretty good time at the Shilo Inn that evening.

Oh, yeah, yeah! We hooked up with some of the guys that were flying the airplanes at the air show. I met one of the old crew chiefs for the unlimiteds, Tad...



Jimmy Shane and *Graham Trucking* chase J. Michael Kelly in *Beacon Plumbing* in the final at Tri-Cities. *Graham Trucking* succeeds overtaking the cowlingless *Beacon Plumbing* for the win.

Karl Pearson photo

Yeah, Tad Dean. He owned the first unlimited that Chip Hanauer drove.

What a trip! We had a good time celebrating.

Are you having fun, has it been worth it?

You know, I am having fun. It's a lot different in the unlimiteds. There's pressure, there's a lot of pressure involved. A lot of money involved. A lot of people involved. You have to just keep that in mind all the time when you're doing this stuff. It's not always going to be a perfect situation. There's going to be drama here and there, there are going to be tempers, there are going to be people that have hostilities about how much you're involved with the unlimiteds. But I'm enjoying it right now. I think we're making a good approach to it. We're making sure we have fun as a team. And still make the best that we can, obviously, racing. We take a different approach to maybe what the team's had in the last couple years. It's a nice break for the crew, too.

Do you think you'll stick with it next year if Ted stays involved?

Yeah, I probably will. See how it progresses. It's very exciting right now. So, I would say if the opportunity comes up again, they want to do it all over again next year, I'd give it consideration.

All right, thank you.

Absolutely.

Shots of Jimmy Shane from 2012



Top left Jim my Shane holds the Tri-Cities Columbia Cup. ~ Karl Pearson photo - At right is *Graham Trucking* (#0001), racing on San Diego's Mission Bay. ~Craig Fjarlie photo - No, they are not wrestling over the San Diego trophy at right. Shane is helping David lift the trophy. After the awards presentation David and *Oh Boy! Oberto* were disqualified, giving the win to Jimmy Shane. Then, several days later the disqualification was reversed. ~Chris Denslow photo





HydroFile
Lon Erickson

After the conclusion of the 2013 Oryx Cup/UIM World Championship the focus is now on getting the H1 fleet home, a very short off-season maintenance program, and some serious repair work for a couple of teams, along with getting some drivers healthy. All this in preparation for and focusing on the next race, the Big Wake Weekend at Folsom Lake, California May 31-June 2. The H1 fleet is awaiting its departure from Qatar. The fleet and equipment is scheduled to load in Mesaieed (30 km. south of Doha) on 3/2/2013 and arrive in Houston on 4/3/2013. The vessel transporting the fleet is the Bahri Abha V.1., a new Ro/ro specialized container carrier. Photo courtesy of Steve Mandarin/Peters & May.



Teams with major damage to deal with after the two Doha races include:

U-11. *Peters & May* suffered the most extensive damage, losing the right sponson, after a dramatic flip and roll up and over the U-21 *Snoqualmie Casino*.

U-21. The *Snoqualmie Casino* boat suffered damage to the deck, cockpit, cowlings, wings, and left sponson area when struck by the U-11.

96. In the first race at Doha the 96 *Spirit of Qatar* was dealt major structural and systems damage as a result of impacting several rollers, then breaking motor mounts, fuel lines, resulting in a major onboard fire to the rear of the boat.

Specific plans for each of the teams vary on how they are planning on dealing with these setbacks. The U-17 *Our Gang* served as replacement for the 96 *Spirit of Qatar* in the second Doha race, carrying the number 95 *Spirit of Qatar* name. There has been talk of using team back-up boats, leasing replacement hulls, re-building, and new boats as possibilities for the coming U.S. races. As we learn more from each team we will keep you updated.

U-22. Work continues on the U-22 Webster Racing hull rebuild. Be sure and check back to their facebook page for updates.

U-100. There are new developments on the Leland Unlimited team. The team has recently re-claimed one of their hulls that had been serving display duty for the last two seasons. Fred Leland's #0010, which in 2010 last raced as a replacement U-37



Leland's #0010 was leased to the Schumacher's in 2010, then served as the Degree Men marketing/display hull in 2011-12. It was first spotted at Hydros Inc./Tukwila in early February. ~ Lon Erickson photo



Above is the #0010 sitting on barrels at the Leland shop in Kirkland mid-February. ~ Kirk Pagel photo

Peters & May, then was the back-up hull and Degree Men display. The hull was built in 2000 and is the newest of all Leland's race boats. It raced under a variety of names, *Znetix*, *Fox-Hills Chrysler Jeep*, *Al Deeby*, *Beacon Plumbing*, *Re/Max*, *MirageBoats*, and others. This hull is now expected to be the primary race hull for the 2013 domestic races. It recently returned to the Northwest, as seen in the photo taken mid-February at the Leland shop getting retrofitted with running gear and systems, seen here.



Ryan Mallow and the #9899 at the second UIM World Championship at Doha, Qatar. ~ Chris Denslow photo

The black/maroon hull #9899 that ran the past several seasons, once it returns from Doha, will be stripped down, gone through, re-decked for possible future use.

There were also a couple changes on the team; Ryan Mallow is now serving as team representative, as well as driver, and Kevin Peterson is no longer with the U-100 team.



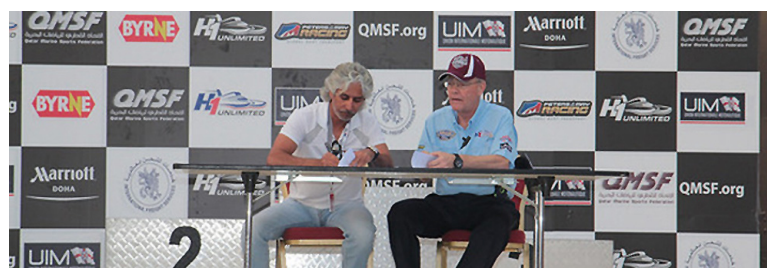
Leland's U-60 *Miss Thriftway* #9810 at Seattle in 2005. This was the boat's last race. ~ Chris Denslow photo

Race News. There have been informal announcements of a newly created team, Spirit of Kitsap Racing, based in Kitsap, WA area. They have promoted the concept of automotive power returning to the unlimiteds. We do know that the hull that Fred Leland was planning on converting to auto-power (former U-60 *Miss Thriftway* #9810), is no longer in the Leland camp and the Spirit of Kitsap group has made note they have or are acquiring a former Leland hull.

It appears that the Air National Guard is not the 2013 season series sponsor. Although H1 has not formally acknowledged it in a press release, the ANG logo has been removed from the H1 website and it appears well-known throughout the sport that ANG is gone. Potential budget cuts at the ANG appear to be the rumored reason for non-renewal. Steve David has posted on the Internet that a new series sponsor will be announced, but the UNJ has not been able to confirm that.

The Diamond Cup group, promoters of the scheduled race in Coeur d'Alene, ID over Labor Day weekend continues to move forward with announcements on funding, volunteer meetings, and sponsorship.

At the conclusion of the 2013 Oryx Cup, Sheikh Hassan, QMSF, and H1 Chairman Sam Cole signed a new 5 year agreement (seen in photo at right), extending the annual event through 2018. According to the agreement, the event will be held in November each year.



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