

# UNLIMITED NewsJournal

A CHRONICLE OF SPEED

JUNE 2024

SEASON PREVIEW ISSUE:

## The Swami looks at 2024.

BY BRIAN ANDERSON

Let's face it. The H1 unlimited hydroplane series is facing some serious challenges. The boat count is low, the races are few even with the return of Bayfair in San Diego, and season sponsors are hard to come by. Teams are up for sale and several boats are apparently sitting this one out. The Gold Cup has no named site as we go to press after Detroit decided to drop out for 2024. Tri-Cities, Seattle, or San Diego seem to be the options.

But with all that seemingly going against it the sport has some real positives going for it. At the top of that list is competition. There are four boats that can legitimately be called title contenders out of the expected six, maybe eight boats that will appear this year. The five races that will be staged all appear to be solid and Detroit is expected to return in 2025. That has the potential to jump start owners and sponsors that are sitting on the sidelines.

Spring testing takes place in Tri-Cities on May 31 with the five-race season starting in Guntersville, Ala., with the Guntersville Hydrofest on June 29–30. Although having just staged five races, this site is seeing excellent growth. From there the teams make their traditional

return to the Indiana town of Madison for the Madison Regatta on July 5–7. Then it's the Northwest swing in Washington state with stops in Tri-Cities for the Apollo Columbia Cup on July 26–28 then the Apollo Mechanical Cup in Seattle on August 2–4. This will be the first time Apollo Mechanical has sponsored both these events. After a few weeks off, the final race in will be contested in San Diego on September 13–15.

So, what are the keys taking the title in 2024? Simply put, its consistency. With these few races, and this level of competition, a couple of bad heats, mechanical failures or the dreaded blow over, will knock a team completely out of it. There will be no time for catching up. The team that can run fast and consistent



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Chris Denslow

J. Michael Kelly pilots the U-9 *Beacon Electric* around the turn during last season's Columbia Cup. The Swami calls the boat this year's top dog.

will walk away the big winner. One bad mistake and you are done. It's as simple as that. And the whole thing will come down to the final heat of the last race in San Diego.

The Swami chisels out the stone tablets for 2024

## The fast four, all title contenders

### 1) U-1, *Beacon Electric*

**DRIVER:** J Michael Kelly, 16 career wins

**OWNER:** Vanessa and Darrell Strong, 10 career wins

**HOME:** Auburn, Wash.

**THE SWAMI SEZ:** The Strong racing team is now the top dog in the sport having won all four events last season with Kelly winning the title and the Gold Cup. They are approaching the season like the last few with excellent preparation. Expect a fast start with others trying to keep up. Should repeat with at least two victories, but won't be fastest qualifier. Still, when the race is on the line, this is who to bet on. Also expect a slightly different paint scheme from last season.

### 2) U-91 *Miss Goodman Real Estate*

**DRIVER:** Andrew Tate, nine career wins

**OWNER:** Miss Madison LLC., 40 career wins

**HOME:** Madison, Ind.

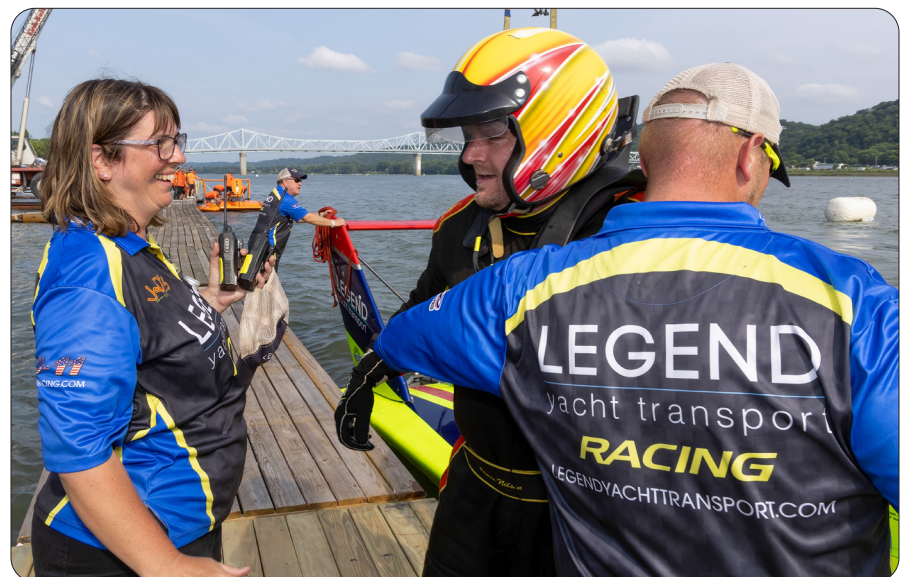
**THE SWAMI SEZ:** Andrew Tate says not so fast in crowning Kelly with the championship. This team is always fast and solid and will be there in every heat every time. Should be fastest qualifier at

two or more of the races and will score a win, maybe two. This is last year's *Miss HomeStreet* hull that can be almost untouchable when it leaves the dock. Tate has a way of getting to the winner's circle.

### 3) U-9 *Beacon Plumbing*

**DRIVER:** Corey Peabody, five career wins

**OWNER:** Vanessa and Darrell Strong, 10 career wins



Chris Denslow

Shannon Raney (left), co-owner of the U-11, celebrate a heat victory with driver Jamie Nilsen during last year's Madison race. The Swami picks them to finish fifth this season.

**HOME:** Auburn, Wash.

**THE SWAMI SEZ:** Not a team to overlook. Often seen as Strong's second boat, it is really just as fast and as well piloted as the supposed number one. Peabody has a way of always being there and stacking up points. Don't forget he won two of the four races in 2023. Should win at least a race and don't be shocked if the championship comes his way. This hull will also receive slightly modified graphics.

#### 4) U-40 Bucket List Racing/Flav-R-Pac

**DRIVER:** Dustin Echols, no career wins

**OWNER:** Sharon and Kelly Stocklin, no career wins

**HOME:** Snohomish, Wash.

**THE SWAMI SEZ:** With perhaps the fastest boat in terms of sheer speed, this team should be the fastest qualifier at most events. The surprise is that it hasn't won a race yet, but this should be the year. The hull as been completely gone through after its spectacular blow over in Madison last year. Will be in every final and get that first victory. A season title is definitely possible. See the famed Tennessee-orange color for the first two events then the yellow/blue in the west.

### Just off the pace

#### 5) U-11, Miss Mercurys Coffee

**DRIVER:** Jamie Nilsen, no career wins.

**OWNER:** Shannon and Scott Raney, no career wins

**HOME:** Cle Elum, Wash.

**THE SWAMI SEZ:** The team enters the season with a new sponsor and paint scheme. A reliable contender that has flashes of brilliance but ultimately seems a tick or two behind. They will be there ready to pounce if the top dogs falter.

#### 6) U-12 Graham Trucking

**DRIVER:** Bobby King, no career wins

**OWNER:** Rob Graham, four career wins

**HOME:** Kent, Wash.

**THE SWAMI SEZ:** Last year's Rookie of the Year returns with a fast boat. Could make some waves, but expect a West Coast-only appearance. Should make finals if it finishes all of its heats.

### Possibly

#### 7) U-21, Go Fast, Turn Left Racing

**DRIVER:** Gunnar O'Farrell, no career wins

**OWNER:** Greg O'Farrell, no career wins

**HOME:** Maple Valley, Wash.

**THE SWAMI SEZ:** We hope to see this team at the two Northwest events. Last season they landed last-minute sponsor *The Beast Unleashed presents Miss Thriftway* at Seattle. It was a welcome addition we would like to see every year.

### Maybe a Return?

#### 8) U-27 Miss Apollo

**DRIVER:** Dave Villwock, 67 career wins

**OWNER:** Wiggins Racing, no career wins

**HOME:** Gadsden, Ala.

**THE SWAMI SEZ:** Sponsor rumors regarding Apollo Mechanical are rustling in the weeds. Maybe the boat will appear in Gunter'sville, or maybe Tri-Cities? Maybe Villwock in the cockpit? Would be great if this comes to fruition.

### We Need You Back

#### U-6 Hull #2, Miss Madison Inc.

**DRIVER:** Unnamed

**OWNER:** Miss Madison, LLC, 40 career wins

**HOME:** Madison, Ind.

**THE SWAMI SEZ:** Team has won eight out of the last 11 national championships. This is a topflight hull that just needs a sponsor and will be a highly competitive entry.

### Where O where?

#### U-7 Spirit of Detroit

**DRIVER:** Bert Henderson, no career wins

**OWNER:** Dave Bartush, one career win

**HOME:** Detroit, Mich.

**THE SWAMI SEZ:** Would be nice to see it at a race again.



Chris Denslow

Corey Peabody settles into the cockpit of the U-9 *Beacon Plumbing* at last year's Gold Cup in Seattle. The Swami says we shouldn't be shocked if he wins the title this season.

Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow



### U-10 Spirit of Detroit II

**DRIVER:** Patrick Haworth, no career wins

**OWNER:** Dave Bartush, one career win

**HOME:** Detroit, Mich.

**THE SWAMI SEZ:** Bartush's second boat will most likely sit this one out.

### U-98, Graham Trucking II

**DRIVER:** Unnamed

**OWNER:** Rob Graham, four career wins

**HOME:** Kent, Wash.

**THE SWAMI SEZ:** Could be a solid ride for someone.

## Classified ads

### Last known as U-2

**OWNER:** Dave Bartush

**HOME:** Detroit, Mich.

**THE SWAMI SEZ:** Former *Trendwest Resorts* most likely is for sale.

### Last known as U-37

**OWNER:** Jane Schumacher, four career wins

**HOME:** Seattle, Wash.

**THE SWAMI SEZ:** Still for sale, anyone want to jump in?

### U-3 Griggs presents Miss Ace Hardware

**OWNER:** Ed Cooper, three career wins

**HOME:** Evansville, Ind.

**THE SWAMI SEZ:** Entire operation for sale. Last of the piston boats.

Scenes from the 2023 H1 Unlimited campaign. **TOP:** A portion of the crowd along the shore of Guntersville Lake in Alabama watching the Southern Cup. **MIDDLE:** The annual Madison Regatta Parade on the Friday evening before the big hydro race always features the competing boats and race teams. **ABOVE:** The Beacon Plumbing team celebrates their victory at the Columbia Cup in the Tri-Cities.

The race programs that you'll find this coming season will be fun to collect, but rarely contain the detailed information about the boats and drivers that the serious hydro fan desires.

With that need in mind, we offer the following:

# The 2024 Handbook for Hard-core Hydro Fans

## 2024 H1 Unlimited Racing Series

June 29-30 .....	Guntersville, Alabama .....	Southern Cup
July 5-7 .....	Madison, Indiana .....	Madison Regatta
July 26-28.....	Tri-Cities, Washington .....	Apollo Columbia Cup
August 2-4 .....	Seattle, Washington .....	Apollo Mechanical Cup
September 13-15 .....	San Diego, California .....	San Diego Bayfair

# The Hydroplanes

## U-1 Beacon Electric

**OWNER:** Vanessa and Darrell Strong

**DRIVER:** J. Michael Kelly

**CREW CHIEF:** Jeff Campbell

**RACE TEAM:** Strong Racing

**BOAT SHOP:** Auburn, Wash.

**BUILT:** 2014 (Hull #1496)

**BUILDER:** Ron Jones, Jr. and Mike Hanson

**POWER:** Lycoming T-55/L-7 turbine

**PREVIOUS NAMES:** *Qatar* (2014), *Ellstrom E-Lam Plus* (2015), *Oh Boy! Oberto* (2016–17), *Miss Tri-Cities* (2021–22), *Lynx Healthcare/Miss Tri-Cities* (2022), *Boitano Homes* (2022), and *Beacon Electric* (2023).

**PREVIOUS DRIVERS:** Kip Brown (2014), Jean Theoret (2014–16), J.W. Myers (2017), and J. Michael Kelly (2021–23).

**RACE VICTORIES:** 5 (including 2023 Gold Cup)

**NATIONAL TITLES:** 1 (2023)

**LAST SEASON:** First at Madison and Seattle, third in Tri-Cities, and fourth in Guntersville. First in national points.

**COMMENTS:** The defending national champion. The boat was built for Erick Ellstrom 10 years ago and was purchased by Vanessa and Darrell Strong when they formed the Strong Racing Team in 2020. Kelly drove the boat to victory at the 2021 Guntersville race, which was the team's debut in the sport.



Chris Denlow

## U-3 Griggs presents Miss Ace Hardware

**OWNER:** Ed Cooper

**DRIVER:** Jimmy King

**CREW CHIEF:** Ed Cooper

**RACE TEAM:** Go3 Racing

**BOAT SHOP:** Evansville, Ind.

**BUILT:** 2002 (Hull #0203)

**BUILDER:** Rick Bowles and Dale Van Wieringen

**POWER:** Turbocharged V-12 Allison

**PREVIOUS NAMES:** *Vacationville.com* (2002–04), *Master Tire* (2003–09), *Toyota of Kirkland* (2003, 2005), *Fox Hills Chrysler Jeep* (2003), *Llumar Window Film* (2003), *Miss Chrysler Jeep* (2005–09), *U-3* (2005, 2010), *Conover Insurance* (2006), *Acura of Seattle* (2006), *Hoss Mortgage Investors II* (2007), *Hoss Mortgage Investors Too* (2008), *Hoss Mortgage Investors* (2008), *Grand View on the Lake* (2009), *Griggs presents Miss Ace Hardware* (2015–23), *Miss HomeStreet Bank* (2015), *Miss DiJulio* (2016), and *Roostertail* (2018).

**PREVIOUS DRIVERS:** Mitch Evans (2002–04) and Jimmy King (2005–10, 2015–23).

**RACE VICTORIES:** 3 (including 2003 Gold Cup)

**NATIONAL TITLES:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Did not qualify for the final heat at Guntersville and Tri-Cities. Finished ninth in national points.



Chris Denlow

**COMMENTS:** The last of the piston-powered hydros, this boat has always been a fan favorite. In recent years, mechanical woes have limited its ability to finish heats. Ed Cooper placed the boat and much of his equipment up for sale this past winter. Unless a buyer emerges, the boat will likely not see action in 2024.

## U-6 Miss Madison

**OWNER:** Miss Madison, LLC

**DRIVER:** To be determined

**CREW CHIEF:** Troy Holmberg (Boat Lead)

**RACE TEAM:** Miss Madison Racing

**BOAT SHOPS:** Madison, Ind., and Tukwila, Wash.

**BUILT:** 2007 (Hull #0706)

**BUILDER:** Miss Madison Racing Team

**POWER:** Lycoming T-55/L-7 turbine

**PREVIOUS NAMES:** *Oh Boy!* *Oberto* (2007–13), *Oberto* (2014–15), *Miss HomeStreet* (2016–18), *Oberto Super Salami* (2019), *Goodman Real Estate presents Miss HomeStreet* (2021), and *Miss Goodman Real Estate* (2022–23).

**PREVIOUS DRIVERS:** Steve David (2007–13), Jimmy Shane (2014–18, 2021), Jeff Bernard (2019–22), and Andrew Tate (2023).

**RACE VICTORIES:** 25 (including 2014, 2015, 2017, and 2021 Gold Cups)

**NATIONAL TITLES:** 8 (2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017)

**LAST SEASON:** Second at Guntersville and Seattle, and fourth in Tri-Cities. Missed the Madison race because of damage sustained in Guntersville. Fastest qualifier at Seattle. Finished fifth in national points.

**COMMENTS:** The boat ranks among the most successful in history. It is currently third on the list of boats with the most race victories, is in second place for most career heat victories, and has won more national titles than any other boat in history. Its owner, Miss Madison, Inc., has reportedly put the hull up for sale and appears to have no plans to race it in 2024. That can change if circumstances change, or especially if a buyer emerges.



Chris Denslow

## U-7 Spirit of Detroit

**OWNER:** Dave Bartush

**DRIVER:** Bert Henderson

**RACE TEAM:** Detroit Unlimited

**BOAT SHOP:** Detroit

**BUILT:** 1996 (Hull #9601, T-5), Rebuilt in 1997 (Redesignated Hull #9712)

**BUILDER:** Hydroplanes, Inc.

**POWER:** Lycoming T-55/L-7 turbine

**PREVIOUS NAMES:** *Miss Budweiser* (1996–2004), *Formula II* (2006–08), *Graham Trucking* (2009–11, 2016), *Air Guard* (2010), *Graham Trucking II* (2014–16), *Spirit of Detroit* (2017–19), *Spirit of Detroit/Boitano Homes* (2019), and *Spirit of Detroit presented by Boitano Homes* (2019).

**PREVIOUS DRIVERS:** Mark Evans (1996), Dave Villwock (1997–2004), Mike Allen (2006–08), Jeff Bernard (2007, 2011, 2016, 2018), J. Michael Kelly (2009–10, 2016), Cal Phipps (2014), Jesse Robertson (2015), and Bert Henderson (2017–19)

**RACE VICTORIES:** 24 (including 2000 Gold Cup)

**NATIONAL TITLES:** 5 (1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2006).

**LAST SEASON:** Did not appear.



H1 Unlimited

**COMMENTS:** There were rumors earlier in the spring that the boat might make an appearance this season but, with no race in Detroit, it's now highly unlikely we'll see this hydro in 2024.

## U-9 Beacon Plumbing

**OWNER:** Vanessa and Darrell Strong

**DRIVER:** Corey Peabody

**CREW CHIEF:** Jeff Campbell

**RACE TEAM:** Strong Racing

**BOAT SHOP:** Auburn, Wash.

**BUILT:** 1992 (Hull #92102)

**BUILDER:** Ron Jones, Jr.

**POWER:** Lycoming T-55/L-7 turbine

**PREVIOUS NAMES:** *Coors Dry* (1992),

*Miss Circus Circus* (1993), *Miss Exide 2* (1994, 1996), *Miss Cost Less Carpets* (1998), *Miss Sammamish*

*Lake Watch* (1998), *Jones Racing* (2000), *Miss WABX* (2001–03), *Carpenter Communications* (2000), *Miss Go Bowling* (2000), *Sun Harbor Mortgage* (2000–03), *Miss Bello's Pizza* (2001–03, 2012), *Tubby's Grilled Submarines* (2001–02), *Fiesta Bowl & Casino* (2001), *Skyway Park Bowl & Casino* (2001–03), *Miss Jack-Sons Sports Bar* (2002), *Al Deeby Dodge* (2003), *Jack-Son's Kennewick* (2006), *Miss Car Pros Kia* (2006), *Conover Insurance* (2007), *Miss Tri Arc Electric* (2007), *U-9* (2009, 2012–13), *Oh Boy! Oberto* (2011), *Miss VisitTriCities.com* (2011), *Corporate Fleet Services* (2012), *Miss Sound Propeller Services* (2012), *Red Dot* (2013), *Qatar* (2014), *Les Schwab/Red Dot* (2014–15), *Red Dot/811 Call B4 You Dig* (2015), *Call 811/Les Schwab/Red Dot* (2015), *Bello's Realtrac Performance* (2016), *Les Schwab* (2016), *Delta Research/Realtrac* (2016), *Delta Realtrac* (2017–19), *Les Schwab Tires* (2017–18), *Auxier Marketing presents Delta Realtrac* (2019), *Pinnacle Peak Consulting* (2021), *Lynx Healthcare* (2022), and *Beacon Plumbing* (2023).

**PREVIOUS DRIVERS:** Dave Villwock (1992–93), Jimmy King (1994), Mark Weber (1996), Mike Jones (1996), Lindsey (1998), Mike Hanson (2000–03), Chris Bertram (2006–07), David Williams (2009), Jon Zimmerman (2011–14), Scott Liddycoat (2015), Andrew Tate (2016–19), and Corey Peabody (2021–23).

**RACE VICTORIES:** 17 (including 2001, 2018, and 2022 Gold Cups)

**NATIONAL TITLES:** 1 (2018)

**LAST SEASON:** First at Guntersville and Tri-Cities, and third in Seattle. It had to be withdrawn from competition in Madison due to equipment damage. It was the fastest qualifier at Madison and Tri-Cities and finished second in the national standings.

**COMMENTS:** At 32 years old, this is the oldest in the fleet. In fact, it holds the record for being the oldest boat to win a race in the sport's history. It also ranks fourth for having the greatest number of heats finished. The boat was extensively rebuilt before the 2023 season after being damaged in an end-over-end flip at Madison in 2022. The boat returned to action with plenty of speed, despite its age. Last year in Guntersville, Corey Peabody set an all-time record for the fastest average speed in a competition heat, a mark of nearly 163 mph, and set a course record with a competition lap of over 164 mph. One could legitimately argue that if it hadn't been for a broken prop strut in Madison, the team probably would have won last season's national championship.



Chris Denslow

## U-10 Spirit of Detroit II

**OWNER:** Dave Bartush

**DRIVER:** Patrick Haworth

**RACE TEAM:** Detroit Unlimited

**BOAT SHOP:** Detroit

**BUILT:** 1989 (Hull #8901, T-3) Rebuilt in 1995 (Redesignated Hull #9501)

**BUILDER:** Hydroplanes, Inc.

**POWER:** Lycoming T-55/L-7 turbine



**PREVIOUS NAMES:** *Miss Budweiser* (1989–2000), *EMCOR* (2006), *Al Deeby Dodge* (2006), *Solutions Plus* (2006), *Todd Hoss presents Fair-weather Masonry* (2006), *Designer Glass and Shower* (2006), *Ahern Rentals* (2007–08), *Hoss Mortgage Investors* (2007–08), *Miss Dover Environmental* (2008), and *Degree Men* (2012).

**PREVIOUS DRIVERS:** Jim Kropfeld (1989), Tom D'Eath (1989–91), Scott Pierce (1991), Chip Hanauer (1992–96), Mike Hanson (1994), Mark Evans (1995–97), Dave Villwock (1997–2000), Nate Brown (2006), J.W. Myers (2006), David Bryant (2007–08), and Scott Liddycoat (2012).

**RACE VICTORIES:** 18 (including 1995, 1997, and 1998 Gold Cups)

**NATIONAL TITLES:** 3 (1995, 1997, and 1998)

**LAST SEASON:** Did not appear.

**COMMENTS:** The chances of seeing this boat in 2024 are highly remote, especially with no race in Detroit.



Karl Pearson

## U-11 Miss Mercurys Coffee

**OWNER:** Shannon and Scott Raney

**DRIVER:** Jamie Nilsen

**CREW CHIEF:** Scott Raney

**RACE TEAM:** Unlimited Racing Group

**BOAT SHOP:** Cle Elum, Wash.

**BUILT:** 1993 (Hull #9302), Rebuilt in 2009 (Redesignated Hull #0925)

**BUILDER:** Dale Van Wieringen

**POWER:** Lycoming T-55/L-7 turbine

**PREVIOUS NAMES:** *Miss T-Plus* (1993–95), *Miss D.O.C./Acuvue* (1996), *Harvey Motorsports* (1996), *ARC Construction* (1996–99), *Trendwest Resorts* (1996), *KISS 106/Trendwest* (1996), *Molson's Jack Hammer* (1996), *The Dole Cannery* (1996), *Miss Detroit Ford Dealers* (1997), *PrimeStar* (1997), *Gargoyles* (1997), *Pit Stop* (1997), *U-2* (1997–99), *Déjà vu* (1997–98), *Miss Chrysler Jeep* (1998–2001, 2004), *Miss Molson* (1998), *Freddie's Club* (1998–2000), *Gaylord's* (1998), *Trendwest* (2001–02), *Miss APBA* (2004), *Graham Trucking* (2004), *Graham Trucking/Sinbad's Roostertail* (2004), *Superior Racing* (2007), *Jarvis Construction* (2007), *Procraft Windows* (2008), *Buffalo Federal Savings Bank* (2009), *Mister Home Loan* (2009), *U-25* (2009–10), *Boylund Nissan* (2010), *Miss Car Pros* (2010), *Peters & May* (2010–12), *Miss J&D's* (2017), *Miss DiJulio presents J&D's* (2017), *Reliable Diamond Tool presents J&D's* (2017–18), *J&D's presents Reliable Diamond Tools* (2019), *Legend Yacht Transport* (2023), *Legend Yacht Transport presented by The Truss Company* (2023), and *Legend Yacht Transport presented by The Old Cannery Furniture Warehouse* (2023).

**PREVIOUS DRIVERS:** Steve David (1993–99), Mark Tate (1999–2000, 2004), Scott Pierce (2001), Greg Hopp (2004, 2007), J. Michael Kelly (2004), Ken Muscatel (2007–10), Jon Zimmerman (2010), J.W. Myers (2011–12), Tom Thompson (2012–19), and Jamie Nilsen (2019, 2023).

**RACE VICTORIES:** 2

**NATIONAL TITLES:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Finished second in Madison, third in Guntersville, and fifth in Seattle. Did not qualify for final heat in Tri-Cities. It was fourth in the final standings.

**COMMENTS:** After a successful career as a crew chief, Scott Raney became a team owner with his wife, Shannon, in 2011.

While they have yet to earn a first-place trophy, their boats always seem to be in the thick of things. Heat victories are not



Chris Denslow

uncommon, and they usually qualify for the final heat. Last season, after using another hull (the former Budweiser T-4 that was rebuilt and reidentified as Hull #2111) for two years, the Raney's returned this boat to competition. At one point midway through the 2023 season, the team had a very narrow lead in the national points race.

## U-12 Graham Trucking

**OWNER:** Rob Graham

**DRIVER:** Bobby King

**RACE TEAM:** Graham Racing

**BOAT SHOP:** Milton, Wash.

**BUILT:** 2001 (Hull #0001, T-6)

**BUILDER:** Hydroplanes, Inc.

**POWER:** Lycoming T-55/L-7 turbine

**PREVIOUS NAMES:** *Miss Budweiser* (2000–04), *Formula* (2006–10), *Valken.com* (2011), and *Graham Trucking* (2012–21, 2023).

**PREVIOUS DRIVERS:** Dave Villwock

(2000–04), Mike Weber (2006), Mike Allen (2006), Jeff Bernard (2006–10), Scott Liddycoat (2011), Jimmy Shane (2012–13), J. Michael Kelly (2014–19), Andrew Tate (2021), and Bobby King (2023).

**RACE VICTORIES:** 26 (including 2003 and 2016 Gold Cups)

**NATIONAL TITLES:** 3 (2003, 2004, and 2013)

**LAST SEASON:** Appeared only in Tri-Cities and Seattle and did not make the final heat in either. Seventh in national points.

**COMMENTS:** Only one boat has won more races during its career. Rob Graham began sponsoring the boat in 2012, then purchased it in 2016, and with that combination can claim credit for a total of 16 of the boat's career victories. Like last year, the boat likely will appear only in the west.



Chris Denslow

## U-21 Miss Lakeridge Paving

**OWNER:** Greg and Brian O'Farrell

**DRIVER:** Gunnar O'Farrell

**CREW CHIEF:** Brian O'Farrell

**RACE TEAM:** Go Fast Turn Left Racing

**BOAT SHOP:** Maple Valley, Wash.

**BUILT:** 2019 (Hull #1999)

**BUILDER:** Go Fast Turn Left Racing Team

**POWER:** Lycoming T-55/L-7 turbine

**PREVIOUS NAMES:** *Darrell Strong presents PayneWest Insurance* (2019), *CARSTAR powers Miss Rock* (2019), and *The Beast Unleashed presents Miss Thriftway* (2023).

**PREVIOUS DRIVERS:** Brian Perkins (2019), and Gunnar O'Farrell (2023).

**RACE VICTORIES:** None

**NATIONAL TITLES:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Appeared only in Seattle and did not qualify for final heat. Finished eighth in the national points standings.

**COMMENTS:** While the boat has been around for five years, it has seen action in only three events during that time. Owner Greg O'Farrell became hooked on hydroplane racing as a youth when Bill Muncey gave him a ride aboard the famous *Thriftway Too* in the late-1950s. It's possible the boat might appear as U-60 *Miss Thriftway* as a tribute to that memory. The Go Fast Turn Left Racing Team is a family affair. O'Farrell's son serves as co-owner and crew chief while his grandson sits in the cockpit. The boat will likely see action only in the Pacific Northwest.



Chris Denslow

## U-27 Miss Apollo

**OWNER:** Charley Wiggins

**DRIVER:** Dave Villwock?

**CREW CHIEF:** Charley Wiggins

**RACE TEAM:** Wiggins Racing

**BOAT SHOP:** Gadsden, Ala.

**BUILT:** 2007 (Hull #0717), Rebuilt after 2018 accident (If it appears in 2024 it would be Hull #2427)

**BUILDER:** Nate Brown

**POWER:** Lycoming T-55/L-7 turbine

**PREVIOUS NAMES:** *Red Dot* (2007, 2010–12), *Our Gang Racing* (2008, 2014), *U-17* (2009), *West Pasco Family Dental* (2009), *USNW Express* (2009), *Seal Shield* (2009), *O'Brien Law* (2010), *Qatar* (2013), *Fox Plumbing and Heating* (2014), *Dalton Industries* (2015–16), *Wiggins Racing* (2017), *Chase Building Group* (2018), and *Oberto* (2018).

**PREVIOUS DRIVERS:** Nate Brown (2007, 2009–10, 2012), Kip Brown (2008–13), Cal Phipps (2011, 2015–16, 2018), Jeff Bernard (2014), and J.W. Myers (2017).

**RACE VICTORIES:** 1 (2013 Gold Cup)

**NATIONAL TITLES:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Did not appear.

**COMMENTS:** The boat was badly damaged in an accident at the 2018 Seattle race and has not been seen since. During that time owner Charley Wiggins has completely rebuilt the hull, but has also recently said that he is through with racing. But, who knows? Rumors still persist that the hydro might make an appearance this season, perhaps sponsored by Apollo Mechanical and driven by Dave Villwock.



Wiggins Racing

## U-40 Bucket List Racing/Flav-R-Pac

**OWNER:** Sharon and Kelly Stocklin

**DRIVER:** Dustin Echols

**CREW CHIEF:** Taylor Evans

**RACE TEAM:** Bucket List Racing

**BOAT SHOP:** Snohomish, Wash.

**BUILT:** 2007 (Hull #0721)

**BUILDER:** Ron Jones, Jr.

**POWER:** Lycoming T-55/L-7 turbine

**PREVIOUS NAMES:** *Meyer's Auto Tech* (2007), *The Plumbing Joint* (2007), *All Access Rentals* (2007, 2015), *Albert Lee Appliance* (2010–13, 2015–17), *Go Fast Turn Left Racing* (2010, 2014), *Lakeridge Paving* (2011, 2014), *TapouT* (2011), *Miss HAPO* (2012), *Snoqualmie Casino* (2012–13), *Miss Al Deeby Dodge* (2014–15), *Fasteners* (2015), *PayneWest Insurance* (2016–17), *Miss Al Deeby* (2016), *All Access Equipment* (2016), *Darrell Strong presents PayneWest Insurance* (2018), *Miss Beacon Plumbing* (2021–22), *Bucket List Racing* (2023), and *Flav-R-Pac* (2023).

**PREVIOUS DRIVERS:** Brian Perkins (2007, 2010–13, 2015–18), Jamie Nilsen (2013–14), Dave Villwock (2021–22), Dustin Echols (2022–23).

**RACE VICTORIES:** None

**NATIONAL TITLES:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Second in Tri-Cities, third in Madison, fourth in Seattle, and sixth in Guntersville. Fastest qualifier at Guntersville. Finished third in the national standings.



Chris Denslow

**COMMENTS:** The boat proved itself as one of the fastest in the sport last year when Echols drove it to a qualifying run of over 171 mph in Guntersville, putting the boat among a very select group that has ever exceeded 170 mph in history. But, as in 2022, mishaps in competition plagued the team. It collided with another boat at the start of the final heat in Guntersville then flipped end-over-end backwards during the final heat in Madison. For 2024, the boat will again race as *Flav-R-Pac* in both the Tri-Cities and Seattle and will be the bright Tennessee-orange *Bucket List Racing* everywhere else.

## U-91 Miss Goodman Real Estate

**OWNER:** Miss Madison, LLC.

**DRIVER:** Andrew Tate

**CREW CHIEF:** Mike Hanson

**RACE TEAM:** Miss Madison Racing

**BOAT SHOPS:** Madison, Ind., and Tukwila, Wash.

**BUILT:** 2018 (Hull #1801)

**BUILDER:** Miss Madison Racing Team

**POWER:** Lycoming T-55/L-7 turbine

**PREVIOUS NAMES:** *Miss HomeStreet* (2018–23)

**PREVIOUS DRIVERS:** Jimmy Shane (2018–22), and Dylan Runne (2023).

**RACE VICTORIES:** 7 (including 2019 Gold Cup)

**NATIONAL TITLES:** 3 (2019, 2021, and 2022)

**LAST SEASON:** Finished fourth in Madison and fifth in both Guntersville and Tri-Cities. Was disqualified in final heat at Seattle. It finished the season sixth in the national standings.

**COMMENTS:** With a total of 40 race victories to their credit, the Miss Madison Racing Team is the second-most-successful owner in the sport's history. Their familiar light-blue-and-white *Miss HomeStreet* had won three of the past four national championships, but officials at HomeStreet Bank decided at the end of last season they would no longer sponsor a hydroplane. As a result, the colors of the team's other entry will be applied to the newer hull in 2024. The boat is sponsored by Goodman Real Estate, a privately-held real estate investment company that specializes in multifamily and commercial real estate.



Chris Denslow

## U-98 Graham Trucking II

**OWNER:** Rob Graham

**DRIVER:** TBA

**RACE TEAM:** Graham Racing

**BOAT SHOP:** Kent, Wash.

**BUILT:** 1998 (Hull #9899)

**BUILDER:** Fred Leland

**POWER:** Lycoming T-55/L-7 turbine

**PREVIOUS NAMES:** *U-99* (1998), *Miss Bell Forklift* (1998), *United Furniture Warehouse* (1998), *PICO American Dream* (1998), *Miss PICO* (1999), *Znetix* (2001), *Miss U.S.* (2002),

*Miss Chrysler Jeep* (2002), *Miss Raben Tire* (2003), *Mariann Travel Inn* (2003), *ReMax* (2005), *Demaree Automotive Group* (2005), *Miss Rebecca* (2005), *Miss Beacon Plumbing* (2005), *Lady Lexus* (2005), *Mirageboats* (2008–09), *U-100* (2009–10, 2012–13), *Miss Jarvis Paintin'* (2009), *Jerry's Tavern* (2009), *Jarvis Property Restoration* (2010), *Fleury Auto & Truck Parts* (2010), *Miss Lay's Kettle Cooked* (2010), *HAP0 Summer* (2011), *Leland Unlimited* (2011, 2015), *Xtreme Precision Products* (2012), *Fifth Third Bank* (2012), *Fox Plumbing & Heating* (2012), *Sahara Pizza* (2013–14), *Central Coast Airbrush* (2013),



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*Tony Roma's* (2014), *Miss CARSTAR* (2015), *Dooley's/Miss CARSTAR* (2015), *CARSTAR/Miss Rock* (2016), *CARSTAR-powered Miss Rock* (2017), *KISW Miss Rock powered by CARSTAR* (2017), *CARSTAR powers Miss Rock* (2018), and *Graham Trucking American Dream* (2019).

**PREVIOUS DRIVERS:** Rick Christensen (1998), Mark Weber (1998), Greg Hopp (1998–03, 2005, 2008–12, 2017), Mark Evans (1998), Chip Hanauer (1999), Ryan Mallow (2011–13), Dave Warren (2013–14), Kevin Eacret (2015–16), Aaron Salmon (2018), and Corey Peabody (2019).

**RACE VICTORIES:** None

**NATIONAL TITLES:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Did not appear.

**COMMENTS:** This boat will only appear in the remote chance that owner Rob Graham decides that he needs to enter something other than his U-12.

# The Drivers

## Jeff Bernard

**HOME:** Kent, Wash.

**AGE:** 39

**BOAT IN 2024:** To be determined

**BOATS DRIVEN:** Hull #9399: *Lakeridge Paving* (2005) ... Hull #9610: *Lakeridge Paving* (2006) ... Hull #0001: *Formula* (2006–10) ... Hull #9712: *Formula II* (2007), *Graham Trucking* (2011), *Graham Trucking II* (2016), and *Spirit of Detroit* (2018) ... Hull #0717: *Red Dot* (2012), *Our Gang* (2014), and *Fox Plumbing and Heating* (2014) ... Hull #9010: *Graham Trucking II* (2016) ... Hull #0706: *Oberto Super Salami* (2019), *Goodman Real Estate presents Miss HomeStreet* (2021), and *Miss Goodman Real Estate* (2022).

**RACE VICTORIES:** 3 ... 2008 Indiana Governor's Cup, Madison, Ind.; 2008 San Diego Thunderboat Regatta, San Diego; and 2009 Thunder on the Ohio, Evansville, Ind.

**NATIONAL TITLES IN UNLIMITEDS:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Did not appear.

**COMMENTS:** Bernard comes from a boat-racing family. His stepfather was Gold Cup champion Terry Troxell and he is the nephew of former unlimited drivers Mark and Mike Weber. While he is available to drive an unlimited, he will most likely spend the 2024 season driving in Grand Prix competition, where he has seen considerable success.



H1 Unlimited

## Dustin Echols

**HOME:** Monroe, Wash.

**AGE:** 44

**BOAT IN 2024:** U-40 *Bucket List Racing* and *Flav-R-Pac*

**BOATS DRIVEN:** Hull #1218: *Snuskitush* (2016), and *Bucket List Racing* (2017–21) ... Hull #0721: *Miss Beacon Plumbing* (2022), *Bucket List Racing* (2023), and *Flav-R-Pac* (2023).

**RACE VICTORIES:** None

**NATIONAL TITLES IN UNLIMITEDS:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Second in Tri-Cities, third in Madison, fourth in Seattle, and sixth in Guntersville. Fastest qualifier at Guntersville. Finished third in the national standings.

**COMMENTS:** Echols turned heads last year when he drove the U-40 *Bucket List Racing* to a qualifying run of over 171 mph in Guntersville, putting him among a very select group



Chris Denlow

that has ever exceeded 170 mph. His racing was marred by mishaps, however, when his boat collided with another at the start of the final heat in Guntersville then flipped end-over-end backwards during the final heat in Madison. The owner of Eastside Truck Repair in Redmond, Wash., Echols holds several speed records and both national and international titles in limited-class competition.

## Brent Hall

**HOME:** Seattle

**AGE:** 54

**BOAT IN 2024:** To be determined

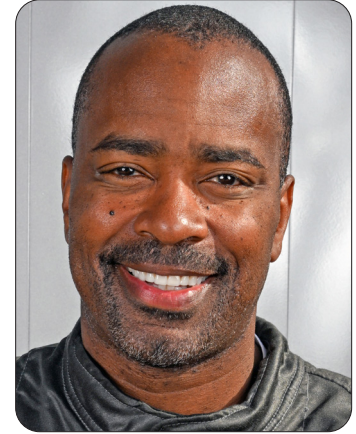
**BOATS DRIVEN:** Hull #1218: *Boitano Homes* (2023-DNQ).

**RACE VICTORIES:** None

**NATIONAL TITLES IN UNLIMITEDS:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Did not qualify.

**COMMENTS:** With extensive experience driving limited-class hydros, Hall made his unlimited debut last season as the driver of the U-440 *Boitano Homes*. To become a qualified driver, however, he was required to complete 15 test laps in the boat with 10 of those over 130 mph. He came one lap short of that standard when the boat went dead during his final qualifying attempt in Seattle. If he had qualified, he would have become the first African-American to qualify for the sport's fastest boats.



Vic Wright

## Patrick Haworth

**HOME:** Valleyfield, Quebec

**BOAT IN 2024:** To be determined

**BOATS DRIVEN:** Hull #9712: *Spirit of Detroit presented by Boitano Homes* (2019).

**RACE VICTORIES:** None

**NATIONAL TITLES IN UNLIMITEDS:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Did not appear.

**COMMENTS:** A winner of world, U.S., and Canadian championships in limited-class competition, Haworth saw action at one heat in 2019 but has not been in an unlimited cockpit in competition since. If he reappears, he'll likely have to qualify as a driver all over again.



Robert Peters

## Bert Henderson

**HOME:** Brockville, Ontario

**AGE:** 52

**BOAT IN 2024:** To be determined

**BOATS DRIVEN:** Hull #9712: *Spirit of Detroit* (2017–19), *Spirit of Detroit/Boitano Homes* (2019), and *Spirit of Detroit presented by Boitano Homes* (2019).

**RACE VICTORIES:** None

**NATIONAL TITLES IN UNLIMITEDS:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Did not appear.

**COMMENTS:** Henderson is best known within the sport as a talented boat builder who creates custom hydroplanes and race boats, as well as pleasure craft. He is also an active participant in the Hydroplane Racing League out of Canada.



Robert Peters

# J. Michael Kelly

**HOME:** Bonney Lake, Wash.

**AGE:** 45

**BOAT IN 2024:** U-1 *Beacon Electric*

**BOATS DRIVEN:** Hull #0302: *Miss APBA* (2004), *Graham Trucking* (2004–05), *Graham Trucking/Sinbad's Roostertail* (2004), and *Dick Scott Automotive Group* (2005) ... Hull #8700: *Acura of Bellevue* (2006), *Spirit of Detroit* (2007), *Car Pros* (2007), *Graham Trucking* (2008), and *Miss DYC* (2008) ... Hull #9712: *Graham Trucking* (2008, 2016), and *Air Guard* (2010) ... Hull #1188: *Degree Men* (2011), *Miss Beacon Plumbing* (2012–13), and *Performance Chevrolet* (2013) ... Hull #0001: *Graham Trucking* (2014–19) ... Hull #1496: *Miss Tri-Cities* (2021–22), *Lynx Healthcare/Miss Tri-Cities* (2022), *Boitano Homes* (2022), and *Beacon Electric* (2023).

**RACE VICTORIES:** 16 ... 2009 Oryx Cup UIM World Championship, Doha, Qatar; 2014 Indiana Governor's Cup, Madison, Ind.; 2014 Albert Lee Appliance Seafair Cup, Seattle; 2014 San Diego Bayfair, San Diego; 2014 Oryx Cup UIM World Championship, Doha, Qatar; 2015 Albert Lee Appliance Seafair Cup, Seattle; 2016 APBA Gold Cup, Detroit; 2017 HAPO Columbia Cup, Tri-Cities, Wash.; 2019 HAPO Columbia Cup, Tri-Cities, Wash.; 2019 HomeStreet Bank Cup, Seattle; 2019 HomeStreet Bank Bayfair, San Diego; 2021 Guntersville Lake Hydrofest, Guntersville, Ala.; 2021 HomeStreet Bank San Diego Bayfair, San Diego; 2022 HomeStreet Bank Cup, Seattle; 2023 Indiana Governor's Cup, Madison, Ind.; and 2023 APBA Gold Cup, Seattle.

**NATIONAL TITLES IN UNLIMITEDS:** 2 (2021 and 2023)

**LAST SEASON:** First at Madison and Seattle, third in Tri-Cities, and fourth in Guntersville. First in national points.

**COMMENTS:** The defending national champion, Kelly currently stands in a three-way tie with Danny Foster and Ron Musson for having the 10th most race victories in unlimited racing history. A fourth-generation boat racer, he has set numerous world speed records and national championships in both inboard and outboard classes. And, the family tradition is continuing. He made history last year when both he and his 13-year-old son, Carson, were inducted together into the APBA Hall of Champions, the first father-son pair to be inducted together since 1974. Carson is an accomplished driver in several junior outboard classes. When he's not driving a race boat, Kelly is employed in the construction industry. He has also been a friend since grade school with his teammate on the Strong Racing Team, Corey Peabody.



Strong Racing

# Bobby King

**HOME:** Shelby Township, Mich.

**AGE:** 30

**BOAT IN 2024:** U-12 *Graham Trucking*

**BOATS DRIVEN:** Hull #0001: *Graham Trucking* (2023).

**RACE VICTORIES:** None

**NATIONAL TITLES IN UNLIMITEDS:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Appeared only in Tri-Cities and Seattle and did not make final heat in either. Finished seventh in national points.

**COMMENTS:** The 2023 Rookie of the Year, King is the son of veteran driver Jimmy King. He started racing 2.5-litre stock hydros as a teenager and eight years later would be named Driver of the Year in the Hydroplane Racing League. He is a two-time Valley-field Champion in the Hydro 350 class and in 2021 set a one-mile world record in the class that was previously held by his father. He holds a degree in business administration and is a fiberglass technician at Sankuer Composites.



Chris Denslow

# Jimmy King

**HOME:** Wales, Mich.

**AGE:** 63

**BOAT IN 2024:** To be determined

**BOATS DRIVEN:** Hull #9210: *Miss Exide 2* (1994) ... Hull #9299: *Miss Wellness Plan* (1995), *Miss Jennifer* (1996), and *Empire Contractors* (2004) ... Hull #8808: *Lynnwood Honda* (1996), *Pflueger Honda/KPOI Radio* (1996), *Llumar Window Film* (1999–02) ... Hull #8401: *Carpenter/Miss Exide* (1996), and *Miss Exide* (1997) ... Hull #9516: *Miss E-Lam Plus* (1998–99) ... Hull #0203: *Master Tire* (2005–09), *Miss Chrysler Jeep* (2005–09), *U-3* (2005), *Toyota of Kirkland* (2005), *Conover Insurance* (2006), *Acura of Seattle* (2006), *Hoss Mortgage Investors* (2007–08), *Hoss Mortgage Investors Too* (2008), *Grand View on the Lake* (2009), *U-3* (2010), *Griggs presents Miss Ace Hardware* (2015–23), *Miss Home-Street Bank* (2015), *Miss DiJulio* (2016), and *Roostertail* (2018).

**RACE VICTORIES:** None

**NATIONAL TITLES IN UNLIMITEDS:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Did not qualify for final heat at Guntersville and Tri-Cities. Finished ninth in national points.

**COMMENTS:** King has been driving unlimiteds for the past 30 years, mostly in the cockpit of boats owned by Ed Cooper. He was the sport's Rookie of the Year in 1994. He is also an accomplished limited-class driver having won four national championships and three world titles in the Grand Prix class. Outside of racing he is a mason contractor.



Chris Denslow

## Jamie Nilsen

**HOME:** Gig Harbor, Wash.

**AGE:** 39

**BOAT IN 2024:** U-11 *Miss Mercurys Coffee*

**BOATS DRIVEN:** Hull #0721: *Albert Lee* (2013), *Go Fast Turn Left Racing* (2014), *Miss Al Deeby Dodge* (2014), and *Lakeridge Paving* (2014) ... Hull #9610: *Snoqualmie Casino* (2013) ... Hull #0925: *J&D's presented by Reliable Diamond Tool* (2019), *Legend Yacht Transport* (2023), *Legend Yacht Transport presented by The Truss Company* (2023), and *Legend Yacht Transport presented by The Old Cannery Furniture Warehouse* (2023). ... Hull #2111: *J&D's* (2021), *Miss Colleen* (2022), *Miss Joker's Casino* (2022), *Miss The Old Cannery Furniture Warehouse* (2022), and *Legend Yacht Transport* (2022).

**RACE VICTORIES:** None

**NATIONAL TITLES IN UNLIMITEDS:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Finished second in Madison, third in Guntersville, and fifth in Seattle. Did not qualify for final heat in Tri-Cities. He finished fourth in the final standings.

**COMMENTS:** Nilsen has driven a race boat to victory in nearly every category of closed-course competition within the APBA. Among the few classes where he has yet to win is the unlimiteds. He started racing outboards when he was 12 years old, has won a total of 15 national championships in outboards, and has also won national titles in both 5-litre and Grand Prix inboards. He was inducted into the APBA Hall of Champions in both 2000 and 2002. Nilsen also played baseball in college, was drafted by the Kansas City Royals, and played one season of professional baseball in the minor leagues. He holds a degree in finance and, when he's not racing, is a financial analyst for the U.S. Navy.



Chris Denslow

## Gunnar O'Farrell

**HOME:** Maple Valley, Wash.

**AGE:** 26

**BOAT IN 2024:** U-21 *Miss Lakeridge Paving*

**BOATS DRIVEN:** Hull #1999: *The Beast Unleashed presents Miss Thriftway* (2023).

**RACE VICTORIES:** None

**NATIONAL TITLES IN UNLIMITEDS:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Appeared only in Seattle and did not qualify for final heat. Finished eighth in the national points standings.

**COMMENTS:** O'Farrell started racing stock outboards when he was nine years old and moved



Vic Wright



into the inboards 11 years later. In 2021, he won the Western Nationals in the 2.5-litre modified class. The grandson of team owner Greg O'Farrell, he became qualified as an unlimited driver in 2022 but didn't enter competition for the first time until last year's Seattle race. Outside of racing, he works as a CDL truck driver.

## Corey Peabody

**HOME:** Covington, Wash.

**AGE:** 45

**BOAT IN 2024:** U-9 *Beacon Plumbing*

**BOATS DRIVEN:** Hull #9210: *Spirit of Detroit* (2016), *Pinnacle Peak Consulting* (2021), *Lynx Healthcare* (2022), and *Beacon Plumbing* (2023) ... Hull #9899: *Graham Trucking American Dream* (2019).

**RACE VICTORIES:** 5 ... 2021 HAPO Columbia Cup, Tri-Cities, Wash.; 2022 APBA Gold Cup, Guntersville, Ala.; 2022 Madison Showdown, Madison, Ind.; 2023 Southern Cup, Guntersville, Ala.; and 2023 Columbia Cup, Tri-Cities, Wash.

**NATIONAL TITLES IN UNLIMITEDS:** None

**LAST SEASON:** First at Guntersville and Tri-Cities, and third in Seattle. A broken strut took him out of competition in Madison. Fastest qualifier at Madison and Tri-Cities. Finished second in national standings.

**COMMENTS:** Peabody started racing outboards in 1998 alongside his grade-school friend, J. Michael Kelly, now his teammate on the Strong Racing Team. After spending three years as a crew member for the boat that Kelly was driving, he got into the cockpit himself and became qualified as an unlimited driver in 2016. He now drives the oldest boat in the hydro fleet, yet despite his boat's age, he set a record last year in Guntersville for the fastest competition heat average speed in history, a mark of nearly 163 mph, and a course record with a competition lap of over 164 mph. In addition to driving the *Beacon Plumbing*, Peabody is also the general manager of the entire Strong Racing Team.



Strong Racing

## Dylan Runne

**HOME:** Rumson, NJ

**AGE:** 29

**BOAT IN 2024:** To be determined

**BOATS DRIVEN:** Hull #1801: *Miss HomeStreet* (2023).

**RACE VICTORIES:** None

**NATIONAL TITLES IN UNLIMITEDS:** None

**LAST SEASON:** Finished fourth in Madison and fifth in both Guntersville and Tri-Cities. Disqualified in the final heat at Seattle. He finished the season sixth in the national standings.

**COMMENTS:** Runne joined the unlimited ranks last year with 20 years of racing experience in stock outboards, inboards, and Formula 1 tunnel boats. During that time he collected 11 national titles, including eight stock outboard national championships, and has set six world speed records. He was the Rookie of the Year in the Hydroplane Racing League (HRL) in 2017, was Driver of the Year in that series the following year, and became the first driver in HRL history to win three consecutive titles in three different classes. He holds a degree in business management and is the CEO of Fenom Digital, a company that he founded four years ago.



Vic Wright

## Andrew Tate

**HOME:** Canton, Mich.

**AGE:** 34

**BOAT IN 2024:** U-91 *Miss Goodman Real Estate*

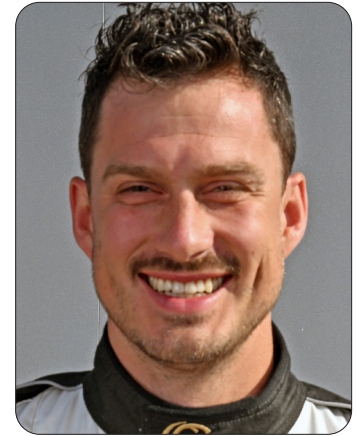
**BOATS DRIVEN:** Hull #9210: *Bello's Realtrac Performance* (2016), *Les Schwab* (2016), *Delta Research/Realtrac* (2016), *Delta Realtrac* (2017-19), *Les Schwab Tires* (2017-18), and *Auxier Marketing presents Delta Realtrac* (2019) ... Hull #0001: *Graham Trucking* (2021). ... Hull #0706: *Miss Goodman Real Estate* (2023).

**RACE VICTORIES:** 9 ... 2016 Albert Lee Appliance Seafair Cup, Seattle; 2017 Indiana Governor's Cup, Madison; 2017 President's Cup, Detroit; 2017 HomeStreet Bank Bayfair, San Diego; 2018 Guntersville Lake Hydrofest, Guntersville, Ala.; 2018 HAPO Columbia Cup, Tri-Cities, Wash.; 2018 Albert Lee Appliance Seafair Cup, Seattle; 2018 APBA Gold Cup, Detroit; and 2018 HomeStreet Bank Bayfair, San Diego.

**NATIONAL TITLES IN UNLIMITEDS:** 1 (2018)

**LAST SEASON:** Second at Guntersville and Seattle, and fourth in Tri-Cities. Missed the Madison race because his boat was damaged in Guntersville. Fastest qualifier at Seattle. Finished fifth in national points.

**COMMENTS:** Another fourth-generation boat racer, Tate's father is Mark Tate, who won the sport's national championship four times and is a two-time winner of the Gold Cup. When Andrew won the Gold Cup in 2018, he and his father became the first father-son pair to ever have both of their names etched on that prestigious trophy. Andrew started racing stock outboards when he was nine years old and has collected more than 100 race victories in various outboard and inboard classes, as well as nine national titles. He's been inducted into the APBA Hall of Champions three times. When he's not racing, he does sales and marketing for Sun Coating Co.



Vic Wright

## Dave Villwock

**HOME:** Monroe, Wash.

**AGE:** 70

**BOAT IN 2024:** U-27 *Miss Apollo*

**BOATS DRIVEN:** Hull #9031: *Miss Circus Circus* (1990) ... Hull #92102: *Coors Dry* (1992), and *Miss Circus Circus* (1993) ... Hull #8401: *Miss Circus Circus* (1993) ... Hull #9399: *American Dream* (1994), *U-100* (1994), and *PICO American Dream* (1995–96) ... Hull #9610: *PICO American Dream* (1996) ... Hull #9501: *Miss Budweiser* (1997–2000) ... Hull #9712: *Miss Budweiser* (1997–2004) ... Hull #0001: *Miss Budweiser* (2000–04) ... Hull #0116: *Ellstrom* (2005–09), *Amos W. Hoss* (2008), and *Spirit of Qatar* (2010–12) ... Hull #1188: *Cost Less Carpets* (2014), *Miss Beacon Plumbing* (2014), and *Miss Seattle* (2014) ... Hull #0721: *Miss Beacon Plumbing* (2021–22).

**RACE VICTORIES:** 67 ... 1992 Budweiser Cup, San Diego; 1994 Texaco Cup, Seattle; 1994 Bayfair, San Diego; 1996 Gila River Casino Unlimited Regatta, Phoenix; 1996 APBA Gold Cup, Detroit; 1996 Pontiac Thunder on the Ohio, Evansville, IN; 1996 Budweiser Columbia Cup, Tri-Cities; 1996 Texaco Cup, Seattle; 1996 Canadian Cup, Kelowna, BC; 1997 Chrysler Jeep APBA Gold Cup, Detroit; 1997 Pontiac Thunder On The Ohio, Evansville, Ind.; 1997 Budweiser Indiana Governor's Cup, Madison, Ind.; 1997 Virginia is for Lovers Cup, Norfolk, Va.; 1998 Pontiac Grand Am Thunder, Evansville, Ind.; 1998 Chrysler Jeep APBA Gold Cup, Detroit; 1998 Virginia is for Lovers Cup, Norfolk, Va.; 1998 Budweiser Columbia Cup, Tri-Cities; 1998 Texaco Cup, Seattle; 1998 Budweiser Indiana Governor's Cup, Madison, Ind.; 1998 Bayfair Bill Muncey Cup, San Diego; 1998 Las Vegas Cup, Las Vegas; 1999 Budweiser Thunderfest at Barrie, Barrie, Ont.; 1999 Budweiser Thunder on the Ohio, Evansville, Ind.; 1999 Virginia is for Lovers Cup, Norfolk, Va.; 1999 Budweiser Columbia Cup, Tri-Cities; 1999 General Motors Cup, Seattle; 1999 Budweiser Thunderfest, Kelowna, BC; 1999 Bayfair Bill Muncey Cup, San Diego; 1999 JN Chevrolet Hydrofest, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; 2000 Mojave Unlimited Hydrofest, Lake Havasu City, Az.; 2000 Budweiser Thunder on the Ohio, Evansville, Ind.; 2000 Indiana Governor's Cup, Madison, Ind.; 2000 Chrysler Jeep APBA Gold Cup, Detroit; 2000 General Motors Cup, Seattle; 2000 Bayfair Bill Muncey Cup, San Diego; 2001 Budweiser Thunder on the Ohio, Evansville, Ind.; 2002 Thunder on the Ohio, Evansville, Ind.; 2002 APBA Gold Cup, Detroit; 2002 General Motors Cup, Seattle; 2003 Budweiser Madison Regatta, Madison, Ind.; 2003 General Motors Cup, Seattle; 2004 Thunder on the Ohio, Evansville, Ind.; 2004 UIM World Championship, Madison, Ind.; 2004 Budweiser Columbia Cup, Tri-Cities; 2004 General Motors Cup, Seattle; 2004 Washington Mutual Bill Muncey Cup, San Diego; 2005 Budweiser Columbia Cup, Tri-Cities; 2005 Thunderboat Regatta, San Diego; 2006 Thunder on the Ohio, Evansville, Ind.; 2006 Madison Regatta, Madison, Ind.; 2006 Atomic Cup, Tri-Cities; 2007 Thunder on the Ohio, Evansville, Ind.; 2007 Indiana Governor's Cup, Madison, Ind.; 2007 Chrysler Jeep APBA Gold Cup, Detroit; 2007 Lamb Weston Columbia Cup, Tri-Cities; 2008 Chevrolet Cup, Seattle; 2009 Indiana Governor's Cup, Madison, Ind.; 2009 Chrysler Jeep APBA Gold Cup, Detroit;



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2009 Chevrolet Cup, Seattle; 2010 Jarvis Restoration APBA Gold Cup, Detroit; 2010 Air National Guard Championship, San Diego; 2010 Oryx Cup UIM World Championship, Doha, Qatar; 2011 APBA Gold Cup, Detroit; 2011 Lamb Weston Columbia Cup, Tri-Cities, 2011 Air National Guard Championship, San Diego; 2012 Lucas Oil Indiana Governor's Cup, Madison, Ind.; and 2012 DYC presents APBA Gold Cup, Detroit.

**NATIONAL TITLES IN UNLIMITEDS:** 10 (1996, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2007, and 2011)

**LAST SEASON:** Did not appear.

**COMMENTS:** Villwock is among the greatest champions the sport has ever known. He has won a total of 67 races, making him the most successful driver in the sport's 121-year history. In addition, his 10 national titles are the most by any driver in history. He won seven of those titles in a row (the longest streak in history), won nearly half of the races that he entered (again, the best), and won a total of 345 heats (the most). He last drove a hydro in 2022 and the latest reports say that he will return in 2024. If he does, the 70-year-old Villwock would become the oldest person to ever compete in an unlimited hydroplane race.

# Course Records

## GUNTERSVILLE, ALA.

<b>2.5-mile course:</b>	SPEED	DRIVER	BOAT	YEAR
Qualifying.....	171.294 mph	Dustin Echols.....	Bucket List Racing.....	2023
Competition lap.....	164.597 mph	Corey Peabody.....	Beacon Plumbing.....	2023
7.5-mile heat (3 laps).....	162.910 mph	Corey Peabody.....	Beacon Plumbing.....	2023
12.5-mile heat (5 laps).....	152.004 mph	Andrew Tate.....	Delta Realtrac.....	2018

## MADISON, IND.

<b>2.5 mile course:</b>	SPEED	DRIVER	BOAT	YEAR
Qualifying.....	166.852 mph	Chip Hanauer.....	Miss Budweiser.....	1993
Competition lap.....	152.954 mph	Nate Brown.....	Tide.....	1994
7.5-mile heat (3 laps).....	151.578 mph	Dave Villwock.....	Ellstrom.....	2009
12.5-mile heat (5 laps).....	145.573 mph	Mark Tate.....	Smokin' Joe's.....	1996

## TRI-CITIES, WASH.

<b>2.5 mile course:</b>	SPEED	DRIVER	BOAT	YEAR
Qualifying.....	170.471 mph	Dave Villwock.....	Miss Budweiser.....	1999
Competition lap.....	162.666 mph	Dave Villwock.....	Spirit of Qatar.....	2011
7.5-mile heat (3 laps).....	156.957 mph	Chip Hanauer.....	Miss Budweiser.....	1994
12.5-mile heat (5 laps).....	150.422 mph	Dave Villwock.....	Spirit of Qatar.....	2011

## SEATTLE, WASH.

<b>2-mile course:</b>	SPEED	DRIVER	BOAT	YEAR
Qualifying (1 lap).....	163.451 mph	Dave Villwock.....	Miss Budweiser.....	1999
Competition lap.....	155.256 mph	Kip Brown.....	Spirit of Qatar.....	2013
6-mile heat (3 laps).....	150.880 mph	Mark Tate.....	Winston Eagle.....	1993
10-mile heat (5 laps).....	141.880 mph	Jean Theoret.....	Miss Beacon Plumbing.....	2006

## SAN DIEGO, CALIF.

<b>2.5-mile course:</b>	SPEED	DRIVER	BOAT	YEAR
Qualifying.....	173.384 mph	Dave Villwock.....	Miss Budweiser.....	1999
Competition lap.....	164.919 mph	Mark Tate.....	Winston Eagle.....	1993
7.5-mile heat (3 laps).....	161.712 mph	Mark Tate.....	Winston Eagle.....	1993
12.5-mile heat (5 laps).....	155.011 mph	Jimmy Shane.....	Miss HomeStreet.....	2022

# Museum boats test Lake Washington.

BY CRAIG FJARLIE

**D**uring the last several years, H1 boats have had a late spring test day at Tri-Cities in preparation for the coming season, and it is an event area hydro fans look forward to watching. Recently, the Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum has tested some of their vintage boats on Lake Washington during May, and it has drawn several hundred fans to the Stan Sayres pit area.

The museum boats are all powered by World War II aircraft piston engines, which means they produce a noise that broadcaster Jim Hendrick used to describe as, “The sounds of engines of unlimited hydroplanes.”

On Tuesday, May 14, four museum boats gathered in Sayres pits. Three boats had round bows and used Allison engines, one had a picklefork bow and a Rolls engine. The Allison boats were the restored 1958 *Miss Bardahl*, the replica *Miss Wahoo* (1957 configuration), and *Notre Dame*, which originally was *Miss Lumberville*. The Rolls boat was the restored *The Squire Shop* of 1979.

Each of the four boats went out for a few laps to ensure everything was run-

ning properly. Then the three Allison boats gave rides to people who had either done significant work on the boats or had purchased a ride. *The Squire Shop* also ran again but was not used for giving rides.

On one run, a different propeller was tested. When the boat reached a speed of 110 mph, it wanted to turn left, and the driver had to get off the throttle.

The boat made it back to the pits safely.

May weather in Seattle can be warm and sunny, or cool and drizzly. The Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum was lucky with a warm sunny day and good water. The pit area and part of the Lake Washington shoreline was filled with spectators who enjoyed the show.

Thank you, David Williams, for making it happen. ❖



Craig Fjarlie



Craig Fjarlie

Five members of the hydro fleet from the Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum took spins on Lake Washington in mid-May. **TOP:** One of the lucky people getting rides waves as the *Notre Dame* roars past. **ABOVE:** The 1979 *The Squire Shop* during its test run.

# AROUND THE CIRCUIT

## Race Site News by Chris Tracy



## Prelude to the 2024 season.

Some of the biggest unlimited hydroplane race site news has been the involvement of Apollo Mechanical. Last month, I mentioned that Apollo Mechanical had sealed a three-year deal to be the unlimited hydroplane race title sponsor in Tri-Cities.

So how did Tri-Cities get the Apollo sponsorship? Apollo has been a smaller sponsor for 30 years in the Tri-Cities. Water Follies officials had approached Apollo earlier about being the title sponsor for the hydro race, but the company did not bite. Darrell Strong had recommended that Water Follies enlist Steve Lamson to help with a title sponsor search. Lamson has a long record of recruiting sponsors for unlimited boats.

Well, the *Tri-City Herald* hit the streets with an article about the race not having a sponsor and Lamson happened to approach Apollo shortly after that, which helped Lamson close the sponsorship deal. While the newspaper article got the information out about the need for a sponsor, Water Follies also credits Lamson for bringing Apollo on board as the unlimited event title sponsor. It is a three-year deal. Also, Apollo is helping sponsor the testing in the Tri-Cities on May 31. That event will be expanded to include a beer garden and evening concert.

But Apollo's role with unlimiteds expanded since last month. Recently, Seafair announced that Apollo Mechanical will sponsor the unlimited race in Seattle, too! Apollo Mechanical deserves a big thank you from hydro fans.

In Seattle there was more news. Longtime Seafair president and CEO Eric Corning has announced he is leaving in September. Corning has worked

with Seafair for 25 years. Corning has not only been a great organizer and promoter of Seafair, but he's also a boat racing fan. He'll be missed. Seafair will soon conduct a search for Corning's replacement.

### What's happening at H1?

There is still a fair amount of H1 business that has not been revealed for the upcoming season.

SWX will provide Internet streaming for the testing in Tri-Cities for the race site, but as I write this, H1 has not outlined its streaming plans for 2024. The H1 website has said it will be available and free, but many have commented that the Meyer brothers are no longer listed on the H1 website. They have been responsible for producing the streaming video in the recent past.

One fan told me that he asked an H1 board member directly about the streaming program for the 2024 season and was told announcements would be made on the H1 website.

It's time to start the public relations build up for the 2024 season and time for H1 to make more robust and informative use of their website and social media.

H1 had said that having at least six boats at each event was a priority, and inferred there would be round-robin racing with six boats and definitely no match races. Which boats will be racing on the eastern swing? And what happens if only five boats show or qualify?

With no Detroit race on the schedule, will there be a Gold Cup race this year and, if so, where will it be? There is a widely spread rumor that there might be a change in the starting procedure, but who knows? The racing rules have not

been announced.

Just an observation—almost all information about HydroTown has been scrubbed from the H1 website.

I guess what I am saying is that two weeks before spring testing, hydro fans are largely in the dark about the upcoming season, except that there will be five races. And we assume the four H1 board members who operate boat teams will be racing their five boats this season.

New H1 chair Mike Denslow mentioned at the 2023 H1 Unlimited awards banquet that his goal was to make everyone proud of the sport, so between the time I write this column and when it is published on June 1, I'm hopeful fans will learn a lot more about plans for the 2024 season. Fans are rooting for H1 and for the series to succeed. ❖

# MY \$0.02 WORTH

## Editorial Comment by Andy Muntz



Like many race fans, I flipped the TV on last Sunday anxious to watch the Indy 500, one of my biggest passions. The TV had apparently been tuned to our local CBS affiliate the last time it was on, because as the screen came to life, I saw race boats speeding around buoys instead of race cars getting ready at the Brickyard.

I had stumbled upon the E1 Series, now being presented on the CBS Sports Network.

I happen to know the effort that H1 Unlimited has made during the past 20 years trying to get the attention of the television sports networks, hoping one of them might cover the sport. The effort has continued to result in frustration. Those making the effort have heard every excuse imaginable—too expensive to produce, not enough fan interest, no major sponsors, not enough races, and so on.

Yet, here was a boat race on one of the major national TV networks!

While the boats look exotic—they are electric powered, cruise above the surface on hydrofoils, and have long

pointy bows—they didn't seem particularly fast. I'm guessing there are speedboats on most lakes that are faster. The drivers didn't appear all that skilled, either. In one case, a driver lost track of the buoys and cut well inside the course without seeming to be aware.

Yet, they're on national television at a coveted time on Sunday mornings! What gives?

I checked the E Series website and saw immediately what they've got that H1 Unlimited doesn't: Money, connections, celebrity, a reality-show vibe, and environmental cachet.

The website itself is impressive, featuring the latest in design. And, it demonstrates why the E Series is already successful. It has the look and feel of Formula 1. The people involved are straight from the Formula 1 cast of characters. There's talk of transcending traditional racing, the drivers are both men and women, and there are events in Saudi Arabia, Venice, Spain, Geneva, Monaco, Rotterdam, and Hong Kong.

The impression is not an accident.

The series was founded by two men with strong connections to Formula 1 and with proven track records in promoting new sustainable forms of motorsports.

As for celebrity? Look at the team owners: Super Bowl champion Tom Brady, tennis champion Rafael Nadal, music producer Steve Aoki, F1 driver Sergio Perez, top cricket player Virat Kohli, technology entrepreneur Marcelo Claure, pro soccer star Didier Drogba, Grammy-winning singer Marc Anthony, and Oscar-winning actor Will Smith.

We often hear from "experts" on Facebook who claim that it should be easy to get the attention of television networks. Look at how spectacular H1 hydroplanes are, they say, how fast they go, and how skilled the drivers are. Some claim H1 would do better if it had noisy engines again.

H1 hydroplanes are more than three times faster than these silent electric boats, the drivers are far more skilled, and the races are more exciting. But, watching the E Series on CBS, it seems none of that really matters. ❖

**EDITOR:** Andy Muntz

**ASSOCIATE EDITORS:** Craig Fjarlie, Chris Tracy, Dick Sanders

**HYDROFILE EDITOR/WEBMASTER:** Lon Erickson **TREASURER:** Bob Senior **HISTORIAN:** Bob Greenhow

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Letters are welcome, but may be edited for clarity and space.  
Send comments to: [ajmuntz@icloud.com](mailto:ajmuntz@icloud.com)

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