



The Grand Old Lady's Sister



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

What must it be like to be the sibling of a famous politician or movie star? Everywhere you go, people would recognize you, not as yourself but as so-and-so's brother or sister. If we could assign human feelings and emotions to a boat, that would have been the predicament that Slo-mo-shun V found for itself. During the early 1950s, it shared a boathouse with perhaps the most legendary hydroplane in Seattle racing history.

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Though its career was overshadowed by its more famous family member, *Slo-mo-shun V* was also a highly successful boat. The story that follows is based on excerpts from the book *Slo-mo-shun*, which tells the story of Stan Sayres, Ted Jones, Anchor Jensen, and the boats that brought big-time hydroplane racing to the Pacific Northwest 75 years ago and created a civic infatuation for the sport. The story was written by NewsJournal editor Andy Muntz. His book is available for purchase through Amazon.

Three-quarters of a century ago, a mahogany hydroplane named *Slo-mo-shun IV* became an icon in the Pacific Northwest. Affectionately known as “The Grand Old Lady,” the craft revolutionized the sport with its three-point, prop-riding design. It brought fame to Seattle when it became the fastest boat in the world with a record-shattering straightaway run on Lake Washington in June 1950, then a month later went to Detroit and won the Gold Cup, thus giving Seattle the privilege of hosting the sport’s most prestigious event the following year. For good measure, it added a Harmsworth Trophy victory later that summer, making it the first to set a world speed record, and win both the Gold Cup and a Harmsworth since the legendary Gar Wood performed that trifecta in 1921.

Because of *Slo-mo IV*, the sport of

Unlimited hydroplane racing became the biggest sporting event in the Seattle area during the 1950s and early ‘60s. Hundreds of thousands of people would flock to the shores of Lake Washington each summer to watch it and other hydros speed across the water. Children growing up in the Puget Sound area towed little wooden hydroplanes behind their bicycles and, in addition to sports heroes such as Mickey Mantle or Willie Mays, they were passionate about hydro drivers named Lou Fageol, Joe Taggart, Bill Muncey, and Mira Slovak. When *Slo-mo IV* crashed in 1956, many thousands of fans with tear-filled eyes solemnly filed past the wreckage to pay their last respects. The boat played such an important role in the region’s history that it is now enshrined within Seattle’s Museum of History and Industry.

The Grand Old Lady attracted so much attention, it’s been easy for casual

observers to overlook the legendary craft having a teammate. Conceived during the winter that followed *Slo-mo IV*’s history-making first season, *Slo-mo-shun V* would never be as celebrated as the craft it sat next to within the team’s boathouse, yet is also was highly successful—the winner of two Gold Cup races.

It was created by the same three boat racers who had introduced the city to *Slo-mo IV*. Its owner was Seattle Chrysler dealer named Stan Sayres, its design was conceived by an innovative visionary of the sport named Ted Jones, and its construction was done at Anchor Jensen’s boatyard on the north shore of Portage Bay at an address that was known at the time as Northlake Way. In addition to its success as a member of the *Slo-mo* team, the craft would appear on hydroplane racecourses for many years that followed, but now, seven decades later, is likely best remembered for the spectacular mishap



The *Slo-mo* team’s legendary family member, *Slo-mo-shun IV*, floating on Lake Washington near Hunts Point in 1950.

Jensen Family Collection

that ended the first phase of its career.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. First, the boat would have its contentious creation.

While the building of *Slo-mo IV* in 1949 had been hampered by constant bickering between Jones and Jensen (the credit for its design remained a matter of debate for many decades that followed), constructing *Slo-mo V* had no such intrigue. Even Anchor Jensen himself willingly gave full credit for the boat's design to Jones. Still, the project elicited its own brand of dispute.

According to Mike Welsh, who served as crew chief of the *Slo-mo* team, after the great success of *Slo-mo IV*, Stan Sayres decided in the fall of 1950 he wanted a new boat that would be a little faster and lighter and that would turn better than that craft, which had been designed with a straightaway speed record in mind. The basic idea, according to Welsh, was to build a competition boat and maybe just keep *Slo-mo IV* as a specialist in straightaway runs.

Jones responded with a design that changed the crown on the boat to provide more lift. He developed ideas for a craft that would be the same length as *Slo-mo IV*, but a little wider. To make the new boat accelerate faster, Jones incorporated different planing angles and a larger non-trip to improve handling through the turns and in rough water. He increased the angle of attack from the three degrees used on *Slo-mo IV* to about five degrees and, to counteract the resulting greater lift, he increased the length of the prop strut so the new boat's propeller would be over two inches farther below the bottom of the boat.

The result, he predicted, would scare everybody who drove it, because the boat's tail would rise as it gained speed, and its nose would suddenly climb then drop back down. "But that's what you have to do if you want an all-out boat, and this was an all-out boat," he explained.

While Jones's ideas became more re-



From the left, Anchor Jensen, Stan Sayres, and Ted Jones pose for a publicity photo during the construction of *Slo-mo-shun V*.

Seattle Museum of History and Industry

fined late in 1950 and in January 1951, nothing was said publicly about the project until Sayres admitted to a reporter in early February he already had the building material for a new boat, but that the project hadn't yet started. He said the delay was caused by uncertainty related to the Korean War.

But that explanation left out another important provision: he wanted to get funding for the project from Greater Seattle, the civic organization that produced the city's race. Toward that end, Sayres proposed that Greater Seattle contribute \$15,000 [about \$183,000 in today's dollars] toward the design and construction of the new hydroplane and to fit it with a Rolls-Royce Merlin engine. The leaders at Greater Seattle agreed to the plan with the condition that the boat be completed in time for the 1951 Gold Cup race in early August.

Facing a tight deadline and not wanting progress to get mired by the quarrels between Jones and Jensen that had disrupted the building of *Slo-mo IV*, Sayres then had a "very frank talk" with his designer and builder to convince them to get along with each other. So,

they worked out an agreement. Because Jensen's company was busy with other projects for the Coast Guard, Jones would quit his job at Boeing and devote his full attention to building the new boat. Sayres would pay him with \$5,000 [about \$61,000 today] that he had solicited from Greater Seattle for that purpose.

Building *Slo-mo V*

Construction finally started on March 25—secretly, at first. The project was contained within the sail loft of the Jensen boat shop, in an area above the apartment where Jensen's mother and father still lived. To avoid disturbing them, Jones promised to do the work during the day. For privacy, they posted a guard with a .45 pistol at the bottom of the narrow staircase that led to the loft so others would not discover what was going on up there. Even Jensen had to admit that Jones did most of the work—at least at first. And the two got along better—at first, simply by ignoring each other.

By the end of June, the project had progressed to where they felt comfortable in bringing the boat out of hiding. They hoisted it from the loft, dropped it to the



Slo-mo-shun V takes shape in the sail loft at Jensen Motor Boat in Seattle.

shop floor, and announced its existence to the local newspapers. “We can’t promise that the new *Slo-mo* will be ready for the Gold Cup,” a cautious Sayres told reporters. “We expect to have her actually in the water, ready for preliminary tests, by July 15. It takes hours to work such a boat in and we may not make it.”

But, again, much was not admitted. As with the *Slo-mo IV* project and despite their agreement, Jensen did much of the work—including making decisions that the designer of a boat usually would make. And, though they were ignoring each other, Jensen couldn’t help but notice that Jones was late or absent parts of many days during the last month of the boat’s construction. Finally, he felt he had to say something to Sayres.

Four days before the boat’s scheduled unveiling, and as he saw the date of the Gold Cup drawing near, Sayres’s patience was used up. With things not progressing fast enough, he sent a blistering three-page letter to Jones, Jensen, and the rest of the *Slo-mo* crew to outline his grievances for why the project was behind schedule.

“I am afraid that some of you—have decided that I am an ‘easy mark’—that I am so wrapped up in race boats—records, etc.—that anything will get by,” he wrote. “Let me assure you, that you

are wrong if you have this conclusion. Let me assure you that if you contribute to my getting stuck for \$15,000 or \$20,000—I WILL NOT ACCEPT IT EITHER AMIABLY OR GRACIOUSLY. I WILL PIN THE ROSE OR ROSES EXACTLY WHERE THEY BELONG.

“You should remember that the 1950 season cost me \$39,000 out of my pocket. So far for 1951 I am ‘IN’ for more than \$10,000 more (actual investment in ‘IV’ and ‘V’). If I cannot secure some return from Greater Seattle in other ways—then I wonder if YOU think the diplomas, the

awards and the publicity are worth that kind of money to me? If you do—you are kidding yourselves.

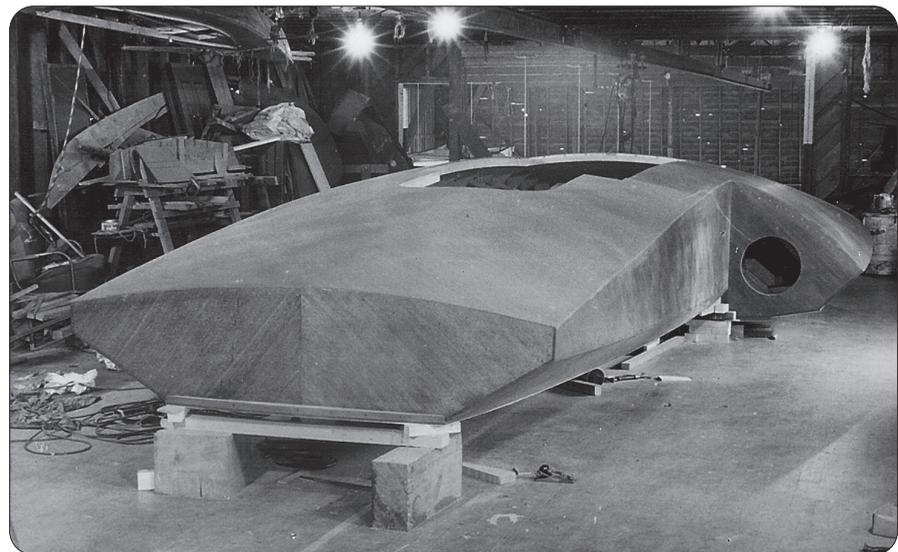
“I have always been meticulous about giving credit to you—I will be just as thorough in pointing out the ones that I depended on and the ones who failed me.

“Take it or leave it—At this point I do not particularly care.”

Message strongly delivered, Sayres authorized the project to continue and had a meeting with Jensen to discuss the situation. There, as expected, Jensen complained about what Jones was (and wasn’t) doing and reminded Sayres that his boatyard was busy with Coast Guard work. Sayres wasn’t deterred. He told Jensen he didn’t care about the other work; he wanted his hydroplane done.

So, Jensen reluctantly called his contact at the Coast Guard to ask permission to delay those projects so his crew could get *Slo-mo V* done. The commander not only told him the delay would be okay, but that he’d also like him to get the hydro done. His commanding officer was coming for the Gold Cup and was expecting to see both *Slo-mo* boats in the race.

With that path cleared, Jensen and his team scrambled for the next three



Slo-mo-shun V on the shop floor with its decking completed.



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

weeks. They installed the engines and mechanical equipment, and by July 22 the boat was ready for its first shake-down cruise—with Sayres in the cockpit and the Gold Cup only a week away.

The finished product looked like its sister—the same mahogany color but with a bright-yellow cowling over the engine instead of red. Behind the cockpit, instead of a triangular tail standing upon the rear deck, *Slo-mo V*'s red tail was supported at its front end by a quarter-circle of yellow cowling behind its single seat. The crew painted the number U-37 in yellow on the top of each sponson.

After Sayres had his turn at the new boat, Jones took over and drove it on a 25-minute run that ended across Lake Washington at Sayres's boathouse next to his new home on Hunts Point. "She's the sweetest thing yet," he said when he arrived, a wide grin on his face. "She turned on a dime and had a slightly different feel from the *Slo-mo IV* that I'm sure means she'll do what we figured she would,"

As the Detroit fleet crept its way west across the hot plains and through the steep mountains toward Seattle, the *Slo-mo* team worked every daylight hour to get their two boats ready for the race. Although *Slo-mo V* needed fine-tuning changes after every run, its performance was remarkable right from the start. "It was fascinating," Mike Welsch said. "The *Five* was launched about three weeks before the race and we had no problems. We didn't change anything."⁴

About the time the Detroit caravan was approaching Montana, the *Slo-mo* team pushed the new boat faster. It hit 140 mph without hardly opening the throttle. Then, it went even faster. The

tests showed *Slo-mo V* to be quicker than its older sister coming out of the turns, but that it also lacked stability in the straightaways. While *Slo-mo IV* could reach 185 mph, the bow of the new boat showed an alarming tendency to rise when it reached 165 mph. Its driver would have to watch that with care.

Welsch experienced that phenomenon firsthand. "I was always leery of the *Five*," he explained. "I felt that she was too flighty. Stan and I always did the off-season testing and one day I had the *Five* up to 160 miles per hour and she got airborne. I was never so scared in my life." In part because of his feelings about the new boat, Welsch remained the crew chief of *Slo-mo IV* and Elmer Linenschmidt was assigned those duties for *Slo-mo V*.

Finally, it was time for the action to start. As the first boats from the east arrived in Seattle, the *Slo-mo* team continued testing. Ted Jones was slated to drive the new boat in the race, while the defending Gold Cup champion would be driven by Lou Fageol of Kent, Ohio.

Standing only five feet five inches tall, Fageol was a veteran limited-class competitor who glowed with self-confidence. "He was two people," his son Ray says of his father. "He was a racer, but he also was a very serious businessman."

The business side of that equation came by way of his father, Frank Fageol, one of four brothers who founded the Fageol Motor Company in 1916, a firm that made tractors and transit buses. In 1927, Frank and his brothers then formed the Fageol Twin Coach Company in Kent, Ohio, and produced buses that featured two engines and that

The two members of the *Slo-mo* team pose for a family portrait.

"She's the sweetest thing yet. She turned on a dime and had a slightly different feel from the *Slo-mo IV* that I'm sure means she'll do what we figured she would,"
-Ted Jones

would be among the first to use propane for fuel. Lou Fageol took over as president of the company shortly after World War II.

Fageol loved to go fast, and he was a fearless competitor, both on the water and on the auto racetrack. Anchor Jensen once described him as somebody who could make a log go fast.

He had entered race cars in the Indianapolis 500, drove a 7-litre boat named *So Long* in several Unlimited contests, then saw experience aboard *Such Crust* and *Such Crust II* in 1949. His most recent experience in an Unlimited came during the 1950 Gold Cup that *Slo-mo IV* had won. After Bill Cantrell withdrew himself from the cockpit of *My Sweetie* following the first heat, Fageol was tabbed to drive the craft for the rest of the day. He made a good run against the faster Seattle boat until mechanical problems took him out of the running. Then, after the race, Sayres invited him to turn a couple of laps aboard *Slo-mo IV* and was impressed enough to ask him to join the team.

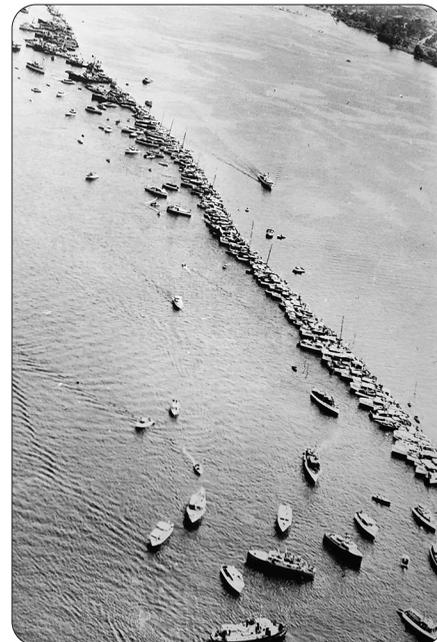
The 1951 Gold Cup

Officials were scheduled to open the Gold Cup course for qualifying trials at

nine o'clock Monday morning. And, as was becoming his habit, Sayres wanted his boat to make the first attempt. Jones drove *Slo-mo-shun V* on a five-mile journey south from Hunts Point, checked in with those on the official's barge anchored off Mt. Baker Park, then went around the course three times at an average speed of 91.370 mph, the second-fastest in Gold Cup history. There was only one problem. "Jones had a narrow escape with the craft in the morning run," Cliff Harrison of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reported, "turning completely around when he hit the south turn too fast. Beyond drenching him, no damage was done to the craft." No damage, that is, except to Jones's psyche.

Fageol arrived in Seattle via his private plane later that afternoon and took the new boat around the racecourse—turning in an unofficial lap of 103 mph. Then he turned his attention to the ride he had been assigned. Fageol took *Slo-mo IV* down from Hunts Point on Tuesday and qualified it at 90.4522 mph.

During the next couple of days, however, as the *Slo-mo* team continued to test the two hydroplanes at the north end of Lake Washington, Jones was having second thoughts about his driving



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The 1951 Gold Cup attracted a quarter million fans, including those watching from thousands of boats tied to the log boom.

assignment. Spooked that *Slo-mo V* had spun out on him, and then after watching Fageol take the hydro around the course smoother and faster a few hours later, Jones asked Sayres if the two could switch boats. Sayres agreed, but as the race drew closer, Jones thought better of the change. This time, Sayres said no.

The first Gold Cup race held west of the Mississippi River was held before a crowd of a quarter million people who lined the shore of Lake Washington or who watched from the decks of thousands of yachts and pleasure boats tied to a log boom that lined the backstretch. It was a summer day typical for the Pacific Northwest: cloudy and mild in the morning then warm and sunny by early afternoon.

The *Slo-mo* team had moved its base of operations from Hunts Point to a place closer to the racecourse. Because the Gold Cup race committee was concerned that Mt. Baker Park might be too small to accommodate the boats, they encouraged Sayres's team to work from a pier at Leschi, just north of the Floating Bridge and close to where *Miss Pepsi* was based. It would serve as their race-day



Ted Jones (left), Stan Sayres, and Lou Fageol share a laugh as they prepared for the first Gold Cup to be held in Seattle

base for every Seattle race they would enter for the next five years.

There at Leschi, the team collected the tools and equipment they would need. They assembled two wooden cradles for their boats to rest upon and hired a crane to lift the boats to and from the lake. As the hydros floated near the dock, Jones climbed into the cockpit of *Slo-mo IV* while Fageol settled into the seat of *Slo-mo V*. They both set their magneto switches and tickled their primer switches. Metallic-sounding clunks, thumps, and whirring noises rang from both engines. Dark-gray smoke then shot from the exhaust stacks, and they were away—south to the racecourse where they would join the other hydros that were circling the racecourse to warm up their engines and get into position for the start.

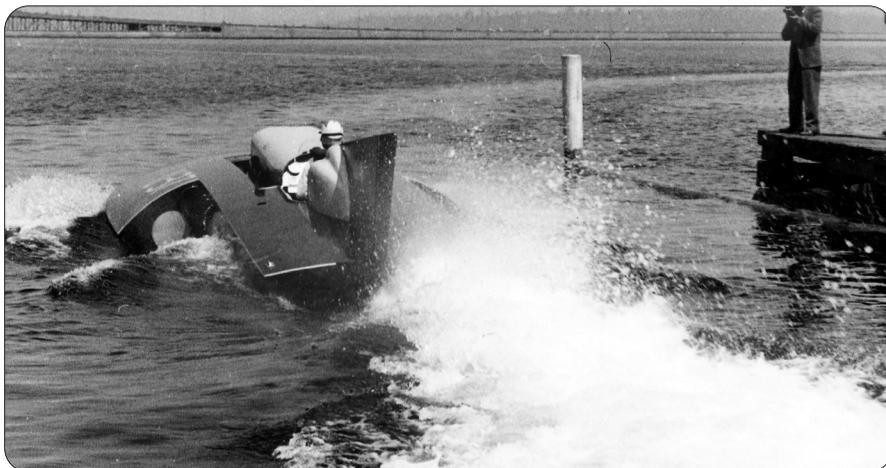
Fageol and Jones took a lap around the buoys, then, as the time for the start drew closer, they sneaked back through the span of the Floating Bridge without attracting attention and circled around near the Leschi pier. While the final seconds counted down and the Detroit boats milled around in the north turn preparing for the start, Fageol and Jones were getting into position for a surprise.

As the fleet rounded the north turn to make their run for the starting line, the drivers of the two hometown favorites slammed their feet to the throttles. Side by side the two mahogany boats screamed back under the bridge and straight for the starting line—their white roostertails soaring behind them, emitting a roar loud enough that people miles away in Renton and downtown Seattle could hear it. The sudden appearance of the speeding boats from under the bridge was so thrilling to the partisan throng on the beach that the “flying start” became a beloved trademark of the *Slo-mos*.

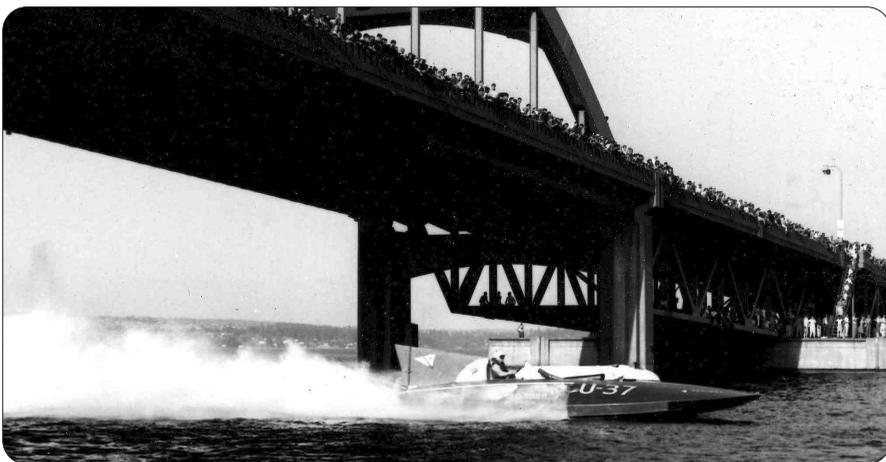
Careening toward the starting line, Jones veered left to pass the others to the inside. Fageol veered to the right and passed the others on the outside. *Slo-mo V* hit the starting line at the instant the starting gun fired. With a quick glance



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Guy Hoppen

TOP: The crew works on *Slo-mo V* as it rests on the dock at Leschi during the 1951 Gold Cup. Driver Lou Fageol, owner Stan Sayres, and Ted Jones are standing to the right of the boat. **MIDDLE:** *Slo-mo V* motors away from the Leschi dock toward the racecourse. **ABOVE:** As fans watch from above, Fageol drives *Slo-mo V* through the west span of the Floating Bridge

“Fageol proved he was one of the best hydro drivers in the country by his split-second timing of the start,” Kent Powell of the *Seattle Times* reported.

As a throng of reporters watched from the official barge, *Slo-mo-shun V* leads the field as it approaches the finish line during the 1951 Gold Cup.

over his left shoulder, Fageol saw the dark-green hull of *Hornet* behind him. He flew his boat toward the south turn. It out accelerated all but Chuck Thompson in the long and skinny step hull *Miss Pepsi*, which followed close behind.

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As Fageol steered to his left toward the buoy line, Thompson crossed his wake and held a position to the rear and to the right of *Slo-mo V* as they rounded the turn. The pair then headed up the backstretch toward the north turn, circled those buoys, and returned to the starting line to complete the first lap. *Slo-mo V* was ahead of *Miss Pepsi* by the length of its roostertail. *Hornet* followed in third place, then *Gale II*. Jones and *Slo-mo IV* were back in the pack in a tight battle with *Such Crust I* and *Hurricane IV*.

Meanwhile, the contest between Fageol and Thompson continued. During the next three turns around the course, *Slo-mo V* would pull ahead by 150 yards in the straightaways and then *Miss Pepsi*, using its advantage in the turns, would cut that gap in half. Holding its lead, *Slo-mo V* danced across the wave tops while, behind it, *Miss Pepsi* carved its way over the water—its narrow bow pointed slightly upward, pulsating up and down like a flapping wing as it kept pace.

The duel then ended during the fourth lap. One of the engines in *Miss Pepsi* sputtered,

coughed, and went silent. Its lubricating oil had been pumped out through the front seal and into the blower because of a damaged crankshaft. “The supposedly sensational *Miss Pepsi* simply didn’t have the guts, to use that short but significant word,” wrote Cliff Harrison of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

“We were aware of the fact that the *Pepsi* was throwing oil at the rate of about 40 gallons a heat,” said Welsch. “We also knew the reason why it was doing it. It was because their breather system was hooked up wrong and it was just sucking the oil right out of the tank. The way we discovered it was that you could see an oil slick running behind the *Miss Pepsi*. And for this reason, we knew he would never last a heat.”

From the perspective of the *Miss Pepsi* team, Thompson had no choice but to protect his boat. “*Slo-mo* was a terrific boat,” said Robert Dossin, the son of owner Roy Dossin. “If Chuck felt there was a problem with our boat, rather than take a chance, he would pull out. The smooth water conditions out in Seattle were better suited to a three-pointer. Our boat was built for rough water.”

With *Miss Pepsi* out, the heat victory belonged to *Slo-mo V* while *Slo-mo IV* finished third behind Bill Cantrell in *Hornet*. Cantrell’s second-place finish came with a cost, though. When he returned to the pits, he stood up and discovered that with all the battering he had taken, his pants had ripped down the back. He snatched the torn sections of his pants together with one hand, vaulted out of



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Lou Fageol and *Slo-mo-shun V* complete a lap during the Gold Cup as Lee Schoenith drives *Gale II* down the backstretch.

the cockpit, and threw on some mechanic's overalls.

Fageol began the second heat like he had the first, with the same flying start from under the west approach span of the Floating Bridge. Thompson also did like he had done during the first heat and grabbed a spot at the heels of *Slo-mo V*. But this time the battle lasted only a few seconds. A crankshaft broke on *Miss Pepsi* before the boat had even reached the first turn—causing it to drift silently to a stop.

“The public address announcer and

others on the judges' barge had been declaring what an exciting race the Gold Cup hydroplane race had been. In all truth, it had been only mildly exciting,” wrote one cynical reporter the next day, who for evidence pointed to the dropping out of *Miss Pepsi* in the second heat. “In the absence of this one strong competitor, virtually the sole contest resolved itself into the question of how many boats *Slo-mo-shun V* could lap.”

With *Miss Pepsi* drifting near the south turn, the hopes of the Detroit fleet rested with *Hornet*—a craft that owner

Horace Dodge called his “green-eyed monster,” now driven by Danny Foster, instead of Cantrell. In the early laps, Foster tried to keep his boat within striking distance of *Slo-mo V*, but by the fourth lap, the eventual order of finish was well established, with Fageol in the lead and winning with ease.

“With a wide grin for the clicking cameras and a wink for the happy blonde in the red coat who is his wife, Lou Fageol taxied up to the finish barge after the second heat, when it was evident that the Seattle boat was best,” wrote Royal Brougham of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. “This was the way he responded to the cheers which reverberated up and down and across the water—Fageol leaned over in the cockpit and caressed with two hands the dripping hull of *Slo-mo-shun V*. It was a great driver's tribute to a great boat.”

After the brief celebration, Fageol started the boat's engine and cruised back under the Floating Bridge to the dock at Leschi where the team waited to prepare their two boats for the final heat. While the *Slo-mo* crew members in their white coveralls scrambled over their boat doing their work, the disabled *Miss Pepsi* dangled from the boom of a crane only a shouting distance away—the water tapping at the tip of its tail. Roy and Walter Dossin stood on the dock next to their



Lou Fageol drove *Slo-mo-shun V* to the official's barge when the race was over.

boat with grim expressions on their faces.

On the strength of its two heat victories, *Slo-mo V* had 800 points, 200 more than *Hornet's* total. *Slo-mo IV* had 450 points with two third-place finishes.

Among the boats far behind in the standings was a silver-colored step hull of the old flavor named *Quicksilver*, a craft owned and driven by a Portland tugboat captain named Orth Mathoit. He had built the boat from a set of plans drawn by famed designer John Hacker in about 1930 but, according to Ted Jones, it was not well constructed. And it was vastly overpowered. Instead of the 275-horsepower engine specified in the plans, *Quicksilver* had a powerplant that was capable of over 10 times that amount. Yet, despite his boat's great power, Mathoit had barely qualified. So far on race day he had a sixth-place finish in the first heat and did not start the second. Then came the final. As the cannon roared to signal the coming start, Mathoit shouted to *Such Crust* owner Jack Schafer, "We're going to shoot the works this time, whatever happens," and he drove his boat onto the course.

For this start, Morlan Visel in the massive dark-green and white *Hurricane IV* joined the two *Slo-mo* boats in their run from under the bridge to the starting line, but Foster had seen enough of that act and tried his best to put *Hornet* in position to disrupt the maneuver. As he emerged from the north turn, he let *Hornet* skid to his right—into *Slo-mo V's* path. But Fageol also swerved to his right, got around the green boat, and led the field across the line and into the first turn—with *Hornet* right behind—but only for a moment. As they roared up the backstretch, *Hornet* slowed, picked up speed again, then fell to a crawl and dropped out of the race. That left Fageol alone and well ahead once again—victory seemed assured.

Then, tragedy struck. While ending its second lap, far behind the leaders, *Quicksilver* took a wide arc coming out



Lou Fageol and Stan Sayres celebrate their victory with other members of the *Slo-mo* team.

of the north turn and passed so close to the official barge that, according to the report in *Time* magazine, "newsmen aboard could count the stitches on his [Mathoit's] lifebelt." About 300 yards past the barge, the boat launched itself into the air going about 120 miles per hour and disintegrated into a geyser of spray as it returned to the surface of Lake Washington. When rescuers arrived, they found only a few splinters of silver plywood floating on the water, two life jackets, a seat cushion, and one shoe with a sock still inside.

Race officials stopped the race—or, at least tried. The drivers, however, weren't getting the message and continued, unaware of what happened. In the confusion, *Hurricane IV* hit some of the wreckage and suffered hull damage, *Gale II* caught fire, and Fageol continued until he was in his ninth lap. "Unable to spot the frantic flag waving of starter Fred Hallett, the boats on the course continued for lap after lap," wrote *Yachting* magazine's Mel Crook, who also was serving as the referee for the race. "Finally repeated shots from the cannon caught their attention and the 44th Gold Cup contest settled into shocked silence."

Race officials ruled they would consider the first and second heats to be the full contest and declared Fageol the winner—but there was little celebrating. Divers found Mathoit's body two hours later and didn't recover the remains of his riding mechanic, Thompson Whitaker, until the next day.

Among the congratulatory messages that Sayres received with his second-straight Gold Cup victory was a telegram from Walter Dossin, co-owner of *Miss Pepsi*. "Congratulations to you and Lou Fageol in retaining the Gold Cup and running such a fine race," he wrote. "Your boats were wonderful. Hope to see you in Detroit."

1951 Seafair Trophy Race

The Seafair Trophy Race was scheduled for the following weekend, but the Detroit contingent had little taste for more. All six Motor City boats formed another caravan and, by early Tuesday morning, were already headed east on U.S. Route 10 across Snoqualmie Pass. The race instead became an exhibition where the two *Slo-mo* boats competed against three limited-class hydros on a five-mile course that would have been used if a

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Harmsworth race had been scheduled.

Jones won the first heat in *Slo-mo V* then Fageol won the second in *Slo-mo IV*. Before the final, Fageol told Jones, “Let’s make it look like a race. Let’s stay fairly close.” So, the two boats started side by side. *Slo-mo V* would go faster in the straightaways while *Slo-mo IV* performed better in the turns—until the final turn where, according to their agreement, they were on their own. “Well, he [Fageol] went on his own ahead of me,” Jones said. “Instantly, when he saw that buoy, he stood on it and got through the buoy, and I had to go around him on the outside.” When they reached the finish line, Jones and *Slo-mo V* crossed two or three boat lengths ahead. “Seattle deserved a good show that day,” Jones later admitted.

Vancouver Exhibition

Three weeks after winning their second Gold Cup, the *Slo-mo* team took a road trip north of the Canadian border to compete in a more friendly contest. There had been faint whispers that a group from British Columbia might try to challenge for the Harmsworth Trophy, so Sayres agreed to take both of his boats

140 miles north to Vancouver to help nudge that possibility along. They would make an exhibition on Burrard Inlet, the saltwater bay that sits on the north side of the city. The event’s promoter, the *Vancouver Sun* newspaper, billed it as “Vancouver’s most sensational waterfront event since Captain George Vancouver discovered our talent in 1792.”

The two hydroplanes left on Wednesday, August 29 under escort by the Washington State Patrol. They were then met at the border by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and taken to the fairgrounds of the annual Pacific National Exhibition, where the two boats sat on display outside the Hobby Show for three days. On Sunday afternoon, September 2, an estimated 100,000 spectators crowded the shore of Burrard Inlet to watch *Slo-mo IV* and *Slo-mo V* throw roostertails into the air. The boats went three times around a triangular-shaped course about four statute miles in length.

Organizers promised they would sweep the course with seine nets to clear any debris, but the rough water from an incoming tide made that impossible. Many on the *Slo-mo* crew suggested it was too dangerous to run, but Sayres put

the boats in the water, anyway.

Sayres took the controls of *Slo-mo V* in the first heat while Jones drove the sister with the red engine hood. Sayres finished a few feet ahead with an average speed of 90.864 mph, as compared with Jones at 90.6 mph. The two then switched boats the second time out. Driving *Slo-mo IV*, Sayres turned one lap at 110.6 mph and won again by a close margin—an average speed of 99.429 mph. In comparison, the boat with the yellow cowling and with Jones at the wheel went 99.1 mph. They both said they hit a top speed of about 140 mph. The schedule also called for an attempt to set a saltwater world speed record, but officials canceled that because of the conditions.

Before he returned to Seattle, Jones thanked the thousands of people who watched. “If the driftwood problem can be completely conquered, Burrard Inlet is a far better course than the Detroit River where they’ve had Gold Cup races for the last 40 years,” he said.

It was one of the last times Jones would sit in the cockpit of either boat. He left the team a few months later. When news of his departure reached the press in February 1952, the announcement made it sound as though he was leaving the team on good terms to seek an exciting new opportunity. But those who watched the team closely knew the reason was much deeper than that. Some even felt his departure was not voluntary—a consequence of the debacle surrounding the construction of *Slo-mo V*. ❖

Next Month, Slo-mo V wins another Gold Cup, performs an aerobatic maneuver that is still remembered, and concludes its racing career.



Seattle Museum of History and Industry

The *Slo-mo* team was honored at the Seattle Yacht Club after the 1951 season. On the table are, from the left, the Gold Cup, the Seafair Trophy, and the Martini & Rossi Trophy. Standing behind the trophies are, in the front row from the left, Lou Fageol, Stan Sayres, Ted Jones, Anchor Jensen, and Jerry Barker. In the middle row from the left, Ollie Meek, an unknown person not on the crew, Doc Lounsberry, and Bob Swanson. In the back row from the left, Elmer Linenschmidt, Mike Welsch, Ralph Shamic, Joe Schobert, and Hi Johnson.

The 2025 edition of the Hydro Record Book is now available.

For the sixth year in a row, the *Unlimited NewsJournal* has provided you with a document that can settle just about every debate you could ever have about the sport of Unlimited hydroplane racing. Don't remember who won the 1968 Wisconsin Cup in Madison, Wisconsin? The Record Book has the answer. (Billy Schumacher in *Miss Bardahl*.) Hasn't every true hydro fan had a debate with friends about which boat has finished the most heats? Now, you can settle the matter by checking page 27 of the Record Book. And, which driver has the best percentage of winning the heats he has finished? You know where to look.

The 2025 edition includes updated data using the results from last season. And, like the previous five editions, this year's Hydro Record Book offers a new feature. This year, it's an index by hull that lists every boat that has won a race since 1922.

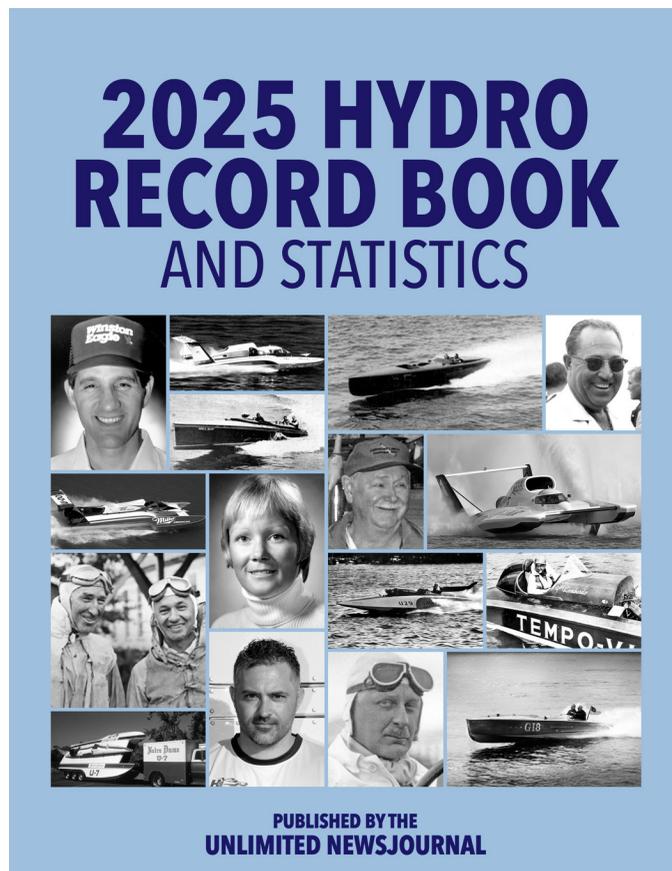
But, that's not all. The best thing about the Hydro Record Book is its price.

It's FREE!

To get your copy of this 52-page publication, simply go to our website. You can read it there, bookmark it, download it to your computer, or print yourself a copy. You'll find the Hydro Record Book at www.unlimitednewsjournal.net. Just click on the link at the top of the home page.

Every hydro fan needs a copy.

On the following pages are a few samples of what you'll find inside this year's edition of the Hydro Record Book.



MOST RACE VICTORIES BY A DRIVER:

1. Dave Villwock	67	12. Ron Musson	16	George Reis	9
2. Bill Muncey	62	Tom D'Eath	16	Jack Regas	9
3. Chip Hanauer	61	14. Chuck Thompson	15	25. Dan Arena	8
4. Dean Chenoweth	25	15. George Henley	12	26. Lee Schoenith	7
Jimmy Shane	25	Mark Tate	12	Scott Pierce	7
6. Jim Kropfeld	22	Gar Wood	12	Corey Peabody	7
Bill Cantrell	22	18. Mickey Remund	11		
8. Steve David	18	Andrew Tate	11		
9. Billy Schumacher	17	20. Mark Evans	10		
Danny Foster	17	Mira Slovak	10		
J. Michael Kelly	17	Bill Stead	9		

MOST RACES ENTERED BY A DRIVER:

1. Bill Muncey	194	15. Jerry Hopp	90	30. Steve Reynolds	59
2. Steve David	183	16. Bob Gilliam	86	31. Jack Schafer, Jr.	58
3. Chip Hanauer	158	17. Ron Snyder	85	32. Bob Schroeder	57
4. Dave Villwock	153	Jimmy King	85	George Woods, Jr.	57
5. Mitch Evans	145	19. Tom D'Eath	78	34. Chuck Hickling	56
6. Ken Muscatel	126	20. Nate Brown	77	Warner Gardner	56
7. Mike Hanson	124	21. Dean Chenoweth	76	Jeff Bernard	56
8. Bill Cantrell	118	22. Billy Schumacher	71	37. Mickey Remund	54
9. Mark Evans	109	Milner Irvin	71	38. Norm Evans	52
10. J. Michael Kelly	104	24. Jim McCormick	70	39. Brian Perkins	51
10. Fred Alter	101	Walt Kade	70	40. Danny Foster	50
11. Greg Hopp	97	26. Jim Kropfeld	69	41. Mark Weber	49
12. Mark Tate	94	27. Bob Miller	68	42. Lee Schoenith	48
13. Scott Pierce	93	28. Jimmy Shane	64		
14. Chuck Thompson	91	29. Todd Yarling	63		

BEST PERCENTAGE OF HEAT WINS vs. HEATS FINISHED BY A DRIVER:

1. Jimmy Shane	163	238	0.685	16. Billy Schumacher	77	166	0.464
2. Chip Hanauer	270	412	0.655	17. Bill Stead	27	59	0.458
3. Dave Villwock	346	537	0.644	18. Tom D'Eath	81	179	0.453
4. Jack Regas	35	59	0.593	19. Mira Slovak	43	96	0.448
5. Dean Chenoweth	113	193	0.585	20. Mark Tate	128	325	0.394
6. Ron Musson	61	106	0.575	21. Jean Theoret	44	112	0.393
7. Andrew Tate	63	114	0.553	22. Don Wilson	28	75	0.373
8. Jim Kropfeld	92	168	0.548	23. Bill Cantrell	66	183	0.361
9. Mickey Remund	63	118	0.534	24. Corey Peabody	27	77	0.351
10. Bill Muncey	234	451	0.519	25. Steve Reynolds	38	113	0.336
11. George Henley	38	76	0.500	26. Tommy Fults	17	52	0.327
12. Bill Sterett	31	63	0.492	27. Bill Brow	27	83	0.325
13. Danny Foster	42	86	0.488	28. Leif Borgersen	23	73	0.315
14. Guy Lombardo	26	54	0.481	29. Rex Manchester	16	61	0.314
15. Chuck Thompson	79	168	0.470	30. Warner Gardner	31	102	0.304

MOST RACE VICTORIES BY AN OWNER:

1. Bernie Little.....	134	Vanessa/Darrell Strong.....	13	29. Bob Steil.....	6
2. Miss Madison, Inc.....	42	16. George Simon.....	12	30. Herb Mendelson.....	5
3. Bill Muncey.....	29	Gar Wood.....	12	Jim Harvey.....	5
Joe Schoenith.....	29	18. William Waggoner.....	11	J. Gordon Thompson.....	5
5. Erick Ellstrom.....	28	Lori/Mike Jones.....	11	Milo/Glen Stoen.....	5
6. Ole Bardahl.....	27	20. Guy Lombardo.....	10	Vic Kliesrath.....	5
7. Dave Heerensperger.....	25	William Bennett.....	10	35. Jane/Billy Schumacher.....	4
8. Fran Muncey.....	24	22. George Reis.....	9	J.W. Whitlock.....	4
9. Ted Porter.....	18	Jack Schafer.....	9	Leslie Rosenberg.....	4
Willard Rhodes.....	18	24. Bill Harrah.....	8	Rob Graham.....	4
11. Fred Leland.....	17	Bill Wurster.....	8	Stan Dollar.....	4
12. Horace Dodge.....	15	Edgar Kaiser.....	8	Dan Arena.....	4
Steve Woomer.....	15	27. Stan Sayres.....	7		
14. Dossin Brothers.....	13	Joe Little.....	7		

MOST GOLD CUP VICTORIES BY AN OWNER:

1. Bernie Little.....	14	George Reis.....	3	Jesse Vincent.....	2
2. Fran Muncey.....	7	Jonathan Wainwright.....	3	Joe Schoenith.....	2
3. Miss Madison, Inc.....	6	Vanessa/Darrell Strong.....	3	Mike and Lori Jones.....	2
4. Erick Ellstrom.....	5	13. Caleb Bragg.....	2	Steve Woomer.....	2
Gar Wood.....	5	Dave Heerensperger.....	2	Vic Kliesrath.....	2
Ole Bardahl.....	5	Edward Schroeder.....	2	Zalmon Simmons.....	2
Stan Sayres.....	5	Fred Leland.....	2		
8. Willard Rhodes.....	4	George Townsend.....	2		
9. Bill Muncey.....	3	Horace Dodge.....	2		

MOST TOTAL RACE VICTORIES BY A HULL:

The boat name listed is the name the hull had when it first entered competition.

1. #0116 Miss E-Lam Plus.....	27	14. #5960 Miss Thriftway.....	14
2. #0001 (T-6) Miss Budweiser.....	26	#7025 Pride of Pay 'n Pak.....	14
3. #0706 Oh Boy! Oberto.....	25	16. #6240 Miss Bardahl.....	12
4. #7701 Atlas Van Lines.....	24	#8200 Atlas Van Lines.....	12
#8701 (T-2) Miss Budweiser.....	24	18. #6812 Miss Budweiser.....	11
6. #8700 Miss Circus Circus.....	23	19. #5608 Hawaii Kai III.....	10
#9712 (T-5) Miss Budweiser.....	23	#6740 Miss Bardahl.....	10
8. #7325 Pay 'n Pak.....	22	21. #2202 El Lagarto.....	9
#8012 Miss Budweiser.....	22	#1801 Miss HomeStreet.....	9
10. #92102 Coors Dry.....	19	23. #4803 My Sweetie.....	8
11. #9501 (T-3/rebuilt in 1995) Miss Budweiser.....	18	#5099 Miss Pepsi.....	8
12. #8401 Atlas Van Lines.....	17	#5513 Tempo VII.....	8
13. #8901 (T-3) Miss Budweiser.....	16	#7171 Atlas Van Lines.....	8

HERITAGE

Historical Perspective by Craig Fjarlie



Through the years with Miss Madison.

The recent news about the sale of the Miss Madison, Inc., racing team means it is a good time to review the history of the hydroplanes from Madison, Indiana. The legacy runs from 1961 through 2024. Numerous people have sweated over one or more of the boats in pit areas around the country, and some of the greatest drivers in racing have occupied the cockpits. Whether there will be another Miss Madison at some time in the future is impossible to predict. For now, the history of the team is where we will focus our attention.

Sam DuPont entered Unlimited racing in 1958 with a boat named *Nitrogen*. At the close of the 1960 season, he donated the craft to the City of Madison, which wanted to campaign it to promote the Ohio River town. The first *Miss Madison* entered competition in 1961 at the Detroit Memorial, with Marion Cooper driving.

A few weeks later the boat made the trek to Seattle for the Seafair regatta. That



Bob Carver Photos

The first Miss Madison used a hull that was donated to the community by Samuel DuPont in 1960.

year, Seafair ran a format of three races in one. The top seven qualifiers would compete for the World Championship, the next group ran in a separate race for the Seattle Trophy, and the third race for the Queen's Trophy was for the slowest three qualifiers. *Miss Madison* was in the second group and Cooper drove it to victory. The original boat's final appearance

was the 1963 Gold Cup, but new driver Morlan Visel was unable to qualify when the boat's left sponson came apart.

Meanwhile, DuPont had been running a new Staudacher hull named *Nitrogen Too*. Ron Musson drove it to victory in the 1960 Silver Cup. DuPont had stopped racing at the end of the 1960 season and *Nitrogen Too* became the new *Miss Madison* at the 1963 Madison Regatta. Buddy Byers drove through the 1965 season and won the Gunter'sville Regatta in his final year. Jim McCormick drove in 1966, then Ed O'Halloran drove the next two seasons. McCormick returned in 1969 and drove through 1971. In his final season with the boat, McCormick won the Gold Cup in front of the hometown crowd, and also won the Atomic Cup in Tri-Cities.

The Gold Cup winner was retired at the end of the 1971 season and was replaced by a new boat built by Gale Enterprises. Bill Muncey had been winning with a similar boat named *Atlas Van Lines*, powered by a Rolls-Merlin engine. The new *Miss Madison* used a tur-



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

The revolutionary "Winged Wonder" hydroplane continued to race 11 seasons for the Madison race team after finishing its career as *Pay 'N Pak*.

Madison Team Stats (1961-2024)

YEAR	BOAT	HULL#	DRIVER	RACE RESULTS				HEAT RESULTS				Pt.
				RACES	1st	2nd	3rd	START	DNS	FINISH	1st	
1961	Miss Madison	5879	Marion Cooper	5	1	0	0	13	0	13	2	0.154
1962	Miss Madison	5879	Marion Cooper	3	0	0	1	9	0	9	0	0.000
1963	Miss Madison	5879	Morlan Visel	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
	Miss Madison	6079	Buddy Byers	3	0	0	0	6	0	5	0	0.000
1964	Miss Madison	6079	Buddy Byers	9	0	3	3	27	0	27	5	0.185
1965	Miss Madison	6079	Buddy Byers	8	1	1	1	24	0	22	4	0.182
1966	Miss Madison	6079	Jim McCormick	9	0	0	1	20	2	18	2	0.111
1967	Miss Madison	6079	Ed O'Halloran	3	0	1	0	6	1	4	1	0.250
1968	Miss Madison	6079	Ed O'Halloran	4	0	0	0	10	0	8	0	0.000
1969	Miss Madison	6079	Jim McCormick	4	0	0	1	10	2	10	0	0.000
1970	Miss Madison	6079	Jim McCormick	5	0	0	2	15	0	15	4	0.267
1971	Miss Madison	6079	Jim McCormick	9	2	3	2	26	0	24	6	0.250
1972	Miss Madison	7206	Charlie Dunn	3	0	0	1	5	0	5	1	0.200
1973	Miss Madison	7206	Charlie Dunn	2	0	0	0	5	0	4	0	0.000
		7206	Tom Sheehy	7	0	0	0	18	1	17	1	0.059
1974	Miss Madison	7206	Milner Irvin	9	0	0	3	19	5	16	5	0.313
1975	Miss Madison	7206	Jerry Bangs	6	0	0	0	17	0	14	1	0.071
	Hamm's Bear	7206	Jerry Bangs	4	0	0	0	11	1	9	2	0.222
1976	Miss Madison	7206	Ron Snyder	6	0	0	2	16	1	14	2	0.143
	Miss Lynnwood	7206	Ron Snyder	2	0	0	1	4	1	4	0	0.000
1977	Miss Madison	7206	Jon Peddie	6	0	0	0	17	1	17	0	0.000
	Barney Armstrong's Machine	7206	Jon Peddie	2	0	0	0	5	1	5	1	0.200
	Starvin' Marvin's	7206	Jon Peddie	1	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	0.000
1978	Miss Madison	7206	Jon Peddie	7	0	2	0	15	3	12	1	0.083
1979	Miss Madison	7325	Milner Irvin	3	0	0	0	4	5	3	0	0.000
1980	Miss Madison	7325	Milner Irvin	8	0	1	1	19	5	15	1	0.067
	Dr. Toyota	7325	Milner Irvin	2	0	0	2	6	0	5	0	0.000
1981	Miss Madison	7325	Milner Irvin	5	0	1	3	14	0	14	4	0.286
	Frank Kenney Toyota/Volvo	7325	Milner Irvin	3	0	0	2	9	0	9	1	0.111
1982	Rich Plan Food Service	7325	Tom Sheehy	2	0	1	0	2	3	2	1	0.500
		7325	Ron Snyder	3	0	0	0	8	1	7	2	0.286
	Miss Madison	7325	Ron Snyder	1	0	1	0	2	1	2	0	0.000
	Frank Kenney Toyota/Volvo	7325	Ron Snyder	3	0	0	2	8	1	7	1	0.143
1983	Miss Rich Plan	7325	Ron Snyder	4	1	1	0	15	0	13	2	0.154
	Frank Kenney Toyota/Volvo	7325	Ron Snyder	3	0	0	2	6	2	3	2	0.667
1984	American Speedy Printing	7325	Ron Snyder	10	0	2	1	22	4	16	1	0.063
		7325	Milner Irvin	1	0	0	0	3	9	2	0	0.000
1985	American Speedy Printing	7325	Andy Coker	7	0	2	1	15	3	11	0	0.000
	Miss Madison	7325	Andy Coker	2	0	0	0	6	0	6	1	0.167
1986	Miss Madison	7325	Ron Snyder	1	0	1	0	3	0	3	1	0.333
	Holset/Miss Madison	7325	Ron Snyder	9	0	0	1	25	1	20	4	0.200
1987	Holset/Miss Madison	7325	Ron Snyder	8	0	0	1	22	1	19	4	0.211
1988	Holset/Miss Madison	7325	Ron Snyder	7	0	1	0	16	2	14	0	0.000
		7325	Mike Hanson	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0.000
1989	Holset/Miss Madison	8806	Mike Hanson	6	0	0	2	17	2	16	0	0.000
	Holset/Miss Mazda	8806	Mike Hanson	4	0	1	1	14	0	13	3	0.231
1990	Holset/Miss Madison	8806	Mike Hanson	8	0	0	1	25	2	18	1	0.056
	Holset/Miss Mazda	8806	Mike Hanson	2	0	1	0	5	0	3	0	0.000
	Holset/Miss U.S. Star	8806	Mike Hanson	1	0	1	0	5	0	4	0	0.000
	Gaylord's at Kilohana	8806	Mike Hanson	1	0	0	0	4	1	3	1	0.333
1991	Valvoline/Miss Madison	8806	Mike Hanson	3	0	1	1	14	0	13	3	0.231
	Kellogg's Frosted Flakes	8806	Mike Hanson	3	0	0	0	12	1	10	2	0.200
1992	Kellogg's Tony the Tiger	8806	Mike Hanson	9	0	0	2	36	5	34	9	0.265
1993	Kellogg's Frosted Flakes	8806	Mike Hanson	10	1	3	2	40	2	40	8	0.200
1994	Powerball Miss Madison	8806	Mike Hanson	1	0	0	0	4	0	3	0	0.000
1995	Jasper Engines & Transmissions	8806	Mike Hanson	4	0	0	0	15	1	14	3	0.214
	DeWalt Tools	8806	Mike Hanson	3	0	0	0	11	1	8	0	0.000
1996	DeWalt Tools	8806	Mike Hanson	10	0	1	3	37	0	36	5	0.139
1997	DeWalt Tools	8806	Mike Hanson	9	0	0	3	37	0	37	3	0.081
1998	Miss Madison	8806	Mike Hanson	10	0	0	1	4	0	3	0	0.000
1999	Miss Madison	8806	Todd Yarling	5	0	0	1	18	1	17	3	0.176
2000	Miss Madison	8806	Charley Wiggins	3	0	0	0	10	1	9	1	0.111
	Miss Madison	8806	Jerry Hopp	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0.000
	Oh Boy! Oberto	8806	Nate Brown	3	0	0	2	12	0	12	3	0.250
2001	Oh Boy! Oberto	8806	Steve David	6	1	0	1	24	0	23	3	0.130
2002	Oh Boy! Oberto	8806	Steve David	6	0	0	1	24	0	22	1	0.045
2003	Oh Boy! Oberto	8806	Steve David	5	0	0	1	16	2	15	3	0.200
2004	Oh Boy! Oberto	8806	Steve David	6	0	2	2	25	0	24	6	0.250
2005	Oh Boy! Oberto	8806	Steve David	7	1	2	2	28	0	24	9	0.375
2006	Oh Boy! Oberto	8806	Steve David	7	0	2	2	25	2	25	5	0.200
2007	Oh Boy! Oberto	0706	Steve David	6	2	3	0	24	0	24	9	0.375
2008	Oh Boy! Oberto	0706	Steve David	5	1	3	0	19	0	19	9	0.474
2009	Oh Boy! Oberto	0706	Steve David	6	1	2	2	22	0	20	11	0.550
2010	Oh Boy! Oberto	0706	Steve David	6	3	2	1	26	0	26	14	0.538
2011	Oh Boy! Oberto	0706	Steve David	5	2	1	1	20	0	19	12	0.632
	Oh Boy! Oberto	92102	Jon Zimmerman	1	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0.000
2012	Oh Boy! Oberto	0706	Steve David	6	2	3	0	26	0	26	16	0.615
2013	Oh Boy! Oberto	0706	Steve David	7	2	2	1	28	1	28	18	0.643
2014	Oberto	0706	Jimmy Shane	6	2	1	1	26	0	25	16	0.640
2015	Oberto	0706	Jimmy Shane	5	3	0	0	20	0	20	16	0.800
2016	Miss HomeStreet Bank	0706	Jimmy Shane	5	3	2	0	22	0	22	17	0.773
2017	Miss HomeStreet	0706	Jimmy Shane	6	2	1	3	25	0	25	16	0.640
2018	Miss HomeStreet	0706	Jimmy Shane	3	1	1	0	13	0	9	7	0.778
	Miss HomeStreet	1801	Jimmy Shane	3	0	1	0	12	1	12	9	0.750
2019	Miss HomeStreet	1801	Jimmy Shane	5	2	1	1	23	0	23	19	0.826
	Oberto Super Salami	0706	Jeff Bernard	3	0	0	1	13	0	12	2	0.167
2021	Goodman/Miss HomeStreet	0706	Jeff Bernard	1	0	0	0	3	0	3	2	0.667
	Goodman/Miss HomeStreet	0706	Jimmy Shane	2	1	0	0	5	0	5	4	0.800
	Miss HomeStreet	1801	Jimmy Shane	2	0	1	1	9	0	9	7	0.778
2022	Miss Goodman Real Estate	0706	Jeff Bernard	8	0	5	1	27	1	27	2	0.074
	Miss HomeStreet	1801	Jimmy Shane	8	5	0	1	25	0	23	21	0.913
2023	Miss Goodman Real Estate	0706	Andrew Tate	3	0	2	0	12	0	12	4	0.333
	Miss HomeStreet	1801	Dylan Runne	4	0	0	0	16	0	14	1	0.071
2024	Miss Goodman Real Estate	1801	Andrew Tate	5	2	1	0	21	0	20	13	0.650
				445	42	67	77	1412	82	1301	380	0.292

bocharged Allison. Charlie Dunn was the driver in 1972. Part way through 1973, he was replaced by Tom Sheehy. Milner Irvin took over in 1974, then Jerry Bangs drove in 1975.

In 1975, when the need for sponsorship money became apparent, the boat's name was changed to *Hamm's Bear* at Western races.

Ron Snyder was in the cockpit of *Miss Madison* the following season. He finished third three times, but that was the best the boat could do. At Tri-Cities and Seattle, the name was changed to *Miss Lynnwood*. Jon Peddie drove in 1977 in what would be the boat's final season. The name was changed to *Barney Armstrong's Machine* at Tri-Cities and Seattle, and *Starvin' Marvin* in San Diego.

The former winged wonder *Pay 'n Pak* became *Miss Madison* in 1978. That year, the Gold Cup was held in Owensboro, Kentucky, and Peddie picked up second place. He stepped aside after the Madison Regatta and Milner Irvin was in the cockpit when the circuit headed west. He continued as driver through 1981. The boat's name was changed to *Dr. Toyota* at the two Northwest races in 1980, and *Frank Kenney Toyota/Volvo* at three western races in '81.

Tom Sheehy drove the fourth *Miss Madison* at the first two races of 1982, then Ron Snyder took over the cockpit duties and continued as driver through 1984. He won the 1983 Missouri Governor's Cup; the boat was named *Miss Rich Plan* at that event. The boat carried the name *American Speedy Printing* in 1984 and again in 1985, when rookie Andy Coker was the driver. Snyder drove again in 1986 and continued through 1988. Most of those years, the boat carried the name *Holset Miss Madison*.

At Tri-Cities in 1988, the Madison team had a new Ron Jones cabover hull with the name *Holset Miss Madison*. The new boat replaced the former *Pay 'n Pak* hull at Tri-Cities. Snyder drove the first weekend, but Mike Hanson was in the cockpit at Seattle. Snyder drove again at San Diego, then Hanson held the cockpit through 1998. During those years, the boat carried names such as *Holset Miss Madison*, *Holset Miss Mazda*, *Gaylord's at Kilohana*, *Valvoline Miss Madison*, *Kellogg's Tony The Tiger*, *Kellogg's Frosted Flakes*, *Jasper Engines and Transmissions*, and *Dewalt Tools*. Hanson won the San Diego race in 1993 after starting in the trailer position. The boat was converted from Allison to turbine power in 1991.

In 1998 the team was without a sponsor and the boat only ran at the Madison Regatta, with the name *Miss Madison*. Todd Yarling was the driver at that race and in 1999. Charley Wiggins drove at three races in 2000, and Jerry Hopp filled in for one heat. Nate Brown drove the West Coast races in 2000. Steve David began driving for the team from Madison in 2001 when the boat was named *Oh Boy! Oberto*. David won the hometown race and immediately endeared himself to the city.

A new boat was built by Mike Hanson and Rick Bowles



The Madison race team ended its involvement in the sport by winning the 2024 national title with Andrew Tate driving *Miss Goodman Real Estate*.

for 2007. Oberto remained on board as sponsor and David continued as driver. He won two races with the new boat in its first season, one race in 2008 and in 2009, three races in 2010, and won the national championship in each of those three years.

David had a frightening incident at Madison in 2011. In the final heat, *Oh Boy! Oberto* was chasing Dave Villwock in *Spirit of Qatar*. Going into the second turn on lap four, *Qatar* turned directly into the path of *Oberto* and spun out. *Oberto* ran over *Qatar*, barrel-rolled, and landed right-side up. Neither driver was seriously injured. *Qatar* was disqualified for causing the accident and because three laps had been completed, the win went to *Oh Boy! Oberto*.

In spite of the victory, the boat was too badly damaged to compete in the Gold Cup the next weekend. The Madison team leased the U-9 from Mike and Lori Jones. Their boat ran in the Gold Cup as *Oh Boy! Oberto* with Jon Zimmerman in the cockpit. The regular *Oberto* was ready to run at West Coast races and won at Seattle. Steve David drove for two more seasons, winning two races and the national title in 2012 and two races in 2013.

Jimmy Shane took over the driving duties in 2014. The boat's name was shortened to *Oberto*. Shane won two rac-

es and the national title in 2014 as well as three races and another title in 2015. HomeStreet Bank became the sponsor in 2016, and remained with the Madison team through 2023.

Shane won three races and the national championship in 2016, two more races and another title in 2017, and had one race victory in 2018.

The Madison team unveiled a new boat at Tri-Cities in 2018. Built by Hanson and Bowles, it was lighter and faster than the boat it would replace. The 2007 boat ran at Tri-Cities, but the new boat entered competition at Seattle. There were still some bugs to sort out, but Shane took second at the Gold Cup in Detroit. In 2019, Shane won the first two races of the season and was second at San Diego. The 2007 hull also ran at West Coast events in 2019 with the name *Oberto Super Salami* and was driven by Jeff Bernard.

In 2021, the 2007 boat ran at the first two races with the name *Goodman/Miss HomeStreet*. Bernard drove at Guntersville, Shane drove at Madison and won the Gold Cup. The 2018 hull was used at West Coast races with the name *Miss HomeStreet*. In 2022 and 2023, the Madison team fielded two boats. The 2018 hull, driven by Shane in 2022, was named *Miss HomeStreet*. The 2007 boat was driven by Jeff Bernard and was named

Miss Goodman Real Estate.

Shane retired at the end of the 2022 season and was replaced in the *Miss HomeStreet* cockpit by rookie Dylan Runne. The 2007 hull again ran as *Miss Goodman Real Estate*, this time with Andrew Tate as driver. Runne appeared to be too cautious in his driving, but word has slowly leaked out that the team knew the HomeStreet sponsorship was going away, and if the 2018 boat were to have an accident, there may not be funds available to repair it. Tate, however, was free to drive hard in the 2007 boat and picked up second place in the Gold Cup at Seattle.

In 2024, the 2007 boat stayed in the shop. Andrew Tate drove the 2018 boat, now carrying the name *Miss Goodman Real Estate*. He won two races and the national championship. Following the season, the announcement was made that the entire Madison team had been sold to Bruce Ratchford, who had sponsored Charley Wiggins's boat as *Apollo*. The sale marked the end of the City of Madison's involvement in Unlimited hydroplane racing.

From 1961 through 2024, the seal of the City of Madison has appeared on a boat. The increasing cost of campaigning an Unlimited hydroplane meant the Madison boat carried corporate names, but the seal was still evident. Whether there will be another hydroplane with a civic connection to Madison is unknown at this time. If it never happens, the citizens of Madison still can be proud of the legacy their boats established. *Miss Madison*, in all its variations, went from an also-ran to the best boat on the circuit. It's a great achievement for that small town on the Ohio River. ❖

AROUND THE CIRCUIT

Race Team and Race Site News by Chris Tracy



The off-season in Unlimited hydroplane racing is often referred to as the Silly Season, the time when gossip and rumors circulate. But this off-season has resulted in considerable news and plenty of drama.

Sale of the Madison Team: The Saga Continues

We reported last month that the Miss Madison Race Team had been sold to Bruce Ratchford, the founder and CEO of Apollo Mechanical, a contracting company based in the Tri-Cities.

When boats are sold, the deal generally comes without (much) controversy or drama. The Little family sold two boats to Ted Porter. And Rob Graham bought his boat from Porter. When Darrell Strong moved from being a sponsor to an owner, he purchased a boat from Mike Jones and one from Erick Ellstrom. Scott and Shannon Raney have acquired boats over the years from other owners. Charley Wiggins purchased his boat from Nate Brown to get into Unlimited racing. The O'Farrell team acquired a boat from a California owner, Kevin Aylesworth, raced it and eventually it was passed on to Kelly Stocklin and the Bucket List Racing team. Boats and sometimes teams sell without much fanfare and without notice to fans. But there has been plenty of drama surrounding the sale of the two Madison boats and assets.

Now, additional news adds a new wrinkle to the matter of the Madison sale. It all stems from confusion over who exactly was the owner of the Miss Madison Race Team. The team was viewed by some, rightly or wrongly, as city-owned and some believe the boats and equipment were community assets. The mayor of the City of Madison is among those who believe the boats and equipment belonged to the citizens of Madison. Charlie Grooms, the chair of the committee that operated the team and the team manager, says he had been funding the team with his own money the last few years.

The sale of the boats and assets were forced due to a sizable debt the team had accumulated in recent years, and the sale was pretty much done quietly. The mayor claims he should have been informed of the sale before it was finalized. And this has brought public scrutiny within the Madison city government. The mayor says the management of the race team should have been done by a committee that he appointed, not by the group that was making the decisions, and he has replaced the Miss Madison board. And there has been a fair amount of press. Lots of blame going on—from both sides.

The *Madison Courier* newspaper has done a pretty good job of describing the two sides, with two different reporters providing two different perspectives. David Campbell has ar-

ticulated the position of Charlie Grooms and reporter Bob Demaree has reported the city's perspective, especially from the mayor of Madison. (On Facebook, Hydro News has the full text of the articles.)

The *NewsJournal* is here just to report on the issue, not to take sides. That said, I've read the reporting and I can say that both sides tend to leave out pieces that don't support their positions. But the bottom line is that the Madison team was under an unsurmountable amount of debt—close to being under water—and likely the selling of the team was the only way to pay off their bills. With the accumulated debt, it would have been highly unlikely that Madison could have fielded a boat in 2025. It has been reported that Bruce Ratchford paid \$1.5 million for the Miss Madison, Inc., assets and likely nearly all of it will be used to pay off debt.

Stay tuned ... more news to come. Now, the attorneys are getting involved.

The New Owner:

Bruce Ratchford entered the sport in 2024, big time! His company, Apollo Mechanical, sponsored Charley Wiggins's U-27. Ratchford did not stop with sponsoring a boat in 2024; in addition, Apollo Mechanical inked a three-year deal to be the title sponsor for the Tri-Cities race and sponsored the Unlimited race in Seattle—the two races with the largest attendance on the circuit.

But, during the off-season, Ratchford stepped it up even more! The *NewsJournal* has been told that Ratchford has recently purchased the Wiggins hull, which campaigned last year as *Miss Apollo*. In late December, Ratchford acquired the assets of the Miss Madison organization, including both of their contemporary hulls, and the Tukwila shop contents and shop lease.

News outlets have reported that the Goodman Real Estate sponsorship will continue with the formerly Madison-owned boat (Hull #1801), with Mike Hanson as the crew chief and Andrew Tate as the driver. It is believed that Dave Villwock will drive the boat formerly owned by Charley Wiggins. Some sources have indicated that Villwock might also be the team manager for the boat he drives. The 2007 hull (Hull #0706), acquired in the Madison asset purchase, will be a back-up boat for the Ratchford team, which will compete as BWR Racing.

News From H1 Unlimited

Just before this month's *NewsJournal* was put to bed, H1 Unlimited issued a press release about the organization's plans for

2025. Before getting into that, a little background is necessary: As we detailed in an article that we published a year ago (look for it in the January 2024 issue of UNJ) when the governance of the sport changed, there were two entities running the sport of Unlimited hydroplane racing in the United States. A non-profit corporation called the American Boat Racing Association (commonly known as H1 Unlimited) is responsible for establishing the rules and governing all race activities. And, beginning last year, another group was involved in running the sport. Called Hydrotown Group, LLC, it was organized as a for-profit company to improve the marketing of the sport. When it was organized, Hydrotown was managed by a board that had four governors: Darrell Strong, Charlie Grooms, Mike Denslow and Tim Story.

As of last December, the State of Washington's Secretary of State website now says that Hydrotown Group has been administratively dissolved and a new group has been created called Hydrotown Racing, Inc. This new organization has only one governor: Darrell Strong. *NewsJournal* sources report that Bruce Ratchford may join forces with Strong and Hydrotown Racing, Inc.

The press release issued by H1 Unlimited announces that Hydrotown has secured multi-year contracts with all of the existing race sites and it outlines the goals for 2025, which are centered on promoting the sport and strengthening the production of the livestreaming broadcasts. Hydrotown has funded the restructuring and upgrading of equipment for livestream coverage, according to the press release. It has contracted with Two-Plank Productions to bring in a producer with an extensive background with extreme motorsports and direct connections with major streaming and broadcast networks.

As part of the effort, Hydrotown has made a substantial six-figure investment in livestream. It has acquired a broadcast production trailer that will be outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment and satellite internet. Coverage will be wall-to-wall five to six hours each race day. Viewers can look forward to more drone coverage and more live interviews.

News About Other Race Teams:

Graham Trucking:

The team will have a new driver in 2025: Jeff Bernard. We have been told by *UNJ* contacts that Bernard will likely be active in helping recruit additional crew members and may have some crew responsibilities, as well. Bobby King leaves on good terms. With King living out of state from the Graham shop, Bernard is likely a more ideal fit to support the team and crew with responsibilities besides driving.

Go Fast Turn Left:

Greg O'Farrell's racing team has announced that it will return to their former U number: U-21 for 2025. The *UNJ* has been told that in addition to the U-21, that both the 1996 Leland hull (below) and the 2001 Ellstrom boat are at their shop. It appears that work is being done on the former Leland hull and looks like it has a new cockpit. Earlier the team obtained the former *Miss Freei* Unlimited hydroplane and did a cosmetic restoration, with lettering and graphics that promoted a pre-school.



A UNJ Secret Agent

Bucket List Racing:

As mentioned last month, Dustin Echols has decided not to drive next year for the Bucket List team. A *UNJ* contact asked owner, Kelly Stocklin, if a new driver would be announced soon and was told, "No." ❖

MY \$0.02 WORTH

Editorial Comment by Andy Muntz



The disputed sale of the Miss Madison Racing Team brings to a sad close the last remaining remnant of a peculiar aspect of this sport's history that today's fans might find unfamiliar, or at least surprising.

Shortly after the turn of the 20th Century, when long and narrow motor boats powered by internal-combustion engines were starting to become popular, there came a need to do something about all the impromptu races between the speedboat owners of different yacht clubs that were continually popping up on the Hudson River and other bodies of water near New York City. The sport of hydroplane racing was founded on the idea of organizing the chaos. In early 1903, the representatives of several yacht clubs got together at New York's Columbia Yacht Club to develop some rules, and from that meeting came a new organization: the American Power Boat Association.

During the first half century of the sport, the boat races were organized by yacht clubs with contestants that were the members of other yacht clubs. The sport

was a pastime for millionaires. In fact, until 1948, advertising on the boats was strongly discouraged. So, the boats had pet names. For example, Warren Avis, the founder of the well-known car-rental company, might have been tempted to give his boat the name of his new company, but instead it raced in 1948 as *Miss Frostie*.

The races had an amateur ring to them, as well. Prize money wasn't offered to the contestants of an Unlimited race, even into the 1960s. The winner might instead get a gold-plated loving cup or silver platter for the trophy case, but no money. That didn't come about until rulings from the tax court made it possible to operate a hydroplane and the races like a business.

As the transition to professionalism was taking place within the sport, Samuel DuPont, the owner of a couple of hydros named *Nitrogen* and *Nitrogen Too* was persuaded in December 1960 to donate one of his boats to the City of Madison as a tax write-off. The craft, renamed *Miss Madison*, was operated by the people of

that community. Then, in 1963, when a member of the Madison group offered DuPont \$5,000 to purchase a spare engine, he instead came away with DuPont's other boat and the team's entire stock of equipment.

Operating an Unlimited hydroplane is an expensive undertaking, especially for a non-profit community-based organization. As the years went on, the team dabbled more and more into the high-cost world of getting progressively better equipment and needing the involvement of sponsors who were demanding greater results for their sizable investment. And, as this went on, the debt grew, until finally reaching the point where the enterprise was no longer sustainable.

So, in many ways the sale of the Miss Madison Racing Team concludes the last reminder of those bygone days when profit wasn't the sport's driving force, and when a small community could get involved in the sport and call one of the hydroplanes their own. ❖

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