

DECEMBER 2012

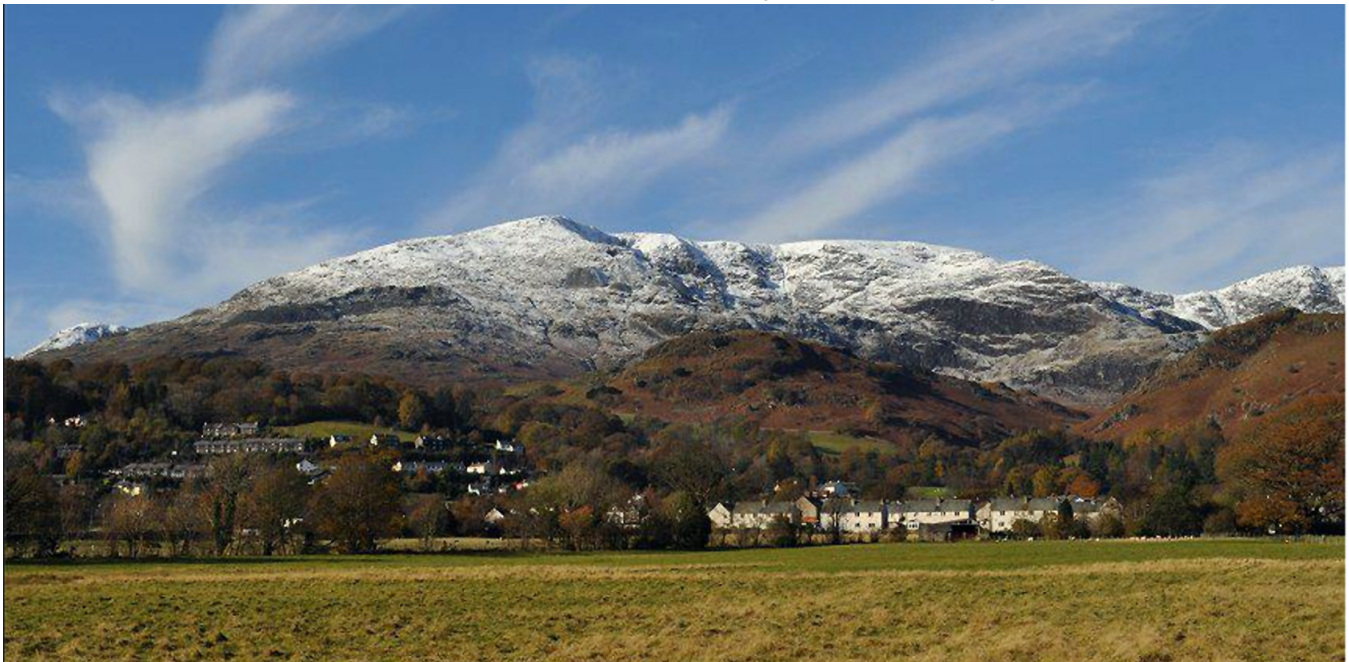


# Coniston Welcomes the Unlimited Racing Group

- J. W. Meyers sets a new British propeller record -

by Malcolm Pittwood, Speed Record Club

Photos from Anthony Stuchbury



Nestling in the southern part of the Cumbrian Lake District, Coniston Water lies between the rocky fells forming part of the Langdale system and the Grizedale forest. Of course, Coniston is best known as the place where Donald Campbell's last great joust with speed ended on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1967, but today, for 51 weeks of the year, the water is quiet (except when the RAF jets fly through on low level sorties) and the sleepy village near to the water's edge welcomes tourists, walkers and climbers on holiday. For the remaining week of the year, however, old ghosts are stirred and there is the sound and action of powerful small and large watercraft whose pilots aim, during Records Week, to establish or break World and National Speed Records. For these craft the 10 mph speed limit is lifted and the fastest contenders reach over 140 mph through the measured kilometre.



The village of Coniston in the Cumbrian Lake District area of England boasts the 2,634 ft. high Old Man fell as well as the five mile long lake known as Coniston Water. For the 2012 event snow had already settled on the upper slopes of the Old Man and the hills above the village, yet the trees wore their autumn colours of gold, orange and red.



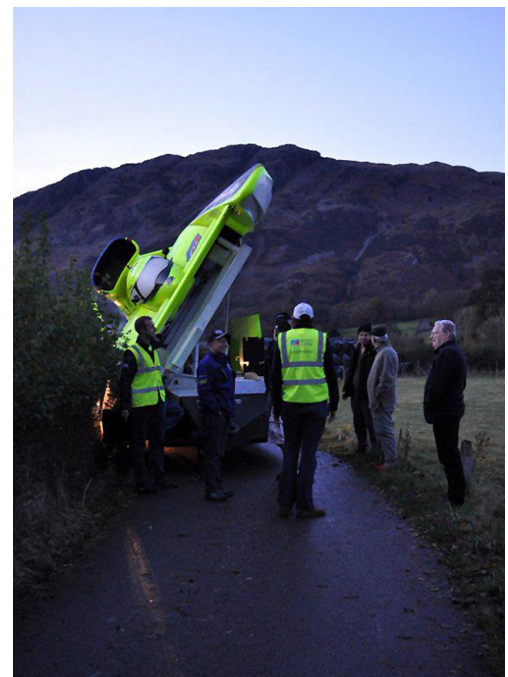
For the last eight years the annual Powerboat Records week has been held by the Record Attempts Committee of the

Windermere Motor Boat Racing Club on Coniston, which is allowed by the by-laws. Before the imposition of the speed limit for powered craft, Records Week had been held on Windermere, to the east of the forest.



For the 42<sup>nd</sup> running of kilometre speed records, where competitors attempt RYA and UIM National British and World Records, the first Unlimited Hydroplane from the USA was entered by the Unlimited Racing Group from Edmunds, WA. The U-11 *Peters & May* was to be driven by her regular pilot and co-owner J. W. Myers, who had recovered from a crash earlier in the racing season. The boat was presented in the H1 racing configuration for this speed attempt, governed by the rules of the UIM, as it would be raced in the Air National Guard H1 Unlimited Hydroplane Series ([www.h1unlimited.com](http://www.h1unlimited.com)).

Having left the UK headquarters of Peters & May located in Southampton on the South Coast of England where the boat had been transhipped, the U-11 team had a tow of over 350 miles to reach the Lake District. The Peterbilt tractor unit and the trailer had to contend with driving on the wrong side of the road as well as the narrow country roads, bends and bridges as they approached Cumbria. This meant that the journey took much longer than expected and as the light was fading the team





convoy approached the road to their temporary pit location at Pier Cottage. The sharp bend in the narrow and elevated approach roadway across the final field defeated the transport driver. There was no room for further maneuvering. The trailer had to be unhitched and maneuvered the last few hundred yards into the Pier Cottage yard by a farm tractor.

Pier Cottage was the historic location chosen by seven times World Water Speed Record holder Campbell for the pit area for his jet-powered hydroplane *Bluebird K7* for all of his UK based attempts following his 1955 effort at Ullswater. Alongside the cottage is the mooring jetty which Donald left for the last time on that long ago January morning for his final bid which would sadly end in the looping flight and fatal crash into the dark waters. For Records Week 2012 the U-11 *Peters & May* craft would be craned into the lake alongside the Pier Cottage mooring jetty, allowing J. W. to step aboard for the tow.

As snow on the Old Man fell the U-11 team members faced their first morning in Coniston after freezing overnight temperatures had left a coating of ice over the upper surfaces of the boat. As Records Week got underway for the other competitors the professional crew of URG led by Scott Raney prepared the U-11 for competition. Following a static engine test of the Lycoming T55 L7 turbine the boat was craned into the water beside the Pier Cottage jetty before being towed to the holding point close to the Bluebird Café on the lake shore.

Team member Aaron Salmon was making record attempts in the *Peters & May* 0.350 hydroplane and he went down the course ahead of the planned run of U-11 so he could report the water conditions to the team. This plan was looking sound until Aaron reached the buoys marking the northern timing point, whereupon the engine seized and the pilot and craft were left stranded in the centre of the course. Help from the on-water safety and support crews was soon at hand and via a slow return to the jetty at the north end of the lake (slow, to prevent disturbance to the water for other speed contenders) Aaron was eventually returned to the U-11 base.



Owner Charles Morris invited the U-11 team to visit the Helical Technologies, Lytham St Annes, Lancashire above. In the background is the replica K777.



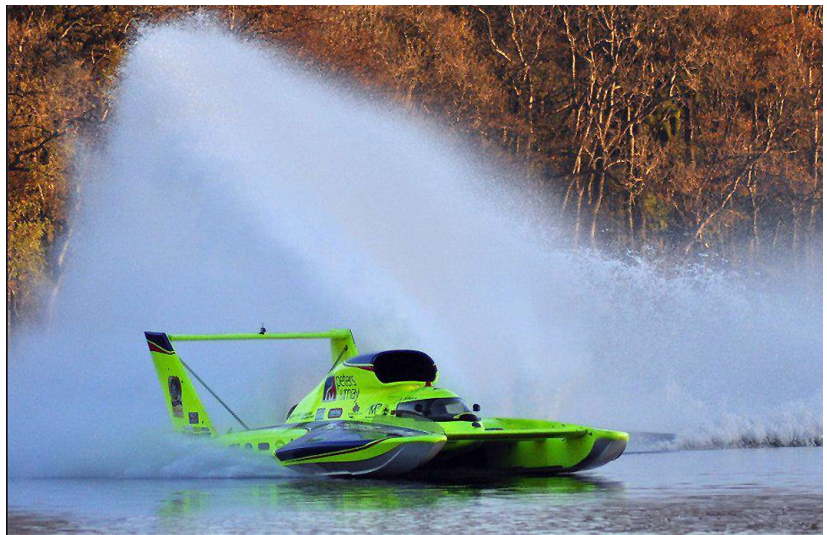


Seasoned veteran watchers of Records Week were surprised that even late in the afternoon the water surface remained smooth, reflecting the autumn forest trees. Once given clearance by the officer of the day, the person who controls the 'stack' of entries, J. W. fired the turbine and powered on to the glass smooth surface of Coniston Water to make his first attempt over two consecutive runs. The first run from north to south was timed at an average speed of 140.689 mph through the kilometre. Turning at the southern end of the lake he made a return pass at 180.108 mph – the fastest speed timed on this lake since 1967. The new World and National record for the H1 class was established at 160.40 mph. The U-11 boys made it look easy.

Taking advantage of the 'back to back' running opportunity, J. W. turned the U-11 at the northern end of the lake and made another north to south run. This time he averaged 171.676 mph having had to adjust his alignment to the course, which slowed his acceleration into the kilo. The fourth and what was to be his final run on Monday 5 November was quickly made at 180.544 mph to raise his minutes-old record to an average speed of 176.11 mph by averaging runs three and four. Daylight was fading fast and with other competitors still to make their attempts the Peters & May U-11 team returned their craft to Pier Cottage.

J. W. explained how the boat needed a different trim setting to overcome the suction of the very smooth water surface. To go faster he also needed some disturbance on the water to go along with these trim adjustments to the craft. Unlimited hydroplanes tend to run better in light popple.

To round off the end of their first successful day the URG team members were introduced to the English beer and real ales served in the local public



U-11 Peters & May kilometer record run





houses. Two of the pubs were themselves part of the Campbell story in Coniston, as they hosted the boat crew and press during the outright speed bids of Malcolm and Donald. U-11 team members were able to admire the photographs of the K7 record bid displayed on the bar walls. Some could be seen hanging alongside the still photography taken during the filming of the television play 'Across the Lake', which dramatized Donald Campbell's fated record attempt. In particular the iconic image of the Christmas Day run taken from high above the lake looking down on K7 captured the imagination of team members as the speed then was about 250 mph. This was an estimate as the timekeepers had gone home for the Christmas holidays and Donald ran K7 just to increase boat speed and hone his skills as the conditions were for once so good. [Just over 100 miles east of Coniston the recovered K7 is being rebuilt in Newcastle, ready to be conserved as an operating boat for future generations to admire in the museum in the centre of the village].

For the URG team the conditions the following morning were milder but what they and the other contenders got on the second day of Records Week was a very strong wind which caused waves and white tops on the surface. No hydroplanes were able to run in such conditions, thus leaving the water to the more stable offshore racing boats which would 'benefit' from running.

Preparing the engine for the second day the warm-up process included toasting a pork pie in the turbine exhaust. The team members had been introduced to the Scotch Egg and the individual Pork Pie. So should you be able to meet the crew at forthcoming H1 race meetings do question them about who ate these foods. Perhaps the incineration is an indication of how much they liked the pie.

After the Tuesday lunch break the entire Osprey safety crews and boats were back near the launch jetties and the safety course. Any hydroplane with an enclosed capsule needs these volunteers and their boats to be in position for immediate safety cover when adjusting craft and tackling the two buoy course, and of course the Peters and May U-11 team was keen to have another go in spite of the poor water conditions.

U-11 was towed to the safety course so that J. W. could determine whether greater speed could be achieved with the different trim settings. In a light drizzle, four laps around the safety course, cornering at up to 140 mph, confirmed that there could be, should the weather improve during the afternoon. Unfortunately the Cumbrian weather gods were not going to relent so *Peters & May* was returned to base, craned on to its trailer, and prepared for the journey



via Southampton onwards to Doha, Qatar for the final Air National Guard H1 race of the Unlimited 2012 season in January.

During the evening and after the fundraising quiz, J. W. Myers was presented with the trophy awarded by the organizers for the fastest boat at Records Week. This was a popular award as everyone who had witnessed the Monday runs knew that no other entrant would achieve such velocity later in the week.

The whole team had enjoyed their relatively short stay in Coniston and the members were keen to experience again the enthusiasm shown for Record Week by spectators, competitors and the organizing team that made the event possible. Dave Holley of Peters and May said he was hopeful that the U-11 *Peters & May* hydroplane would be able to return to Coniston in 2013 for the 43<sup>rd</sup> Records Week.



# More Shots from Lake Coniston

## from Anthony Stuchbury



As a nice footnote; Due to the visit of the Peters & May team to showcase the sport in the United Kingdom, Tony and his wife are currently planning a trip to Seattle and 'The Albert Lee cup' to watch the racing which coincides with their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013. We (UNJ) hopes to see them and welcome them to America. ~ Editor



# First Time

by Craig Fjarlie

When I witnessed Jimmy Shane score his first victory in an unlimited hydroplane race this past summer, I started thinking about all the times I've been at a race when a driver won for the first time. For Shane, it was an emotional moment coupled with surprise. J. Michael Kelly hit rough water which allowed Shane to surge ahead and take the checkered flag by a scant few feet. I've been attending races for over 50 years; this was the closest finish I've ever seen. ~ Karl Pearson photo

As a child, I watched races on live television and saw a number of drivers win for the first time. The list in this column will be limited to those I saw in person. The first time I watched a driver make an inaugural trip to the winner's circle was when



Jim Ranger drove *My Gypsy* to victory in the 1966 Seafair race. Had he won 10 years earlier, his accomplishment



with a Detroit-based boat probably would have been greeted with boos. However, the era of the yacht clubs was over and the boat's home port no longer mattered. Besides, *Gypsy* was a strikingly beautiful wooden boat with a snorting ram's head on the tail fin. It was a fan favorite.

The Rangers and crew win at Seattle. ~ Sandy Ross Collection

Several years passed before I saw another driver win for the first time. The 1974 Miami race was marred by the tragic death of Skipp Walther in a pre-race testrun. Howie Benns was the rookie driver of *Miss Budweiser*. Several of the top boats had problems and Benns drove home a winner. Bernie Little was less than congratulatory. "I suppose you think you were great," he scowled at Benns. "You were awful." Benns made an "aw shucks" shrug and let it go. ~ H&RM Collection photo



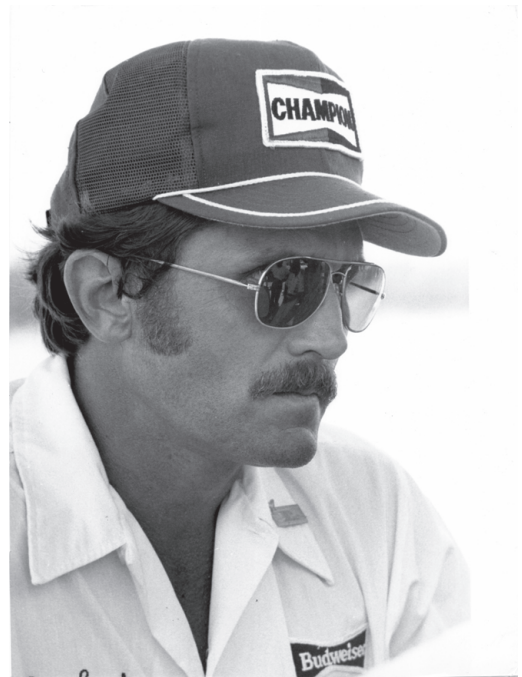
Howie Benns, kneeling at right, and Bernie Little with the Spark Plug Regatta Trophy in front of *Miss Budweiser* (7).





George Henley (at left) made up for losing in Miami by driving *Pay 'n Pak* to victory at the President's Cup in Washington, D.C. the next weekend. The team celebrated by carrying the Cup around the pit area.

Ron Snyder was the driver of *Miss Budweiser* in 1978. He ran behind Bill Muncey and *Atlas Van Lines* at every race on the eastern swing. Luck finally went his way at Tri-Cities when *Atlas* had a mechanical failure in the final heat. Snyder and the Bud team celebrated all night. ~ URC photo

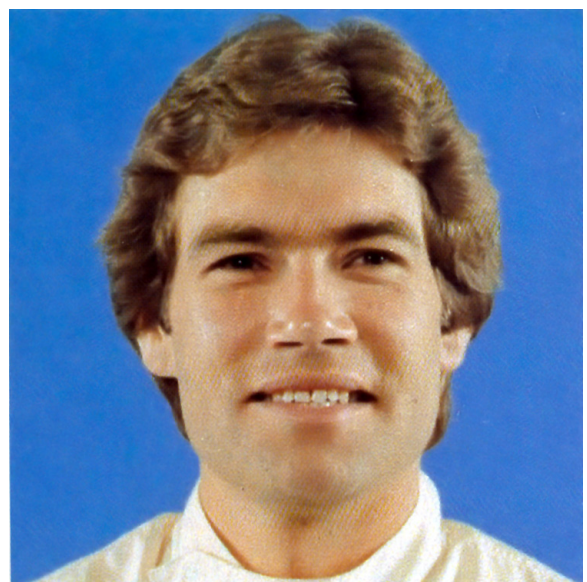


Chip Hanauer was driving the new *Squire Shop* in 1979. The boat joined the circuit at the Gold Cup in Madison, and it was clear some dialing in work was needed. Hanauer had two heartbreaking losses the



previous year with the old *Squire*. He nearly caught Muncey napping in the final heat at Detroit, and briefly led the final at the Gold Cup in Owensboro only to be passed by *Atlas*. With the new boat at Willard Bay, Utah, it all came together. Muncey, and Dean Chenoweth in the first Griffon-powered *Miss Budweiser*, took each other out. Muncey rode up *Bud's* roostertail in the shape-up turn and suffered damage; Chenoweth jumped the gun. Hanauer drove a smart race and won. ~ H&RM Collection photo

At San Diego in '79, Steve Reynolds finally managed to win with the new *Miss Circus Circus*. The boat was fast and Reynolds had pressured Muncey at Evansville and Madison. He led the final heat at Seattle, but jumped the gun. At the last race of the season, San Diego, things finally went his way.



Steve Reynolds drove the first three *Miss Circus Circus* boats; 1978 to 1980. ~ H&RM Collection photo





John Walters scored his first—and only—victory at upstate New York in 1982 (John Walters in life jacket celebrates with team after victory). The turbine *Pay 'n Pak* was fast but a handful to drive. The new *Atlas Van Lines* was late arriving in Miami and missed the race. At New York, it wasn't quite ready to win. The once invincible *Miss Budweiser* developed a mechanical problem in the final heat. Walters went by the ailing *Bud* and took the checkered flag. ~H&RM Collection photo

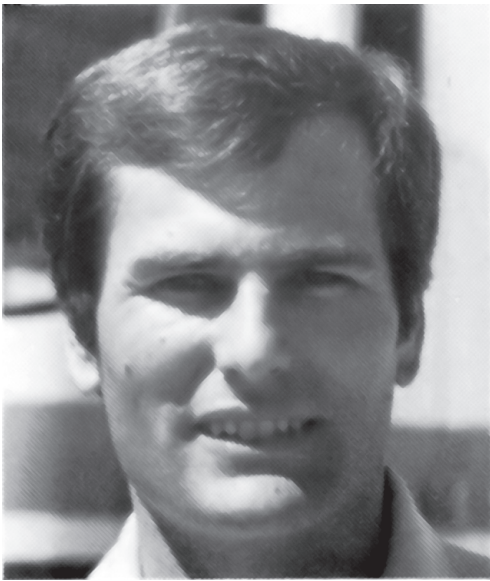


Jim Kropfeld scored his first win at Miami with *Miss Budweiser* in 1983. Putting on a good show was more important than running fast, and Kropfeld spent most of the day barely staying ahead of much slower boats. Traditional leaders fell by the wayside at Tri-Cities in 1983, allowing Jack Schafer, Jr., to win with *American Speedy Printing*. A similar situation occurred in Houston and Milner Irvin won aboard *Miss Renault*. Irvin, ever humble, said, "I hate to win this way." At left; Jim Kropfeld ~ H&RM Collection photo Middle Jackl Schafer Jr. ~H&RM Collection photo On right; Milner Irvin III ~ Russell Knox photo



Saltwater in Miami was still a problem for turbine boats in 1985. Scott Pierce, in the Rolls-powered *Executone*, was expected to do well. If salt got the turbines, the race was Pierce's to lose. Salt indeed slowed the turbines but Pierce did everything right. He scored his first win as a driver and the first for owner Bill Wurster. ~ James Neff photo





The 1986 San Diego race featured one of the most unusual situations when a driver scored his first victory. Ron Armstrong won with *Miss Bahia*. It was one of only two boats to finish the final. *Miller American* failed to qualify (this was before the Chairman's Option was in the rule book) and *Miss Budweiser* had mechanical problems and had to sit out the final. ~ File 10 photo

George Woods Jr. benefited from salt in 1988 at Miami. Jim Harvey's *Oh Boy! Oberto* was freshly repaired from a highway

accident and fire the year before. A heavy thunderstorm pummeled Miami the day before the race. Salt again slowed the turbines and Woods came home first, the Rolls engine running smoothly.

~ H&RM Collection photo



Mitch Evans (seen at left, on the podium in Miami) won in Tri-Cities in 1989. *Miss Budweiser* driver Tom D'Eath was called for a lane violation and Evans took the win in Ed Cooper's U-3. It was the last win for a piston-powered boat until Cooper's new boat started winning in 2003.

~ H&RM Collection photo



Mark Tate scored his first win at the 1991 Gold Cup in Detroit aboard *Winston Eagle*. Scott Pierce tried hard to take the win with *Miss Budweiser*, but Tate ruled the day. At left Mark Tate being interviewed at Seattle. ~ Rick Sullivan photo







Steve David put Harvey and *Miss T-Plus* in the winner's circle again at the 1993 season opener in Texas. A happy Steve David after victory at Lewisville's Sneaky Pete's Texas Hydrofest. ~Bill Taylor photo



Terry Troxel, at right, and Nate Brown, middle left after winning Seattle is being interviewed by

Steve Montgomery, both scored their first wins in 2001. Troxel drove *Zenetix II* to an upset victory at Tri-Cities, while Brown won at Seafair with *Miss E-Lam Plus*.



Troxell's victory was the last for owner Fred Leland; Brown's win demonstrated *E-Lam* was just coming into its own as a major force in unlimited racing. A new boat would soon catapult the Ellstrom operation to the top rung in the sport.

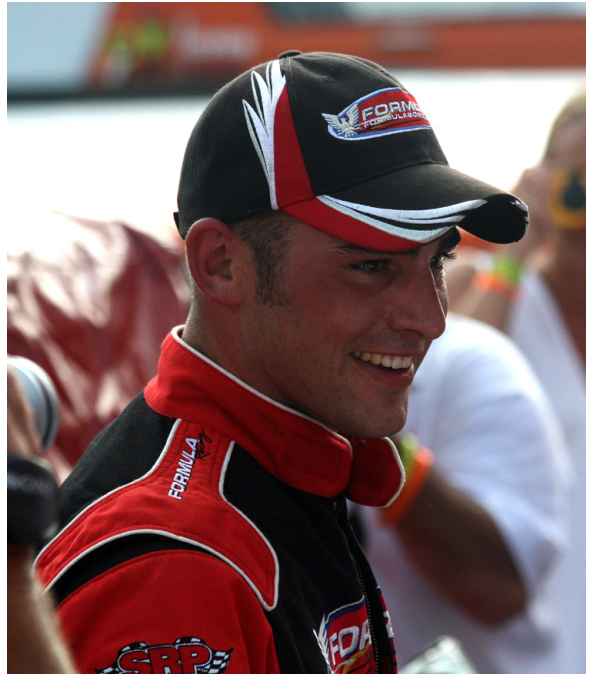
J.W. Myers, below with trophy, guided the new Ellstrom boat to victory in Madison in 2005. He turned in a flawless performance. ~Craig Fjarlie photo



Jean Theroret was a rookie in the unlimited class in 2005, driving Bill Wurster's *Llumar*. A gun jump in the final heat at Tri-Cities cost him a shot at victory in that race, but it all came together at Seafair. He passed Dave Villwock in *Ellstrom* in the first turn and pulled away to take the checkered flag. "It's like winning at home in Valleyfield," Theroret said. "There are a lot of similarities."



In 2008, also at Madison, Jeff Bernard scored his first win with *Formula*. ~ Ron Harsin photo



Shane drove well in early 2012 races, so his win at Tri-Cities was hardly a major upset. Still, problems for both *Qatar* and *Oberto* facilitated his victory. Very few drivers scored their first win by simply standing on the throttle of the fastest boat and counting the laps. Most had a little help along the way when established teams experienced breakdowns or were called for penalties or both. The real test of a champion driver, then, is to thirst for the next win, learn from experience, and drive to make it a reality.

Next month, a list of a different kind of firsts.



**HydroFile**  
**Lon Erickson**

From Dave Holley, Peters & May C.E.O., the vessel transporting the H1 Unlimited fleet, the Saudi Tabuk, has offloaded the 9 boats & support equipment in Doha, Qatar. The URG U-11 *Peters & May* boat and equipment will arrive in Doha later in the month of December. This will complete the H1 fleet of ten boats competing for the 2012 season ending race, being held Jan. 10-12, 2013.

These 10 teams will also stay in Doha and compete in the 2013 season opener, the UIM World Championship being held February 9-12, 2013.

After the San Diego Bayfair race final outcome was resolved, with the appeal process and decision coming from the H1 Board of Directors, there was a statement made by U-5 owner Ted Porter. He had expressed intent of filing a protest of the reversal of the win awarded to the Graham Trucking team. In a recent post on the Hydropage forum, H1 Unlimited Chief Referee Mike Noonan clarified the ruling on any potential protest and the status. From Mr. Noonan, "H1 Rule 4P allows a member two ways to appeal/protest. The first is that a contestant " . . . shall have the right to appeal adverse decisions by H1 officials that result in penalties to their teams. Appeals must be filed in writing with the Chief Referee as soon as possible but no later than 7 days after the contestant was notified of the adverse decision which he intends to appeal." That is what the U6 team did, appeal the penalty (DSQ). The second is that "An owner competing at an event or race may protest the legality of another competitor at that event by filing the protest in writing with the Chief Referee no later than one (1) hour after the Final Heat."

Neither applies to Mr. Porter since he was not the recipient of a penalty that resulted in an "adverse decision" in SD. If his intent is to question and therefore protest the legality of the U6 team, then he should have done so within one hour of the final heat. Therefore, I had to deny the appeal as neither grounds for protest/appeal applies to his situation.

As a member of APBA, Mr. Porter has the right to a hearing under APBA By-Laws. Article XIV - Appeals says: "The American Power Boat Association National Commissioner may hear appeals from any determination made by APBA officials relating to penalties, technical questions, suspensions, termination of membership, or procedural questions." The article describes in detail the jurisdiction, restrictions, process and procedures that need to be followed to have his appeal heard by the National Commissioner, who currently is Charles Strang.



The process within the H1 rules has been exhausted for Mr. Porter as it applies to the reversal of the U6 DSQ from SD. He has an option to take it to the next level, and only he can answer to his intents. It is now between he and the APBA. We, of course will cooperate by furnishing any and all information that Mr. Strang requests. I am not giving away any secrets here. Both the H1 rules and the APBA By-Laws are available on-line for anyone to research.

H1 Unlimited announced plans to re-broadcast the San Diego Bayfair race starting on Christmas Day, check your local FOX/ROOT Sports affiliate for broadcast times in your area. We will update the website as soon as the details are available.

In conjunction with that broadcast, H1 Unlimited is launching a sweepstakes promotion to win a trip to the 2014 Oryx Cup UIM World Championship in Doha, Qatar. The winner will receive Airfare, Hotel, and VIP tickets for 2 to the February 2014 Oryx Cup. To enter the sweepstakes, go to the H1 Unlimited website and follow the link, <http://www.canyonmarketing.net/H1/contest/enter.html>



In conjunction with a recent press conference promoting the 2013 Big Wake Weekend event coming to Folsom Lake May 31-June 2, H1 Unlimited released a PROPOSED 2013 event schedule:

February 9 - 12 Oryx Cup UIM World Championship Doha, Qatar	August 2-4 Albert Lee Cup at Seafair Seattle, Washington
May 31 - June 2 Big Wake Weekend Sacramento, California	August 31 - September 2 Diamond Cup Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
July 5-7 Madison Regatta Madison, Indiana	September 13-15 San Diego Bayfair San Diego, California
July 12-14 Detroit APBA Gold Cup Detroit, Michigan	
July 26-28 Lamb Weston Columbia Cup Tri-Cities, Washington	



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