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A Chronicle of Speed

Still living the dream, Tate wins in San Diego.

BY MAC CLOUSE

When Andrew Tate won the Gold Cup in Detroit, he said he was “living out his dreams.” His dreams lived on as he won the San Diego Bayfair Bill Muncy Cup in the U-9 *Delta RealTrac*. At this season-ending race, events off the water overshadowed the events on the water.

Testing and Qualifying

As people arrived at the pits on Friday morning, there were rumors about sad news concerning Stacy Briseno, the owner of the Leland Unlimited racing team. On Saturday morning, a post on the team’s Facebook page confirmed that Stacy had been fatally injured Thursday night in a pedestrian-vehicle accident near Santa Ana on the way to San Diego. Stacy’s family and the crew decided the U-99.9 *CARSTAR powers Miss Rock* (Aaron Salmon) would compete because they felt that it is what Stacy would



Chris Denslow

The U-9 race team celebrates their victory in San Diego

have wanted.

The rest of the six-boat field was U-1 *Miss HomeStreet* (Jimmy Shane), U-9 *Delta RealTrac* (Andrew Tate), U-11 *Reliable Diamond Tool presents J&D’s* (Tom Thompson), U-21 *Darrell Strong presents Payne West Insurance* (Brian Perkins), and U-440 *Bucket List Racing* (Dustin Echols).

With Tate clinching the national high-points championship in Detroit, both Tate and Shane were

asked what this race meant to them. “We want more of the same,” said Tate. “We’ve had success here and we want to keep our momentum going. We’ve got what we got and won’t make changes.” When asked about the one thing they changed for the Detroit final, he smiled and said, “I wore a new white driving suit, but it was one and done. It is now retired.”

Shane said, “Our sponsor wants to see us win. We also want to see

IN THIS MONTH’S ISSUE:

5 San Diego statistics

8 Thoughts about the future

9 Heritage by Craig Fjarlie

10 Around the Circuit by Chris Tracy

12 HydroFile by Lon Erickson

16 My \$0.02 Worth by Andy Muntz



Chris Denslow



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[Top] The two main rivals, the U-1 Miss HomeStreet and the U-9 Delta Realtrac, sit side by side at the San Diego pits on Mission Bay.

[Middle] The pit area for the HomeStreet Bank Bayfair event.

[Above] Jimmy Shane in the U-1 Miss HomeStreet (left) leads Andrew Tate in the U-9 Delta Realtrac during Heat 1B action on Saturday.

how the new boat does in the salt water. Our goal is to perform the way the team is used to performing and to win the weekend.”

The water was flat and there was very little wind for the Friday 9 a.m. testing session. The last of HomeStreet’s four laps was 161.693 mph. Delta RealTrac was out twice for a total of five laps with a best of 160.034. PayneWest did two laps with a best of 143.763. Bucket List did an impressive 145.135 as one of its five laps.

The water was not as good for the 12:15 p.m. test session and speeds were not as good as in the morning. HomeStreet did 160.702 mph, PayneWest did 143.442, and Bucket List did 142.310. J&D’s did three laps with a best of 145.135.

Qualifying was at 2:40 p.m. There was a 10-mph wind blowing across the course. The water conditions were not as good as they were in the test sessions. The first boat on the qualifying ladder was CARSTAR, but the team passed. PayneWest was next, but the boat died in the backstretch on its way back to the pits without completing a lap. Bucket List did one lap at 136.773 and then came in.

J&D’s tried to go out, but couldn’t get beyond ground idle. HomeStreet then did 159.679 mph, followed by Delta RealTrac that did 157.714. Only two boats tried to qualify in Round Two. PayneWest did 137.490 and then returned to the pits with compressor stalling. J&D’s tried again, but had the same problem and couldn’t get on a plane. Despite having no speeds, CARSTAR and J&D’s would be part of the six-boat field.

Perkins talked about his boat’s problems. “It looks like the engine salted up. We’ll clean it up for tomorrow. This is the only motor we run in the salt. It is aluminum. Our other motor is magnesium, which doesn’t hold up in salt.”

J&D's owner Scott Raney said, "We had a problem with the flow divider in the high-pressure fuel system. A piston in it was stuck, which wouldn't let the engine get out of ground idle."

Raney was helping CARSTAR with its engine, and other teams were helping also. "We're going to try to help the U-99.9 so they can race," said U-9 owner Lori Jones.

Prior to the draw for Heat 1, H1 officials announced a new format that would be used as an experiment for this race. There would be no fighting for lanes in any of the heats. There would still be random draws to determine which boats would be in each heat's section. The starting lanes would then be assigned, and boats would have to stay in those lanes from midway through the backstretch before the start until they exited turn one after the start, with the seven-boat overlap rule still enforced.

For Heat 1, lanes would be assigned based on a boat's national championship points. The boat with the most points would be assigned to lane one, the boat with the second most points would be assigned to lane two, and so on. This method would be used for Heat 1A and 1B.

For Heat 2, after the random draw, boats would be assigned lanes based on the reverse order of their current national high points (including the points from Heat 1). The boat with the fewest points would be assigned to lane one and so on; the boat with the most points would be assigned the outside lane.

Heat 3 would have a random draw and then lanes would be assigned based on the reverse order of points earned in the race. The boat with most race points would be assigned the outside lane, and the boat with the least points would be assigned lane one. Qualifying points would not be included in the

total used for race points for any of the heats.

In the final, the boat with most race points would get lane one, the boat with the second most points would get lane two, and so on.

This format is patterned after the format used in Canada by the Hydroplane Racing League (HRL). Here are some of the reasons given for the decision to use this format:

- ◆ Enforcing the minimum 80 mph rule was more difficult now because of the unreliability of the strobe lights.

- ◆ Officials would not have to monitor the strobe lights for the full milling period, at all parts of the course.

- ◆ With assigned lanes, boats could be spread out during the milling period. This was especially important for the salt water course to prevent a boat from getting a lot of salt spray from other boats.

- ◆ With assigned lanes, it was assumed that there would be fewer lane infractions as boats attempted to take a lane from another boat.

- ◆ Placing faster boats in the outside lane could result in more competitive racing after the start.

Kelly Stocklin was a proponent of the experiment. "Getting rid of the 80 mph is a big plus. This may also avoid some salt problems. The drivers voted, and all the guys are willing to try it. It is an idea. If



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow

[Top] Kelly Stocklin, the owner of the U-440 *Bucket List Racing*, took his boat out for a spin on Sunday morning. [Above] The U-1 *Miss HomeStreet* flies across the water on Mission Bay.

someone has another alternative, we can look at it.”

Tom Thompson drives boats in the HRL, so he was asked to work on the proposal for the format. “This format is the drivers’ decision. We want a better show for the fans. It is a good format and the key is that everyone understands that the drivers wanted this.”

J. Michael Kelly’s *Graham Trucking* boat was not at the race, but he was there driving a 1-liter boat and had some thoughts about the format. “It is a good idea to try something different. I would have voted to run all six boats in all their heats, like we did here last year with five boats. I also think maybe they should let you fight for lanes in the final. I might not have any race wins if I hadn’t been able to fight for lanes.”

In Heat 1A, *J&D’s* was in lane one, *PayneWest* in lane two and *CARSTAR* in lane three. Thompson was first to turn one and led Perkins by a roostertail after lap one, with *CARSTAR* trailing. Thompson used the inside to win by two roostertail lengths over Perkins. *CARSTAR* slowed to a stop in turn one of lap two. “The engine was hot, and I shut it down before



Lon Erickson

Brian Perkins waves to the crowd as his boat is towed back to the pits

anything bad happened. I didn’t want to risk the equipment,” said Salmon.

Thompson was pleased with the win. “We had some engine changes to do before the heat. The crew pulled together to get it done. I got a good start, and it was a good run with Brian.”

In Heat 1B, *Delta RealTrac* had lane one, *HomeStreet* was in lane two, and *Bucket List* was in lane three. Tate and Shane were close at the start, but Shane was first to turn one. *Homestreet*, on the outside, had

the speed to lead *Delta RealTrac* by a roostertail at the end of lap one. In lap two, Shane had the overlap and moved into lane one as he entered turn two. Tate moved outside of *HomeStreet’s* wake. After moving out, Tate backed off and Shane won by about a quarter of a lap. Echols finished third.

Shane was pleased to beat Tate in their head-to-head match. “With this format, you can concentrate on your marks. The key is timing the start. I had a two-boat-length lead at the start, a good ride, and fast boat. It had to be fast to beat the 9.”

Sunday

In the morning test session, *HomeStreet* posted the three fastest laps of the weekend, with 164.131 mph the best. The other interesting thing was that Kelly Stocklin took his *Bucket List* boat out for two laps; the fastest was 139.554. It was his first time in the boat since his flip on this course in 2015.

“The boat drives nicely and it’s stable, but speed is a bit elusive. Originally, I wanted to keep my qualified status each year, but I need to give Dustin all the time he



Chris Denslow

Aaron Salmon was behind the wheel of the U-99.9 *CARSTAR* powers *Miss Rock*

needs in the boat. In 2015, the boat handled well. It was a setup error. At a certain speed, the wing took control and the boat went over,” Stocklin said.

In Heat 2A, *PayneWest* was in lane one, *J&D’s* in lane two, and *HomeStreet* in lane three. Shane was first to turn one and sped away to win by four roostertails. Perkins and Thompson were close for all three laps, and Perkins used the inside to get second.

“I always love racing with Tommy,” said Perkins. “Everyone is being generous with the lane spacing due to the salt. That may change as we get closer to the final.”

Shane’s win from lane three was impressive. “We are making incremental changes. It was good to have a close race for second and third.”

In Heat 2B, *CARSTAR* was in lane one, *Bucket List* was in lane two, and *Delta RealTrac* in lane three. With the engine heating problems, *CARSTAR* left the dock late to avoid putting too much time on the engine. Echols was first across the start line, but Tate and Salmon were close behind down the backstretch. Tate stayed close to Salmon for all three laps, putting on a good show for the fans. Tate won, with Salmon second, and Echols third.

Tate had a few comments. “The outside lanes where I was are actually rougher now than the inside lanes. The 99.9 ran well, and I couldn’t be happier for those guys.”

Salmon enjoyed the heat. “It was a great time running on the inside. It was smoother than I expected. We’ll see if we can do this again. After I crossed the finish line, I shut down the engine to save the equipment.”

In Heat 3A, *CARSTAR* was in lane one, *Bucket List* in lane two, and *PayneWest* in lane three. Echols led the field across the starting line

STATBOX

HOMESTREET BANK BAYFAIR

San Diego, California, September 15-16, 2018
2 1/2-mile course on Mission Bay; 35 mile race

QUALIFYING (1) U-1 *Miss HomeStreet*, Jimmy Shane, 159.679, 100 points; (2) U-9 *Delta Realtrac*, Andrew Tate, 157.714, 80; (3) U-21 *Darrell Strong presents PayneWest Insurance*, Brian Perkins, 137.490, 70; (4) U-440 *Bucket List Racing*, Dustin Echols, 136.773, 60; U-11 *Reliable Diamond Tool presents J&D’s*, Tom Thompson, DNQ – fuel system problem (used 148.652 test speed to enter the race), 0; U-99.9 *CARSTAR powers Miss Rock*, Aaron Salmon, DNQ – passed on the opportunity (used 139.556 test speed to enter the race), 0. This race uses assigned lanes.

HEAT 1A (1) *Reliable Diamond Tool presents J&D’s* [lane 1] 139.072, 400 points, 400 cumulative points; (2) *Darrell Strong presents PayneWest Insurance* [2] 137.869, 300, 370; (3) *CARSTAR powers Miss Rock* [3] DNF – engine overheated, 0, 0. Fast lap (1) *Reliable Diamond Tool presents J&D’s* 141.540.

HEAT 1B (1) *Miss HomeStreet* [2] 152.530, 400, 500; (2) *Delta Realtrac* [1] 140.187, 300, 380; (3) *Bucket List Racing* [3] 125.045, 225, 285. Fast lap (2) *Miss HomeStreet* 155.881.

HEAT 2A (1) *Miss HomeStreet* [3] 149.228, 400, 900; (2) *Darrell Strong presents PayneWest Insurance* [1] 142.931, 300, 670; (3) *Reliable Diamond Tool presents J&D’s* [2] 142.448, 225, 625. Fast lap (3) *Miss HomeStreet* 153.152.

HEAT 2B (1) *Delta Realtrac* [3] 137.263, 400, 780; (2) *CARSTAR powers Miss Rock* [1] 135.788, 300, 300; (3) *Bucket List Racing* [2] 131.746, 225, 510. Fast lap (2) *Delta Realtrac* 141.678.

HEAT 3A (1) *Darrell Strong presents PayneWest Insurance* [3] 137.876, 400, 1070; (2) *Bucket List Racing* [2] 137.165, 300, 810; (3) *CARSTAR powers Miss Rock* [1] 118.821, 225, 525. Fast lap (2) *Darrell Strong presents PayneWest Insurance* 140.200.

HEAT 3B (1) *Delta Realtrac* [2] 150.304, 400, 1180; (2) *Miss HomeStreet* [3] 147.713, 300, 1200; *Reliable Diamond Tool presents J&D’s* DNQ – felt vibration, 0, 625. Fast lap (3) *Miss HomeStreet* 151.739.

FINAL (1) *Delta Realtrac* [2] 143.605, 400, 1580; (2) *Bucket List Racing* [4] 124.993, 300, 1110; (3) *Darrell Strong presents PayneWest Insurance* [3] 117.050, 225, 1295; *Reliable Diamond Tool presents J&D’s* [5] DNQ – propeller blade broke, 0, 625; *Miss HomeStreet* [1] DNS – ignitor failed, 0, 1200; *CARSTAR powers Miss Rock W/D* – engine issues, 0, 525. Fast lap (2) *Reliable Diamond Tool presents J&D’s* 147.210.

COMPILED BY ALLEN STILES

Chris Denslow



Lon Erickson



Chris Denslow



[Top] Jimmy Shane in the U-1 *Miss HomeStreet* leads Tom Thompson (left) and Brian Perkins during Heat 2A. [Middle] The start of Heat 2B with Aaron Salmon in the U-99.9 *CARSTAR* powers *Miss Rock* in lane one, Dustin Echols in U-440 *Bucket List Racing* in lane two, and Andrew Tate in U-9 *Delta Realtrac* in lane three. [Above] Andrew Tate races side by side against Tom Thompson in Heat 3B.

and led Perkins at the end of lap one, with Salmon trailing. Perkins took the lead in lap two and went on to win, with Echols in second and Salmon in third. In turn two of lap three, *CARSTAR*'s engine was popping and sputtering. It slowed down, was able to cross the finish, and then went dead in the water.

In Heat 3B, Shane and Tate were matched again. *J&D's* had lane one, *Delta RealTrac* had lane two, and *HomeStreet* had lane three. Tate and Thompson were close coming out of turn one of lap one, but Shane trailed. At the end of the lap, Tate had a narrow lead over Thompson, but Shane was a roostertail behind. In lap two, Thompson felt a vibration, and he shut the boat down as it was coming out of turn one. Tate went on to win by two roostertails over Shane.

HomeStreet had a bit of a problem. "We found a gearbox leak just before the heat. We didn't have time to change anything. It was a minor leak, so we filled the oil and hoped it would be okay," said Shane.

The lanes were now set for the final. Because *HomeStreet* and *Delta RealTrac* both had 1,100 points, a tie breaker had to be used. It was the elapsed time for each boat's completion of the three heats. *HomeStreet* had about a 25-second advantage and got lane one. *Delta RealTrac* got lane two, *PayneWest* got lane three, *Bucket List* got lane four, *J&D's* got lane five, and *CARSTAR* got lane six.

Because of concerns about their engine, and based on its performance in 3A, *CARSTAR* withdrew from the final.

Echols was looking forward to the final heat with some apprehension. "The new format has worked well for competition today, but I'm not sure I want to be in lane four. There will be a lot of water on both sides of me, but I'll do my best."

Tate was looking forward to

another race with Shane. “We will be next to each other in lanes one and two. It is always a battle when we are side-by-side. The key will be the start and who is first to the turn.”

Unfortunately, the final was not the side-by-side battle that everyone expected and wanted to see. *HomeStreet* never left the dock. “The igniter box went bad. It was fine when we trailer fired to check the fix on our oil leak, but when it came time to start, it wouldn’t ignite. It’s been that kind of a season,” said a disappointed Shane.

On the water, Tate was first through turn one and led Thompson by about a roostertail at the end of lap one. In turn two of lap one, Perkins was between Tate and Thompson. He went into *Delta RealTrac’s* roostertail and lost power. Perkins was able to restart, but he was not at full power and he trailed the field. Echols was in third.

Thompson used a 147-mph lap two to have a narrow lead over Tate at the end of the lap. Tate took the lead in lap three, and *J&D’s* lost a prop blade coming out of turn two. The shaft and prop were still there, but the strut was pulled away from the bottom and the boat was taking on water.

With no more competition, Tate had it easy in laps four and five to win the race. Echols finished second with Perkins in third. After the race, Perkins asked for a review of his washdown. The video did seem to show that Thompson moved in at the exit of turn two forcing Perkins to go left into Tate’s roostertail. However, no penalties were given.

When asked about his second-place finish, Echols said, “It is pretty cool. We are ending the season with two good engines and no gear box issues. Now we need to find speed. It was a great year.” Stocklin explained the team’s second-place



Chris Denslow



Lon Erickson

[Top] The start of the final heat. Andrew Tate in the U-9 *Delta Realtrac* has the inside lane, Brian Perkins is to his outside in the U-21 *PayneWest Insurance*, Dustin Echols in U-440 *Bucket List Racing* is next, and Tom Thompson in U-11 *Reliable Diamond Tool presents J&D’s* is on the outside. [Above] Andrew Tate crosses the finish line in the U-9 *Delta Realtrac*.

finish in a few words. “You’ve got to start and you’ve got to finish.”

For Tate, this was his fifth win in the season’s six races. “It is the end of the season, but I don’t know if it is the end of the dreams. I want to thank the Joneses, the Campbells, and all the rest of the crew. I’ll just look at things one at a time in the off season and see how things fall.”

Andrew’s father Mark was at the race. “I’m proud of him and the whole team,” he said. “Andrew started racing 18 years ago. His brother Brent also raced. When we started, I only had one boat. So one brother got to race on Saturday and the other got to race on Sunday. Brent moved on to hockey, and Andrew stayed with boats. Andrew obviously made a good choice. It is sweet to have his name and mine on

the Gold Cup.”

With his national high-point championship, Andrew and Mark became the only father and son duo to both be national champions. It was a good year for the Tates.

It was also a good year for Mike and Lori Jones. Mike said, “It has been an unbelievable year. The best part is that we get to be U-1. I never thought that would happen.”

At the end of the day, there was a lot of discussion among fans, officials, and participants about the very unusual 2018 season. All agreed that it needs to be a busy and productive off-season for H1. Let’s all hope that we will have many opportunities in 2019 to see the Jones’ boat with the U-1 on it. ❖

Thoughts about the sport and its future.

The San Diego race provided the opportunity to speak with both Charlie Grooms, the H1 commissioner, and Mark Mason, the CEO of HomeStreet Bank.

Both men have a strong interest and a big investment in hydroplane racing, and both spoke about what is necessary for the sport to survive and be successful.

CHARLIE GROOMS:

On H1:

We need to get our governance in place so we can address the business of H1. This is a business, not a sport. We have addressed several issues. We are organized in the state of Washington and the documentation needs to be renewed. We joined the APBA to get an insurance contract that was more favorable to H1 and the race teams. We need to review our race site contracts. We need manageable deals with the sites to be able to operate.

We will have a new Board of Directors with a significant turnover. Our old board has some people who aren't even involved anymore with the sport. It will be a functional board.

We need to do all the things I just mentioned to provide the business and governance foundation we need to go forward. Until we have this solid, credible foundation, we can't reach out to interested parties to join us. There are some interested parties for both the series sponsorship and boat sponsorships. These parties would be business partners with us, and when they talk to us they want to see our business model. We haven't been able to respond to their requests, but we will now have a model and information to include in our pitch to sell them on being involved in our sport. When we meet with these potential partners, I want to be able

to under promise, but over deliver. That's the way I have always done business.

On Charlie's future:

I will stay as the interim H1 commissioner. We want to find a full-time executive for H1. After we find that person, I will continue to stay in an advisory role. I'm looking forward to this because I am doing a lot now. I am running Clifty Engineering, I'm the team manager for the Miss Madison/Homestreet team, I have my H1 duties, and I have my chicken wing business (Mother's Grilled Wings – look for them in the eastern Kroger stores).

On HomeStreet:

We have a long-term agreement with the bank. They have been great to work with, and they have been very supportive. An example of their support and how complex this business can be was the purchase of the former Budweiser shop in Tukwila. It gave us a shop, equipment, and the foundation for our new boat. It took seven months and seven attorneys to complete what was an asset purchase.

On the future of H1:

I am bullish on H1. Our product on the water is good and anyone who sees a race is impressed with the product. The product is still viable. Our challenges are the business

challenges. People who have the abilities and the resources to join us in H1 have reached out to me. We can now show them how the H1 business model works, and if we can show them that there is a good return on their investment, then there will be interest.

MARK MASON:

It has been an eventful season, with both good and bad. We are excited about our new boat and happy with our investment in the sport, but we didn't accomplish this year's goals.

We need to work with H1 in the offseason. We need to be more involved in the business of the sport. Events this season have caused us to want to be more outspoken about the officiating, the race schedule, the relationship with the sites, and the daily schedules at the sites.

We were upset with the Seattle race schedule. It's our "home" race, and we wanted the fans to see our boat on the water. Saturday was especially bad. The boats ran early in the morning and then nothing until late in the afternoon. We lost our midday audience. The sites tell us that the fans will stay until late in the day to watch the big boats, but the evidence shows that is not true. We need to fix that scheduling.

We are also pleased to be a race sponsor for the San Diego Bayfair event. It is a great family event that fits well with our bank's emphasis on families and family values. ❖

Heritage

Historical Perspective



Craig Fjarlie

In the corner

Ever since the first Hawaii race in 1989, I have served as a turn judge at unlimited races. Some years I worked at only one or two races, other years I served at several regattas. In 2018, I was in a corner at every race. Joining me on the course was Tim Hamilton. He would be in one turn and I would be in the other.

Tim and I gained experience working as turn judges at inboard and outboard races. Drivers must take turns volunteering as turn judges, because local racing clubs can't afford to pay professional judges to work at their regattas. Some participants are willing to help, but others balk at the obligation. "Nobody wants to be the bad guy and call somebody," Hamilton explains. "It's actually a good place to see the race. You have all the boats together and they'll be diving into the first turn. It's the best place to be." He cautions, "You have to be on your toes and watching, though."

Referee Doug Brow explains what he looks for in a turn judge. "Commitment," he says, putting the qualifications into one succinct term. He pauses, then adds a few additional factors. "Somebody who has been around the sport long enough to know what they're looking at and what they're watching for. That's the most important thing. You know, anybody would love to go out and be a turn judge, but I need somebody who knows what they're looking for."

Turn judges have been part of the race committee for decades. I

remember KING-TV sportscaster Bill O'Mara referring to turn judges during his race broadcasts in the 1950s. American Power Boat Association rules require turn judges. Without them, the race must be on hold until qualified personnel are in position in each turn.



Lon Erickson

Hamilton describes his experiences based on work he did at 2018 regattas. "Mostly you focus on people trying to get through the turn clean, without anybody pushing them out or coming in on them," he says. "You just want them to stay dry and get through the turn good and clean. Then the boats will stretch out a little more after every lap."

Hamilton had no incidents in turns he was watching in 2018, but I did. At Seattle, Oberto went over in the corner where I was assigned. In Tri-Cities, we were helping with the 5-litre race and a boat blew over in my turn. When a mishap occurs, the turn judge must immediately use the radio to state what happened and call for red flags to stop the race.

Turn judges are responsible for one other item in addition to watching boats go through the corners. Rules require flags in turns as well as on the official tower and

on the "echo boat" that is stationed in the infield at the starting line.

"Usually, you get on a boat with some people who think it's kind of cool to help with the flags,"

Hamilton notes. "I'm more than happy to let them carry the flags."

While someone on the boat holds the flags, the turn judge must ensure the correct flag is held up for drivers to see. Occasionally, the person on the boat holds up the wrong color flag, or is slow changing flags during the race. The turn judge must pay attention and may need to shout to the flagger above the noise of the race so that the boat displays the right flag at the right time.

Working as a turn judge is a way to contribute to the success of H1 regattas. It also is a way to become acquainted with officials and other people working on the race committee. The turn judge may hear things on the H1 radio that can't be repeated to members of the media or to the public, although those situations are rare. I feel honored to be able to help at the regattas, knowing the H1 leadership feels my service is valued. To that end, I look forward to the 2019 racing season. ♦

Around the Circuit

Race Site News



Chris Tracy

The 54th annual Unlimited Hydroplane Champions' Gala was held on October 13 at the Three Rivers Convention Center in Kennewick, Washington. Although the gala was held at a different venue from last year, it was the second year in a row that the Tri-Cities hosted the event.

The party started in the parking lot! On the edge of the convention center parking lot, the Bucket List team circled their motorhomes that had caravanned to the gala and, shortly before happy hour started, walked across the parking lot to the convention center with most of the men wearing orange ties and co-owner, Sharon Stocklin, wearing a stunning orange cocktail dress. No, this was not to celebrate Halloween. It celebrated the Bucket List racing color: orange.

But, once inside the convention center, make no mistake, this was a big party to celebrate the new national champion and the U-9 Jones Racing Team. For the 2018 season, the Jones Racing Team had center stage and the best tables in the house were reserved—for the first time—for their team.

This banquet was also a little unusual as it was held much earlier than most banquets in the past. And, there were fewer H1 Awards passed out. An opening video put together by Jared and Tait Meyer chronicled the season, race by race. Veteran Tri-Cities hydro broadcaster Michael McDonnal was master of ceremonies.

Since the gala was so far from the beginning of the 2019 season, there was not much of a preview of what was going to happen in the

future. H1 Chairman Charlie Grooms did mention that the H1 Board of Directors had been reformulated and revised and includes race site and team owners. But, Grooms summed up the 2018 season when he said it was a “crazy year in many ways.” He indicated that 2019 would be “bigger, better and stronger.”

Early in the program, U-11 owner Scott Raney delivered touching remarks about U-99 owner Stacy Briseno and Dr. Keith Peterson. Both have recently passed

away. Raney noted that Briseno was there for Fred Leland when he was ill and carried on his team after Leland passed away and remarked that Briseno gave opportunities for several drivers to get their first ride in an unlimited. Raney noted that Dr. Peterson recognized the need and implemented a program for full-time medical staff at each unlimited race.

Several people were honored. Madison race chair Matt True was



Chris Denslow



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[Top] The crowd at the Three Rivers Convention Center in Kennewick, Washington. [Above] Scott and Shannon Raney, owners of the U-11 Reliable Diamond Tool presents J&D's, give a memorial tribute to Stacy Briseno and Dr. Keith Peterson.



Jared and Tait Meyer accept an award from Miss Tri-Cities for their contribution to the sport

singled out for a Chairman's Award for helping to turn around the Madison event. Under his leadership, the race made a sizable profit, repaired relationships, and worked to make Madison a sustainable race.

Katy Norton and the Guntersville race were honored for their great efforts putting on their first race in decades. Norton thanked all the teams for showing up and modestly accepted the Race Site of the Year. Those attending last year's banquet may recall that she promised that her team would work hard to earn the award in the 2018, and she delivered and won!

Longtime Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum board member, Seafair Boat Club member, *Unlimited NewsJournal* officer, and Seafair leader, Bob Senior, was honored with the Gar Wood Award.

Rookie of the Year went to the U-99's Aaron Salmon. He thanked all teams for the help this past season, plus singled out his parents for their support. He remarked that the season had "unbelievable highs and lows." (Editor's Note: Salmon and his crew rebuilt a boat that was in bad shape, had a particularly good race at Seafair, but their owner died tragically in Southern California at the end of the season.)

THE AWARD WINNERS

CHAIRMAN'S AWARD:

Matt True, Madison Regatta President

CHAIRMAN'S SPECIAL AWARD:

Katy Norton, Event Producer, Guntersville HydroFest

EXCELLENCE IN PRINT MEDIA:

David Campbell, Writer

EXCELLENCE IN TELEVISION MEDIA:

Walter Farley, TV Producer

GAR WOOD AWARD:

Bob Senior

RACE SITE OF THE YEAR:

Guntersville Lake HydroFest, Guntersville, Alabama

SPONSOR OF THE YEAR:

HomeStreet Bank

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR:

John Walters

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION:

Jared and Tait Meyer

MOST IMPROVED TEAM:

Bucket List Racing

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR:

Aaron Salmon, U-99.9 Leland Unlimited

CREW OF THE YEAR:

U-9 Jones Racing

CREW CHIEF OF THE YEAR:

Jeff Campbell, U-9 Jones Racing

OWNER OF THE YEAR:

Lori and Mike Jones, U-9 Jones Racing

BILL MUNCEY NATIONAL HIGH POINT DRIVER CHAMPION:

Andrew Tate, U-9 Jones Racing

MARTINI AND ROSSI TROPHY (NATIONAL CHAMPION):

U-9 Jones Racing

GOLD CUP WINNER:

Andrew Tate, U-9 Jones Racing

5th PLACE DRIVER AND TEAM:

Brian Perkins, U-21 Go Fast, Turn Left Racing

4th PLACE DRIVER AND TEAM:

Dustin Echols, U-440 Bucket List Racing

3rd PLACE DRIVER AND TEAM:

Tom Thompson, U-11 Unlimited Racing Group

2nd PLACE DRIVER AND TEAM:

Jimmy Shane, U-1 Miss Madison Racing

NATIONAL CHAMPION DRIVER AND TEAM:

Andrew Tate, U-9 Jones Racing



The Jones Racing Team shows off the hardware they collected at the event

HomeStreet Bank was awarded the Sponsor of the Year award. HomeStreet's Mike Denslow accepted the award on behalf of the bank. Denslow remarked that HomeStreet's CEO, Mark Mason, was "giddy" about the sport.

But, this was the Jones Racing Team party. They won Owner of the Year, Crew Chief of the Year, National Points Awards for both the boat and driver, the Gold Cup, and more. Normally quiet Mike Jones made the rounds to many tables. To us, he thanked the *News-Journal*, which he says he reads each month, and especially likes the My \$0.02 Worth column.

Mike Jones remarked that "it took 25 years to win in Tri-Cities." Lori Jones said that the final heat in Gunter'sville this past year was awesome and many believe it might have been the most memorable heat in their team's racing history. Lori thanked her driver, Andrew Tate. She said that "Jeff Campbell (U-9 crew chief) is why we are here."

Jeff Campbell, in accepting the Crew Chief of the Year Award, said his team went from "runner up to running away." Few disagree. He thanked his crew and said it "takes an army to win this award." He also sincerely thanked the fans who

attend races and buy T-shirts.

He called his crew to the award stand and asked each one to identify themselves and tell what they did on the boat. Several said, "We do what Jeff asks us to do." Campbell had previously said that the 2018 season would be his last, but did not tip his hand if that was still the plan.

Andrew Tate was emotional as he accepted the Driver of the Year award. He recalled that he met Jeff Campbell at an outboard race in 2014. He talked with him between outboard heats and didn't even have

a shirt on. He went to the San Diego race at the end of that season and the doors were opened up for him to drive.

"Thanks for taking a shot on an outboard kid that shouldn't be driving a million-dollar machine," said Tate. He said he was honored to have the seat and explained that this team, the U-9 Jones Racing Team, is a family and he's part of that family.

"Jeff Campbell is not the easiest to get along with, but most of the time he's right. Thanks for telling me when I messed up—not everyone would." As for the mustache, Tate explained he grew it on a dare and showed up in Tri-Cities with it. After winning in Tri-Cities, the superstition was that the mustache brought good luck, so he kept it.

We were all reminded that next year, the U-9 Jones Racing Team will also get the spot of honor in the Tri-Cities pits. The Jones team has earned the right, for the first time, to pit under the Bernie Little tree and enjoy some shade during the sunny and hot race weekend—under that big tree that Bernie Little helped save. ❖

Former medical director for the sport passes away.

Dr. Keith Peterson, a former medical director for the Unlimited Racing Commission, passed away in Seattle on September 30 at the age of 85. Founder of the Sports Medicine Clinic in the Ballard area of Seattle, the largest privately owned clinic for sports injuries in the United States, Peterson was a pioneer in the field of sports medicine and a constant fixture on the sideline, gym, rodeo arena, and in the hydro pits. In addition to his work with unlimited hydroplane racing, he provided medical area to athletes at Seattle Pacific University; established the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Camp in Seeley, Montana; established the International Council of Motorsport Science, was an assistant team physician for the Seattle Mariners; and was the attending physician for the Pro Rodeo circuit in four states.

HydroFile

Race Team News



Lon Erickson

U-1 HomeStreet Racing/Miss Madison

The HomeStreet/Miss Madison Racing team has brought both their hulls, “blue” #0706 and “white” #1801, to the Tukwila, Washington, shop after the season-ending San Diego race. Along with the HomeStreet Bank display hull, the team is working on off-season maintenance and going through their complete inventory of equipment in Washington. The shop in Madison, Indiana, is not large enough to accommodate all of the team’s current assets. There has been discussion and plans of a future race shop in Madison to work from, but until that shop materializes, the team will work out of the HSR shop in the Northwest.



Miss Madison Racing



Miss Madison Racing



Miss Madison Racing

U-9 Jones Racing - Les Schwab

The new H1 Unlimited national champion U-1 hull is currently being stripped down and de-salted after San Diego Bayfair. The Jones crew chief Jeff Campbell and crewman Mike Campbell have called this season their last competing on the H1 circuit. Their last work as full-time crewmembers for the team is to get the hull winterized and ready to prep for the 2019 season. The crew and team make-up for 2019 is still to be determined at this time.



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow



Reggie Frederick

U-11 Unlimited Racing Group

A recent crew night at the *Reliable Diamond Tools* presents *J&D's* shop in Edmonds, Washington, had the team trailer firing (below) and testing electrical systems. The electrical system required replacement after suffering a salt water bath in the final heat at San Diego Bayfair. The new system and spares all checked out and performed perfectly.



Unlimited Racing Group

U-16/96 Ellstrom Racing

The Ellstrom Racing family continues to be involved with off-road Turbo UTV Class in The Desert Off-Road Racing Series. There has been no formal announcement from Ellstrom Racing regarding their unlimited hydroplane racing. There has been some movement with some of the hydroplane assets of the Ellstrom team, however. The hull #0116 (below), which raced as the *E-Lam-Plus* and *Spirit of Qatar* from 2001 to 2013, has been acquired by a group out of Chelan, Washington, made up of Mitch and Mark Evans and Johnny Walcker. Their plan is to convert the 2001 hull to twin automotive power and compete on the H1 circuit. This is a long-term project with no specific target date set, and various areas of the project are still in the development stages. The other newer Ellstrom hull (#1496) remains in storage at the Mike Jones race shop and is awaiting Erick Ellstrom's decision on its future.



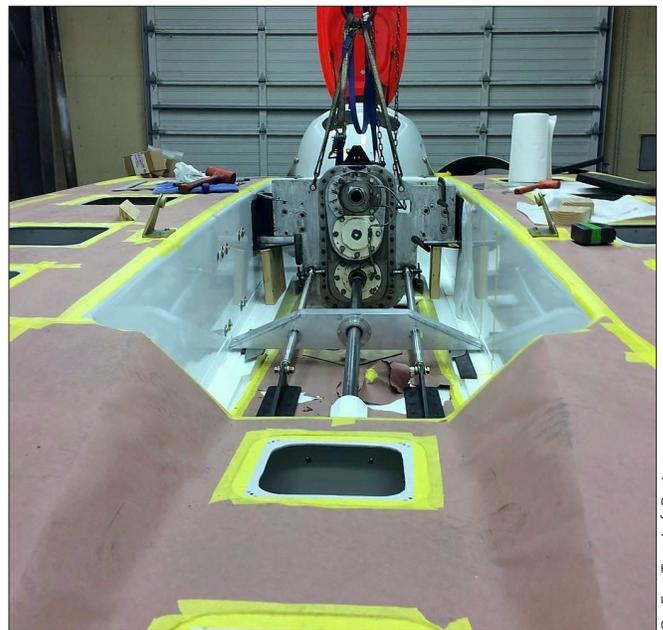
Lon Erickson

U-21/48 Go Fast Turn Left Racing

The GFTL team is getting the current U-21 hull winterized and prepped for the 2019 season (bottom). Work is continuing on finishing the new U-48 GFTL hull (below). The current plan is to have both hulls ready for the annual Tri-Cities spring testing. Based on testing, a decision would then be made as to which hull will be their primary hull going into 2019.



Go Fast Turn Left Racing



Go Fast Turn Left Racing



Go Fast Turn Left Racing

U-27 Wiggins Racing

Charley Wiggins recently announced they have bought some material from the Miss Madison team to use in repairs to the U-27 hull. Discussion has been reported that they are rebuilding the center section of the hull and considering options on sponson repairs or replacement. The hull is currently completely stripped down and many portions of the hull have been cut away or were damaged in the flip in Seattle.



Wiggins Racing



Wiggins Racing

U-99.9 Leland Unlimited

As was previously reported, Leland Unlimited owner Stacy Briseno lost her life in a traffic/pedestrian accident in Southern California over the Bayfair weekend. The status of the team assets is currently in the hands of her brother and, to date, that future is uncertain. Several principals within H1 have reached out to Briseno's family and to offer help moving forward with a decision.



Lon Erickson

440 Bucket List Racing

The Bucket List crew has stripped down and de-salted the hull and hardware, began fabricating new parts, and is building a new cowling. They recently took their T-53 engines and parts to Whispering Turbines in Montana for a complete de-salting, inspection, and dyno work.



Bucket List Racing



Bucket List Racing



Bucket List Racing

My \$0.02 Worth

Editorial Comment



Andy
Muntz

It all starts with the start. Every hydroplane fan knows that the few minutes just before the start are some of the most important. Quite often, it's what happens during that time that determines how the race will eventually turn out.

The start of a heat has also been among the most controversial issues the sport has contended with during the past couple of decades. There has been a continual effort by race officials to get the process right, yet each change has done little but create new problems.

Back in the olden days, the process of starting a race was fairly simple. The boats had to be on the racecourse and running when the one-minute gun was fired, and they had to be running fast enough to remain on a plane. At some point, the rule about being on a plane was abandoned, perhaps because it was a matter of loose interpretation, which then led to a period where the drivers slowed to a crawl after

claiming their lane and would quickly accelerate to the start line at the last instant.

The people running the sport hated the crawling start, so they established a score-up buoy at the far end of the course that boats couldn't pass until there was one minute left to the start. The idea was to force the boats to go faster to the start line, but it just moved the crawling to the other end of the course as the boats approached the score-up buoy.

I remember talking to a couple from New Jersey during this time. They had booked a cruise to Alaska, had an extra day in Seattle, read something in the paper about a hydroplane race, and decided to see what it was about. One of them asked about the start process and when I started talking about score-up buoys and such, I could see their eyes glaze over. It was like explaining calculus.

The score-up buoy was also

eventually abandoned and replaced with many other variations to the theme, the most recent involving GPS and flashing lights if a boat dropped below 80 mph. In San Diego, there was another experiment: assigned lanes. Mac Clouse does a great job of explaining it in his race report found elsewhere in this issue.

The drivers are apparently willing to accept the change, but there are others who argue that it takes away the most strategic part of the race.

Whatever ends up happening, I hope the sport takes into account what fans think. It's important that it makes sense and is easy enough to understand that a couple from New Jersey, who had never heard of a hydroplane before, could at least comprehend what in the heck is going on out there. ❖

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Letters may be edited for clarity and space.

PLEASE JOIN US AT THE NEXT MEETING OF UNLIMITEDS UNANIMOUS.

2 p.m. on Sunday, November 18, 2018

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