



## HYDRO RULES CHANGES FOR 2012

**Interview with H1 Unlimited Chief Referee Mike Noonan**

**Conducted by Clint Newman**



Mike Noonan



Clint Newman

*This article has become an Unlimited NewsJournal tradition as Chief Referee Mike Noonan brings us up to speed on rules changes for the new racing year, and why the new rules were adopted. We appreciate Mike's cooperation in keeping our readers informed.*

**UNJ:** Mike, we have been doing these interviews for many years, and the number one topic is always the starting procedure. So, let's rehash the starting procedure at the beginning of 2011, explain how it changed during the season, and then tell us what the procedure will be this year.

**Noonan:** We started the year with a major change that, as people say, put the fight back in the driver's hands and gave them a one minute buoy, established at the exit of turn 1. You could not be past that buoy before the one minute gun. We also made the boats go past the judges stand "at speed" which would prevent someone from leaving the pit area and driving at a slow pace all the way to the first turn to lane 1, then they established their lanes. There was a lot of leapfrogging on the backstretch; there were a lot of boats idling slowly past the s/f line at 3 minutes thirty seconds in lane 1, crawling up to the one minute buoy. We saw some engines being washed out because they were

---

going so slow, some teams broke propeller shafts, we think because the torque of the engine, once they could see it was time to make the start before the one minute period, the driver accelerated and the torque would twist the shafts.

By the time we left Seattle, the owners had decided that they had enough of the park and starts, crawling starts, and they were worried about saltwater ingestion in San Diego, and trying to keep the fleet alive to go to Doha. So, they went back to a random draw to assign lanes based on the order your ball was pulled out of the pill bottle for lane choice for heat draws. The first ball out for Heat 1A, the second ball was for Heat 1B, you choose your racing lanes in that order. We used this procedure for San Diego and Qatar. Over the winter, no one came up with any different proposals, except for one team, the U-11. JDub Meyer and Scott Raney began playing with a GPS transmitter similar to one that could be bought off the shelf and used in model rocketry. The units could send the speed, altitude, and GPS positions back to a receiver on the ground that would track your rocket. We would put one of those in each boat, put a receiver on the Judge's stand for the referees to watch, and a receiver on the corral for the team's radio men to watch. Software would be set up so that we could have minimum speed of 100 mph, and each boat would send back information that would show up on a bar graph. Zero to 95 mph would be red, 95 – 100 mph would be yellow, and above 100 mph would be green. So, at a glance you could see which boats were above 100 and which were below 100. We couldn't do testing over the winter, so we will try to do all the testing this spring. Without a system in place that we were sure would work, we couldn't put that in the rule book, so the HI Board and competition committee said we would leave the rules like they were at the beginning of the season last year in case the GPS system does not work. If our testing proves that the GPS system works, we'll use a competition directive to put that procedure in the book. If not, we'll go back to 2011 rules.

**UNJ:** So the GPS system will tell you how fast the boats are going. What about the assignment of heats, the draw, etc.?

**Noonan:** That will be a random draw, just like a traditional race. All boats will be drawn into Heats A, B, and possibly C. The 100 mph minimum must be kept. There is a rule that you are given a grace period when you drop below 100, you either have to get the position back or you are given a 15 second penalty for each time you drop below 100. This could be up to one minute or even a full lap if it is really serious.

**UNJ:** So the rule is that you have to maintain a speed of at least 100 mph at all times prior to the start?

**Noonan:** Yes, the minimum speed is 100 mph during the five minute gun. If you are below the minimum for more than 5 seconds, you get a 15 second penalty. You just keep getting 15 second penalties until a maximum of one minute is added to your time. They will be fighting for lanes at 100 mph, and of course, that one minute buoy will be there. That will be the tricky part. The tough part is going to be hitting that one minute buoy at 100 mph. That's almost like making s start. We may have to do some tweaking of the rules during the season, of course. We only have a concept in mind with some suggested rules, without actually having the equipment, software, or even an idea how it will work. Once we get it to work, we realize the Competition Committee will have to come up with rules that work and issue a CD to implement it.

**UNJ:** How will you test the GPS system in the spring?

**Noonan:** We will buy the units, put them in boxes, mount them in some of the inboards and possibly outboards out west. Scott and J. Dub have taken the lead on getting the test unit box put together, and testing in races out West.

**UNJ:** Is there a chance this will be used in Madison?

**Noonan:** We hope so!

**UNJ:** You made a change in the rules regarding restarts.

**Noonan:** If the situation comes up where we cannot re-run the final heat due to extenuating circumstances, the rule book says the winner is determined by cumulative points. It did not include points earned during qualifying.

---

Since we include qualifying points on race day, we added that in. The second part of the rule adds a sentence that says that the boat that causes the stoppage of the heat is not eligible for a re-start. We added a sentence that says that the boat that caused the stoppage cannot be declared the winner on the basis of points. If your accident causes the stoppage, you can't run the final, but even though you had the highest number of points, you can't be declared the winner.

**UNJ:** What's the rule change relating to biofuel?

**Noonan:** We put together a blue ribbon panel to look at switching over to biofuel mid-season 2011. If we get to a site where biofuels are available, we wanted to be able to use it the entire weekend. Some of the board and owners felt like until we get all of the data in on biofuels, and if it is going to be used by anybody, it can only be used in testing, not in qualifying and racing. Having said that, there was also a petition offered by the U-22 Webster racing team, working with former Boeing executive Scott Carson, to be a "test bed", and that they be allowed to use biofuel at a couple of races. They have been given clearance to use biofuels at a couple of pre-determined races during the entire event.

**UNJ:** Some attention has been given to tightening up the requirements regarding the signing of waivers to get in the pit area.

**Noonan:** Several places in the rule book repeat the requirement that you have to sign the waiver to be allowed into a restricted area. We are taking more steps to be sure we have the signed waivers, and the security people are looking for verification that waivers are signed before you are allowed in a restricted area.

**UNJ:** What's the change in the rules regarding N2 violations?

**Noonan:** Another violation has been added. The rule book has always said that it is the responsibility of the boat team to use the existing system, specifically the governor in the fuel control, to limit the N2 to 110%. There is a way to let the motor run well above 110% for the 3 or 5 seconds before the fuel begins to cut back to slow the engine down. A lot of people felt that was a huge performance advantage. You still couldn't go over the N2 or fuel, it just meant that the motor kept the fuel flow until way past the time it should have cut it back. The new rule says that if our data shows the motor is running at a spike of 130%, and the data does not show that the governor is pulling the fuel back by that time, then it is the same as an occurrence or a flagrant fuel flow violation.

**UNJ:** The next change I see deals with calibrating the start/finish line camera and the start clock.

**Noonan:** We will be giving all of the teams a video of the clock face, the digital display that the teams read, the small readout that the spotters can see the back side of the judges stand and the red light, showing them that all three in calibration. Zero-zero is truly zero-zero. When they see the red light go on the videos, it shows that it is truly zero-zero.

**UNJ:** Tell me a little about the start/finish line. There is always a start/finish buoy, and the debate is always whether a boat past that buoy prior to the start, or at the finish. There is also a line on the video camera that is used to determine when the start occurs. What is the difference between the start/finish buoy and the line on the video camera?

**Noonan:** The starting buoys are moving objects, one on the inside and one on the outside. They are extremely difficult to keep in exactly the same spot. Current, wind, and tides makes them hard to keep in exactly the same place, perfectly lined up. The judges' stand and the camera are on land. They never move, and neither does the actual race course. We can move the camera back and forth and there is a vertical line in the camera that is the start line. We try to position that line as far to the right side of the inside start/finish buoy. This gives the boats the benefit of the doubt, as far as we can to the right of the buoy to be behind the line. Our video cameras take one frame thirty times a second. The starting line is always defined by the line in the camera field of view, and it is always lined up with the buoys, as best as we can get it.

---

**UNJ:** This year's rules define the word "running"?

**Noonan:** It has to do with the finish of the final heat in Madison and the way it was determined. If two boats are involved in a wreck, one at fault and one is not, can the race go to the one that is not at fault. We didn't want to say that the boat that was not at fault would be out of the race also. Another related proposal said, 'If the final heat is stopped, but it can be declared a complete heat because more than half the number of heats has been run, then you declare the winner based on who was running at the time the heat was stopped'. The proposal that eventually was passed said a boat must have been running to be declared the winner. "Running" could mean a lot of things. For example, the *Oberto* motor was still running in Madison when it turned right-side up until Steve (David) had to shut it off. To clarify that, we defined "running" as, basically, you must have been racing. You can't be experiencing difficulty, coasting to a stop. A team can't claim that their boat was still moving, even after the incident, and that they should be declared the winner.

**UNJ:** So if this rule had been in effect at Madison last year, *Oberto* would not have won?

**Noonan:** Correct.

**UNJ:** You have a rule regarding missing buoys in the starting procedure.

**Noonan:** Nowhere in the rule book does it say that you have to go around all the buoys during a race. It's one of things that was understood, but was not in the book. So, the book now says that you must go fairly around all the buoys during the event. What happens if you miss a buoy like in Madison? Again, there is nothing in the rule book that says that you have to go around and pick it up. It's just an unwritten rule in boat racing. In maybe the inboards and in the outboards, if you miss a buoy, the rule says you go around and pick it up to be scored. However, it's never been in our rule book. After Madison, I put out a competition directive that said that the buoy shall NOT be picked up. If you miss a buoy, it's a one lap penalty. Continue on, get back on the course as safely as you can, do not go back around. This could have been done anyway, because a missed buoy is an automatic lap penalty. What if you were coming up for the start, the race hasn't started, and you have missed a buoy? Are you disqualified? Is there a one lap penalty? Looking at that, I proposed a third rule that says before the start, if you miss a buoy, you can ignore it, not go back, not be penalized as long as the missed buoy did not give you an advantage, was not used to gain position, was not used to shorten the distance on the course. If it is used to gain an advantage, you either have to give that advantage up, or be subject to a one lap penalty. If someone went inside the course, missed a buoy, and got lane 1 during the fight for lanes, if they didn't give it back, they are down one lap before the race starts.

**UNJ:** You are requiring that a radioman be in the corral any time two boats are testing at the same time.

**Noonan:** With the limited visibility inside the cockpit, even if there is no competition going on, the drivers still may not know where other boats are on the race course and may not know what other boats are doing. The radio men will communicate with their drivers, sort of like the spotters in NASCAR.

**UNJ:** You have a new rule dealing with boats dropping off plane and losing power.

**Noonan:** We have a rule saying that you have to have a seven boat-length overlap before changing lanes, and a 5 boat-length overlap during the starting period.

It's hard for us to tell what's five boat-lengths when the boat is going 15 mph. You can't be parked, coasting or engine dying or washed out in lane 1, prior to the one-minute buoy and keep that lane. Someone can go around you without the overlap to move over. You have lost right-of-way. It all depends on the GPS/minimum speed not being used, and reverting back to the 2011 starting procedure.

**UNJ:** You have a new provision relating to driver qualifications.

**Noonan:** When a new driver has either completed all of his 15 qualifying laps, but has not been able to complete the required heats, or has not gotten all 15 laps in and the season is over. The old rule said the requirements had to be completed in one season. Now you can spread that out over two seasons, strictly at the chief referee's discretion.

**UNJ:** What's the new rule on evacuation helicopters?

**Noonan:** The rules have never required a helicopter to be parked near the pit area. Some sites do that. Now, the rule say if there is not a trauma center within 40 miles, or if a helicopter is not within 15 minutes away by a telephone call, there must be a helicopter on-site.

**UNJ:** How about the assignment of boat numbers?

**Noonan:** The numbers are owned and assigned by H1 Unlimited, and are done so to promote the best interest of the sport. If reassigning a number from one team to another is in the best interest of the sport to keep a sponsor on board, they are allowed to do that.

**UNJ:** The big news is that Kelly Stocklin will be entering the sport with his G boat and will be using a T-53 turbine engine which he has gotten special permission from H1 to use. How will this work?

**Noonan:** The T-53 is the same engine that was used in the Glenn Davis boat, the 3 point reverse canard boat that blew over in Seattle, a smaller, lighter boat with a smaller engine. Kelly came to the Board and requested permission to use the T-53. The Board and the Competition Committee discussed it, and the board approved the request for this one instance.

The big differences are horsepower, roughly half the horsepower of the T-55s we run right now. The weight of an existing hull with engine is 6,575; with the T-53, it will weigh 3,800 pounds, and the horsepower is roughly half. It will still be a 28' boat that meets all the other Unlimited rules.

**UNJ:** Are the T-53 engines more available than T-55? Cheaper?

**Noonan:** They say they are. It seems to be a less expensive alternative.

**UNJ:** I would assume the owners would be interested in a less expensive alternative...

**Noonan:** But, not to power their 7,000 pound boats. That engine would not push a 7,000 pound Unlimited.

**UNJ:** This could have broad implications if they are successful.

**Noonan:** There could be other, lighter weight hulls out there. We aren't opening the sport up to old grand prix boats. This is a one-time deal with Kelly to try it. We'll see how it works. We reserve the right to limit or change competition restrictions. We can add weight to it or change the fuel flow or N2 during the season if the boat proved to be too fast or too slow. We do reserve the right to make rule changes, and Kelly agreed to that.

**UNJ:** Thanks, Mike!

**H1 Unlimited  
Rules and Regulations  
2012**



**U-1** (Ellstrom Spirit Of Qatar). Work continues on upgrades to the Ellstrom hull and prep work for a refresh of the color scheme to the 2012 QMSF colors.

**U-5, U-7. Ted Porter** and PPE LLC have announced they will run one boat in 2012. Graham Trucking will return as primary sponsor of the U-5 *Graham Trucking* raceboat with **Jimmy Shane** driving for the 2012

season. Shane has been Ted Porter's back-up driver for several years and competed for the PPE team in the Oryx Cup, Doha 2011. The former U-7 *Valken.com* hull (*Bud T-6*) will be the hull used as the U-5 *Graham Trucking* this year.

**U-6.** Crew chief **Mike Hanson** and the Oberto/Madison team have been busy stripping the hull of all the old paint and are repainting the U-6 with a fresh paint scheme. The basic color theme will be similar to the previous years.

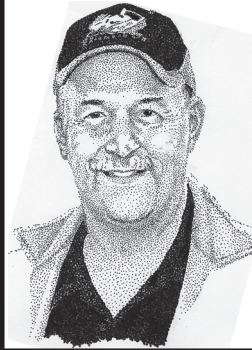
**U-11** (see the Tri-Cities testing report). The Peters & May team is also heading up the testing of the GPS program for the H1 Unlimited Air National Guard Series. **Scott Raney** and **J.W. Myers** have been testing the GPS units and software under different conditions and used the equipment during the Tri-Cities testing session.

**U-12.** There has been no further information or updates coming from the Schumacher Racing team since their request to use the Budweiser's former U-12 number. The *UNJ* has requested updates on the plans for 2012.

**U-13.** There has been no information coming from the Spirit of Detroit team since last months report of some collaboration possibly going on to secure a full season of racing in 2012. Attempts to contact the Detroit Unlimited group have gone unanswered.

**U-17. Nate Brown** and team have had the boat upside down in the shop, worked on the strut area, and re-built the runners. Our Gang Racing plans on testing the U-17 before leaving for

**H  
Y  
D  
R  
O  
P  
L  
A  
N  
E**



**E Lon Erickson**

Madison, however the specific date has not been confirmed.

**U-22.** Final stages of the new "Bud style" safety capsule installation are underway and a new paint scheme is coming for the Webster team.

**U-57.** The Formulaboats.com race boat has a new home with Evans Brothers Racing in Chelan, Wash. **Mark** and **Mitch Evans** will be campaigning the red U-57 for the

2012 season. Mark Evans will remain in the driver's seat and Formulaboats.com will stay on as the presenting sponsor. **John Walcker** is the team manager heading up the crew made up of members from the Northwest and Detroit area.

**88 Degree Men/USA Racing Partners** (see Tri-Cities testing report). The USA Racing Partners team was reunited in the Tri-Cities for the initial testing of their upgraded race boat and debut of the new Degree Men paint scheme. **Debbie Gregory, Kari Gregory, Adam Gregory**, along with Matt were all together for the event. The 88 crew that will run the boat this year consists of **Matt Gregory, Adam Gregory, Mark Smith, Bob Catipovic, John Rice, Dale Van Wieringen, Steve Peterson**, along with driver **Scott Liddycoat**.

**U-100.** With the very recent passing of **Fred Leland**, the status of the Leland Unlimited race team for 2012 was unknown to many. But Leland had already made that decision, "*Fred had a wish that the team continue on after he was gone,*" said driver **Greg Hopp**. "*He had a plan and made arrangements for us to go on . . . and that's what we will do.*" Fred Leland's family and team members announced they will be campaigning the team's #9899 hull in the 2012 Air National Guard Hydroplane Series. Hopp will also act as owner's rep with **Tim Shadduck** continuing as crew chief. Other crewmembers will include **Barney Tavener, Dan Radner, and Lori Santillo**.

# Fred Leland, 1938 – 2012

by Kirk Pagel

Karl Pearson photos

Fred Leland, age 74, passed away just before 5:00 am on May 21, 2012.

It was important to Fred, that he not meet his end in a hospital room, and as he had wished, he passed away among friends and family, at home in his own bed.

Fred began his racing career in 1968 buying a Karelson built 5 liter hydro he named *Hombre* and numbered F-40. After owning and racing three different 5 liter hulls, and one 7 liter hull, Fred went to the 'unlimited class' in 1976, owning and driving his boats with Merlin power.

In 1982 Fred hired Scott Pierce as his first of many well know drivers. He liked driving himself, but was far more successful as an owner and builder.

Besides Pierce, his roster of drivers included Nate Brown, Mike Hanson, Mike Weber, Jeff Bernard, Jack Barrie, Mark Evans, Terry Troxell, and Greg Hopp. In 1994 Fred hired an up and coming driver, Dave Villwock, who gave him two wins in his first season. In 1996, he sold his masonry business to become a full time owner and builder.

In 1996 Villwock drove Fred's *Pico American Dream* to six wins, including the Gold Cup and the National Championship. Villwock would go on to become the sport's most winning driver of all time.

Mark Evans gave Fred five more wins between 1997 and 1999, then Fred hired Chip Hanauer for three more wins including the Gold Cup for a second time.

Fred's last win came in 2001 with Terry Troxell at the Tri-Cities.

At one time, only five years ago, Fred had five racing hulls in his Kirkland shop, and was always available to lease a hull to a team in need.

Fred built his own gearboxes and like to innovate with intake cowlings for the Lycoming turbine motors.

Fred's hulls and equipment will remain in the sport, the same sport who has lost a true craftsman and innovator.



Fred Leland in the pits at Seattle last year.



Fred Leland in San Diego last season, still at work.

# Tri-Cities May 18th test on the Columbia River

by Michael Prophet & Craig Fjarlie

Chris Denslow-Brad Drake photo



The newest 88 *Degree Men*, which is the former U-10 USA Racing Partners hull that we haven't seen since Seattle of 2008, and U-11 *Peters & May* showed up at the Lampson pits in Columbia Park about 3:30 pm Thursday. The river was higher than the normal level they race on in July and a stronger current, which all led to debris floating downstream, something they would have to watch out for Friday.

On Friday morning, the crews were busy working on the boats in the pits. They trailer fired the 88 about 9 am and the U-11 around 10 am. The 88 was ready to go, the slings

were on the boat, but they had to wait until the buoys were set for an approximate 2 mile course and the pleasure craft cleared off the course; some of them were stubborn. About 10:30 *Degree Men* was launched. Scott Liddycoat ran three laps then came in. From not being on the water for several years the boat looked and ran well. Liddycoat docked short and away from the dock, then drifted downstream and had to be towed back. It was quite an ordeal and took a while. They had no problems mechanical on their first run.

The U-11 *Peters & May* and J.W. Myers were launched as soon as they unhooked the 88 and went out on the course about 11:00. Myers didn't spend nearly as much time getting setup in the cockpit. *Peters & May* ran three fast laps and looked very good. J.W. had no trouble parking within inches of the dock after returning. Myers said upon exiting his boat, "We didn't push it real hard. We just wanted to test some new changes to the ride and there weren't any surprises" This turned out to be their last run of the day. They discovered an issue within the gearbox, J-Dub noticed a spike in the gear box oil pressure at the end of the run and later found they had a serious oil leak. Scott Raney commented "that's why we go test, to find out these kind of issues now, rather than at the first race" The *Peters &*



Michael Prophet photo



Brad Drake photo



May crew began stripping down their boat once it was back on the trailer, they would stay in Tri-Cities for some display duties on Saturday before heading back over the mountains.

After lunch, *Degree Men* was put back together and launched for their second test run about 12:30. Liddycoat was in the cockpit and ready to go, but had to wait for them to put back a deflated buoy and move pleasure craft from the course again. They hit the course about 1:00 and ran three very speedy laps. Liddycoat did a much better job of parking this time; not as good as J.W., but better.

During the downtime after the run J.W. signed autographs and Scott Liddycoat was taking photos with kids and fans.

*Degree Men* stayed on the trailer for about two hours as the crew worked on the steering. Finally, they were ready to go. Liddycoat left the pits and headed up the backstretch. As he made the far turn, it was obvious he was much happier with the boat's handling. He came down the front straightaway at full speed and made a good turn in front of the pits. The next lap was even faster. On the third lap, he made another good turn in front of the pits, but slowed as he was going up the backstretch and coasted to a halt. The boat was towed in. Liddycoat had thought he hit something and rather than risk additional damage he shut off the engine. It was a prudent move as the river was littered with debris. Tumbleweeds were everywhere, and large chunks of wood occasionally floated by the pits.

As the boat went back on the trailer, the only visible sign of a problem was a light scuff mark on the right side of the rudder. There were obvious sighs of relief. At 4:15 the slings were hooked up and the boat went back in the water. Just then word came that a deer was swimming in the river, across from the start-finish line area. The last test run was put on hold. The deer, a yearling buck, was struggling in the current and slowly floated downriver toward the pits. Rescue personnel tried to herd it toward shore. The



Brad Drake photo



Michael Prophet photo



deer finally reached the pit area and touched land at the edge of the pit wall. Someone put a rope around its neck and helped get it to land near the water tower. The animal was exhausted and cold, too weak to struggle to get free. Fish and Wildlife personnel were called to tend to it as Liddycoat went back on the course at 5:00. It was a short run; just enough to be sure everything was in good working order. He went up the backstretch, made a hard turn at the far end, started down the front straightaway then came off the throttle and returned to the pits.

The test day ended with the *Degree Men* team happy and looking forward to Madison. The *Peters & May* team felt lucky their gear box problem had been discovered at the test session rather than during qualifying at Madison. Both teams had learned a lot from their day on the Columbia River.

~~ UNJ

## Three! 88 Degree Men

At right are three different boats on tilt, all named the 88 *Degree Men*. Two of them are from 2011 and the other is from 2012, so everybody should know what boats they are. But which is which?

The top *Degree Men* is the late Fred Leland's #0010 hull that last raced as the U-37 *Peters & May* in 2010. ~Michael Prophet photo taken at Seattle

The middle is Bill and Jane Schumacher's 88 *Degree Men*, #1188. ~Karl Pearson photo taken at San Diego

The bottom boat is the new 88 *Degree Men*, owned by the Gregory family, the former T3'95, #9512. This boat last raced as the U-10 *Hoss Mortgage Investors* at Seafair in 2008. ~ Brad Drake photo taken at Tri-Cities



~~ Ed.

---

# The John Humes Story

## Part 2 by Craig Fjarlie

Last month, in part one, John Humes talked about his early years with the Miss Madison team. This month, in part two, he talks about the change to turbocharged Allisons, acquiring the former *Pay 'n Pak* hull, becoming crew chief, the trip to Acapulco, and more. Craig Fjarlie conducted the interview in 2000.

**When the team converted to turbocharged Allisons, how did that program develop? Did you get help from teams that were already using them?**

We had spied on the *Lincoln Thrift*. Here again, back in the days of early boat racing, a lot of secrets were stolen after hours. I mean, they weren't speed secrets but as far as measuring somebody's inside skid fin at the time – because there was no skid fin hangin' out there – “what've these guys got here?” Well, we'll go home, we'll make a pattern, we'll bolt that on. That was part of boat racing, that's how we learned. But, they came into town. Bill Boat, I believe, had developed that turbocharger, fuel injection for them.

**Bill Boat and George Magnuson.**

And George Magnuson. Those guys had a pretty successful program, it was neat. And we beat 'em up in Dayton one year because they did some fluke thing. I forget what it was and we beat 'em in a heat. And that was another part of, you know, you can beat this guy tomorrow but you might not beat him again. That was the fun part. But they had a good program. Of course, Hillborn made the fuel injection. That was an order it, bolt it on. We were real successful having Cummins-Holset around here. They helped us develop. And Tom Kolb, out of Evansville, Indiana, had Kolb Diesel. We would buy turbos and he worked on them for us.

**Oh, OK.**

He was interested in the speed. We could trick up the turbos. We had better success at not having any that failed than anybody. A lot of people burned 'em up.

**You guys had pretty good luck with yours.**

We were puttin' a special seal in 'em. And this guy did this for us down there. Those were the early years of turbocharging. And then, like I say, we developed it and everybody burned pistons and everybody went to the special L rings, and three rings and four rings and five rings and no oil ring and let it scuff on the wall and what have you.



JohnHumes in1981~E.K.Muller photo



Media promo photo

The boat they spied on. Bob Fendler's turbo-Allison powered U-55 *Lincoln Thrift* at running at Phoenix in 1974.

## This is the piston rings?

Yeah. But I mean, a lot of technology was trial and error. But these guys, they started it but I don't think Fendler went far enough to keep developing. We did, and we were fortunate enough to have Holset around to help us. In the end, we were getting our turbochargers out of England.

## Oh, really?

They were made over in England, they'd send 'em over here. The plant was here in Madison at the time. So the specs that we had from Kolb Diesel on the inlet part of the turbocharger, the bearings and stuff, and seals, Holset puts into Cummins turbochargers yet today.

## For business.

Yeah, sure. I mean, it was a hand-in-hand deal. We helped them, they helped us. They provided 'em to us, we'd tear 'em up—which we didn't tear up very many—and we'd bring 'em back in like before we'd go west. Everything came off, the motors went up there, they'd pull 'em apart, check 'em, if they needed anything done to 'em, do it, put 'em back in it, we'd take 'em with us. That was a good tool for us. But the fuel injection, turbocharged Allisons were good years.

## When you became crew chief, how did that happen? Did you want the job?

Well, I was around. I guess I was the most senior person. I wasn't the most senior person, but the person who had been around the most, had the most time to spend. They said, "Hey, do you want to be the crew chief?" I said sure, you know, what's different than what I'm doing now except it's a title, you know. It's no big deal. I'm the one that hauls the boat around. Me and Russ Willey. We even hauled the '72 boat around together. We were always on the road together, so why not. What comes with this? Nothing. Can't buy a cup of coffee with the salary. Well, actually, back in those days money wasn't the object. I mean, you did it because you liked to do it and the people that were out there racing.

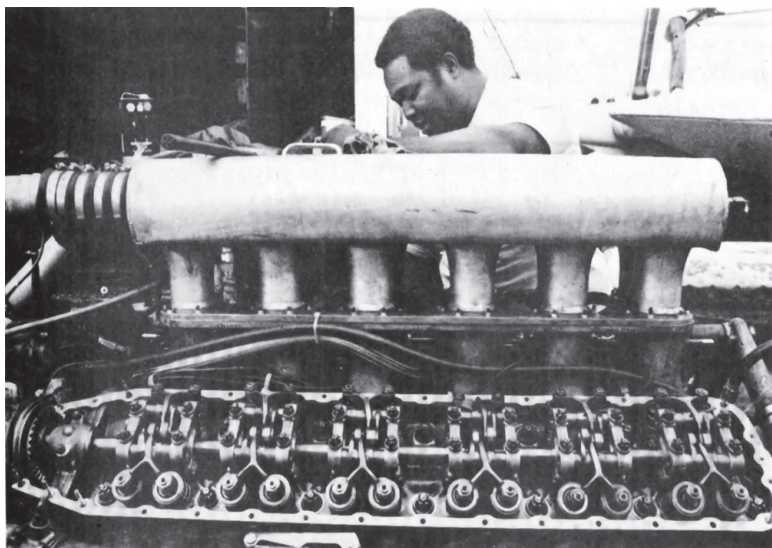
## When Tom Sheehy drove, he seemed to have a lot of trouble starting the boat. What was the problem?

Tom Sheehy. (Sigh.) Good guy. A good guy. Funny guy. We went to New York to test up at that new site they had.

## Up in the finger lakes?

Yeah. We went up there to test. So Bobby Humphrey and myself, and Ralph Ritchie, Bill Haworth, we go up and we set up. It was cold. It was colder than the dickens. Not real cold, cold, but rainy, misty, you know, off and on...

## It wasn't summer yet, anyway.



Tab 10 photos

Big John Humes in the pits working on *Miss Madison's* turbocharged Allison in 1976.



E.K. Muller photo

Madison wins 1981-82 Crew of the Year award. Top left: John Humes & Ralph Ritchey. Bottom left: Bill Haworth, Bobby Humphrey, & Charlie McCluggage.

Seattle weather! We went up there and, of course, we always fired the boat on the trailer, make sure the engine was good and warm. And he just, I don't know what it was.

### Did he get nervous?

I think it was a nervousness he had. The same year when they had the race up there I was sick in the hospital and Charlie Grooms went up to fill in for me. He had trouble getting it started and things happened and I think we didn't make the final heat up there. Then we go to Detroit for the Gold Cup and, uh, couple times he'd float back down and not get started. We'd tow it back in, put it on the trailer, fire right up. "Tom, what's wrong?" I said. "What are you doing, tell me the sequence." He'd do everything right. To this day, I'll bet you he could not say what he did. He might be able to tell you, but it was such a simple start. Two seconds on the gas primer, hit the igniters, starter, start. If it didn't start, go back through the sequence.

### Um hmm.

Gas primer, igniters, start. I wasn't a driver but I could start it. It's no different in the water. So I said, "OK." I went over and got Snyder and I said, "Ron, I want you to do me a favor." I said, "I want you to take this boat out and run it one time, please." He got his suit on, went out. Took off running. Ran probably six, eight laps, came back in. I said, "Well, anything wrong?" Says, "It's backfiring a lot, back on, off, of the right bank." So I said, "OK." Said, "Charlie Mac, check it." Checked it, it was broken. So I did have to give Tom that. We fixed it, put him back in, (pause), coasted down the waterfront. I said, "Hey, do we have to do this again? What's wrong?" He said, "Well..." We gotta have somebody that can run this boat. I said, "You're fired." Took his uniform, got his stuff out of the truck and left. I said, "Ron, got a favor, you want to drive the boat this weekend?" "Yeah." I did it all on my own. I was on the Board at the time but no Board members there, nobody, I did it myself. No heat, done deal. The boat's running. That's what we're all here for, it's running. And we ran that weekend. I forget how we finished but that was Ron's era, Ron Snyder started in the *Pak* boat.

**Milner Irvin started driving for the team in 1974, at Miami. That was a tough weekend for everybody. Jim McCormick got hurt first, then Skipp Walther was killed, *Valu-Mart* spun out at the start of the first heat and everybody got panicked again. But Milner won two heats, he just didn't start one.**

We had a fuel system problem, flooded the motor is what he did. We probably could've won that race. But Milner did a fantastic job for us. I mean, every year he drove for us you couldn't ask for a better shoe than he was. I mean, he was just cool, calm, collected. He liked to do it and here again, we had some pretty good equipment.

**Engines were getting harder to find by that time, too.**



Tom Sheehy at left with Bob Hughes re-christening *Miss Madison* (4) in 1982. John Humes' brother holds the rope below on dock.

H&RM Collection photo



Ron Snyder and John Humes talking things over in the pits at Detroit in 1982.

Brian Grant photo

Every year when we'd go to Seattle I'd go to (Bob) Gilliam's and get parts. And, you know, he treated us well. The last time I was there, which was probably in, I'd say '86 or '87, he had built a bunch of buildings. I say a bunch, he probably had three big buildings, probably 30 by 60, two floors, Merlin parts, Allison parts, all in these buildings. Brand new stuff, brand new. We got rings, pistons, but, you know, toward the end of the fuel injection you didn't need a big piston, you just ran stock pistons. They said the Allison parts were getting scarce, I don't really think they were.

**People just didn't know where to go get 'em?**

They didn't know where to go get 'em. Everybody looked for a new motor, or a complete motor, when you could go to his place and get parts. I mean, he had the blocks, he had complete blocks. Parts were getting hard because the airplane boys were trying to get parts and they didn't want anything a boat racer had ever had, because they knew that they'd really hurt 'em, you know. As far as tractor pullers, they were getting into the Allison racing then, too, so there's a lot of 'em still to be found today if you want 'em.

**When the team bought the *Pay 'n Pak* boat before the '78 season, Muncey tested it in Seattle with the *Miss Madison* name and a Rolls-Merlin in it. You had to convert it to turbocharged Allison. How did that program work?**

We had to modify the engine stringers and balance the boat. And of course, outfit it for the lines and electric and all that. But it was almost like getting a new boat except for getting the mounts in, balance, and bolting it in before we firmed everything up. There again, that boat was kind of a turn key operation for us other than that part of it. The wing...

**That was new technology to your team.**

Lucero says, "Well, set it to this and check it at that and always run it that way." And we never did move it, all the years we had that boat we never did any crazy thing with that wing. Whether Jim did or not, he didn't relay to us. So we always checked it and set it at what he had when we got the boat, and that was it.

**Did you get propellers at the same time, or did you use props you had run with the *Gale* hull?**

We couldn't use the props we had on the *Gale* boat. I believe we might've gotten two or three propellers from Lucero when we got the boat. After that, we were buying propellers from Ron Jones. Here again, we had help from other places, but mainly everything came from Jones.

**Tell us about the trip to Acapulco. Is that a tough subject for you?**

No.

**Not just the race, but the drive down through Mexico, the caravan.**



Ron Armstrong and the first U-25 *Pay 'n Pak* in 1977 at Tri-Cities Gold Cup a year before being sold to Madison.

H&RM Collection photo



Milner Irvin III returns to drive the new *Miss Madison* (4) in 1978. Below, Irvin talking thing over at Seattle.

H&RM Collection photo

When they said they were gonna do this, we had a Board meeting. "Well, we gonna go?" First thing, can we afford to go? Well, they're gonna foot the bill. We had to pay for the fuel. They paid all the lodgings down and all the lodgings back out. All we had to pay for is hotel when we get there, and fuel down, and fly the crew in. OK, we do it.

### **You drove the boat down?**

I drove the boat down. We meet in Nogales, Arizona, on such-and-such a day. Everybody gets there. The next day we're leaving at 7:00, headin' south. We get to the border. Had this Mexican guy that's head of tourism, or the tourism man for Mexico. He's the one that's takin' us in. This boy's packin'.

### **Oh!**

And he's got a briefcase full of money, so he's the man. He gets to the border and they want some ungodly amount of money. They see all these racing boats. I think there were 12 of us, and Wurster went down on his own. Lined up here at the border, customs. They see all these rigs and they want \$100-something thousand for us to go into Mexico.

### **Whoa.**

Oops, turn around. We turn around, go back to the hotel. So the people on the American side knew somebody on the other side. Hey, they're going to Acapulco for this. So we get it all straightened out. So the next day we go down and leave. We go through. It had already been proposed we drive 225 miles a day. So they mapped out the cities, Guadalajara, blah, blah, all the way down, 225, Mexico City. That's all we'd drive. Hey, it'd be a piece of cake. Fifteen and 17 hour days.

### **Because of the roads.**

Because of the roads. It was fun, we had fun doing it, but it was a nightmare. So we get down to the first place and we stay the whole day in that city, promoting. The first town we went into, we're all parked out in this field. It was on a beach area, and it rained that night we got there. So the next day we spent half a day pulling trucks out of this field. And I think the Budweiser motorcycle got stolen off the trailer that night. Anyway, that was the start. So then, 225 a day, all right. Next city it's 15, 17 hours. Get there, get parked, get checked in the hotel. Everything was fixed for us. It was just like they said, they'd pay for everything, no problem. We paid for the fuel. Then as you start to get in deeper, before we got to Mexico City, you'd go from one province to another and it was almost like a different country.

### **Rural Mexico.**

Rural country, yeah. I remember we went by this one checkpoint one time and here are these guys standing with these big ol' guns. Of course, the guy in front, our Mexican guide, he was there and he got us through everything ok, but, I mean, this is scary. You're in another element that you know nothing about. Don't speak the language. This guy took care of us and we were at his mercy.

Mexico City, power steering went out on my truck. So here I am, I go to this Chevrolet dealer, tell this guy – he could speak English – what I needed. So the parts, no way they matched up. So Dave Seefelt worked on it a little bit and could see it wasn't going to work. So I called back to Indiana and had them bring parts to



*Frank Kenney Toyota/Volvo in the makeshift pits at Acapulco. Crewmen Bill Haworth on deck and Charlie McCluggage below.*

H&RM Collection photo

Acapulco and we fixed it there. But we had a fun trip. Going through one city one time Charlie and them traded beer out of a Mexican beer truck. Went down the road, you know. Then getting down there, the pits, these people had no clue.

**They were really lucky to run the race at all.**

It was very lucky. The pits were dug out OK, but then as far as launching, they had two cranes, I believe. When it was your time, if you wanted to test, you had to back in and you'd test, then you'd load back up and pull out. Somebody else'd back down in and pull out. It was not a deal where of you didn't make it you didn't run. Everybody took their time backing in, getting unloaded, to go race. That was when we ran the fan plan.

**Yeah.**

Ran half points. Fast boats ran against the fast boats and slow ones ran against the slow ones. So, my old buddy Jim Lucero called to me. He said, "Humes, you guys are sandbaggin'." I said, "You're damn right we are and we'll keep sandbaggin'." It's the way you play, brother." I always told Milner, look, they know what we can run. We'd go out and maybe we can make a good run, a marginal run. I said, "The whole time you're out there runnin' you do whatever you want. But I'm gonna tell you one thing, never make a complete lap. Cut the course somewhere. Make your one run that you want to make, but after that never make a complete lap." And we did that for two years.

**There was the accident in the final heat at Acapulco.**

That was the first heat we had not finished all year long.

**How much damage was there to the boat?**

Initially, Milner thought he had barrel-rolled the boat. Basically, what happened, when Bill went over, Milner was probably two or three lengths back. He saw this happen, saw the splash and everything. He turned hard right hoping to miss everything, then came back hard left. When he went hard right the water flew and it tore the inside of the right sponson up. He lost all concept of where things were in the excitement. We probably could've made it back to the dock. But when something happens they shoot the flares and everybody stops. When we saw him he was still kind of puttering along, and when he had to shut the motor off it was too late then.

**There was a hole in the boat.**

Yeah, a hole in the boat. We lost a motor, driver was OK. People that were not even rescue people were takin' off from the dock. You couldn't stop 'em. It was like they were going out for a salvage hunt. It was pretty chaotic. I mean, it was scary, not knowing what kind of shape Bill was in. Bad day.

This is the end of part two of the interview with John Humes. Next month, in the conclusion, he talks about Ron Snyder coming back to drive *Miss Madison* and the role of Bob Hughes on the team.



H&RM Collection photo

*Frank Kenney Toyota* sinks to the very shallow water of the Bay after the accident that took Bill Muncey's life.





**Craig Fjarlle**

## Heroes of a Generation

Former unlimited hydroplane driver Russ Schlee passed away on Sunday, May 6th. He was among a dwindling number of drivers from the 1950s still alive more than 50 years after achieving national prominence.

Schlee was named driver of *Rebel, Suh* in 1955, but the boat failed to finish a heat in the Gold Cup. Schlee had one good season, 1956, when he drove *Shanty-I* to victory in three races and earned the National Championship. He proved himself to be a tough competitor who never backed down. His crew did him a disservice in 1957 when the boat was changed. Instead of producing a faster ride, Schlee was stuck with a handful that bucked him out at Chelan and eventually bit him hard at the President's Cup. Schlee was badly hurt and the boat was destroyed. He tested *Shanty II* the next spring, but the unusual boat never made it to a race. He drove *Thriftway, Too* and *Nitrogen Too* in 1960, *Miss Reno* in 1961, and the same boat as the first *Tahoe Miss* in 1962. His last competitive appearance was in *Miss Exide* (the former *Wahoo*) in the 1963 Seafair Trophy Race. The winner's circle proved elusive. He tested *Valu-Mart* in spring of 1974 when the team was considering drivers, but the nod went to Ron Armstrong instead.

Schlee drove at a time when the winner of the Gold Cup selected the site of the race the following year. Boats raced for yacht clubs and civic pride was at stake in every race. Drivers were heroes to baby boomers in Detroit, Seattle, and a few other cities. Schlee was one of many drivers who would be mobbed at public events and greeted as conquerors when they arrived home at the airport. Chuck Thompson, Bill Cantrell, Bill Muncey, Joe Taggart, Lou Fageol, Lee Schoenith, Stan Dollar, Dan Arena, Bill Stead, Don Wilson, Roy Duby, Walt Kade, Ron Musson, Rex Manchester, Bill Brow, Norm Evans, Dallas Sartz, Chuck Hickling, Jay and Roger Murphy, Bob Hayward, and Bob Schroeder were sports stars in their day. Now, with the passing of Schlee, only a few are left. Danny Foster, Fred Alter, Jack Regas, Mira Slovak, and Brien Wygle, are the last of the famous drivers from that era still with us.

The passage of time changes perspective and dulls memories. Schlee won the Seafair Trophy Race and made the cover of *Sports Illustrated*, yet his passing was ignored – intentionally or not – by the *Seattle Times*.

Drivers who came later, including Billy Schumacher, Dean Chenoweth, George Henley, Chip Hanauer, Mark Tate, and more recently Dave Villwock and Steve David, are certainly heroes to new generations of fans. In spite of their successes, their names are hardly household words the way Muncey, Thompson, Cantrell, Regas, and Slovak were in the 1950s. Hanauer came the closest, but like all contemporary drivers he raced for commercial entities, not yacht clubs. Commercial entities rarely risk taking sides in civic rivalry. Since 1962, when Gold Cup rules were changed, hydroplane drivers have had only nominal civic affiliation. Hanauer, for example, had as many fans in Detroit as he had in Seattle. It was personality and driving skill that nurtured his fan base, rather than the yacht club burgee on the tail fin of his boat. The unfortunate side effect is that the day after the race, it made little difference whether he won in Detroit or Seattle or Evansville. When Schlee was at his peak, the winning driver represented the boat's home port and civic involvement was front and center.

Schlee's passing means another piece of history, from a very different era, has moved farther off the radar screen. Those days are gone forever, but they were an exciting and unique time in the legacy of hydroplane racing.

# IN THIS MAY 2012 ISSUE

<b>Hydro Rule Changes for 2012 -- Interview with H1 Unlimited Chief Referee Mike Noonan</b> - Conducted by Clint Newman .....	1
<b>HydroFile</b> by Lon Erickson .....	6
<b>Fred Leland 1938 - 2012</b> by Kirk Pagel .....	7
<b>Tri-Cities May 18th test on the Columbia River</b> by Michael Prophet & Craig Fjarlie ...	8
<b>John Humes Part 2</b> by Craig Fjarlie .....	11
<b>Heroes of a Generation</b> by Craig Fjarlie .....	17

**NEXT MONTH: Swami & John Humes Part 3**

**EDITOR** Michael Prophet **ASSOCIATE EDITORS** Craig Fjarlie, Chris Tracy, Dick Sanders  
**HYDROFILE EDITOR & WEBMASTER** Lon Erickson **HISTORIAN** Bob Greenhow  
**SPECIAL PROJECTS** Kirk Pagel, Andy Muntz **EDITORIAL BOARD** Clint Newman II, Bob Senior

*Unlimited NewsJournal*, established in 1973, is published by Unlimiteds Unanimous, an enthusiast club interested in promoting and documenting the sport of unlimited hydroplane racing. Copyright © 2012 *Unlimited NewsJournal*. Reproduction or transmission in whole or part is not permitted without written approval of the *Unlimited NewsJournal*.

Editor, *Unlimited NewsJournal*, 16418 192nd Ave. S.E. Renton, Washington 98058  
or E-mail to: [USA1st@msn.com](mailto:USA1st@msn.com)  
Letters may be edited for clarity and space.

## Next Meeting of Unlimiteds Unanimous

Shoreline Public Library  
345 NE 175th St.  
Shoreline, Washington  
-everyone welcome!  
Sunday June 17th  
UNJ 2 pm -- 4:30pm

## Silver Lake Dental Arts

Michael C. Johnson, DDS, PS  
Brent N. Kellogg, DDS, PS  
1809 100th PL SE  
Everett, WA 98208  
425-337-3922  
[sldarts@verizon.net](mailto:sldarts@verizon.net)  
[www.sldarts.com](http://www.sldarts.com)