

SEPTEMBER 2015



A Successful Rebirth in Detroit *Oberto* and Jimmy Shane Win the UAW/GM Spirit of Detroit Hydrofest by Mac Clouse



“Growing up, I heard about rivalries like (Bill) Muncey and (Dean) Chenoweth, and (Chip) Hanauer, and (Jim) Kropfield. Now we have Kelly and Shane,” said Jimmy Shane after winning the UAW/GM Spirit of Detroit Hydrofest. As has been true all season, Shane in the *Oberto* and J. Michael Kelly in *Graham Trucking* raced deck-to-deck in another exciting final heat. After splitting the season’s first two races with Kelly, Shane’s win in Detroit gives him a 626 point National Championship lead as the

fleet goes to San Diego for the last race of the season. The other winners this weekend were the Detroit fans. After originally not being on the 2015 schedule, Mark Weber and Detroit Riverfront Events resurrected the race. With a little over 60 days to organize the event, the usual cast of Detroit volunteers put together an event that was a great show for the fans. The unlimiteds were joined by the very loud and very fast Canadian Grand Prix boats and the F2 tunnel boats.

Testing and Qualifying

This year's two day event began on Saturday with testing from 8:00am-10:00am. The field of 12 boats was the largest number in many years. All the boats except *Miss Di Julio* tested. The water was very calm with no wind. Jean Theoret again showed the speed in his *ELAM Plus* with the session's fastest lap of 161.153. Shane's best lap was 148.318 before a broken skid fin rod caused him to miss the rest of the session. Kelly's best was 153.619, Cal Phipps in the *Dalton Industries* had the second fastest time of 156.334. Theoret commented about his fast run. "We had great water conditions. I haven't been on the course in a while, but my marks are still the same, and we still have a big corner and small corner. The boat is running well. We are having some cornering issues. We'll try changing the angle of the skid fin." The skid fin comment would be interesting later.

The qualifying session was from 12:00pm-2:00pm. The water was not as flat as earlier, but it was good. The first boat out was *Miss DiJulio* (Patrick Sankuer). After a slow warm up lap, Sankuer came in saying he was having canard problems. *Dooley's/Miss CARSTAR* (Kevin Eacret) was next and did 141.320. *PVS Chemicals/Roostertail* (Mike Webster) did 148.170. Webster was pleased. "We have been making fuel flow adjustments to get it right"

Graham Trucking II (Jesse Robertson) did 151.651. When asked about his first experience on the Detroit course, he said, "It is interesting and unique. To get ready for the Roostertail turn, it is more of a priority to make sure that the skid fin is set. I have to use the wing to make sure the front of the boat is down so the fin will set. The long straightaways and long turn 1 let you get a lot of speed."

Next out was *Peters & May* (Tom Thompson) which did 147.971. *Home Street Bank* (Jimmy King) did one lap of 154.756 and then came in. *Al Deeby Dodge/Colony Marine* (Brian Perkins) did 153.880. *811 Call B4 You Dig/Les Schwab/RedDOT* (Scott Liddycoat) posted the top speed so far with a 158.226. That was soon topped by *ELAM Plus* (Jean Theoret) with a 161.518. *Dalton Industries* (Cal Phipps) did 156.179. *Graham Trucking I* (J. Michael Kelly) at 158.029 and *Oberto* (Jimmy Shane) at 159.030 couldn't match Theoret's speed.

In Round 2, *Miss DiJulio* did 130.849. This was Sankuer's first lap over 130mph. He was very happy. "We have been working on the fuel system. I still have seven laps of over 130 to do before I am a qualified driver. I'll try to do some in tomorrow's testing. I have raced on this course before





At the bottom of previous page and above are the four top qualifiers at Detoit; *ELAM Plus*, *Oberto*, *Les Schwab/RedDOT*, and *Graham Trucking*.

in my Grand National hydroplane, but the Roostertail turn was still a surprise. It is a big turn for the small boat, but it is a very small turn for the big boat!"

Webster (151.835) and Perkins (155.754) were the only drivers to increase their speeds. Robertson, Kelly, and Shane were the only other drivers to go out in Round 2. *ELAM Plus* was in the water in case Kelly or Shane topped its speed, but Theoret did not need to go out "The officials said I would be able to go out if one of those guys beat my speed, but they didn't so I couldn't go. I think I might have been able to do a 162 or 163, but now we'll never know."

Heat 1

Twelve qualified boats; Heat 1 would have three four boat flights. 1A was originally scheduled for 6:00pm, but the time was changed to about 5:00pm to try to get the racing done by 6:00pm. Since Patrick Sankuer was not a qualified driver, Dave Warren would drive *Miss DiJulio*, as he did in Seattle.

The first matchup of Kelly and Shane was in 1A. Shane was early in the front stretch to take lane 1. Kelly was in lane 2 with Eacret in 3 and Warren in 4. *Graham Trucking* and *Oberto* crossed the start together with *CARSTAR* and *Miss DiJulio* way back. Kelly was first out of turn 1, but he and Shane were side-by-side down the backstretch. Shane used the inside lane in the Roostertail turn to pass Kelly and led by two boat lengths at the end of lap 1.

Shane used the inside lane to increase his lead and beat Kelly by almost a roostertail. Eacret was third with Warren fourth. After the heat, it was announced



that *Miss DiJulio* had a fuel violation and would get 0 points. ~ The two photos at bottom of previous page at from Chris Denslow

In 1B, Perkins was early to get lane 1. Thompson was in lane 2, Robertson in lane 3, and Webster in lane 4. *Colony Marine* was first in and out of turn 1 and led *Peters & May* by about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a roostertail at the end of the first lap. *Graham Trucking II* was in third, with *Roostertail* in fourth. This order stayed the same until the finish. Bottom photo on previous page is a shot of the U-11 and U-21 in 1B.

In 1C, Liddycoat was early to get lane 1. Theoret was in lane 2 with Phipps in lane 3 and King back a bit in lane 4. As the boats neared the start, the three inside boats looked early. *ELAM Plus* was first in and out of turn 1 and led the boats down the backstretch. The boats were close as they entered the Roostertail turn. *Les Schwab/RedDOT* trailed a bit in lane 1 and got into a lot of rough water and roostertails. The boat hooked coming out of the turn and stopped. Liddycoat got it restarted, but he now trailed the field. *ELAM Plus* was in first, followed by *Dalton Industries* and *Home Street Bank*.

During lap 2, it was announced that all the boats except *Home Street Bank* had jumped the gun. *ELAM Plus* was the first to complete lap 3 with *Dalton Industries* a half a roostertail behind, then *Home Street Bank* and *Les Schwab/RedDOT*. Only King got the checkered flag. The other three boats did their extra lap. However, after the heat, *ELAM Plus* was given a fine and one minute penalty for encroaching on *Les Schwab/RedDOT* in turn 2 of lap 1. That moved *Dalton* to second, *RedDOT* to third, and put *ELAM Plus* in fourth. ~ Karl Pearson photo



At the end of the first day's racing, Shane, Perkins, and King each had 400 points. Kelly was close with 300, but the surprise was that Theoret, the fastest qualifier, only had 169 points.

Heat 2

Sunday morning was nice with a temperature in the mid-70s and a light wind blowing across the course from backstretch to front stretch. During the testing, Sankuer did 3 laps in *Miss DiJulio*, but none were above 130. Then Warren took the boat out and did six laps, three of which were over 130; he would drive again in the Sunday heats. Theoret did a 161.610, the fastest speed of the weekend, in the testing. Only seven boats tested. *Oberto* did not test. With twelve boats still in the field, heat 2 would also have three four boat flights. 2A was scheduled for 11:30am.

In 2A, Kelly was in lane 1. Theoret was in 2, Liddycoat was in 3, and Perkins was in 4. *ELAM Plus* was first in and out of turn 1. Theoret had good speed and led Kelly by a roostertail at the end of lap 1, with Liddycoat in third, and Perkins in fourth.

At the second buoy in turn 1 of lap 2, *ELAM Plus* hit a roller as it went into the wind that was blowing across the course. The right sponson lifted and the boat went into the air with the rear end pivoting around 180 degrees. It never went upside down in the air and landed hard on the left side. It ended up right side up. Theoret opened the (Mac had hatch?) canopy and got out as the rescue boat arrived. He rode in the rescue boat back to the pits, and was paced in the ambulance for the short ride to the medical facility in the pit tower. He walked from the ambulance into the medical center. After a short examination, he was released.

At the first glance, it looked like the boat only had minor damage. The cowling was destroyed, and there was damage to the left rear upright. The serious issue was that the skid fin and its bracket



Above is the aftermath of the *ELAM Plus* wreck in 2A. A bot hooks up to the wreck at left. *ELAM Plus* closes to the dock where it will be put on her trailer in the pits. More photos start on Page 10. Karl Pearson photos.

were gone. Surprisingly, there was no damage to the hull where the bracket and its rods had been connected to the hull. Theoret said, "I'm OK. My right hand is a little sore. The boat hit hard so my back is sore, but it has been sore for the last 10 years from driving these boats. I'm not sure if the skid fin had anything to do with the flip. I didn't notice anything, and it happened so fast. If we had another skid fin and bracket, we would be in the next heat. The other damage is minimal." Video of the crash showed that the skid fin was still attached until the boat hit the water. Photos on page 10. Heat 2B and 2C were run before the re-run of 2A. In 2B, Shane led the other three boats into turn 1 to get lane 1. Phipps was in lane 2, Robertson in 3, and Webster in 4. *Dalton Industries* was first in and out of turn 1 and led *Oberto* and *Graham Trucking II* into turn 2. However, again the advantage of having lane 1 in the Roostertail turn enabled Shane to pass Phipps and lead at the end of the lap. Robertson was in third with Webster in fourth. ~ Karl Pearson photo

Dalton Industries stayed close to *Oberto* in lap 2 and only trailed by a boat length going into the Roostertail turn, but *Oberto* expanded its lead through the turn. At the end of the heat, Shane won by a half a roostertail over Phipps. Robertson was third with Webster coming in fourth.



In 2C, Thompson got lane 1, King was in lane 2, and Eacret was in lane 3. Warren was late to the start. *Peters & May* was first in and out of turn 1 and led *Home Street Bank* by a roostertail at the end of lap 1. *CARSTAR* was in third with *Miss DiJulio* in fourth. In lap 2, King pulled even with Thompson on the backstretch and then passed him to lead at the end of the lap. Unfortunately for both drivers, it was announced that they both jumped the gun. That put Eacret in first with Warren in second and that is how they finished the heat. King and Thompson did their extra lap to get third and fourth.



Above the U-11 *Peters & May* running inside of the U-3 *Home Street Bank* and U-100 *CARSTAR* in heat 2C, which Mike Eacret and *CARSTAR* won. It was his first heat win and he was ecstatic.

In the rerun of 2A, Kelly was in lane 1, Perkins was in lane 2, and Liddycoat was in lane 3. All three were together at the start. *Les Schwab/RedDOT* was first across the line, but *Colony Marine* was first



Above, the U-5 *Graham Trucking* on the inside with the U-21 *Colony Marine* and U-9 *Les Schwab/RedDOT* outside in the rerun of heat 2A. ~ Karl Pearson photo.

to turn 1. However, *Graham Trucking* passed both in the backstretch and used the inside lane in the Roostertail turn to lead by $\frac{3}{4}$ of a roostertail over *Colony Marine* at the end of the lap. *Les Schwab/RedDOT* was $\frac{3}{4}$ of a roostertail behind *Colony Marine*. Kelly extended his lead to win by $1\frac{1}{2}$ roostertails over Perkins, who was the same distance ahead of Liddycoat.

Shane was pleased with his win. "I was able to get lane 1 and get a clean start. Turn 1 (the Belle Isle turn) is breezy with some light white caps, but it is raceable."

Heat 3

Without a skid fin, *ELAM Plus* withdrew, as did Webster's *Roostertail* due to gearbox problems. With ten boats, heat 3 would have two five boat flights.

3A had another matchup between Shane and Kelly. Shane cut across the course before the Roostertail turn to move in front of the field and get lane 1. Kelly was in lane 2, Phipps in lane 3, and Thompson in lane 4. After leaving the pits, *Miss Dijulio* died and Warren could not restart it.

Graham Trucking was first to turn 1 and *Graham Trucking* and *Oberto* were side-by-side down the backstretch. Shane used the inside lane to take the lead out of the Roostertail turn and led by one boat length at the end of the lap. Phipps was in third with Thompson in fourth. *Oberto's* inside lane advantage enabled it to beat *Graham Trucking* by a roostertail. *Dalton Industries* was third and *Peters & May* was fourth.



In 3B, Robertson was in lane 1, Perkins in lane 2, Liddycoat in lane 3, King in lane 4, and Eacret in lane 5. *Graham Trucking II* was first across the line and to turn 1. At the end of lap 1, *Graham Trucking II* was first, *Les Schwab/RedDOT* was second, *Home Street Bank* was third, *Colony Marine* was fourth, and *CARSTAR* was fifth. This order stayed the same until the finish. However, Robertson was penalized one lap for jumping the gun. After the heat ended, King received a one minute penalty for encroaching on Perkins. So the final



order of finish was *Les Schwab/RedDOT*, *Colony Marine*, *CARSTAR*, *Home Street Bank*, and *Graham Trucking II*. ~ Photo of heat 3B on previous page from Chris Denslow

Final

The final would have five front line boats, plus two trailers. The front line boats would be *Oberto*, *Graham Trucking*, *Colony Marine*, *Les Schwab/RedDOT*, and *CARSTAR*. *Dalton Industries* and *Home Street Bank* would be the trailers. *Home Street Bank* declined which gave the second trailer position to *Peters & May*, but they also declined. *Graham Trucking II* became the second trailer.

Going into the final, it was obvious that lane 1 would be important. In the season's two prior races, Shane and Kelly had gone head-to-head five times. Each had been in lane 1 twice. In this race, Shane was in lane 1 in both their earlier matchups, and he won both times. Kelly frequently cuts the course to get lane 1. In Detroit, the water is very low between the start line and turn 1, and no course cutting is allowed for much of that half of the course, specifically in the area closest to turn 1. That may have been a disadvantage for Kelly's normal strategy.

With the wind picking up and the threat of storms on the way, the final was moved up from its scheduled 4:10pm start. It started at 3:45pm.

Starting the final, Shane was earlier than he had been in the other heats going slowly down the front stretch in lane 1. If he could get to turn 1 in lane 1 before the other boats, no one could cut across



Above, Jimmy Shane and the U-1 *Oberto* once again runs in lane 1 with J. Michael Kelly and the U-5 *Graham Trucking* in lane 2. ~ Karl Pearson photo

the course to move in front of him. His strategy worked, as he kept his speed above 80 mph and got lane 1. Kelly was in lane 2, Perkins in 3, Eacret in lane 4, and Liddycoat in lane 5. Phipps trailed in lane 4 and Robertson trailed on the outside. There was some excitement from Robertson before the start. As the field began to move slowly down the backstretch prior to the start, they discovered that *Graham Trucking II* already was in lane 1 way in front of the field, potentially blocking *Oberto* from lane 1. In the Seattle final, Robertson was in a similar position before the start, and it was obvious that he would jump the gun, which he did. But he did keep *Oberto* from getting lane 1. The Porter team was accused of doing some "team racing", "sacrificing" *Graham Trucking II* to work against *Oberto* and for *Graham Trucking*. In the spotter corral, there was a lot of yelling about what Robertson was doing. The chief referee ran to the corral and to the Porter team spotters. "Get him out of there! Get him out of there! Get him out of there!"he yelled, referring to Robertson. At the last

backstretch buoy before the entrance to the Roostertail turn, Robertson cut across the course to the front stretch and then cut across to the back of the field and got into his outside trailer position.

As the boats came through the Roostertail turn prior to the start, *CARSTAR* died. Eacret got it restarted, but he was very late to the start. Shane was first in and out of turn 1. At the end of lap 1, the order was *Oberto*, *Graham Trucking*, *Les Schwab/RedDOT*, *Colony Marine*, *Dalton Industries*, *Graham Trucking II*, and *CARSTAR*. ~ Karl Pearson photo



Shane led Kelly by about a roostertail in the backstretch in lap 2. But Kelly actually closed some distance from the outside in the Roostertail turn. Perkins passed Liddycoat to move into third.

In lap 3, Shane's lead was down to a half a roostertail and in turn 1 of lap 4, Kelly caught up to Shane. The boats were side-by-side down the backstretch. In the Roostertail turn, *Graham Trucking* kept up its speed on the outside and looked like it could pass *Oberto*, but it hit rough water and took a big hop as it exited the turn. That gave Shane the distance he needed, and he maintained about a roostertail lead over Kelly through lap 5. Third was Perkins. Phipps passed Liddycoat coming out of the Roostertail turn in lap 5 to get fourth. Robertson was sixth, and Eacret was seventh. ~ Chris Denslow photo



Shane talked about his win and his strategy to get lane 1. "I was conservative in the early heats when I went up the front stretch to get lane 1. I didn't want to show my hand, but in the final I got into lane 1 earlier and then took the chance that I could stay above 80 mph and not be too early. I knew that I had to stay ahead of Kelly so I could control the arc I wanted in the Roostertail turn. If he had been ahead, he would have been in control of the turn. This was the roughest water I have ever been in here. I can't thank the city of



Detroit and the race organizers for all they have done to put on this race." ~ Chris Denslow photo

The 2015 UAW/GM Spirit of Detroit Hydrofest was a great event for the fans. Next year, the organizers will have more time to plan and market the event. They can use lots of highlights from this year's event in their marketing.

While this has been a short season, the racing has been some of the best ever. Round 4 of the Shane vs Kelly rivalry will be soon in San Diego. As fans, we can't wait, and we will look forward to more rounds of this matchup in the future.

The Jean Theroet Crashes *ELAM Plus*

Jean Theroet and *ELAM Plus* has had a better day than what happened at Detroit this year. Below and on the next couple pages are photos of the almost flip from Karl Pearson and Chris Denslow. ~ All Chris Denslow photos on this page





Above left is the start of heat 2B with *ELAM Plus* hooked to a rescue boat and being towed in the infield while boats race. Running inside is the U-1 *Oberto* with the U-27 *Dalton Industries*, and U-7 *Graham Trucking II* outside. The U-22 *Roostertail* is out of the shot. ~ All Karl Pearson photos on this page



Karl Pearson photos



Chris Denslow photo



Karl Pearson photo



Karl Pearson photos



Going Home

The *ELAM Plus* look much better after the crew removed the engine and gearbox, then replaced the uprights. They will haul it home to their Ballard shop and take a close look at the hull for any damage from the crash. They will also need a new engine cowling and rear wing. The Ellstrom team originally planned to be ready for the San Diego race, but that changed and they will stay home. ~ Chris Denslow photo



Chris Denslow photo

Detriot; Just How Rough Was It?

Jimmy Shane said, "This was the roughest water I have ever been in here." I think he was right Jean Theroet found out the hard way when *ELAM Plus* took off and crashed in 2A. From the look of the photos show below and on next page everybody had a chance to find out how rough it was. Here are just a few that showed boat in the air or buried by the water. From the phots I gathered the U-7 *Graham Trucking*, U-11 *Peters & May*, and U-12 *Miss DiJulio* handled the rough water the best.



Chris Denslow photo



Chris Denslow photo



Chris Denslow photo



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