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THE 2017 SEASON REVIEW: A year of few races, small fields, and close competition.

by Andy Muntz

How will the 2017 unlimited hydroplane season be remembered? Ten years from now, perhaps it might be remembered as a year when there was a pitifully low number of races and of race boats. Or, perhaps it might be remembered for the extraordinarily close competition between three race teams? History may recall the year as a campaign where, given the right circumstances, three different boats could have won the national championship.

As for the low numbers, nobody can deny that it was an issue this year.

Despite prize money incentives that are meant to entice owners to enter their boats in all of the races on the schedule, only five teams made the effort. Making that result even more stunning is the realization that the incentive could be earned by appearing in only four



Chris Denslow

The U-1 *Miss HomeStreet* was the 2017 National Champion, giving the Miss Madison Racing Team their fourth title in a row.

places. Perhaps even sadder is the fact that the largest fleet to appear at any race was a mere eight boats.

On the other hand, three of those boats gave race fans many exciting thrills at every stop. And, at one point or another, all three held the lead in the national high-points standings. But, when the last boat was lifted from the waters of

Mission Bay in late September, the results were familiar:

When it was over, Jimmy Shane had earned enough points during the short season to win his fifth straight national title, becoming only the second person to accomplish that feat in the history of the sport. And, at the same time, the *Miss HomeStreet* that he drove won

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a fourth straight national championship for the citizens of Madison, Indiana.

The small town of Madison, nestled on the banks of the Ohio River, is a fitting place to begin the story of the 2017 campaign because it was there that the financial realities of hydroplane racing had its biggest impact. Faced with the challenge of climbing from a large financial hole created by floods and other weather calamities during the past few years, the organizers of the race decided they could not afford to pay the prize money necessary to hold a full points event. Instead, they offered an exhibition with only four boats.

The competition itself was mostly non-existent; the deck-to-



The three drivers who battled each other all year. From the left, J. Michael Kelly, Jimmy Shane, and Andrew Tate.

deck racing was, for the most part, clearly staged for the fans on the beach. But, the event did offer two things: It tested the likability of a format that offered a series of one-

on-one, two-boat battles, and it also provided the year's first encounter by two of the three boats that would characterize the 2017 campaign.

One was the defending champion, the baby-blue hometown *Miss HomeStreet* with Jimmy Shane behind the wheel. The other was the U-9 *Delta Realtrac* with last year's rookie of the year Andrew Tate at the controls.

Although it was the oldest boat on the circuit, a craft that was built a quarter century ago, the brilliant white boat from Kent, Washington, proved to be one of the fastest, thanks to the skill of Tate, the vast racing experience of owners Mike and Lori Jones, and the magic that is performed by veteran crew chief Jeff Campbell.

For the record, Shane out accelerated Tate to the finish line when the two met "manu a manu" in Heat 3A, then Tate sped away from Shane in the final after the latter hit a hole during the final lap.

The third top contender made its first appearance in the Tri-Cities, Washington, four weeks later, when things really began to count. The bright red U-12 *Graham Trucking* is the newest of the former *Miss Budweiser* stable and was purchased by Rob Graham, the team's long-time sponsor, during the off season. The crew had completely rebuilt the



Kirk Duncan



Chris Denslow

[Top] The U-27 *Wiggins Racing* made its only 2017 appearance at the Governor's Cup in Madison. [Above] The U-12 *Graham Trucking* finished third in the final national standings.

2017 SEASON SUMMARY

Num	Boat	ID#	Driver	Madison Governors Cup 7/1-2	Tri-Cities Columbia Cup 7/29-30	Seattle Seafair Cup 8/5-6	Detroit Presidents Cup 8/26	Detroit Gold Cup 8/27	San Diego Bayfair 9/16-17	Subtotal	Total Pts.
1. U-1	Miss HomeStreet	0706	Jimmy Shane	2nd 0	3rd 1805	1st 1469	3rd 1125	1st 1580	3rd 1725		7,704
2. U-9	Delta Realtrac Les Schwab Tires	9210	Andrew Tate	1st 0	4th 1769	7th 1151	1st 1280	2nd 1500	1st 1580		7,280
3. U-12	Graham Trucking	0001	J. Michael Kelly		1st 1695	2nd 1570	2nd 950	1170	2nd 1120		6,505
4. U-11	Miss J&D's Miss DiJulio presents J&D's Reliable Diamond Tool presents J&D's	9302	Tom Thompson	3rd 0	1250	4th 863	70	60	4th 1017		3,260
5. U-3	Grigg's Ace Hardware	0203	Jimmy King		2nd 1435		60	3rd 800			2,295
6. U-440	Bucket List Racing	1218	Dustin Echols		DNF	507	5th 352	225	5th 719		1,803
7. U-99.9	Carstar-powered Miss Rock KISW Miss Rock powered by Carstar Carstar-powered Miss Rock	9899	Greg Hopp Kevin Eacret		5th 915	6th 789	DNF	W/D		1704 0	1,704
8. U-7	Spirit of Detroit	9712	Bert Henderson				4th 809	865			1,674
9. U-21	PayneWest Insurance Albert Lee Appliance	0721	Brian Perkins		40	3rd 975					1,015
10. U-16	OH BOY! Oberto	1496	J.W. Myers			5th 937					937
11. U-27	Wiggins Racing	0717	J.W. Myers	4th 0							0



The U-9 *Les Schwab Tire* also saw action as the *Delta Realtrac* and finished second in the standings with Andrew Tate driving.

boat before they hauled it from its shop in Milton, Washington, across the mountains to the Tri-Cities, where driver J. Michael Kelly took it onto the Columbia River for its first test runs just two days before the season's first race.

The testing proved to be a challenge, as it often does. The boat was somehow letting about 300 pounds of river water into the hull each time it went out, but by the time racing started, the team was ready to go. On the first day of competition, Shane claimed two heat victories while Tate and Kelly each had a victory and a second-place finish. Tate won two preliminaries the following day, while Shane had both a first and a second-place finish.

As for Kelly, although he jumped the gun and finished last in Heat 4A, he outsmarted the field in the start of the final heat. He met with his crew chief, Tom Anderson, before heading out onto the river and devised a plan where he would start from the outside and not get caught up in the battle the others were likely to have for the inside lane. The scheme worked to perfection.

"I started from the outside, led them going into the first turn, and never looked back," he said after returning to the pits. "I just had too much speed going and was able to get through the first turn clean, because usually it's really sloppy."

Meanwhile, Tate did get caught up in that slop. Jimmy King in the Allison-powered U-3 *Grigg's Ace Hardware* had grabbed the inside lane from the others and as the boats rounded the first turn, Tate's boat was doused by the roostertail of the U-3 and faltered, leaving him in fourth. As Kelly sped away to an

easy victory, King held his position in second and left a third-place finish to Shane.

A week later, the boats arrived in Seattle, where they raced on a Lake Washington course that was shrouded in smoke from Canadian forest fires. It also became a place where the lead for the national title changed hands three times. Shane was ahead by only 56 points going into the race, but when he was penalized for going too slow before the start of the first preliminary, Tate was briefly the national points leader. That lasted until Kelly won the second heat while Tate took second, which put Kelly in the lead. Then, it all turned around again in the final.

As the boats were scoring up for the final heat, Tate cut through the inside of the racecourse and as he pulled onto the backstretch, ran smack into a course buoy, sending it flying 20 feet into the air.

Once the race started, Shane grabbed an early lead on the inside lane while Tate stayed with him, edging closer as each lap passed. When they started the final lap, Tate pulled alongside the *Miss Home-Street* going through the first turn, accelerated ahead going down the



The U-21 *Albert Lee Appliance* suffered severe hull damage during the Tri-Cities race, yet finished in third place at Seattle a week later.

backstretch, and held on for an apparent victory.

But, there was the matter of that dislodged buoy. After the boats returned to their trailers, race officials decided that Tate's U-9 *Les Schwab Tires* should be assessed a one-minute penalty for the buoy infraction, thus dropping it to a fifth-place finish while giving the race victory to Shane.

"This had to be one of the most exciting races people have ever seen here," Shane said afterward. "I don't know how Andrew caught me that last lap and a half, I thought I had him covered. I never let off the throttle, yet he was coming on the outside. But, the *Miss HomeStreet* ran great. We'll take the win and the 400 points."

The split second of inattention that allowed Tate's boat to hit that buoy would literally cost him the national title when all things were said and done. If Tate's fifth-place finish had been a first, if Shane's win had been a second-place finish, and if everything else all season long unfolded just the way that it did, Tate would have had enough points to win the championship. Such is the impact of a single incident when there are so few events.

The boats next appeared on the Detroit River in late August where they would compete in two events: the President's Cup race on Saturday and the Gold Cup on Sunday. Tate was the winner of the first event, but only after a controversial start to the final heat, when some thought he had jumped the gun. After close examination of the starting photographs, however, officials determined that his start was legal. Kelly was second and Shane was third.

The following day at the Gold Cup, Tate, Shane, and Kelly all continued to run neck-and-neck, with all three of them winning two preliminary heats and finishing



Lon Erickson



Chris Denlow



Chris Denlow

[Top] The U-99.9 *Miss Rock*, in the foreground, leaves the dock at the Tri-Cities along with the U-11 *Miss J&D's* and the U-9 *Les Schwab Tires*. [Middle] The U-16 *OH BOY! Oberlo* sits at the dock in Seattle, the team's only appearance for the 2017 campaign. [Above] The 440 *Bucket List Racing* was a steady performer all year, appeared at every race, and finished sixth in the final national high-points standings.



Chris Denslow

The Allison-powered U-3 Grigg's Ace Hardware (in the foreground) took second in the Tri-Cities and third in the Gold Cup. Also in the picture is the U-7 Spirit of Detroit, which made it's only appearance at the two Detroit events.

second in another. But, while Shane won the final and Tate placed second, Kelly was pretty much eliminated from national title contention when the U-12 *Graham Trucking* was disqualified from the final heat with a fuel-flow violation.

The season then wrapped up in San Diego, where only five boats appeared. That meant that the top three contenders would meet in every heat and that Shane's 199-point lead over Tate could be in jeopardy with the slightest

misstep. As it turned out, however, the others would make those mistakes.

Kelly was the first to be eliminated when the *Graham Trucking* was again disqualified for a fuel violation in the first heat. Then, Tate also was disqualified at the start of the third heat when he accidentally veered into the DMZ, the area on the inside of the race-course where only patrol boats are allowed. That clinched the title for Shane, even despite the fact that Tate won the final heat and the race victory.

When the race was over, Tate admitted that if it hadn't been for the dislodged buoy in Seattle or the DMZ violation in San Diego, his year might have turned out much different. "As long as I learn from my mistakes, things are good," he said. "The parity and competition this season was great."

There were more boats than just those three, of course. Most notable among the others was the U-11 *Miss J&D's* of Edmonds, Washington, which proved to be a steady performer all season with Tom Thompson behind the wheel.

The team had struggled in previous years, but switched to a different hull in 2017 that showed moments of brilliance. It was especially impressive in a couple of deck-to-deck duels with Tate and Kelly during the Tri-Cities race. A lost propeller shaft in Detroit eliminated the team from any national title hopes, however.

The fifth boat to make the entire circuit of four race stops was the 440 *Bucket List Racing* with Dustin Echols in the cockpit. In previous years, the boat struggled just to qualify, but it won fifth-place honors at two events and was a respectable entry throughout the campaign.

The U-3 *Grigg's Ace Hardware* was fourth in the national standings

CONSECUTIVE DRIVER'S TITLES

Dave Villwock	7 (1998-2004)
Jimmy Shane.....	5 (2013-2017)
Lee Schoenith	3 (1953-1955)
Bill Muncey.....	3 (1960-1962)
Bill Muncey.....	3 (1976-1979)
Steve David.....	3 (2008-2010)
Chuck Thompson.....	2 (1951-1952)
Ron Musson.....	2 (1964-1965)
Billy Schumacher	2 (1967-1968)
Dean Chenoweth.....	2 (1970-1971)
Dean Chenoweth.....	2 (1980-1981)
Chip Hanauer.....	2 (1982-1983)
Jim Kropfeld.....	2 (1986-1987)
Chip Hanauer.....	2 (1989-1990)
Chip Hanauer.....	2 (1992-1993)
Mark Tate	2 (1994-1995)
Steve David.....	2 (2005-2006)



The U-11 *Miss J&D's* finished a strong fourth in the national standings.

despite appearing at only two venues. Jimmy King drove it to win a second-place trophy in the Tri-Cities and a third-place trophy in the Gold Cup.

The Fred Leland Racing team certainly would have liked to have been an entrant at all four race sites, but an end-over-end flip on the Detroit River during the President's Cup ended their season prematurely. The U-99.9 *Miss Rock* took fifth in the Tri-Cities and sixth in Seattle with Greg Hopp at the wheel.

Four other boats also appeared. The former *Graham Trucking II* was purchased by Dave Bartush of Detroit, renamed *Spirit of Detroit*, and entered the President's Cup and the Gold Cup with Bert Henderson in the cockpit. It took fourth in the President's Cup, but was run over by Kelly and the U-12 *Graham Trucking* in the Gold Cup.

Another boat hampered by misfortune was the U-21 with Brian Perkins at the wheel. It threw a propeller in the Tri-Cities that caused extensive damage to the hull, which was repaired in time for it to win a third-place trophy in Seattle a week later. It didn't make the trip to either Detroit or San Diego.

Two boats only appeared once. Also in Seattle was the U-16 *OH BOY! Oberto*, which has always been one of the fastest boats in the sport.

Driven by J.W. Myers, it finished fifth in Seattle, but didn't appear anywhere else. Finally, there is the U-27 *Wiggins Racing*, which appeared only in Madison, also with J.W. Myers driving.

Any discussion about the 2017 unlimited campaign wouldn't be complete without mentioning the activities that took place off the racecourse.

As soon as the previous season ended, H1 Chairman Steve David resigned to return to his life in Florida real estate. That led the organization to appoint Doug Bernstein as its chairman, a Detroit

attorney who had served many years on the H1 board and on the organizing committee for the Detroit races.

Bernstein's time as chairman lasted only until September, when he resigned for personal reasons. It's clear that his tenure was shortened by the fact that dealing with some of the personalities in the sport is incredibly challenging.

H1 Unlimited is now in the process of looking for a new chairman and, as a part of that process, those who run the sport appear to be making a concerted effort to listen to the sport's constituents and devise a clear strategy for growing the sport in the future.

The caliber of the competition on the racecourse in 2017 was exceptional, but as people look back on the season a decade from now, they will be tempted to remember the lack of races and the small number of entrants as their most dominant memory of the season that just passed. That's why as plans are made for 2018 and beyond, a strategy to attract new race sites and new competitors must be at the top of the list for problems that the sport needs to solve. ❖



The moment that may have decided the national title. Andrew Tate steered the U-9 *Les Schwab Tires* directly into a buoy before the start of the final heat in Seattle. The resulting penalty cost him the race victory and perhaps the title.

FROM THE UNJ VAULT: An interview with Ole Bardahl PART TWO

One of the sport's most successful boat owners talks about the triumphs and tragedies of his Miss Bardahl race team in the 1960s.

Unlimited NewsJournal reporters Bill Osborne and David Greene were granted the privilege of interviewing Ole Bardahl at the Bardahl Corporation's Seattle headquarters on December 11, 1980. In the first portion of that interview, originally published in the February 1982 issue of the NewsJournal and republished last month, Bardahl talked about the 1958 Miss Bardahl, a craft that became the first to be known as the Green Dragon. That boat was recently restored by the Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum. The second portion of that interview was first published in the March 1982 edition of the NewsJournal.

UNJ: How did you meet Leo Vandenberg and how did he come to be named crew chief for the 1962 season?

Bardahl: He was with the crew on the previous boat that we ran in 1961. He worked on engines. He was hired by one of my previous crew chiefs. I always let my crew chief hire his men because if something went wrong, I couldn't blame him for the men I hired. My crew chief was in charge. I hired Leo as crew chief because he was a good conscientious fellow and used a lot of common sense. He was patient and didn't rush things. Generally a boat conks out when small things go wrong.

After the new Miss Bardahl made a back-in-the-pack showing in the 1962 Diamond Cup, was there any thought given to running the old boat in the Gold Cup to enhance your chances of winning?

No. That was the reason we built a new boat. We thought it would be an improvement. If we had run the old boat, it would have been a step backward.

On the Eastern Circuit, Miss Bardahl started to come on defeating the Gale V and showing an ability to run with the Miss Century 21. What changes brought about this improvement?

It was just plain propellers. Some are good and some aren't worth a damn. We try to have them made all the same, but they don't turn out that way. Propellers have a hell of a lot to do with performance.

At the opening race of the 1963 season in Guntersville, Alabama, the Miss Bardahl showed remarkable improvement in winning all three heats. What changes brought about these improvements and did you feel that you could defeat the Miss Thriftway in the upcoming

Gold Cup at Detroit?

We did a lot of testing during the winter and we made a number of adjustments. Sometimes changes can make a great deal of difference in the boat's riding characteristics. Sometimes our testing didn't do us much good and then all of a sudden we would find the combination. We were confident that we could defeat the Miss Thriftway at Detroit. I wasn't afraid of Muncy.

Ron Musson drove the Miss Bardahl in the first four races of 1963 while Don Wilson had the cockpit for the last three due to Musson's flip at Madison. How would you compare them as drivers?

Ronnie was the best driver. Don Wilson was an excellent driver but he wasn't familiar with our boat. He was driving what for him at the time was a brand new boat and it took him a while to get used to it.

It is kind of hard to compare them because of this factor.

When changes were made in the boat, what was the decision-making process? Did Leo (Vandenberg), your crew chief, come to you with the changes to get your approval or was there some other method?

Leo would come to me with the changes and I would say, "Now why do you want to make the changes and so on." And then we would get down with the pencil and see what we could do. And then we would make a decision. It might not work, you know—it's just an idea, but you have to try it. That is how you make progress.

At New Town, North Dakota, in 1964, *Miss Bardahl* won her second consecutive race setting a world 15-mile heat record and a 45-mile race record. Were there any speed increasing adjustments made to the boat?

We didn't make any adjustments, but the water was just right. With racing, sometimes you get water that is just right—not too flat and not too rough—and you can set records. It might not last. The guy in the next heat might not have the same good water. We were just lucky there. We got the best water conditions.



Bob Carver

The 1963 version of the *Miss Bardahl*, the winner of the national title and the Gold Cup in 1963, 1964, and 1965.

***Miss Exide* nosed out the *Bardahl* in the final heat to win the 1964 Diamond Cup by using nitrous oxide. When was the decision made to install nitrous in the *Miss Bardahl*?**

Quite a few boats used it before us. Nitrous is very hard on valves. It isn't too bad though if you use it reasonably.

When did it become apparent that the new cabover would not be able to run in 1965?

We had some problems with the gear box. We went to several outfits and we finally got it licked, but it was too late to start the season.

After this, what problems did you encounter in preparing the old *Miss Bardahl* for the 1965 season?

We were working around the clock. Any time you work around the clock, it's no good because the guys get tired. I don't mind if they work overtime a couple of hours, but anything past that, it is no good because they make mistakes. It makes for problems and no one likes to work under such pressure, but that happens in all phases of racing.

Both in the 1964 and 1965 Lake Tahoe races, the *Miss Bardahl* appeared to have the field under its thumb. Did the *Bardahl* racing team have any particular secret for dealing with the altitude at Lake Tahoe?

We had some ideas with the carburetors. Whoever worked with the crew chief on the carburetors did a darn good job. It has got to be just so.

In an incredible performance, *Miss Bardahl* set world lap, heat, and race records to win at San Diego in 1965. The boat showed itself to be four to six miles and per race hour faster than the other boats of history by the indicators of heat and race speed. What caused the *Miss Bardahl* to run better in relation to the field than at any other time in her history?

We finally got our propellers sorted out and came up with a real



Eileen Crimmin

The Green Dragon in 1964.



The ill-fated 1966 Miss Bardahl was revolutionary in utilizing a cabover concept. The boat was destroyed during its second race, the 1966 President's Cup in Washington, D.C., in an accident that killed driver Ron Musson.

good one. We had about four propellers and we tried all of them. On race day we came up with one that could really do the job for us.

Did the boat's remarkable performance give you any second thoughts about retiring it for the 1966 season?

We were thinking about it at one time. Then Musson, Manchester, and Wilson got killed back in Washington, D.C., and I decided to stay out of racing for a year. Besides two boats aren't doing you any good in competition. The only advantage is if you break one you have a standby. At Indianapolis it may make sense because there is more at stake, but in the unlimited, you're better off with one boat. The expense is just too much because you have to have another crew and driver.

When the new boat first tested, were there any particular problems with it? How were these problems resolved?

We tested it out here and Ron said he liked it. He couldn't find anything wrong with it. It was just fine. He was very much sold on it. He said that if we were ever to build another boat we should stay with the cabover.

How did Billy Schumacher get involved with testing the new cabover?

I got Schumacher through Ronnie Musson. He was trying to break Schumacher in. Ron had raced with Schumacher in the small boats and Schumacher was a darn good driver.

Before her tragic accident, the cabover *Miss Bardahl* showed an ability to run with two of the leading unlimiteds of 1965: *Notre Dame* and *Miss Budweiser* (*Miss Exide*). Based on this beginning, did you feel that the boat could have been developed to the point where it would dominate the field if it would have been able to continue on the circuit?

Yes, I had pretty good feedback from the crew and driver. Everyone felt the boat was fast and would be most competitive.

Was there any thought given to running the previous *Miss Bardahl* for the balance of the 1966 season?

No. Under the circumstances we did not want to race.

Why was Ed Karelson selected as designer and builder of the 1967 *Miss Bardahl*?

Karelson is a damn good

builder. I had him build the boat here so I could see what he was doing. It is better than having your boat built in some far away place where you can't keep an eye on what is going on.

After Leo Vandenberg retired as crew chief, a youthful Jerry Zuvich was named crew chief. He along with Dave Smith, John Koenig, Roger Krouse, and Gary Crawford comprised the teenybopper crew. Did you have any second thoughts in entrusting your destiny to such a young crew?

No. Zuvich had worked for me many years before he became crew chief. The Smith boys had worked for me a number of years on the boats. They did very well. I liked all of them. They took great interest in their work. Jerry is tops and all the others were fine mechanics.

The new *Miss Bardahl* won her first race at Tampa. Were you satisfied with her performance or did you anticipate further refinements?

I wasn't quite satisfied because we had some trouble with the propeller. The salt water is different to run in than fresh water with regard to propellers and Tampa was salt water. We wanted to try out some of the other propellers at the next race.

In the final race of 1967, the last *Miss Bardahl* broke the 15-mile record on a 2.5-mile course by turning 107 mph. The previous record was 106 mph, which had been made by the third *Miss Bardahl* at Gunter'sville in 1963. Did you feel at the time that the last or fifth *Miss Bardahl* was the faster boat?

The yellow boat was the faster because of the improvements we incorporated into it. If we would have had these improvements on the Green Dragon (third *Miss Bardahl*), I think they would have



The 1967 version of the *Miss Bardahl* was built by Ed Karelson.

been about equal. You see, I had the Green Dragon for about three years and we made many changes. But, when you get a new boat, you make further changes in the hope of getting better.

The 1967 *Miss Bardahl* was designed with a lower profile and a full afterplane non-trip area to facilitate superior turning, yet such boats as *Miss Chrysler Crew* and *Miss Budweiser* were able to run with her. Was the boat slower on the straightaway? Seemingly, the boat should have been in a position to dominate the fleet.

Well, if you can turn real well, you don't need as much in the straightaway. That was our strategy with the boat, to turn well. We did pretty good that year.

Prior to the start of the 1968 season *Miss Bardahl* sported a new tail fin. Was there any particular reason for this change?

There again, we were trying to improve the boat. Actually we were experimenting with wings on the boat over the winter of 1967-68. But, I wasn't too sure it would work. So I never got around to going that far.

***Miss Eagle Electric*, which was seeded about fifth in the 1968 Dixie Cup at Gunterville, surprised everyone by winning. How did you view the boat as competition for the high-point title?**

I figured this way. Maybe he

just got a live propeller. If I lose this one, I will win the next race. Competition didn't bother me because I figured that we would always do well. But, if we lost, we had to figure out why we lost and maybe improve. A lot of guys lose and they just go to the next race and don't do anything about it. You have to make changes.

In 1968 you had success, but you also had some engine failures. Was there any particular problem with the engines in 1968 or was the competition just stronger?

The competition got stronger. I figured we had to do something to give us more horsepower. And sometimes when you pick up horsepower, something else is

affected. We also had some trouble with the camshaft. We used some Bardahl 2 and we had no more trouble with the camshaft.

At the end of the 1968 season it was rumored that the Bardahl team would either retire or run a new boat in 1969. Why did you decide to retire your 1967-68 national champion after only two years of competition?

At the time, both myself and Lee Schoenith were talking about running a turbine-powered boat. A man called from California and tried to sell me three turbine engines for \$70,000 each. After that I changed my mind. This was a fabulously high price for an engine. It was so expensive that I dropped the idea.

It was also rumored that you would build a new auto-powered boat for 1969. Would you comment?

We did have some meetings with the Ford people in Detroit. I didn't think the auto engines had enough power. You got to have that power. I figured I would stay with what I had unless I could get more power.



Ole Bardahl on board the *Miss Bardahl* with his wife, Inga Bardahl, and driver Billy Schumacher.

When and how did it become apparent that you would not participate on the full circuit in 1969? What prompted you to participate in the last two races of 1969?

We were having internal changes in our marketing organization at that time and our new group was not interested in racing. However, we decided to race the final two races more for sentimental reasons than anything else. Billy was unavailable, so Fred Alter took over.

Ultimately, why did you decide to get out of boat racing?

The reason I quit boat racing is that over the years it began to cost more and more to participate. It got too expensive. For instance, the first gear box I bought cost \$3,500 and the last one cost \$9,000. Also the engines just kept going up in price. The last ones cost about \$8,000 or \$9,000 to build up. Everything went up. It just got too expensive.

In closing, I would like to get your comments on a number of individuals who were very instrumental in the Bardahl success story. Leo Vandenberg:

Leo was a darn good employee and took a lot of pride in his work. I got nothing but praise for him.

Ron Musson:

Same thing with Ron. He did a wonderful job. He could tell you



The "teeny bopper" Miss Bardahl race team in 1967.

what was wrong with the boat when he came in. He would watch the instruments as much as he could and then tell you what the boat was doing. A lot of drivers can't tell you anything. The only one that can tell you how the boat feels is the driver. He is in the boat and if he doesn't tell you anything, you just don't know. You can watch the boat from the shore, but the driver is the only one that can really tell you what is going on.

Jerry Zuvich:

Jerry is a very good mechanic. He is very conscious of what he is doing. He is just as good as any crew chief I know of. I think he is going to do very well for Squire.

Billy Schumacher:

Billy is a darn good driver. I never had any problem with him. Billy is kind of hot tempered and a lot of people don't like him because they think that he has snubbed them or something like that. But, that's just his way. He is thinking about driving the boat. He is not very communicative then and doesn't like to answer a lot of questions. But I just want to say that both Ronnie and Billy were just as good as Muncey ever was.

In the last five full years that you were in unlimited racing, you won fully half of the races you participated in. How would you analyze the great success that you had in the sport?

You pick the best driver, crew chief, and crew, then you have to give the driver and the crew the money to work with. If they needed something I would say, "Go out and get it, but take care of it. Don't go out and break it. Don't just drop it." If you want to win, you have to go first class. You got to give the driver and the mechanics something to work with. And they have to know how to use it! ❖



The Miss Bardahl sported a checker-board paint job in 1968 and 1969.

HydroFile

Race Team News



Lon Erickson

With the fall/winter season setting in, the activity for a lot of teams has slowed down, but a couple have been busier than most.

Go3 Racing

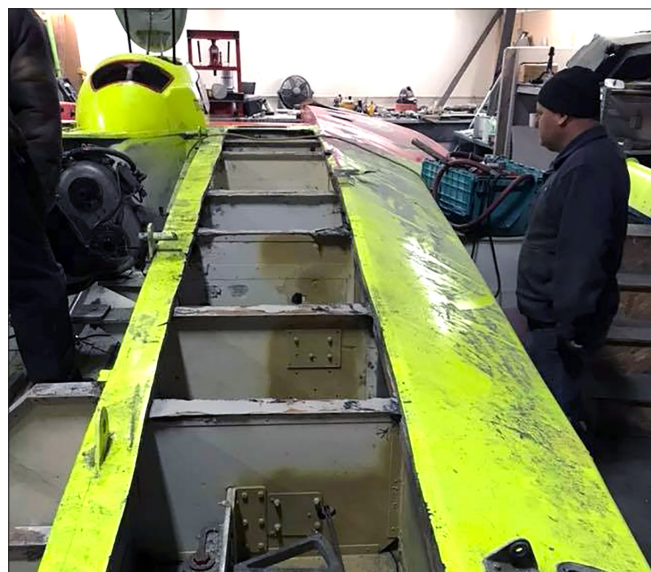
Ed Cooper's Go3 Turbinator has been cleaned up and put away for the winter months. Ed is busy in the shop rebuilding the turbo-Allisons that he ran during the 2017 events at Tri-Cities and Detroit.



Go3 Racing Team

U-11 Unlimited Racing Group

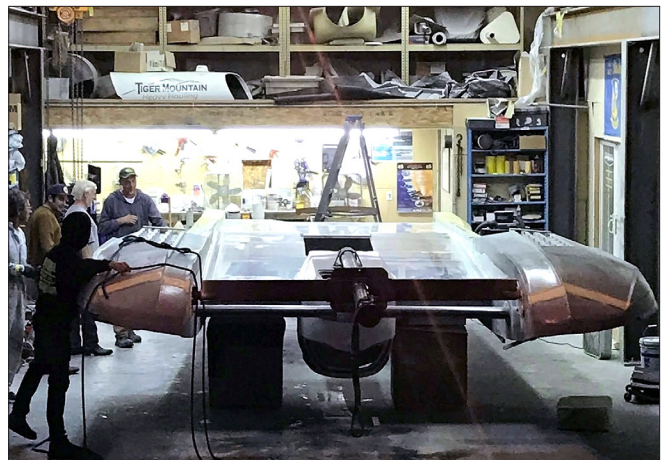
A recent shop night took place at the U-11 URG shop. Both hulls have been moved around. The first project is removing the decks from the current 2017 race boat, along with the seasonal turbine maintenance.



Photos from Unlimited Racing Group

U-21 Go Fast Turn Left Racing

The U-21 team brought in an extended crew for a four-day shop work party to get a jump on several projects. They cleaned up and reorganized the race shop and moved the 2017 hull (below) to a secondary bay. The team's focus has shifted to getting their new, yet unfinished hull completed for the 2018 season. Announced plans point to running the new hull as their primary race boat in 2018.



Photos from Go Fast, Turn Left Race Team

My \$0.02 Worth

Editorial Comment



Andy
Muntz

This is a season to be joyful and when we count our blessings for all that we have and for those who are dear to us. And, as 2017 winds down to its last few days, it's also a time to look back and be thankful for all the good things that happened during the past year.

This sport has been subjected to a great deal of scrutiny over the past few years and has certainly received its share of criticism, but there also has a great deal for which to be thankful.

There is something about the speed and the excitement of this sport that compels us to watch, even when some of the stuff that goes on behind the scenes drives us crazy. There is not another sport like it. I'm thankful every time I can experience the thrill of seeing three-ton machines careen across the water at almost 200 mph, throwing spray high into the air.

Thank you to the brave young men who sit at the controls of these monsters, and who do so just for the joy of doing something that is fun and exciting. Jimmy Shane

deserves our thanks in particular for not only accomplishing his fifth straight national title, something only one other driver has done, but for being such an excellent ambassador for his sponsor and for this sport.

Thanks also to Andrew Tate and J. Michael Kelly, who also serve the sport well. Hydroplane racing has rarely seen a group of young competitors as talented, yet as humble and wholesome as the drivers who sit in the cockpits of the boats today.

Thanks to Doug Bernstein who accepted the thankless job as the sport's chairman about a year ago. Dealing with some of the personalities in this sport can be challenging, yet Doug pulled it off while keeping his dignity and his character intact in the process.

Thanks to Walt Ottenad and Lisa Courneya for the work that they do for this sport. When you check the website or when you watch a video taken from the wing of a hydro on the racecourse, you've seen their work. I had the pleasure of watching them in action close up this year and was very impressed by what I saw.

Finally, thank you to the readers of the *Unlimited NewsJournal*, who make this publication what it is. A special thanks to those of you who contributed to the fund that keeps this publication going. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

May all of you enjoy a holiday season that is filled with wonder and fulfilled dreams. ❖

UNLIMITEDS UNANIMOUS MEETING

2 p.m., Sunday, December 10, 2017

Kingsgate Public Library

112315 NE 143rd St., Kirkland, WA 98034

YOU ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

EDITOR: Andy Muntz

ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Craig Fjarlie, Chris Tracy, Dick Sanders

HYDROFILE EDITOR/WEBMASTER: Lon Erickson **HISTORIAN:** Bob Greenhow

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Letters may be edited for clarity and space.