



1972 STOCK OUTBOARD NATIONALS

Bunched together like ducks on a cold day, C stock runabout boats head down the chute toward the first turn. Bill Allen separated himself from the pack to win.

By Bruce Most

It was a river course long, tight, demanding, some even said dangerous. The chutes were narrow. Rocks laced one edge and there were three-buoy turns at the ends. There was no blasting through the curves at full throttle. You had to stay awake on this mile-and-a-quarter course.

Some people complained. Before the spray had settled on the river from the "biggest powerboat race in the world," the 1972 Stock Outboard Nationals, one referee had quit and a lot of drivers were unhappy.

The complaints started when the drivers arrived in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and took their first look at the course, the Cedar River, a narrow, muddy river which flows through eastern Iowa. The referee, Bob Jones from Williamsburg, Virginia, quit before the races even began. His complaint was that the course was too dangerous and

he mumbled that thirty to forty people would get killed on it.

"It was a damned small course for the nationals," admitted Race Director Pat Cobb, who is also president of the local Jaycees. He said Jones thought a thousand feet was not enough distance from the starting point to the first run. After Jones left the chute was lengthened to 1,500 feet. But Cobb and the other judges thought the course met all APBA safety standards and it was in fact, APBA President Paul Kalb who filled in for the rebellious Jones.

A local newspaper story suggested regionalism among the drivers, stating that the racers from the West and South thought the course was too tight because they were accustomed to lakes and reservoirs, while drivers from the East and Midwest were used to river courses. Conversations with

drivers showed that the hassle really boiled down to speed-drivers versus course-tacticians. "It's a driver's course," commented Mark Lister, part of a racing family from Walnut Creek, Calif. Mark liked the course, saying the need to backoff in the turns called more for driver's skill than simply sheer horsepower.

Despite all the complaining and stomping around, 533 entries raced for a total of \$2,500 dollars in prize money and trophies in thirteen classes. Water conditions were good during the five days of eliminations and finals except for the first day of finals when winds made the course choppy. There was a minimum of accidents.

The real choppy water occurred for the defending national champions who managed to win only two of the eight titles they tried to defend. However, in two of the thirteen events, national

champions had no chance to defend because this was the first nationals for the classes - the 25 ss runabout and the 25 ss hydro.

The first 25 ss runabout national crown went to Clark Maloof of Quincy, Massachusetts. An early favorite after running away with the elimination heats, Maloof's two-heat time of 11:15.3 in the finals beat Vic Brinkman, Michigan Center, Michigan, and Ed Muderlak of Rockford, Illinois. Fourth was Gary Miskerik and fifth was Dave Rode.

Although the 25 ss hydro class has been run several other times this year in sanctioned APBA competition, Charles Erdman said this was the first time he had ever driven in the class. He couldn't have done better if he had

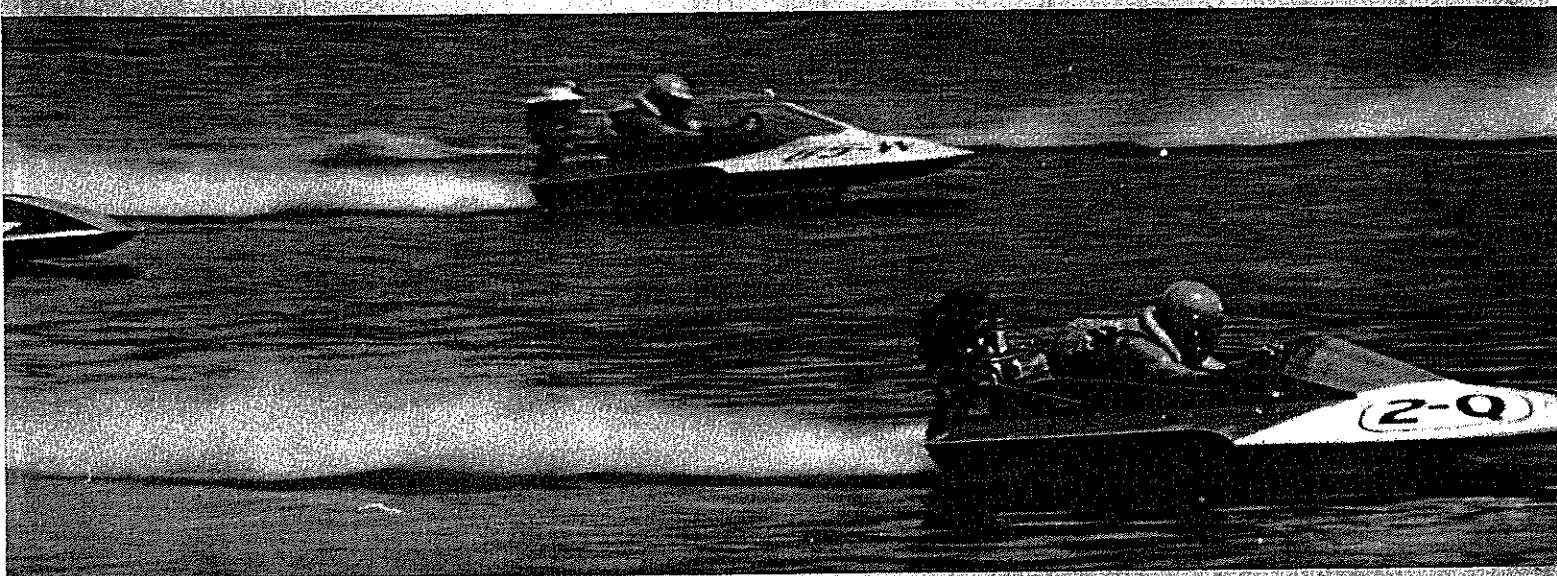
been at it for twenty years. He won the new class championship in a combined heat time of 10:07.9. Erdman Switched propellers between heats and, with a little help from two drivers ahead of him who jumped the gun, won the second heat and the new crown. Doug Nelson of Ellenville, New York was second, Chuck McCabe from Boston, Massachusetts, third, Mike Jones took fourth and Harvey Miskerik fifth.

The new classes are an attempt by the APBA to get more off-the-shelf engines into competition. The new 25 ss classes and the 36 ss runabout engine are among the few stock competition engines being produced. Manufacturers stopped building engines fourteen years ago for A, B, C

and D stock hydro and runabout classes. Mercury is the only manufacturer producing approved parts right now and many parts have to be scrounged up in odd-ball marine stores. The stock engines must use pump fuel and outboard engine oil.

Drivers and officials seemed happy with the new classes. One advantage with the new engines is that they are produced by four major manufacturers, Mercury, Johnson, Evinrude and Chrysler. This winter the Stock Outboard Commission will go over the racing data and turn out a tighter set of specs for the probationary classes. Restrictions on the stock 25-cubic-inch engines were fairly loose this year.

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Paul Di Febo, in 2-Q, crouches in his B stock hydro during an elimination heat. Moments later this boat developed engine trouble and he had to be towed in.



Part of the ten thousand spectators who lined the Cedar River on the final day of competition watch as drivers head into the first turn of the first heat of the 25 ss hydro.

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Drivers corner a sharp three-buoy turn during C stock hydro eliminations. The tight course on the Cedar River brought much criticism from some drivers and the referee.

The only double winner during the Stock Nationals this year was Erdman, who won the A stock runabout along with his 25 ss hydro crown, and added to the long tale of woes and upstarts which plagued the defending national champions.

Erdman won the A stock runabout like he won the 25 ss hydro by changing propellers between championship heats. Two-time defending champion "Andy" Hansen of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, lost a steering bar in the first heat and dropped out. He gave his prop to Erdman, racing partner and neighbor from New Berlin, Wisconsin, which provided the edge in Erdman's first national championship in A stock.

Borrowing seemed to be the key to

the restarted heat. Dee Berghauer and Richard O'Dell took fourth and fifth respectively. Minimum weight for the class is 435 pounds including boat, driver, motor and fuel. The engine's maximum is 30 cubic inches.

As accident sidelined this year's top point driver in C stock runabout when Fred Miller of Trenton, Michigan broached his boat in the second heat while leading the title battle. Two other drivers slammed into his boat, badly damaging the hull. Luckily there were no serious injuries.

Bill Allen, a 19-year racing veteran, narrowly missed the pileup and went on to catch Henry Menzie in the closing 100-feet to win the crown. It was an ironic victory for Allen. He usually only runs in the D stock

champs. John Finn, of Muskegon, Michigan, won his first national crown by edging defending champion Bernie Schaller in the 36 stock runabout class in a race dominated by Michigan drivers. In third place was Don Allen, also of Michigan, Dennis Murray was fourth and Mike Johnson took fifth. All five were from Michigan. The runabouts are one of the heaviest boats in the nationals with a 525-pound minimum. The engine maximum is 36-cubic inches.

Ten thousand spectators lined the river during the second day of finals competition to watch Trudy Corl lose her J stock hydro crown to Donna Roseberry of York, Pennsylvania, the junior class race, with an age limit of nine to fifteen years for boys, and no age limit for girls, saw Brad Schuman finish third, Bruce Reins fourth and Brian fifth.

The J stock runabout class was dominated by Mike Neal of Rumson, New Jersey. Running a 245-pound boat and a 7.5-cubic inch engine, he easily topped the elimination races and the finals. Second was Wyatt Nelson with Brad Schuman taking third and Wyatt Nelson's sister Sherry in fourth.

Another first-time winner was Rich Lovelace of Columbus, Indiana, who collected \$200 dollars (and passed go) to win the D stock runabout championship. It was a wide-open race for the biggest boats of the Nationals (525-pounds, 40-cubic inches) since Pontius, the defending champ, was unable to compete. Second went to Bill Allen and Joe White took third. Then came Don Allen and John Walters.

Phil Van Syckle averaged over 60-mph in his four laps around the mile-and-a-quarter course to beat Clark Maloof in the D stock hydro. In keeping with the plagued defending champs, last year's winner Dee Berghauer failed to win or even place among the top five. Capturing third in

Ernie Dawe, Indio, California in 220-C, tries valiantly to catch the leaders in the finals of the C stock runabout but to no avail.

winning this year. Bill Giles from Taunton, Massachusetts, who has been racing thirteen years, borrowed engines.

Defending C stock hydro champion, Dewey Seehase, stuffed his boat while racing down the back chute in the second heat. Seehase escaped serious injury but the boat was demolished. Henry Menzies finished second. Dave Schupbach of Spring Arbor, Michigan, who had quit the second heat to dive into the water to help his friend Seehase, won the good sportsmanship award and placed a solid third when he was able to run in 36 / POWERBOAT

runabout class but decided to also run in the C stock this year because of the long five-day race schedule. He was disqualified from the D stock race the day before for hitting a buoy. Finishing behind Allen and Menzies in the 470-pound-minimum weight class was Ernie Dawe, Fred Miller (based on his points from his second place finish in the first heat) and Norm Schaub, Don Pontius, Hummels Wharf, Pennsylvania, the defending champion, wasn't able to compete in this year's finals.

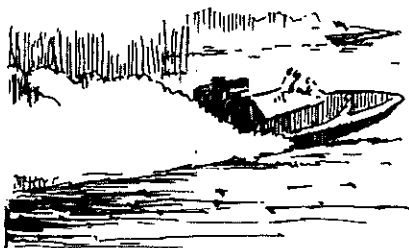
If it wasn't accidents it was upstarts which plagued the defending



the 449-pound boat class was Paul di Febo. Bill Giles and Mike Reich took fourth and fifth.

Another favorite was upset when A stock hydro defending title holder Bill Hutchins, Jr., placed a dismal fourth behind the first-time winner, Dave Haggard from Trenton, Michigan. Racing to second place with a 15-cubic inch engine and a 330-pound boat was Brian Berger, Park Ridge, Illinois. Toronto, Ontario driver, Ron France, slipped in ahead of Hutchins for third and Frank Erion salvaged fifth.

Hutchins had a little more luck in the B stock hydro. The Braniff DC-8 pilot won a first and a third in the two heats to retain his crown, one of only two racers to successfully defend their titles. He averaged nearly 60-mph in



winning his sixth national title, barely beating a determined Bill Giles who finished second with (what else) and borrowed engine. Although Hutchins took a first and third in the two heats, Giles took a third and a first. Hutchins won on elapsed time.

The only other national champion to successfully defend his title was Stover Hire in the B stock runabout class. The Syracuse, Indiana race used the course to his advantage by setting up his boat for the tight turns. His strategy was to swing wide on the turns and then cut back to the chutes. During one such turn he moved up from seventh to third place! The strategy brought him his second straight title. Finishing behind Hire was Vic Brinkman, Scott Neal, Lee Sutter, and Reg Mechan.

The happy new winners and the disappointed defending champs strapped down their boats and headed back home to the four corners of the country, the issue of the tight river course quiet for another year. Race Director Pat Cobb felt justifiably proud. It had all come off with few hitches. There had been a lot of talk, a lot of criticism, but no broken bones. The course not only proved safe but provided the spectators and the drivers with what they had come to see and participate in — a lot of action.

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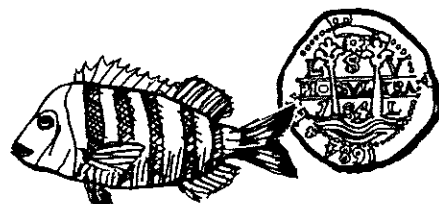
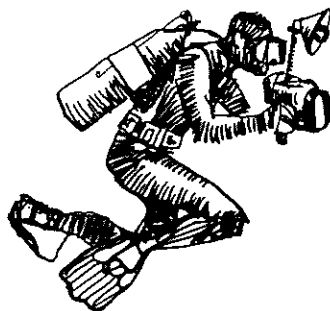


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