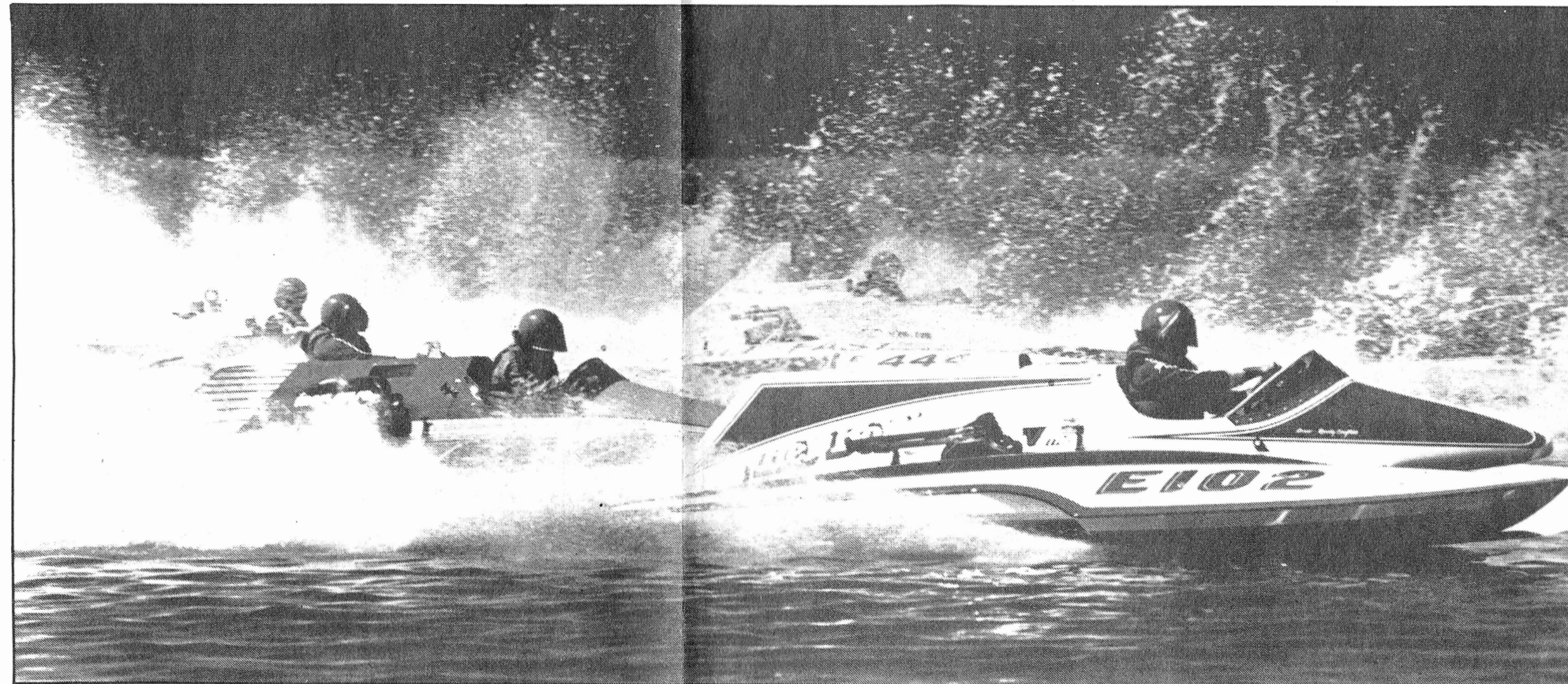


ne drivers set four records at Lake Maggiore



third turn.

Lynn, 32, of Cinnaminson, N.J., was taken to Bayfront Medical Center in St. Petersburg where he was listed in stable condition Saturday night, according to a hospital official. The hospital would not reveal the nature of Lynn's injuries, but they are not believed to be serious.

More thrills came in the 7-litre class where Chuck Woodruff of Miami and Steve David of Pompano Beach bumped each other as they jockeyed for a starting posi-

tion. Woodruff went on to set a world mark with an average speed of 105.517 mph.

"I had the inside and as we came around the buoy we hit," Woodruff explained afterwards. "They can say it was my fault."

They did. Woodruff was disqualified from the heat, thus the record did not stand. Woodruff, however, came back in the final heat, taking the checkered flag. Fort Myers' Glenn Koutny, driving *Hot Stuff*, won the class.

It's a wonder Woodruff is still

able to climb into his *Southern 7* racer these days, or that he would choose to even get near a boat on Lake Maggiore. A limp in his walk never lets the veteran driver forget a 1979 accident here that left him paralyzed from the waist down. But Woodruff, told by doctors he might never walk again, recovered and continued racing.

Then again, a mishap at the National Powerboat Championships last year left Woodruff with a bruised heart and some paralysis.

"I see people walking around

out here looking for a thrill," Woodruff said. "With this sport I get my thrills and I can also give other people a thrill. That makes me feel so good. And that's why I do it."

Notes

■ Tom Burleson, the 1972 Olympian and former NBA Seattle SuperSonic, was held scoreless Saturday in the 6-litre class. Burleson, who stands 7 feet 4, and his boat, the *Lennox Pulse*, did not finish in either heat Saturday be-

cause of mechanical difficulties. He's expected to run again today.

■ James Camp, 70, is the oldest driver in the competition. Experience didn't help the Redington Beach resident as he failed to start his *Slo Poke* in both 5-litre heats.

■ John Prevost of Baton Rouge, La. uses a computer on board his sleek, black craft called *Shazam*. The high technology didn't get a chance to show its worth, however, as Prevost's 7-litre boat was disqualified in the first heat.

Burleson

from 1-C

Burleson is 33 now, and the lanes he drives these days are filled with water. He passes boats, not basketballs.

Burleson, who played in the NBA for seven years from 1974-81, is one of more than 100 drivers who'll take part in the Southland Regatta powerboat races today and Sunday at Lake Maggiore.

He'll drive a five-5 litre boat, No. F-15. Its name is *Welcome to Miller Time*.

And although he may not win a race, unless Manute Bol shows up Burleson will retain his title as the world's tallest hydroplane driver.

Burleson has been a closet mechanic ever since he built his first go-cart back in Newland, N.C., 15 years ago. He became interested in hydroplane racing toward the end of his basketball career, but he had to concentrate on hoops. Now he's free to enter about 20 races a year.

He hasn't had much success. He's won only two of about 75 races. But if his boating record is still being forged, his basketball credentials are solidly intact.

Burleson was the center on North Carolina State's 1974 national championship team. He was also a member of the infamous 1972 U.S. Olympic basketball team — the squad that refused its silver medal following a controversial 51-50 loss to the Soviet Union in the championship game at Munich. (The Soviets won the game after being given three chances to inbound the ball in the closing seconds.)

"I think (coach) Hank Iba was the reason we lost," Burleson said. "His techniques were all wrong, and we played right into the Russians' hands."

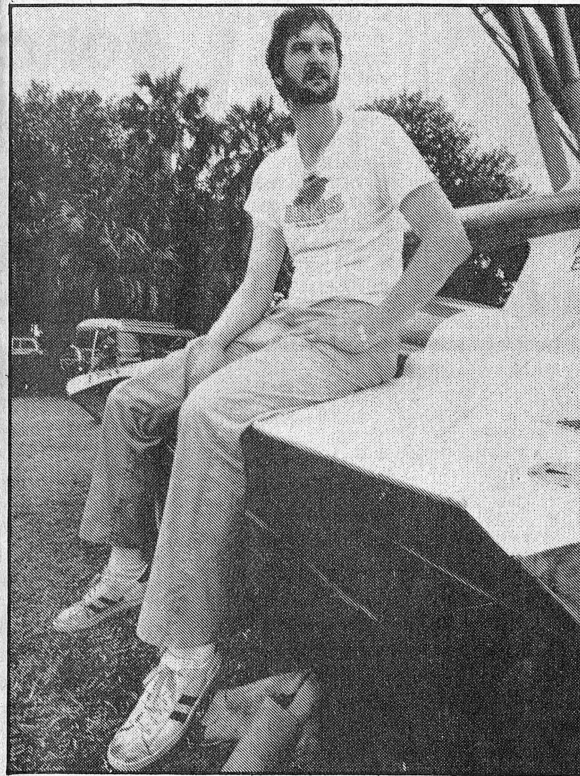
Burleson was the third pick in the 1974 NBA draft. He spent three seasons with Seattle, three with Kansas City, and his final year with Atlanta. A collision with center Darryl Dawkins in 1979 resulted in extensive knee surgery, and although he made a brief comeback, his career was over by 1981.

And then there was this void.

"I just wanted a competitive outlet," he said. "I can't drive any type of vehicle that has a clutch because of my knee, so boat racing seemed perfect."

Acceptance in the powerboat racing community wasn't easy at first.

"I think (former pro quarterback turned auto racer) Dan Pastorini and I are the only former athletes who've gone into racing," Burleson said. "People would wonder what a basketball player was doing in powerboat racing. But then they started to realize I was sincere about the



St. Petersburg Times — FRASER HALE

7-foot-4 Tommy Burleson starred at N.C. State and played in the NBA for seven seasons.

sport.

"These are just a good bunch of people. The friends I've made in these last five years I'll have for the rest of my life."

Burleson plays in three recreational basketball leagues back home in North Carolina. He owns a small electrical supply business, and he grows Christmas trees on the side.

"My height is a real advantage," he said, "because with my 9-foot, 6-inch reach plus the 18-inch chain saw, I can shear 11- to 11½-foot trees.

After a while, Burleson was bending over his engine again — a wrench in one hand and an oily rag in the other.

And somewhere not far away, another person was getting up the nerve to walk up and say, "Didn't you used to play basketball?"

hydros

They'll rev it at Lake Magg

By TOM ZUCCO

St. Petersburg Times Staff Writer

The names painted across the hulls are a dead giveaway.

Junk Yard Dawg, Make My Day, Moonshine, Mad Dog and Whoopee.

If this is February, if that's Lake Maggiore, and if Charlie Daniels is playing on a radio somewhere, then this must be the Southland.

The 48th annual Southland Regatta powerboat races begin at 10 a.m. today on Lake Maggiore, and according to race coordinator Jim Appley, all sorts of speed records could tumble by the time the featured Governor Cup Invitational race for 5- and 7-litre hydroplanes ends Sunday afternoon.

A field of 127 boats, some from such faraway places as Chateaufort, Quebec, and Upper Black Eddy, Pa. will spend the weekend roaring around the 1.75-mile course in search of record-breaking times. The regatta includes nine classes. Tickets are \$5 for a one-day pass, and parking is free.

Some big names are on hand. Jim Kropfeld, the pilot of the *Miss Budweiser* hydroplane in the unlimited class, is entered in the 7-litres. He's joined by Wheeler Baker, who set a world speed record of 112.359 mph in the division at Lake Maggiore last year. The record was later broken. Former pro basketball player Tommy Burleson is entered in the 5-litre division, which includes national titlist Ray Miller.

Kropfeld spends most of his time in the richer, more glamorous unlimited division, which competes on larger bodies of water. If he wins a race or sets a record here, he won't get rich. The monetary rewards are slim.

That's not the point. The drivers say it's the chance to race and try for a world record that lures the drivers and their boats to St. Petersburg.

And there is more to these boats than Star Wars hulls, loud engines and rooster tails or water.