



Tribune photograph by BRITT LAUGHLIN

Ed Scala paddles to shore after his engine quit during a race.

8 world records fall at Southland

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ST. PETERSBURG — World records came and went like the wind on the opening day of competition at the 50th Coors Light Southland Regatta.

Saturday's elimination heats on the 1¼-mile Lake Maggiore course produced eight world marks (pending motor inspections). A total of 16 drivers topped existing standards in the American Power Boat Association's five-mile, four-lap category.

For the crew of Miss Zeroll, it was a particularly gratifying day.

Less than 24 hours after he had flipped his hydroplane on a test run, escaping serious injury, Mark Tate guided the 5-liter Miss Zeroll to a record 89.7 mph during a late-morning heat. The old mark of 85.5 mph, also set at Lake Maggiore, had stood since 1984.

Tate later won another 5-liter

Powerboating

day yesterday. It just brought back tremendously bad thoughts for the owners and the crew because of the incident last year."

A year ago, David Sutton, driving the same hydroplane, caught a sudden wind gust and flipped his boat over entering Turn 3 — not far from where Tate crashed Friday.

Sutton, who had been traveling about 115 mph and was on a world-record pace, suffered a fractured skull, broken ribs, had his lungs fill with water, and remained in a coma for 100 days. He is still unable to move his jaw, left leg or left arm, and is confined to a wheelchair.

Although the boat sustained "relatively minor damage," according to owner Tom Funka, it wasn't until August that the shaken Condor Racing crew was ready to return to

this year, optimism has run high among the Condor crew.

"We were down here Wednesday for testing, and again on Friday, to accustom Mark with the attitude and performance of the boat," Funka said.

For Friday's test run, an experimental prop was fitted on the \$30,000 hydroplane. "It made it light on the nose," Funka said.

As Tate approached the third turn late in his run, a wind gust lifted the front end of Miss Zeroll. "I should've backed off," the driver said.

The hydroplane did a flip and landed on its bottom. Tate, partially thrown from the cockpit by the force of the roll, was saved by a tether line. He hit the water, but suffered only a sore lower back.

Following a night of repairs to the deck and cowl, Miss Zeroll was back on the water Saturday.