

Walther Boats Lead Dayton Entries

By Dick Belsky
Journal Herald Sports Writer

Nearly 20 Dayton entries, including George Walther's prize winning "Country Boy IX," will be competing in the Eastern Divisional Power Boat championships this weekend at Eastwood Lake Park.

Gene Whipp, publicity director for the two-day event, called the local turnout "very impressive" and said it showed how "tremendously active" the Dayton Motor Boat association has been since its formation in 1964.

"It's really remarkable,"

Whipp pointed out. "In the past two years this group has grown in membership from 30 to 145, and the number of boats has increased from 10 to 45.

Fastest Class

The Walther boat, which will be driven by Dave Thomas of Kettering, is entered in the seven liter class which contains the fastest and most powerful boats. It was in this classification that Thomas drove "Country Boy IX" to a third place finish in last year's national championships at St. Petersburg, Fla.

Another Walther-owned boat, "Country Boy X," will also be entered in the seven liter competition. No driver has been picked.

The 52-year-old Walther, president of the Dayton Steel Foundry, has owned and raced boats since he was 14. He also owns Indianapolis "500" race cars.

"I just always liked boats and earned enough money to buy one," he says. "I finally stopped driving them a few years ago, though. These new boats are going too fast."

Walther boats have never won a national championship but they have earned as high as a second place finish.

And they will be facing

keen competition in the seven liter event this weekend. Some of the entrants include Bill Sterret, the defending champion in this class, and Bill Legg, the Western divisional champion.

Another local man will be battling against time to get into the weekend races.

Forrest Moler, vice commodore in the Dayton Motor Boat club, flipped his boat last weekend in Michigan and he's hoping he can make repairs on it in time to participate.

Along For Ride

"I'm sure going to try and get it ready. I've been looking forward to this one for a long, long time," said Moler, who hasn't won many races but says he "just likes to go along and have fun."

Dean Chenoweth, of course, will be defending his national championship in the 145 cubic inch class category in "Chuck's Joy" built by Charles Fyffe.

Other local owners and drivers competing will be Jim Roberts, John O'Hara, Joe

Kreitzer—Ron Bronner, Dick Boyer Jr., Jim Davies—Dan Walls, Jim Davies Jr., Tom Boyer, Dick Boyer Sr., Bob Musson, John Pitcock, Bill Little—Jack Brown, Gene Benning, Jack Brown, Tom Stickle, Cliff Reif and Jon Culver.