

# Walther eyes Gold Cup

By Bucky Albers

Journal Herald Sports Writer

Dayton will have its first representative in the big league of boat racing next season.

George Walther Jr., the industrialist who has entered racers in the Indianapolis "500" for many years, will campaign a Gold Cup boat next year.

His son, David "Salt" Walther, will drive it, and another son, Jeff, will serve as crew chief.

Salt Walther confirmed the plans yesterday.

"I'm definitely going to drive for Dad," said the muscular, 24-year old Salt. "We're going to have two boats and we're looking forward to having a good year."

**THE WALTHERS** have been a successful racing team before in smaller boats, but they separated last year when "Salt" was offered and accepted a bid to drive Miss U.S. on the unlimited circuit.

It wasn't a successful year for Salt because the boat, owned by George Simon of Detroit, kept breaking down.

"Mr. Simon was real nice to



George Walther Jr.

me," said Salt, "but his equipment was flat worn out when we got it. The boat just isn't capable of winning."

The Walthers have taken steps to get top equipment for the 1971 schedule which includes events at Miami, Seattle, San Diego, Detroit, Dallas, Washington, D.C., Minneapolis, Madison, Ind., Owensboro, Ky., Tri-Cities, Wash., and Eugene, Ore.

**BOAT BUILDER** Ron Jones of Costa Mesa, Calif., is constructing a \$25,000 rear engine hull for Walther. It is 40 percent completed and will be finished in mid-February.

In addition, Walther has purchased Bill Sterrett's Miss Owensboro to be used as a



Dave "Salt" Walther

backup boat.

The boats, gigantic crafts that must be tilted when transported on flat bed trucks because of their width, will be powered by Rolls Royce engines.

"We're getting 10 engines at \$10,000 a piece," said Salt,

"and the trailer alone costs \$7,000. Dad figures it will take about \$150,000 to operate."

The new boat will be the only rear-engine type craft on the Gold Cup circuit.

"**TOO MANY** people were afraid to drive them," said Salt, explaining why theirs is the only rear engine boat among the big ones. "Guys don't want to sit up front at 170 miles an hour. It scares you, and I'd be lying if I said it doesn't scare me a little."

Salt, who packs 204 pounds and 19-inch biceps on a 5-11 frame, doesn't scare easily.

He won the 1970 Orange Bowl grand prix in a rear engine boat, capping three years in the 7-litre division. Previously he had driven 266 cubic-inch hydros. He has also driven USAC sprint and championship race cars.