

Drivers Hoping to Solve Powerhouse Ills for Today

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By DAVE BOWRING

Daily News Outdoor Writer

Tony Rodriguez stood on a spreading patch of oil around his 7-liter I hydroplane, Long Gone, and stared at his oil-soaked hands.

"It's blowing oil all over the place. I'm losing six to eight quarts every time I run," he said. "I'm gonna sacrifice the (chevy) engine for the championship. If it blows, let it be at the end of the race."

Rodriguez, visiting Dayton from both his homes in Valley Stream, N.Y. and Portimao, Portugal, wasn't alone in having engine troubles. Both Dayton's Gene Whipp Cincy's Bill Hodge, who finished Saturday's first 7-liter division I heat ahead of Rodriguez, were having powerhouse problems too.

Whipp's Heavy Hauler Ford engine had lost a header, forcing him to temporarily leave Eastwood in search of a welder to put his engine back together.

Bill Hodge's boat, Long Gone, had only turned 6,500 rpm during the first heat, so



Rodriguez

Hodge

Whipp

help was called for. His mechanic was expected to fly down from Chicago, and the fuel mixture was to be changed.

"MAYBE WE'LL get some more oomph out of it that way," Hodge said. "We should be getting between 7,300 and 7,400, but I still didn't get to use all I had."

Like Whipp, Hodge suffered a bumpy ride Saturday on the second corner of the first lap. Both racers complained of a groundswell at the turn, causing Hodge to remark, "I

got it running pretty good, but the I hit the damn swell and I had to come of fit."

But Hodge didn't come off it very far, judging by Whipp's assessment of that first heat."

Whipp said he knew he was running in first place but only during the third lap did he discover just how close the second place boat was running.

"All of a sudden I looked up, and there was Hodge running right on my hip. I guess I slammed the door cut him off with the rooster tail on him in that final turn, but it was a

legal move and I think Billy would have done the same thing to me." A dampened Hodge late confirmed this.

AFTER GETTING the checkered flag, Whipp eased the Hauler back to his pit, stood up, and hollered to his crew: "Where was Hodge all that time?"

"Right on your tail, man," they answered. "Right on your ever-lovin' tail."

In both of Saturday's 7-liter heats, Whipp beat out Hodge and Rodriguez. Ironically, it was the Portuguese Rodriguez, along with Henry Knab of Long Island, N.Y., who paid for Friday's APBA sanction for a day of practice on Eastwood. "What it amounts to," said the burly Rodriguez, "is that we paid out \$150 to put our boat in the water for seven minutes."

Following today's 10 classes running two heats each (total 102 boats), five world championship races will be held. These last races will crown five world champs. The first of 10 heats starts at noon.

Voice of Hydroplanes

Monday, June 26, 1972

THE JOURNAL HERALD
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Crippen non-stop talker

By Paul Meyer

Journal Herald Sports Writer

Dick Crippen may not talk again for a week.

And if he doesn't nobody should fault him. Not after yesterday.

Crippen, a 32-year-old resident of St. Petersburg, Fla., spent the better part of seven hours yesterday describing the inboard hydroplane action at Eastwood Lake over the public address system.

And that was almost seven hours of nearly nonstop talking.

BUT CRIPPEN obviously didn't mind. And neither did the 25,000 people who attended.

Crippen's comments were expert and often humorous—something you'd expect from a man who styles himself as "The Voice of Hydroplanes"



Dick Crippen

"I've been doing boat racing for five years and auto racing for six," said Crippen, who was at his best when the racers faced the worst.

Each time a driver appeared

"Woa-o-o-o-hoa-o-o-o."

Usually it was enough to scare the troubled boat back on the water and out of danger.

Crippen spends most of the year calling races around Miami.

"They have one down there at least once a month," he said. "But I was up here last year. This is about the farthest I go, though. I always try to give the fans some fun."

CRIPPEN couldn't prevent a series of "dropouts" in the second heat of the 145 Class competition, however.

Four of the 11 boats which started didn't finish for one reason or another.

Beavercreek's Ronnie Brunner in "Little Joe" lost power on the first lap and was done, Dennis Anderson's "Miss

lie Long's "Little Miss Lou Too", and Jim Kropfeld of Cincinnati had "Lucy Baby" stop dead one turn from the finish.

YESTERDAY'S program completed the three-weekend run (for the benefit of Children's Medical Center) at Eastwood, but it wasn't the last boat racing on the lake this year. The national championships for 10 classes of modified outboards are scheduled here Sept. 2-3, with drag boat races slated Sept. 4.