



Staff photo by

Sherman Polhamus en route to 225-cubic inch title at Inboard Nationals

Two titlists just keep it together

By Leal Beattie
Journal Herald Sports Writer

Andy Miller and Gordie Reed shared a common goal at yesterday's American Power Boat Assn. (APBA) Inboard Nationals at Eastwood Park Lake.

Simply, it was: Keep the boat together physically and finish the two heats.

The strategy worked as both became national champions for the first time — Miller in the 7-litre hydroplane division and Reed in the 5-litre group.

"I drove a 5-litre and a 7-litre here last year and both broke," said Miller, of Berlin, N.J. "I

was a whole straightaway ahead of the other 7-litres last year when my engine blew up."

MILLER WAS scheduled to drive another boat, but switched when offered a ride in defending champion Howie Benns' "Sudden Seven" boat. Benns is driving an unlimited hydroplane this year, and his boat owner won't allow him to drive the smaller boats.

"Howie has good equipment. It was just something I couldn't turn down," said Miller.

Miller won the first heat of the 7-litre finals and then was third

in the second heat. But that was good enough to edge Steve Jones for the overall title.

"I only had to get a third in the second heat to win so I just wanted to finish," he said. "The boat doesn't like to go slow and it was coughing a little.

"I turned 40 years old yesterday . . . I had to wait until I was 40 to win a national."

MILLER'S win in the opening heat came after Dayton's Salt Walther had stormed into the lead. The blower belt on Walther's boat failed, though, and his boat came to a halt before the

end of the opening lap.

The crew hastily replaced the belt for the second heat, but was unable to start the engine.

"As long as I can beat everyone out front, I know I can still win," said Walther, an Indy-style car driver who was returning to the boats after a two-year absence. "I know I can still do it. If we'd have stayed together, we'd have won it.

Reed, who admits to being "over 30" and a veteran of 24 years of racing, also had hard luck a year ago.

"We broke last year. I felt if

we didn't break a win," said the Gr N.Y., resident.

The triumph was a string of successes

"Two weeks ago Jerry Bangs' five-mile record in Marlton, N.J., was 153.2 miles per hour and we also hold the fly mile record for 153.2.

"Now, we only have a 150-kilometer record. We get that, too."

REED HAD an untested engine in his "Miss Jenny" hydroplane.

"We cracked some pistons in the engine we used to set the record in Maryland," he explained. "This is a Keith Black (prepared) Plymouth engine which was originally developed back in 1969 for Andy Granatelli to use in an Indianapolis car."

Four other champions were also crowned yesterday.

Two Floridians, James Sellers and Sherman Polhamus, claimed the 850cc and 225 cubic inch hydroplane titles, respectively.

Mario Squillace Jr., of Springfield, N.J., earned the SK ski boat championship, and Michigan resident Tom D'Eath won two straight heats to claim the 2.5 litre title.

Dayton's Jerry Scheidt had third and second place finishes to finish as the runner-up in the latter division.

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MICKEY FRANKLIN, Cape Coral, Fla., resident who was the apparent winner of the 280 cubic inch hydroplane class Saturday, was disqualified after the post-race technical inspection revealed that his engine wasn't stock.

That made Chuck Thompson, of Southfield, the title