

Unlimiteds novelty running this

All that remains now of Dayton's biggest picnic is the debris at Eastwood Lake.

It was a lot of fun again . . . this thing they call Hydroglobe. Thousands of people got together Sunday to bathe in the sun, to test their capacity for food and drink and to enjoy the company of each other.

The catalyst for this third annual gathering was a racing exhibition by 10 of the 20 or 30 remaining seaworthy unlimited hydroplanes scattered about the United States.

Racing under the sanction of the American Power Boat Assn. (APBA), this big league of boat racing offers thunderboats that are an exciting attraction. They produce gigantic rooster-tail sprays at speeds in the vicinity of 180 miles an hour.

But when you've seen one roostertail, you've seen them all. Which brings us to the point of this column.

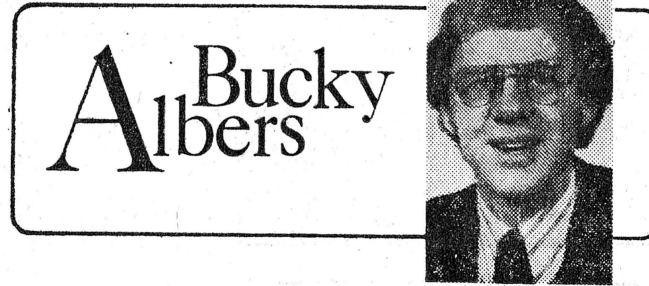
Hydroglobe, Dayton's only real big league sports production, is not going to have a long life if the Unlimited Racing Commission (URC) doesn't wise up and start putting on a worthy program.

When Sunday's racing came to a close with Bill Muncey's victory in the final heat, Jim Hendrick, the "voice of the unlimiteds", was using all sorts of superlatives to try to convince people that they'd just seen one of the most exciting events in the history of the thunderboats.

Hogwash! If that's the best show they can put on, they ought to step aside and let some real entertainers perform. Like Rube Goldberg. Or Stan Kann. Or the guy who designed the Edsel.

If it hadn't been for Billy Schumacher's determined effort to catch Muncey in the final, Sunday's program would have been a complete farce.

The heat races were a bore — Muncey running away with



two, Schumacher easily winning a pair and Jerry Bangs doing likewise.

And, in all fairness to the URC officials, it's not their fault that two of the big boats — Muncey's Atlas Van Lines and Schumacher's Olympia Beer — are considerably faster than the others. That is a credit to the people who maintain them.

Neither is it the URC's fault that those cantankerous Rolls Royce and Allison engines don't always roar when they're asked to. Seldom do the thunderboats ever run a heat in which all entrants are able to run full bore from start to finish.

Communication is another problem. Once a driver is on the water with engine roaring, he is virtually out of touch with those on shore.

For this reason, the thunderboats are started under a system in which the races begin at a specific, pre-determined moment — regardless of the problems the participants might be encountering. I wonder sometimes if they'd abort a start if the Goodyear Blimp suddenly settled onto the race course for a swim.

Yes, it is fair to the competitors to start a countdown 15 minutes before the race and expect them to be bearing down on

the starting line when a gun goes off. But when some of them aren't ready to race, it's not fair to the guy on the shore who forks out \$5 to see a race.

Sunday, for instance, the main event was to have a five-boat race with three-abreast at the starting line and other two side-by-side several yards behind.

What happened was this: Miss Budweiser floated from the pier, coughed and wheezed for nearly four minutes while the driver attempted to start it. Somebody had forgotten to put the alternate boat, Miss Madison, in the water.

When Miss Madison finally did get launched and raced the idle Miss Budweiser onto the course, Miss Bud got started. Although it was too late for her to get lined up properly, she was permitted to run and Miss Madison got the hook.

When the race began, Miss Bud and Miss Vernor's plowing around the course nowhere near the starting line only were they out of the race from the beginning, but plowed holes in the water that made driving treacherous for the dueling Muncey and Schumacher, spoiling what could have been a dandy race.

If that's what the URC calls a great show, I don't want to see one of their lousy ones.

Something has to be done about their starting system. People who contribute the money that makes up the \$5000 purse can get some worthy entertainment. After all, it's a show. If nobody paid to watch, there would be no reason to have the race.

Over the years many cities have been on the unlimited circuit for a year or two only to tell the thunderboats to find suckers at another pond.

I hope Dayton doesn't join their ranks. Hydroglobe is much fun to let the boats spoil it.