

Hydro problem 'Whipp-ed'

By HARVEY SHAPIRO
Daily News Sports Writer

The "Whipp Plan" will be unveiled during Sunday's \$30,000 unlimited Hydroplane Race at Eastwood Lake.

It has been devised by Gene Whipp, unlimited hydroplane driver now turned referee, in hopes of cutting down "sandbagging."

"What I've proposed to do is put a premium on qualifying and heat races," says the former seven litre national champion and President's Cup winner for unlimiteds.

In auto racing, the fastest car sits on the pole. There's a definite advantage to starting on the inside. In unlimited racing, however, it may be nice to be quickest, but it's really meaningless because pairings for the heats are determined strictly on the luck of the draw.

And while each boat is supposed to attain a minimum qualifying speed—95 m.p.h. at Eastwood—that rule can be waived.

SO WHY SHOULD a driver risk blowing an engine, when he can hold back a bit, and save it all for actual competition?

Last year, the rules stated that the top five point-accumulating boats during heat action would qualify for the final. However, the overall winner of the race was determined on a point basis.

In other words, driver X might have captured a pair of firsts in heat races for 800 points, and by a simple mathematical process determined that all he needed was a third place in the final race to win.

Thus, the winner of the final heat would not always be overall winner.

Hoping to stimulate competition, the unlimited racing commission revised its procedure for this season. The top point-accumulating boats during heat competition would be paired in the winner-take-all final event.

The Whipp plan is basically simple. Once the heats are determined by the draw, the fastest qualifiers will start up front.

"The slowest boat in that heat will be staggered behind. The stagger will be 1,000 feet, and I don't think anyone wants to start that far back," says Whipp. "That should give an added incentive to qualifying."

Springfield North names Mike Larson as grid coach

SPRINGFIELD — Springfield North has named Mike Larson its head football coach, replacing Ormonde Ricketts who resigned earlier this year. Larson, 25, is a Vandalia High School and Bowling Green University graduate and was formerly an assistant football coach at Xenia.

Jim Fricke had accepted the North coaching job earlier this year, but resigned Monday to take an assistant football position at the University of Wyoming.