



Staff Photo by Karen B

Frank Zerkle in the J-30 'Double Z' and Joe Hartdgen in his 'Skeeter' duel in Hydrobowl race

Turner wins Prix at Hydrobowl

By Joe Cunningham
Journal Herald Sports Writer

Terry Turner doesn't stand up and lead cheers for the Grand Prix International hydroplane division, but he isn't going to turn his back on that class, either.

Not even if it means the chance to drive one of the unlimited hydroplanes.

Turner drove "Uncle Norman's Lauterbach Special" to victory yesterday and captured the 1977 Grand Prix International national championship at the Dayton Hydrobowl.

BUT WHAT IF HE was given a chance at one of the "big boats?"

"I'm happy in what I'm doing," the 35-year-old driver said.

Oh, he might drive an unlimited — but only if it worked into the Grand Prix schedule. He has driven Pat O'Grady's unlimited a few times, so he knows what they're like. He likes his present seat.

Turner led all the way yesterday in the five-lap final heat, even lapping some of the other boats. But that almost hurt him.

After the race was finished, Joe Hartdgen, who piloted "Skeeter" in the final, lodged a protest with the officials.

Hartdgen had one lap to go when the winner finished. According to Hartdgen, Turner passed him and cut in front of him at the first turn to go into the

inner circle of the racecourse.

"The man just chopped in front of me," said Hartdgen, who claimed Turner was five feet in front of his boat when Turner cut in. "He's an incompetent driver. It was a flagrant violation."

HARTDGEN'S PROTEST was disallowed.

"Hopefully, he won't kill anybody," the 39-year-old driver said. "If he does, I'm sure we'll do something about it. But I don't want to see it come to that."

Turner refused to comment on the situation. He wanted to talk about the race, instead.

The Pomona, Calif., resident had an 89.365 miles-per-hour average for the final heat. That's slow for the type of boat he was driving. Turner blamed weather conditions for the lack of speed.

Driver killed in Seattle

SEATTLE (AP) — Veteran unlimited hydroplane driver Gerald Bangs was killed yesterday when his boat cartwheeled out of control and threw him into the water during the Seafair Trophy races on Lake Washington.

Bangs, 42, a Seattle lawyer and father of four, was running neck and neck with another boat in the fourth lap of the day's first heat when he accelerated on the inside lane, a witness said.

A strong wind made the water choppy and difficult to race on.

"The racecourse and water conditions didn't let us go as fast as we can," Turner said. "It wasn't the best water to race on."

THERE MIGHT have been another reason, though.

Saturday, Earl "Durb" King was killed when his 225 cubic inch boat flipped during a heat race and disintegrated. "Bon Bon," King's boat, reportedly was going about 130 mph down the back straightaway when it was hit by a gust of wind, fishtailed and flew 20 feet into the air. The boat spiraled three times and disintegrated when it hit the water.

The unconscious King was picked up by a rescue helicopter just after he crashed. Efforts to revive the driver failed.

Rick Albrecht, who was a third-place finisher in the 72 cubic inch class, thinks this might have accounted for the slow times in all divisions.

"A lot of guys are thinking of that and the speeds are slower," he said. "They don't want to go all-out."

YESTERDAY'S WINNERS

(Boat's name in parenthesis)
Grand Prix International class — 1. Terry Turner (Uncle Norman's Lauterbach Special); 2. Larry Lauterbach (Edelweiss); 3. Kent MacPhail (Advance United).

72 CI — Sue Schulte (Junk Yard Dawg); 850 CC — Anne Deuschle (Kat N Nan II); 145 CI — Joe Schulte (Yaller Dawg); 2 1/2 Litre — Phil Lipschutz (C'mon C'mon); 225 CI — Jim Kropfeld (Country Boy); 280 CI — Stover Hire (Hire Voltage); Flatbottom — (tie) Rick Berthold (no name), Frank Lamberty (Newer Seattle).