



Skip Peterson/Daily News

Way to go — or at least to start

New Zealand driver Peter Knight had a problem — his Grand Prix hydro wouldn't start Friday at Eastwood Lake. So, he primed his fuel injectors and everything was go as he practiced for today and Sunday's World Championship races.

Kropfeld ready to win

By HARVEY SHAPIRO
Daily News Sports Writer

Jim Kropfeld of Cincinnati, a former national champion and world recordholder, didn't exactly enjoy his first ride in the new Country Boy, a cabover competing in the 225 cubic inch class.

Kropfeld was thrown into the water during a preliminary run, was shaken up; and Dave Sutton not only took the wheel in a relief role but went on to win that race, and the next one.

Last weekend at Columbus, Kropfeld returned to the cockpit and dominated his class. He and Country Boy, owned by Mike Weiner of Cincinnati, will be at Eastwood Lake Saturday and Sunday for Hydroglobe '77, the fourth installment of the five-race series.

It figures to be strictly a two-boat clash, with Don Peseventi in Don Juan providing the toughest competition. Don Juan is reputed to be the quickest 225 down the straight, and its record-setting 139 mph through the kilo attests to that speed.

MORE THAN 150 boats representing 10 different inboard classes, will show their stuff over the 1 1/2-mile course. All races will be three heats, except the Grand Prix boats which will battle over five laps.

Kropfeld's younger brother, Butch, will drive the 850cc Lipship, owned by Mike Lipschutz of Cincinnati.

Practice is set for Friday, with action starting both days at 10 a.m. Hydroglobe '77 ends Aug. 26-27 with the return of the drag boats.

Boat flips, driver dies in Hydrobowl accident

By HARVEY SHAPIRO
Daily News Sports Writer

Durb King of Covington, Ky., a veteran inboard driver of 15 years, was killed Saturday at Hydrobowl when his boat, "Bon Bon" flipped during a heat race and disintegrated.

It marked the first racing fatality since Eastwood Lake became Hydrobowl in 1965. It is considered one of the nation's top racing facilities.

The incident took place in the second heat race as King had moved from fourth place into third. His 225-cubic-inch boat was hitting about 130 miles per hour down the long back straightaway when it suddenly fishtailed, lifted about 20 feet in the air, spiraled two or three times, then came down, disintegrat-

SECONDS AFTER THE accident a rescue helicopter with a scuba diver aboard picked King out of the water. King had been thrown from the boat.

He was unconscious. Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation was started by members of a Box 21 rescue team.

King was taken to Miami Memorial Hospital where he was pronounced dead at 7:35 p.m. The accident took place at 6:40 p.m.

Ken Wright of Dayton, a veteran inboard official, called it "a classic a-million accident. It was just a weird set of circumstances in that he was going that fast and reached that spot when a gust of wind came along. He was probably going about 135 miles an hour when he flipped."

See RACER, Page 12-A.

Racer killed at Hydrobowl

Continued from Page 1.

"HE HAD JUST MOVED into third place and was gaining on the leaders. He was on the inside and had just out of the other guy's windbreak when he flipped. It's also possible that might have triggered the accident. It's awful hard to say. Durb was an excellent chauffeur, a super guy who knew how to go fast," Wright said.

It was the last of four flips during

the opening day of the two-boat Hydrobowl which features the Grand Prix National championship. None of the other drivers who were in the water, however, were killed. Two more heat races, scheduled for Sunday, were canceled after the 225 event, were canceled.

The length of a 225-cubic-inch hydroplane is at least 16 feet and the minimum weight is 1,000 pounds. The current straightaway record through the kilometer is 135.945.