

Daytonian Poppa one of favorites

Racing back at Hydrobowl

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More than 100 inboards and outboards will compete in Sunday's first annual Dave Koch Memorial Race at Hydroglobe. The event, sponsored by the Dayton Motor Boat Association, starts at noon. Admission is \$2 per person.

Koch, a charter member of the DMBA, was not only Region 6 chairman but built and drove his own 145 cubic inch inboard, "Joker's Wild." In the past, this race was sponsored by the Cincinnati club and had been held at Rocky Fork.

The crack field includes Cincinnati's Butch Kropfeld in "Golden Nugget" and Michigan's Jerry Waldecker in "Hot Stuff." Both are 7-litres.

THE POPULAR 280 class includes Dayton's Mike Poppa and "Hombre." Poppa, a relative newcomer to the sport, has won three of five events this season, including the prestigious Buckeye Cup.

The outboards include Dick Burton of Dayton, who won the '78 UT-100 marathon national title and placed third in the SST-120 class. W.S. Holland, drummer for Johnny Cash, plans to enter the SST-120 class.

Poppa, 31, didn't start racing until 1975. "One of my partners in our lumber company saw the races at Hydroglobe, got pretty excited and said he'd like to get involved," recalls Poppa. "I didn't say anything, because I knew it wouldn't take much to get me hooked."

Although Poppa hadn't raced before, he was very familiar with water. "I'd grown up with boats. I had a pretty good feel for the water," he says.

As it turned out, Poppa and his friend found a 280 which had been kept in a barn for seven years. "The boat had been built and run very successfully by Chuck Thompson," Poppa said. "He had won several national championships in it."

The boat was checked over, refinished and the first time Poppa took it out was at Cincinnati. He passed his driver's test that day. By his fourth race that season, Poppa finished second.

CAMPAIGNING AN outdated boat for three seasons, Poppa stayed close to the competition but didn't win.

By the winter of 1977, Poppa decided, "We had done as much with the old style hull as was possible." He looked around, and found a two-year-old boat in Michigan. The boat had "a lot of potential."

Despite a hooking problem, which Poppa feels has been corrected, he won his first race this season at Ripley, Ohio, then followed with victory at Montreal, Canada.

"It was like stepping out of a VW into a Cadillac."