



Staff photo by Skip Peterson

Jim Kropfeld drives Country Boy to victory in 225 class

Boat racer had small regret despite title

By P.M. Walsh
Journal Herald Sports Writer

Inboard results are in Scoreboard, Page 9.

Sweat poured from his head and a smile beamed from Jack Van Deman's face as he told a fellow competitor, "I just wish they hadn't stopped that second heat."

No matter. Van Deman still won the 2.5-litre hydroplane class title during yesterday's National Inboard Championships at the Hydrobowl.

Sunny skies, hot temperatures and 15,000 spectators were on hand as the final five champions were crowned.

But two of the final 10 heats were marred by overturned boats, requiring a third start in the 2.5-liter and 225-cubic inch classes. Neither of the drivers involved in the flips was seriously injured.

Van Deman won the 2.5-litre class by combining first- and second-place finishes in his heat races.

The Cheraw, S.C., resident steered his Datsun engine-powered Why to first place in the opening heat. And he was just inches from being the first to cross the finish line again in the second heat when Ed Murphy's boat flipped over, nullifying the race.

MURPHY, FROM Bloomfield, Ill., flipped his boat, Two Twenty Two, on the first turn of the last lap.

In the subsequent third heat, Van Deman was overpowered by Richard Hallett out of the first turn and had to settle for second place.

But he took the title because of his overall high

there," the 33-year-old biology teacher said afterward.

Standing shirtless with gold racing pants on next to his boat, Van Deman was showered with handshakes and hugs from competitors and friends.

"I was a little faster than he (Hallett) was, but I fell back because I wasn't going to take any chances. I didn't have to win, so I just hung in," he said.

Van Deman set a one-lap record of 80.86 miles per hour during the competition.

HALLETT, FROM Jaoinio, Calif., was second overall behind Van Deman with 625 points. Christopher R. Oliver, from Galesville, Md., was third with 320 points.

The other driver flipping his boat was Mario Conflitti of Trenton, Mich. That was in the 225 class, won by Cincinnati's Jim Kropfeld.

Kropfeld took two second places to earn the national title with 600 points.

In the 5-liter class, last year's Western Division champ, John Gibbs of Costa Mesa, Calif., took first-place honors in his XL-Special. He finished first in both heats and had a total of 800 points.

In the 850 Hydro class, Mark Tate, from Canton, Mich., drove Anti Stick to first- and second-place fi-