

Kropfeld may switch to Miss Bud

By Dave Long
Staff Sports Writer

This Bud may be for Jim Kropfeld. The well-known driver of the Cincinnati-based Country Boy may be the next pilot of Miss Budweiser, the most famous of the unlimited hydroplanes.

Rumors floated around the 17th annual Dayton Hydroglobe boat races all weekend that Kropfeld is the leading candidate to take over the big thunderboat since former Xenia resident Dean Chenoweth was killed last Sunday while driving Miss Bud in Pasco, Wash.

Kropfeld won the 7-litre race yesterday on the final day of the Hydroglobe competition, averaging 95.694 miles per hour over the five-mile course to beat 14 other boats. His boat is powered by a 427 cubic inch Chevrolet engine. He has been a winner every year in Dayton "as far back as I can remember."

Asked about taking over Miss Bud, he said, "I haven't heard anything officially. A couple of friends of mine from the west coast have called me and said I was number one on their list. I met Bernie Little (Miss Bud's owner) in Detroit (at the Detroit Gold Cup) and again at Madison, Ind. (at the Madison Regatta). We haven't talked seriously about anything.

"I'd be interested in hearing what they have to say. It would be an opportunity I would have to think about. But nothing is solid right now.

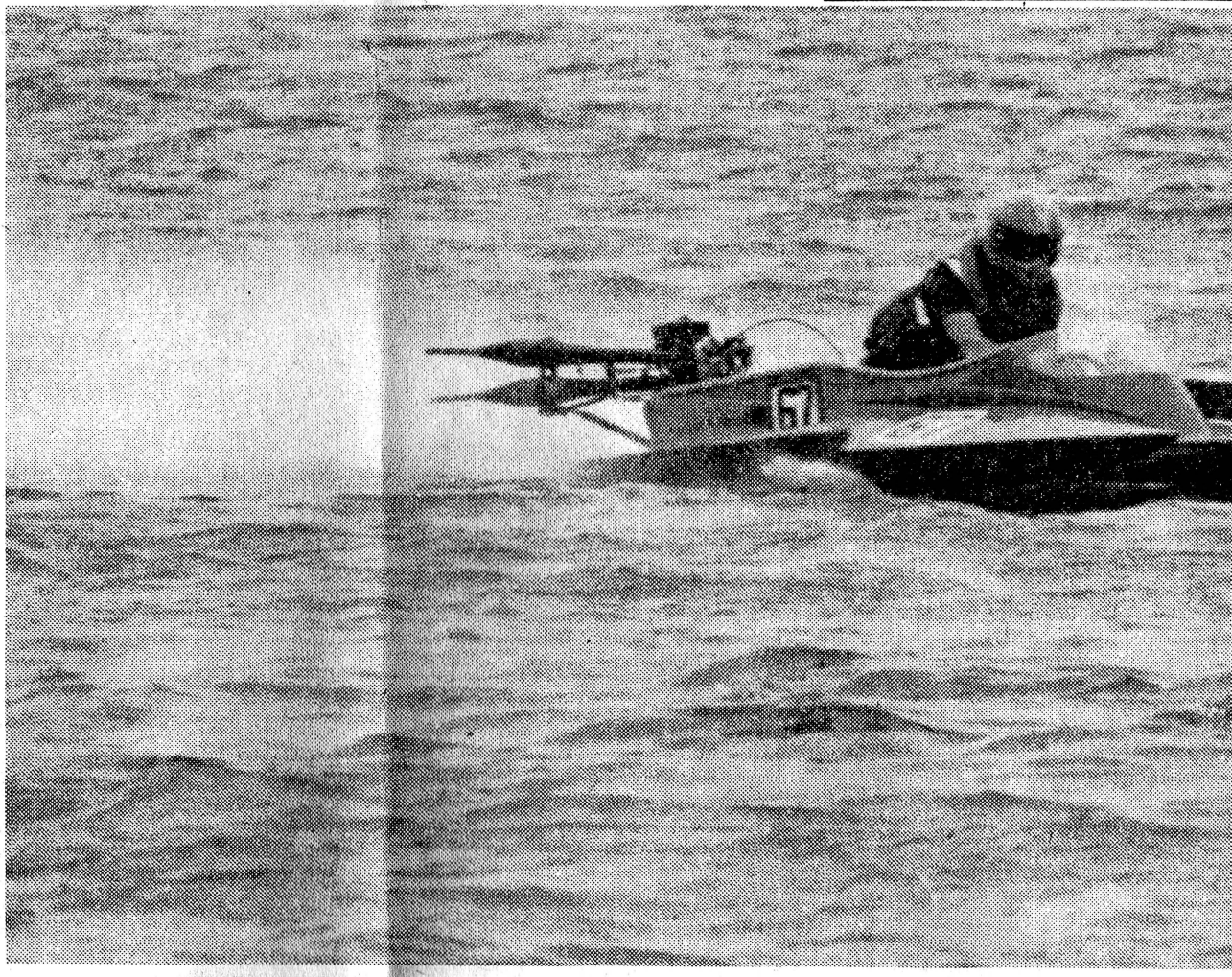
I'm just interested in making our 7-litre boat run as well as possible and getting this 7-litre class off the ground. But I would be interested in something if it came up.

"Right now I'm talking with a major brewery about the possibility of sponsoring an unlimited next year which might be very competitive with Miss Bud and the other big boats next year anyway."

The decision on who will race Miss Bud will be made within the next six weeks. Ron Armstrong drove the boat this weekend in Seattle, but he is not the final choice according to most observers in powerboating circles. The unlimiteds take a six-week break beginning today, and the Budweiser people are expected to assess their situation and make a decision during that time.

The 41-year-old Kropfeld has been racing boats for over 20 years and has won many national titles in several classes. He was named the outstanding driver in last year's Hydroglobe. His appearances at Hydroglobe have been very popular and his win yesterday delighted the estimated 20,000 fans.

Malcolm Harden of Portsmouth, Va., completed an American sweep in the Union of International Motorboating Outboard World Championships. The Navy ship builder captured the OA (250cc engine) class. He scored 752 points in four heat races to 567 points for Hoz Compton of Dallas. Ennio Manfredini of Italy was third with 563



Herbert Lasch waves from the water after he was thrown from his boat in the

and Herbert Lasch of West Germany was fourth with 495. Saturday Dan Kirts of Bristol, Ind., won the World Class OB title.

It appeared that Lasch, a 34-year-old mechanic, had won the World title with a first-place finish in the fourth heat. Points were awarded for various places in heats which covered six laps over the 1 3/4 mile course. First place was good for 400 points. It appeared that Lasch had no problem until he drove off the marked course and was disqualified, costing him the needed points and the title.

The West German team protested the disqualification to an international jury, but the disqualification was upheld. "What can I say? Bitter disappointment is the only way I can say how I feel," said Lasch.

In the third heat race, Lasch was thrown from his boat and taken to Miami Valley Hospital for observation. He was declared fit to race and got back to the course just in time for the final heat.

Other winners included Al Schide of Centerville in the Grand Prix A Class,

driving the Dayton Softwater Special; Joe Schulte of Daytona Beach, Fla., in the 145 cubic inch class; Jerry Kirts of Bristol, Ind., in the Grand Prix outboard class; Stover Hire of Syracuse, Ind., in the 280 cubic inch class; Dave Sutton of Spring Arbor, Mich., driving Yankee Doodle, in the big Grand Prix International Class

Hire and Schulte were also class winners Saturday.

Sutton averaged 99.668 miles per hour in winning his class, which is one notch below the unlimited boats.