

Hire hydroplanes lead Hydroglobe

By **CHICK LUDWIG**
Staff Sports Writer

Stover Hire is the name. Driving hydroplanes — swift, quick power boats — is his game.

At the Dayton Hydrobowl on Saturday, nobody did it better than Hire.

That's Hire as in higher. As in faster. As in outta sight and see ya later.

The Syracuse, Ind., driver dominated the first day of competition at Hydroglobe '84 as he captured the 7-litre title in *Hot Stuff* and placed second in the 280-cubic-inch class behind the wheel of *Hire Voltage*.

It was a day filled with mostly sunshine, a 40-minute rain delay, high speeds and, along with those speeds,

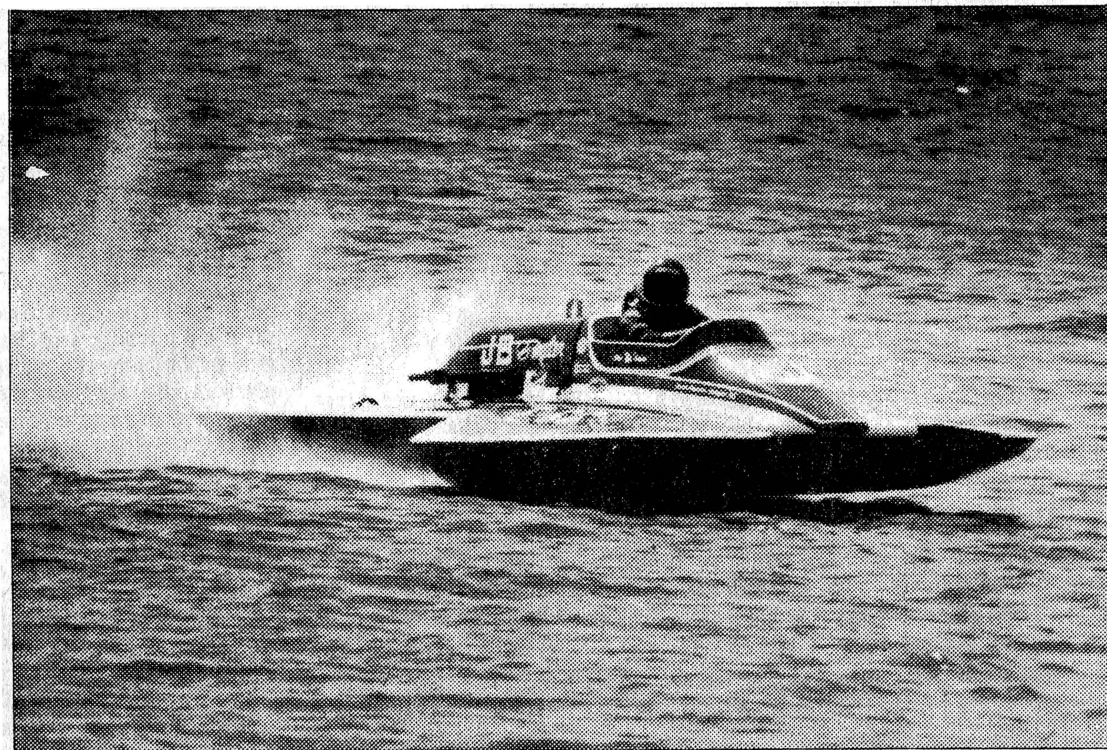
three accidents — one of the scary variety.

Pat O'Connor of Williamsville, N.Y., was listed in fair condition at Miami Valley Hospital after the boat he was piloting, *Hot Ticket*, went out of control and crashed near the end of the front straightaway.

A HOSPITAL SPOKESPERSON said O'Connor, a former national champion and two-time record holder in the 5-litre class, suffered a compression fracture of the vertebrae.

Two other drivers — John Jenkins of Mt. Vernon, Ohio, and Don Waldorf, of Virginia, were treated and released after their boats crashed in separate races.

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Staff photo by Eddie Roberts

Al Shide of Centerville was a winner Saturday in the semifinals of his class

Hire at Hydroglobe

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O'Connor's accident opened a path for Dayton's Jerry Scheidt to win the 5-litre class — one he calls "fast and dangerous" — in his boat, *Fast Tracker*.

"Pat's a terrific competitor and a gentleman to race against," Scheidt said. "I don't mind when a guy blows an engine, but when he loses all his equipment, it hurts."

Opening day drew 78 boats from throughout the United States and competition was held in six different classes of inboard hydroplanes.

TWO HEATS WERE held in each class and the drivers with the fastest times for their combined races were declared the overall winners.

Richard Delsener, of Detroit, Mich., driving *Southpaw*, captured the 1200-850 cubic-centimeter class.

Willard "The Wizard" Wilson, of Wilmington, Del., won the 145-cubic-inch division in *Lil Lectron*, with Beaver Creek's Bobby Newman placing second in *Superhook*.

Bill Whitehouse of Loveland, Ohio, driving *Snowbird*, triumphed in the 2.5 litre class.

And Mark Burghart, of Roseville, Mich., won the 280-cubic-inch class, just ahead of Hire. But Hire, the only driver to compete in two classes, beat Mike Mammano of Webster, N.Y., for the 7-litre title.

Mammano, who pilots *Litre of the Pack*, won the first 7-litre heat. But Hire came back to capture the second heat, and win the division with an overall time of 6:29.8, compared to Mammano's time of 6:30.8.

"**THIS BABY,**" Hire said, smiling as he patted the side of his 7-litre boat, "when it's running right, it's like a bullet."

"He's (Hire) a helluva driver," said Jerry Waldecker, the owner of Hire's 7-litre boat. "We came here to test out some equipment for the nationals in two weeks at St. Petersburg and Stover proved, as usual, that he is a very capable driver.

"Stover's very competitive and he's a very fair driver. But when the chips are down, he doesn't give an inch and that's the way it should be."

Hire, an electrician, said, "I'm 47 years old and I've been in this business since I was nine years old. That's 38 years and it seems like it's forever.

"You want to quit, but you can't. I love to travel and I love the competition. I have friends everywhere.

"**COMPETING IN TWO** classes makes you a better driver. When I get back in a 280 after driving the 7-litre, at first it feels strange. But it only takes a couple of laps for things to take shape."

Bo Shide of Centerville had a hard-luck day. He won his heat in the 280-cubic-inch class and started strong in the final heat. But his boat, *J-B and Water*, slowed when a header fell off on the second lap.

Dave Bernard, race director, said he was "super pleased and thrilled to death" with the first day of action.

"It's one of the closest-guarded secrets Dayton's ever had — boat racing. People who missed today's (Saturday's) action really missed a show and they better be here tomorrow (Sunday) because it's going to be even better."

The highlight of today's action will be a race among the fastest eight boats in the combined 7-liter, 5-liter and 225-cubic-inch classes with a winner-take-all purse of \$2,000 at stake.

Tickets for today's event are \$6 at the gate, with children under 12 admitted free. Parking is 50¢