

Dayton duo goes for broke at the Hydrobowl



**Ritter
Collett**

"We had exceptional success with a 5-year-old boat," Brunner said.

But you can't stand still in any form of racing, so the winter project of putting together the new boat turned the clock upside down for Schide, his wife and their two children.

The hull of E-31 was designed by Don Kelso of Seattle and the engine is stock.

"Starting Jan. 27, we put in as much as 10 hours a day, seven days a week, to get the job done the way it should be," Schide said. At that time he was getting his sleep in the evening before reporting for third shift. "Ron probably put in more time than that."

Brunner laughed when asked to put a price tag on the boat.

"You can't measure the time and effort involved," he said. "But in out-of-pocket expenses, the figure is \$18,000. When the most you can make at a race is maybe \$3,000, you can see it's not an investment proposition. That also doesn't take into account the expense of hauling the boat and yourself around."

"We've had some handling problems, but think we've made the adjustments," Schide said Thursday morning as they got in final tuneups for the qualifying competition today.

The E-31 has raced around the country with inconsistent results.

"We've not won a race, but we've been competitive," Brunner said. "This is a very competitive class. Drivers who have finished third in qualifying heats have come on to win national championships."

Brunner's introduction to boat racing came in 1959 on something of a dare involving Gene Whipp, one of the best boat racers ever to come out of Dayton. Whipp now lives in Florida.

"This was when I was driving what they called hobby stock cars at Kil-kare, the Dayton Speedway and other tracks in the area," Brunner said. "Gene and I traded places for a race. He didn't get hooked on cars, but I got hooked on boats."

"This is a much nicer sport, more family oriented. I wasn't having much fun in the cars, but I've enjoyed every minute of this. I drove up to 1975, but there comes a time when you have to admit your reflexes are slowing down."

The various classes in competition today are rated according to engine size, which determines speed ranges.

The 7-liter is the most powerful in the APE competition, closest to the highly publicized unlimited hydroplanes, perhaps the most dangerous sport of all.

Schide was driving a 6-liter craft at Hydrobowl when he had the crash in 1983.

"I was hitting between 135 and 140 mph when the nose lifted into a gust of wind," he explained. "The boat came down at an angle on its right side. The boat was destroyed. I was fortunate to come out of it with a broken arm and a few other little things, but nothing real bad."

"We've managed to find a few things in the water to knock holes in this boat," he went on referring to the E-31, whose top speed is approximately 125 mph.

Brunner and Schide see Mark Tate of Detroit, Stover Hire of Syracuse, Ind., and Dave Sutton, who holds the world speed record in 6-liter, as their main opposition.

"This is the very best spectator course in the country," Brunner said with a flourish of civic pride. "You have sloped banks all the way around and you can see the whole course from anywhere."

Much of the competition is to be televised nationally on USA Cable network.

It's a legitimate national event out of Dayton — even though a lot of Daytonians seem slow to notice.