Dayton duo goes for broke at the Hydrobowl

Karen Schide didn't see an awful lot of her husband, Bo, during the winter months.

After he got home in the early morning from the third shift at Delco, he gulped down breakfast and then dashed over to Ron Brunner's house, where the two of them spent most of the day working on their pride and joy.

That's the sleek gray and brown Shopsmith E-31, which Bo Schide will be driving in the 5liter class at the American Power Boat Association nationals this weekend at the Hydrobowl.

The finest and fastest inboard racing boats in the country are churning up the spray the next three days, giving Brunner and Schide a reasonable shot at winning a national championship in their own back yard.

Although the Centerville duo has earned national honors in their sport, it has not led them down the road to fame and fortune.

"You can't make a living in this sport," laughs Brunner, whose 26 years as driver and owner have planted him in the APBA Hall of Fame.

He and Schide formed their partnership last season, a year after Schide survived a crash that could have ended his career. In their 1984 season, Schide was runner-up in the nationals at St. Petersburg, Fla., surpassed a world record in another race, and won the Mid-American championship series.



"We had exceptional success with a 5-yearold 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 Kelson 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 publicize unlimited hydroplanes, perhaps the most da gerous sport of all.

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

"I was hitting between 135 and 140 mp when the nose lifted into a gust of wind," I explained. "The boat came down at an ang on its right side. The boat was destroyed. I we fortunate to come out of it with a broken ar 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 o referring to the E-31, whose top speed is a proximately 125 mph.

Brunner and Schide see Mark Tate of D troit, Stover Hire of Syracuse, Ind., and Day Sutton, who holds the world speed record in liter, as their main opposition.

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

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

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