



Staff photo by Bill Garlow

Box 21 personnel rescue Joe Shull after his boat flipped

Hot Shot captures hydroplane title

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It was a dream come true for partners Doug Felster and Mike Naber.

Finally, after two years of engine adjustments and replacements in their 2.5-liter hydroplane, Hot Shot, the boat lived up to its name.

Hot Shot was just that, Sunday, as Felster drove it to the 2.5-liter national title in the American Power Boat Association's inboard National championships at the Hydrobowl.

"This," said Naber, Hot Shot's mechanic, pointing to the boat, "is one hell of a lot of work. The day before the racing season, I got laid off work, and I've been spending every minute on this thing, because everything in it is handmade. But, if you want to win, I guess you've just got to sacrifice."

Felster was willing to sacrifice anything but speed during the race, since he knew Little Red Rocket, the eastern

divisional champion driven by Doug Masengale, was the boat to beat.

"I knew he was fast," said Felster, who has been racing since 1978. "But Doug and I have never been in head-to-head competition. It was a challenge, though, because it was real windy, and not the best condition for me. He could run better in the wind than I can, but I had more power, and could pull ahead on him."

The power Felster referred to comes from the 4-cylinder Fiero engine that Naber built. In the 2.5-liter class, there are few limitations on modification to the engines, which are usually Chevrolet, Ford, Datsun or Dodge engines.

"We're the only ones using this engine," Felster said. "That's what's so nice about this class, because you can use any engine that's within regulation."

"This engine has made us the fastest 2.5 liter in the country," Naber said.

"It's made 103 mph laps, and no one has topped that."

Little Red Rocket tried, and almost did top Hot Shot's performance, but Masengale's luck, and fuel, simply ran out. During the second turn of the third lap, Little Red Rocket stopped running.

"I figured I could pull off the win," Felster said. "I spun the boat in the second lap, and he caught up. But after I saw what happened to him, I knew I had him beat."

This was the first *big* win Felster and Naber, residents of New Baltimore, Mich., have recorded. Their last title was at the Miller Classic '84 in Michigan, where they won the 2.5-liter class.

"It was kind of a hollow victory last year, because the top competition wasn't there," Naber said. "But this win was against the top in the nation, and it means a lot, believe me."