



Staff photo by Bill Garlow

Hydrobowl racers in Dayton bring their boats out of the pits for a 5-minute warmup

Miller picks up national title at hydroplane championship

By Angelique Seremetis

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Ray B. Miller couldn't have dealt himself a better hand.

He drove Deuces Wild to the 6-liter hydroplane national championship at the American Power Boat Association's inboard Nationals Sunday at the Hydrobowl. It was his first national title.

"We're having a great year," said Miller, a resident of Winter Haven, Fla. "We've won nine of 14 races this summer, but this is the high point of my career. I've had this boat for four years, and I haven't changed it at all. I guess we're just having a lot of luck."

Miller is currently leading the APBA's national point standings. He also won the eastern divisionals in Raleigh, N.C. six weeks ago, so Miller didn't have to qualify for the nationals.

"That was the biggest advantage for me, because I was able to save my equipment for when it counted," Miller said. "It's not an easy course, and it was a little windy and rough out there, so it was to my benefit not to have to drive in the

lead during the first turn in the third and final lap.

But a fuel line problem that Scheidt's boat, Bud Light, has been plagued with all summer recurred, and the boat ran out of fuel after the second turn in the third lap.

"The boat from Dayton was very fast, so I thought he was right on my heels on the third lap," Miller said. "I didn't realize he was out of the race until it was over, and that's why I ran so hard the whole race. I didn't want him to catch me."

Miller raced so fast, he also didn't realize the exhaust pipe came loose and the left side of the boat had a hole. Well, not until he got out of the boat to accept the title, and the boat started to sink.

Even though this was Miller's first national title, he's not a new face to boat racing. He was an avid outboard racer before he started racing inboards 16 years ago. Miller has raced in every class, but enjoys the 6-liters the best.

"Speed on the water is a strange thing," Miller said. "Hitting 145 mph on a straightaway in a 6-liter is a great thrill, and it's really like a low flying airplane."