

Toledo driver wins 'em all with pair of hydroplanes

By Debbie Juniewicz

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BOAT RACING

Winning came easily for Randy Haas at the Budweiser Thunder on the Lake hydroplane races at Eastwood Lake this weekend.

Haas won all seven races he was in and was awarded the Mayor's Cup Sunday after earning the most points in the event.

"This is the best weekend that I've had all year," Haas said. The Toledo resident placed first in the qualifying and final heats in both the 6-liter and 7-liter classes on Saturday and Sunday.

"I'm real happy especially because Saturday was the first time I ever raced a 7-liter," Haas said.

Haas is in his fourth year racing in the 6-liter class. "Compared to most of these guys, I'm still the young kid on the block," he said.

A plumber by trade, Haas never aspired to get into racing. "One day my dad called me and told me that he bought a boat for me to drive," Haas said. "A week later we picked it up and I started racing."

The Miss Toledo was his first boat and the same 6-liter that he raced this weekend. "Most people start in a lower class and work their way up," Haas said. "I guess

it must have been in my blood."

Haas and the Miss Toledo have been the National High Point Champions for the past three years and are leading in points this season. Haas has won the Eastern and Western Championships and set a world record on a 1-mile course. His goal now is to win the Nationals.

"Winning is always a thrill, but the real thrill is racing itself," Haas said. "When you get side-by-side out there, your adrenaline really gets pumping," he said.

Haas is not concerned with the dangers of racing, although he has been thrown out of the boat before. "If you don't use your head, you can get yourself into a lot of trouble," he said.

"There's not enough money in this to kill myself. If something bad is going to happen, I lift my foot off the pedal."

A lot of Haas' time and money goes to maintenance. Some weeks, he spends 40 hours on the job and another 40 hours in his garage with his boats. "The people who don't put time in, don't win," Haas said.

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