

3 in a row for Ron Musson and Miss Bardahl makes this man-boat combo the winningest of all in the long history of—

If a regatta starts with the high point boat (Notre Dame) becoming first qualifier, then goes on with the previous race winner (Miss Exide) setting a new qualifying and world speed record and finishes with the latter boat burning to oblivion and the former losing the win because of the flames—if that's how it goes you have a capsule description of the 57th Gold Cup Regatta.

If, in addition, the regatta then is won by the only driver-boat team (Musson-Bardahl) to win three consecutive Gold Cups, you have an event that becomes slightly overwhelming with firsts and onlys.

Always a race of high tension, beach-and-course heartbreak, multiple ironies and countless incidents, this year's Gold Cup Regatta held August 8 on Seattle's Lake Washington continued all historic traditions and added a few for the future.

Of a 15-boat field, 12 participants qualified with startling regularity. Notre Dame opened qualifying with a 107 mph speed soon bettered by following boats. Then 10th qualifier Miss Exide posted a 120.356 mph three-lap average to break Maverick's previous Gold Cup record of 119.956, as well as set a new one-lap record of 120.536 to better the former 120.267 mph.

Final qualifying speeds found Miss Madison at 115.139; U.S. V, 114.407; Bardahl, 113.524; Notre Dame, 112.971; Mariner Too, 111.340; Roostertail, 111.187; Tahoe Miss, 111.035; Miss Lapeer, 109.238; Smirnoff, 109.164; Such Crust, 108.871; Miss San Diego, 108.506; with alternates Savair's Mist, 107.356; Budweiser, 105.606; Savair's Probe, 104.113. On race morning, San Diego withdrew.

The draw put Miss Exide, Madison, U.S. V, Mariner Too, Roostertail and Tahoe Miss into a blistering start with Warner Gardner in Mariner Too leading into the first turn. Bill Brow in Exide and Chuck Thompson in Tahoe Miss were tight behind. In the first turn of lap two Exide took the lead, Tahoe Miss moved into second and Mariner settled for third ahead of Madison, U.S. V and Roostertail.

When Mariner died in lap three the parade order of finish was maintained. However, in a turn duel between U.S. V and Roostertail, Jerry Schoenith lost his turn radius and flew up the U.S. V spray tail for a spectacular moment quickly over, safely terminated.

Exide's winning speed average was 112.172 mph to establish a new Gold Cup Heat record.

Heat 1B saw Ron Musson lead wire to wire with 108.561 mph. Rex Manchester in Notre Dame moved into second spot ahead of Miss Lapeer and Norm Evans. This team held off Bill Cantrell in Smirnoff until lap four when Cantrell passed Lapeer in the backstretch. Savair's Mist and Such Crust finished five and six.

Heat 2A put Notre Dame ahead start to finish in as confused a start as unlimiteds have seen recently. When

milling for position U.S. V and Lapeer collided to inflict damage on both hulls. Only Notre Dame and Exide charged across the start. Lapeer headed for the crowd on shore while U.S. V and Such Crust bogged on the straight.

By lap two Exide was ailing and fourth, Notre Dame had hooked in the upper turn but remained first, Lapeer had returned to the pits and Such Crust was second! At the heat finish Notre Dame was within 1,000 feet of lapping Exide and the head-shaking heat was over. Average time, 100.037 mph.

Heat 2B saw scrapping between Bardahl and Tahoe Miss, Smirnoff and Mariner Too. Tahoe Miss led three laps before yielding first place to Bardahl. Madison maintained a steady third while Mariner Too won fourth place from Smirnoff.

Notre Dame won a duel with Smirnoff to establish and hold first place in Heat 3A. Madison moved from fourth to second, U.S. V placed third, Such Crust fourth, and Smirnoff finally crept under the wire in last place—a rugged, jouncing ride from first to last in four laps. Madison, it must be noted, was only three seconds behind Notre Dame at the final stretch duel for the finish!

Heat 3B restored exhibition tendencies to unlimited racing as Exide led wire to wire with Bardahl second all five laps, Tahoe Miss third, Roostertail fourth, Budweiser fifth and Mariner Too sixth. What relieved the monotony was the pressure Bardahl put on Exide and the discouraging fact that all boats except Exide jumped the gun, were flagged a penalty lap, but were spread so badly no position changes could be made.

Into the Final Heat Bardahl and Notre Dame were tied for points—1100. Exide had posted 969; Tahoe Miss, 825; Madison, 750 and U.S. V, 619. Such Crust was alternate with 564. To win a third consecutive Gold Cup Bardahl had only to best Notre Dame or finish second

Photos By Bob Carver



Ron Musson



The Gold Cup

By Eileen Crimmin

to Exide, if Exide headed Notre Dame. Exide could not win at all. Notre Dame had to win the heat to win overall. Madison, though sixth overall, had, by the way, posted the best elapsed time of the entire race!

It was Exide, Bardahl and Notre Dame in a scorching sprint for the first turn. Exide pulled up the backstretch in the lead, but only slightly. Bardahl quickly was headed by Notre Dame as a backstretch explosion put Exide in the infield with a stack or engine fire. As the field passed, Exide burned brightly. Driver Bill Brow was seen in silhouette standing on the boat's deck. As rescue craft moved in, Brow jumped into the water and the race was stopped.

Exide flamed furiously for nine minutes before the fire was controlled by patrol boats.

The re-run of the Final maintained the first lap and the final lap with Bardahl leading, Notre Dame second followed by Tahoe Miss, Madison, U.S. V and alternate Such Crust fifth. Notre Dame, just one position away from a Gold Cup win, pressured Bardahl 100 feet astern but could not head the fleet craft.

For Musson and Bardahl it was the third consecutive Gold Cup win with the same boat and driver. For Rex Manchester it was the third Gold Cup snatched from his grasp by a course accident. For all who witnessed the qualifying runs and competitive action, it was memorable.

But then, Gold Cup always is.

Barrelling into a Gold Cup turn is Notre Dame and driver Rex Manchester on the way to second overall in the race.

Jerry Schoenith rides his wood-and-steel Roostertail up the vaporous (and original) roostertail streaming out behind Miss U.S. V as Roy Daby wrestles her into a turn. ▶

The winning Miss Bardahl, with Ron Musson at her helm, screams along Lake Washington past Gold Cup crowds. ▼

Final overall results—

Miss Bardahl came in first with 1500 points.
Notre Dame second with 1400 points.
Tahoe Miss third with 1050 points.
Miss Exide fourth with 969 points.
Miss U.S. 5th with 788 points.
Miss Madison 6th with 750 points.
Such Crust IV 7th with 691 points.
Miss Smirnoff 8th with 479 points.
Gale's Roostertail 9th with 296 points.
Mariner Too 10th with 264 points.
Miss Lapeer 11th with 169 points.
Savair's Mist 12th with 127 points.

