

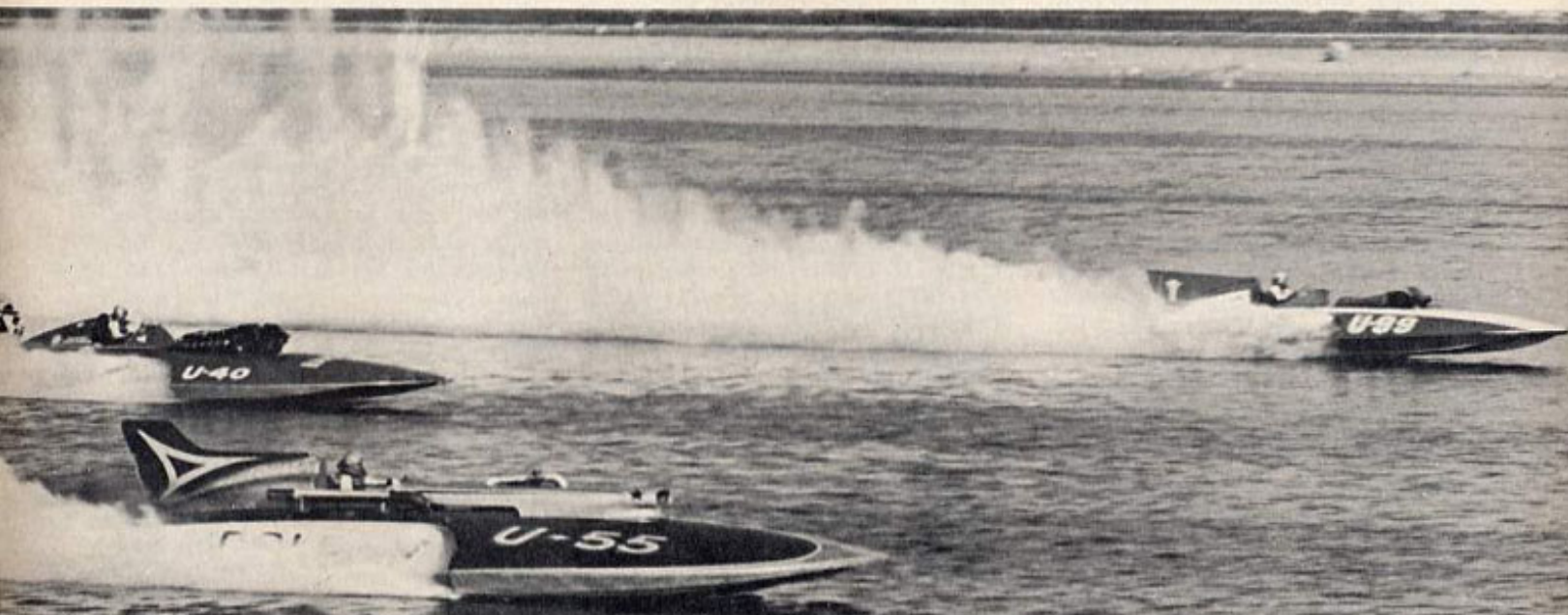
**SAN DIEGO REGATTA**

# Mariner Too is First in Last Race of the Year



• Above: Col. Warner Gardner had the distinction of piloting Mariner Too to victory in the first running of the San Diego Cup Regatta. It was also the only unlimited event held on salt water.

• Below: In the next to last heat, Gale V (in foreground) went dead in the water, as Bardahl gained ground on Mariner to later win. In the final heat, however, Mariner won as Bardahl limped home.



**T**HE SAN DIEGO Regatta – newest event on the unlimited hydroplane circuit and last race of the '64 season – brought 13 entries to sprawling Mission Bay Aquatic Park for a taste of salt water racing, Oct. 1-4.

For *Mariner Too*, the taste was sweet; for *Budweiser*, bitter; for *Bardahl*, not bad at all. For the rest of the field, win or lose, it was at least a beautiful setting for the final roostertail convention of the year.

Under the adroit piloting of Colonel Warner Gardner, *Mariner Too* became the first name to be inscribed on the San Diego Cup trophy. Victory meant \$4,000 in first place prize money for Jim Herrington's neophyte Detroit competitor and a boost to seventh place in the final standings for the 1964 unlimited campaign.

The only casualty of the San Diego race was a major one. *Miss Budweiser*, with a proud history stretching over six unlimited seasons, lost a sponsor during a turn, shattered and splattered into the waters of the Pacific lagoon course.

Though driver Chuck Hickling was unhurt, *Budweiser* appeared to be damaged beyond repair and when scavenger fans finished plucking apart the remains when the boat was beached, owner Bernie Little had little left to trailer home.

The Tampa, Florida entry – formerly the original *Tahoe Miss* ('62), *Miss Reno* ('61) and the second *Maverick* ('59) – was national high point champion in 1959. After a year's retirement in 1963, *Budweiser* had scored well this season finishing eighth on the final standings.

San Diego was a do or die proposition for *Bardahl* master Ron Musson. *Bar-*

*dahl* had already wrapped up the national championship this year at Harrah's Tahoe Regatta, but Musson, piloting the top unlimited of the year, found himself short on points to capture the driver's high point honors.

A "second-best" driver sitting in the nation's first place boat would never do for the second year in a row. Musson had ironically failed to garner the title last year after co-driving *Bardahl* to the '63 crown.

Off of two heat firsts, and a scary finish in the final when *Bardahl* chugged home at 50-mph after developing engine troubles mid-way through the finale, Musson won a deserved top ranking in the driver's standings.

Opening day qualification trials saw a number of creditable timings posted led by *Miss Exide's* clocking of 119.495-mph for one lap. Friday's best effort was made by driver Bill Brow on the final run to be made for the day and edged out Norm Evans with *Miss Eagle Electric* (117.647) and Chuck Hickling with *Miss Budweiser* (112.382) for bonus prize money.

The *Exide* performance also established the first official speed record for unlimiteds on Mission Bay. Fastest time ever made over the course remains at 120.924, set by Harry Schneider and his 225-cu.in. hydro *Tiger Too* in February, 1964.

Other day-number-one clockings included: *Exide*, 116.883; *Smirnoff*, 110.769; *Gale V*, 101.694; *Eagle Electric*, 115.384; *Tempo*, 107.892; and *Budweiser*, 111.225. *Bardahl* threw a rod during a romp around the buoys but was unofficially tagged at 160.71 for a quarter-mile distance on the back stretch.

Early in the proceedings, drivers be-

gan to complain of tight turns and a few low-depth spots on the course.

On Saturday, *Mariner Too*, eventual winner of the cup, portended its victory by topping all qualifying with a 111.455-mph showing after timings of 110.769 by *Gale V*; 110.655 by *Miss Madison*; 109.533 by *Eagle Electric* and 98.360 by *Savair's Mist*.

Pairings in the title heats on Sunday put both qualifying day winners *Exide* and *Mariner Too* – together with *Tempo*, *Tahoe Miss* and *Savair's Mist* in Heat 1A.

Heat 1B matched *Budweiser*, *Madison*, *Gale V* and *Fascination* while Heat 1C fielded *Bardahl*, *\$ Bill*, *Miss Eagle Electric* and *Miss Smirnoff*.

Winners were *Mariner Too*, *Budweiser* and *Bardahl*.

The second round of heats were won by *Madison* in the opener over *Exide*, *Smirnoff*, *Savair's Mist* and *Tempo*; *Bardahl* in 2B over *Mariner Too*, *Fascination* and *Gale V*; and *Mariner Too* in the Final over *Exide*, *Fascination*, *Madison* and *Bardahl*.

Final standings put *Mariner Too* in front of the pack with 1,100 points, *Bardahl* second with 927, *Exide* third at 900, *Madison* fourth with 869, *Fascination* next in line with a total of 675 points, trailed by *Miss Smirnoff* at 450.

Best average mark for the five-lap, 15-mile heats – 113.660 miles per hour – was set by *Miss Bardahl*, registering that in winning 2B. *Miss Exide's* 117.647 went down as the fastest single lap on Sunday and its 119.495 qualifying lap on Friday remained as the fastest time for the entire meet.

Thus, the roar and the roostertails of the 1964 season were ended with the first annual running of the San Diego Cup Regatta.

• *Miss Budweiser*, which put in a very creditable showing all season, lost a sponsor during action at San Diego and went under. Towed to shore, the remains were nearly picked clean, seconds

after this photo was taken, as the crowd in the background swarmed over the hull, ripping off anything they could pry loose. Owner Bernie Little barely arrived in time to stop the vandalism.

