

# The Gold Cup

## BARDAHL MAKES IT THREE IN A ROW

Story by EILEEN CRIMMIN with photographs by BOB CARVER

AS FOR THE GOLD CUP, three drivers could have—should have—won it.

Only one did, and he made racing history.

On Aug. 8, Ron Musson drove the aging, balky *Miss Bardahl* to its third consecutive Gold Cup victory. Racing on his home waters, Seattle's Lake Washington, the mighty mite of unlimiteds, as well as limiteds, did what no other boat/driver team in unlimited history has done—strung three Gold Cups together with the same hull, same driver, same owner.

A further tribute to this feat is that Musson and the *Bardahl* racing team accomplished all this with a hull that underwent extensive remodeling when new, carped out of shape in last year's Gold Cup, definitely mishandled while winning the 1965 Dakota Cup Regatta, and has been a decidedly unsatisfactory piece of equipment ever since.

It takes an exceptionally good team and driver to pull off wins under these circumstances, but then Musson is not Driver of the World for nothing.

In second place overall was *Notre Dame* driven by Rex Manchester. Here was a clear case of winning on the course and losing by circumstances.

Manchester had passed the *Bardahl* and was hot after *Exide* in the Final Heat when *Exide* caught fire in a clear cut accelerating lead. Manchester and *Notre Dame* were on the way to victory when continuing fire on *Exide* brought flares that stopped the heat.

In the re-run Musson and *Bardahl* sped into first place by leading into the first turn. Manchester and *Notre Dame* however, hid in *Bardahl's* roostertail and steadily gained on Musson's less-than-perfect charger.

Suddenly, a bad bounce into a hole in the water lost precious seconds for *Notre Dame*. Though Manchester continued to drive hard he never made up the lost time and distance. He finished the heat in second place and the regatta second overall.

For Rex Manchester it was the third in a line of disappointments. In 1960

Manchester was 17 seconds from a Seafair Trophy win when the *U.S.* burst into flame and driver Don Wilson bailed out to stop the race.

In 1961, Manchester was only yards from a Gold Cup victory on Pyramid Lake when his craft hooked and sank, losing him the win and making him an invalid for months.

"I've been disappointed so many times I just don't get my hopes up any more," said Manchester softly with the easy, self-effacing smile so coolly contrasting the anguish on the features of the rest of Shirley Mendelson's *Notre Dame* Racing Team.

For *Exide* the race was both triumph and disaster. Fresh from winning the Diamond Cup, the *Exide* camp was rumored ready to set a new Gold Cup qualifying record. Bill Brow in *Exide* was the 10th qualifier to take the





• Miss Bardahl (at top) became the first boat in unlimited history to win the Gold Cup three times in a row with same driver and owner. (Above): Rare photo shows Jerry Schoenith and

Gale's Roostertail precariously riding wake left by Miss U.S. V. All ended well, however, as Schoenith managed to level the boat out on outside of turn. He finished ninth overall.

course. And take it he did.

With the *Exide* engines putting out their usual heady power, with Brow's lead foot putting out nothing but pressure, with *Exide's* hull (former *Wahoo*) and tightly skidded turns, the Brow/*Exide* combination turned in a three-lap average speed of 120.356 mph with one of these laps turned at 120.536-mph.

These speeds bettered the exiting record set in 1958 by *Maverick* and Bill Stead. He had turned three laps at 119.956-mph with one lap scorched in at 120.267-mph.

In the pits *Exide*, rather than *Bardahl*, became the "boat to beat" though

lip-service gave *Bardahl* that title.

*Exide* won Heat 1A with a heat average speed of 112.172-mph to set a new Gold Cup heat record. In Heat 2A, *Exide* experienced engine trouble to place a discouraging fourth. To make up for it she came out in Heat 3B determined to win and she bested *Bardahl* and *Tahoe Miss* to lead the field start to finish.

In the Final she had no alternative but to get into first and stay there. Against *Bardahl*, *Notre Dame*, *Tahoe Miss*, *Madison* and *U.S. V* this was no cinch chore because all drivers were experienced, all boats extremely fast.

*Exide* led *Bardahl* into the first turn by two boat lengths. As *Notre Dame* passed *Bardahl* in the turn *Exide* emitted a series of four loud reports; one on the turn entrance, one at the center buoy, another just before the exit pin, and one more as she accelerated up the backstretch.

The last report verged on the sound of explosion. *Exide* veered to the infield and belched flame from the supercharger. Wind drifted flame over engine and cockpit. It appeared the craft experienced stack or supercharger fire.

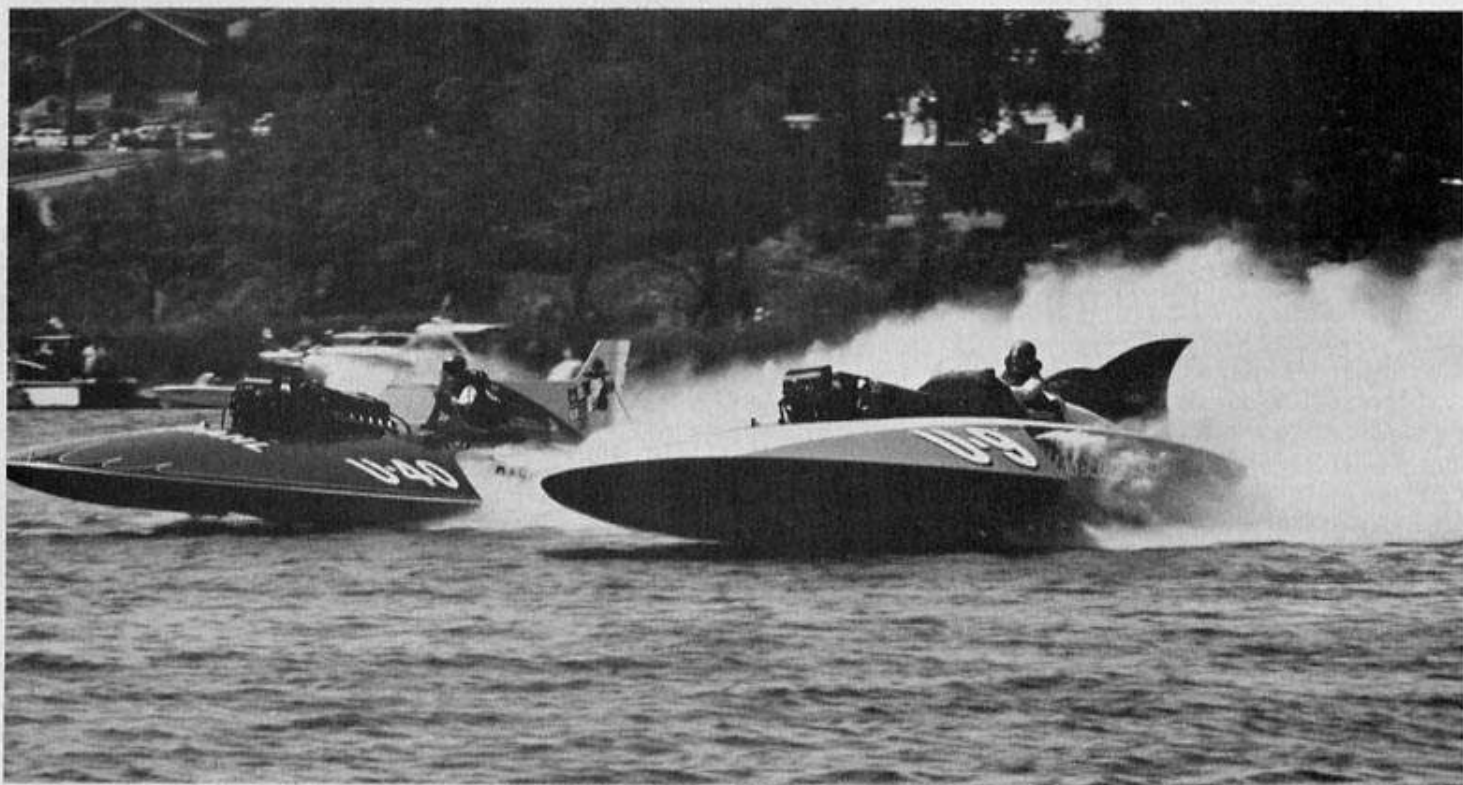
Driver Bill Brow waited in the cockpit until wind blew flame away from





• (Above): Notre Dame and Rex Manchester placed second in the Gold Cup, almost had it won until the Exide fire stopped the Final heat. In re-run, Bardahl took the lead and could not be

headed. (Below): Bardahl and Miss Lapeer battle through the south turn on the Lake Washington course. Lapeer driver Norm Evans was slightly injured in a later collision with U.S. V.



him, then he moved to the tailfin. He waved—in unlimiteds this signals that the driver is ok. Unfortunately, Brow was gesturing to nearby patrol vessels to close in and toss him another fire extinguisher and help him put out the fire. They, under orders not to create wake if the race was in progress (it still was) moved toward him slowly. The helicopter hovered overhead, ready to lift Brow to safety.

As the fire gathered momentum and size Brow leaped into the water. Immediately flares were pulled under the rule that any driver in the water automatically stops the race, even if it's obvious that he is not hurt.

Rescue vessels moved in quickly. Brow was taken ashore. The fire, now burning intensively and creating a long

streamer of black smoke from the infield, was smothered in nine minutes. A combination of flaming nitrous oxide plus regular aircraft fuel pumping from a ruptured fuel line make it an exceptionally difficult fire to subdue.

For owners Mile and Glenn Stone, and the Exide camp, it was a sickening sight. Their *Seattle Too* hydrauliced to disintegration in the 1962 Seafair, injuring Dallas Sartz. The first *Miss Exide* hydrauliced bow and sponson to oblivion in the 1963 Diamond Cup, injuring Mira Slovak. The present *Miss Exide* (former *Wahoo*) is a badly scorched vessel at the moment, though happily, driver Bill Brow is unscathed.

If the Rule of Three ever applied to an event, the 1965 Gold Cup was that event. Three boats could have won;

three drivers also. Musson and *Bardahl* made it three Gold Cup wins in a row. Rex Manchester lost for the third time under accident circumstances. The *Exide* camp lost their third boat by accident. It all seemed like more than coincidence.

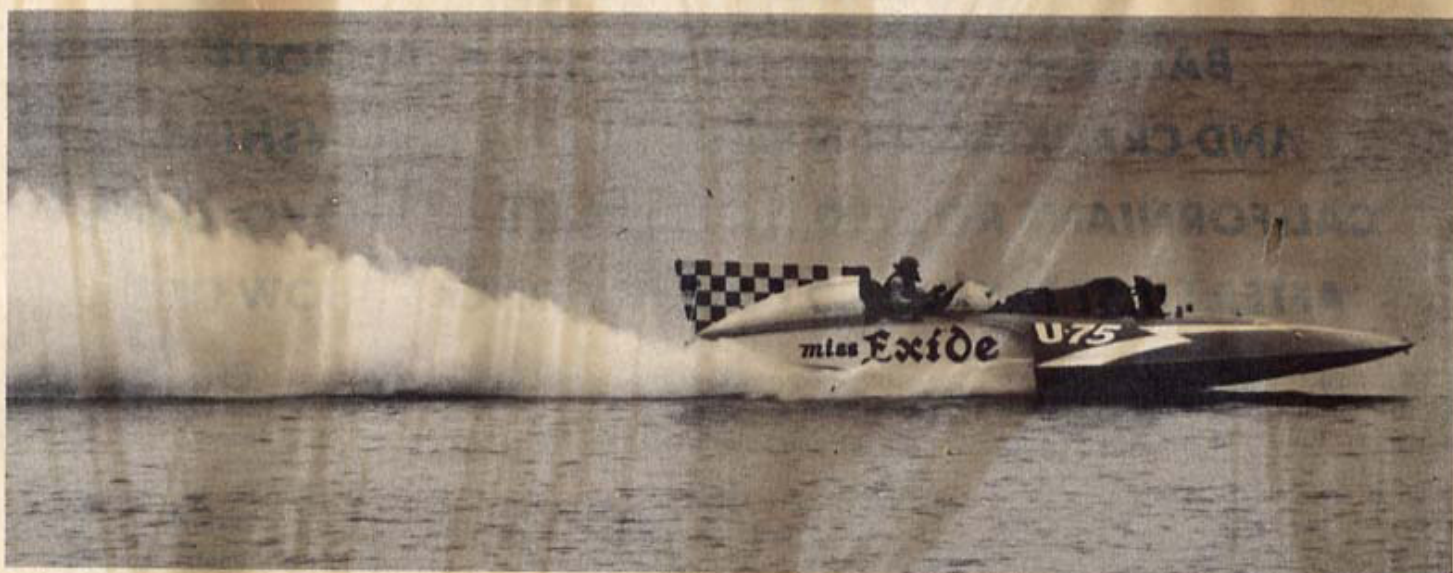
But to recap total action of the 57th Gold Cup Regatta, Heat 1A brought *Miss Exide* the aforementioned new heat record. In addition it was distinguished by one harrowing incident in the south turn when Jerry Schoenith in *Roostertail* nosed into the spray tail of *U.S. V.* The extra lift tipped the boat high in the air and on its side before balance was restored and "I was boat racing again," as Jerry put it.

Musson and *Bardahl* won Heat 1B by withstanding constant pressure from



• (Above): The stable *Tahoe Miss*, driven by Chuck Thompson, is always a threat. It would up third overall at Seattle. (Below): *Miss Exide* as she set a new Gold Cup qualifying record for three

laps at 120.356-mph, breaking the *Maverick*/Bill Stead mark made in 1958. In the Final, *Exide* caught fire in the back stretch bringing the heat to a halt as driver Bill Brow bailed out.



second-place *Notre Dame*.

Heat 2A began with a mess, started in confusion, ended with *Notre Dame* winning. In the prestart milling, *Miss Lapeer* with driver Norm Evans and Roy Duby in *U.S. V* collided. *U.S.* suffered left sponson damage; *Lapeer* sustained right afterplane wreckage. Norm Evans was hospitalized with a nonserious wrenched and bruised shoulder.

As a result, only *Notre Dame* and *Exide* charged across the start. Meanwhile *Lapeer* veered toward the crowd, buzzed the official barge so closely some occupants bailed out of their seats, then returned to the pits.

*U.S. V* continued to race and posted a third as *Exide* went sick and fell into last place. *Notre Dame* hooked once but recovered, then won, and *Such Crust IV*

trundled home in second! For mass confusion, Heat 2A ranks high in Gold Cup Snafu's history.

Heat 2B saw good dueling for one-two and four-five spots. Only *Madison* and Buddy Byers maintained a steady third. *Bardahl* and *Tahoe Miss* fought for first, with *Bardahl* cinching it in lap four.

*Mariner Too* and *Smirnoff* scrapped for fourth with Warner Gardner in *Mariner* fighting off *Smirnoff* from lap three to the finish.

Heat 3A brought *Notre Dame* her second heat win after a one-lap duel with *Smirnoff*.

With *Bardahl*, *Exide* and *Tahoe Miss* in Heat 3B a real battle was expected, but positions changed only in the first lap. *Exide* took the lead, *Bardahl* was second, *Tahoe Miss*, third; *Roostertail*,

*Budweiser* and *Mariner Too* followed. It was pretty much of a parade.

The Final was shut down in lap 2 by the *Exide* fire. In the rerun it was *Bardahl* heading *Notre Dame*, *Tahoe Miss*, *U.S. V* and *Such Crust* as *Madison* went dead before the start.

*Notre Dame* gained on *Bardahl* until a bad bounce lost the blue and white charger seconds that could not be made up. With the win in the Final Heat, *Bardahl* took possession of her third Gold Cup.

During the presentation ceremony Chuck Thompson suddenly collapsed from what was thought to be heat exhaustion. Turned out to be broken ribs from a long leap taken by *Tahoe Miss*.

Injuries, boat damage, new records—that was Gold Cup 1965.