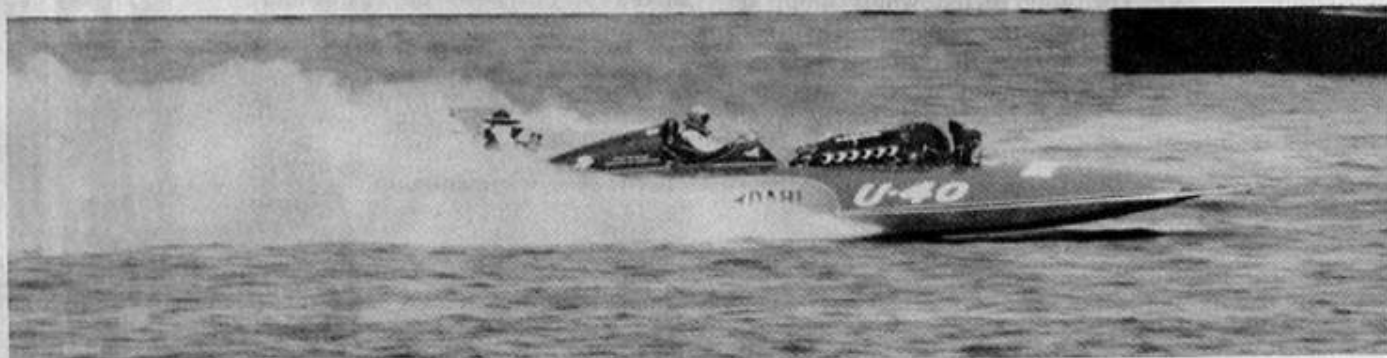


# "Old" Miss Bardahl Wins as Gold Cup Regatta Returns to Seattle

And with its usual flourish of spray, broken parts, fire and reruns...



Miss Bardahl, the Green Dragon from Seattle, claimed the Gold Cup for the third straight time

Story and photos by Tom Weiler

SECOND CHANCES in the fast and furious competition for the Gold Cup—symbolic of unlimited hydroplane racing supremacy—are as rare as left-handed bilge pumps, and when they occur they're seldom wasted.

So, given a second opportunity to take the honors in the 56th contest for the revered golden tureen, *Miss Bardahl*, the "Green Dragon" from Seattle, wasted no time in claiming the cup for the third straight time. And she and her pilot, Ron Musson, did it in the face of the fastest and probably the finest field ever assembled for the Gold Cup race.

Three favorites stormed into the fourth and final six-boat heat of the regatta on Seattle's Lake Washington late in the afternoon of August 8. All six boats were the high-point winners of previous heats, but the three that held the crowd's attention were: *Miss Bardahl*, limping along on an engine which spit spark plugs when pressure was on, had won two heats and placed second once for a total of 1100 points.

*Miss Notre Dame*, a dark horse challenger, also with 1100 points. She had come in second the one time she faced the Green Dragon, but had beaten the prime favorite, *Miss Exide*.

*Miss Exide*, the class of the 1965 Gold Cup fleet, brought a batch of records into the heat, but only 969 points. A solid favorite to win before the race, *Exide* had set two Gold Cup qualifying speed records earlier in the week. Piloted by Bill Brow, the boat was clocked in one lap at 120.536 mph, and averaged three laps at 120.356 mph. To top it off, the *Exide* had cracked an old *Bardahl* race-day record by spinning one lap in 112.172 mph during the day's first heat.

The three were closely bunched crossing the starting line, *Exide* leading and *Bardahl* trailing *Notre Dame*. As the trio came out of the south turn into the backstretch, *Exide's* engine burst into flame and she turned into the infield. *Notre Dame* and *Bardahl* were left to fight it out, with *Tahoe Miss*, *Madison* and *Miss U.S.* along for the

ride. Rex Manchester, the Irish speedster's driver, was building up a comfortable lead as he started into the third lap. It looked as though *Miss Bardahl's* Gold Cup supremacy was to stop at two straight victories.

Brow, though, standing on the burning deck of the *Exide*, watched helplessly in the infield as the flames leaped higher. He signalled to the Coast Guard and fire boat for aid. According to Gold Cup rules, however, the heavy rescue boats have to proceed slowly and cautiously to keep their wake from disturbing the still-racing boats. The rules also will not permit the judges to stop the race until the driver is in the water.

Finally, Brow jumped and the race was stopped at the end of the second lap. Brow and the *Exide's* owners, the Stoen brothers of Seattle, were possessors of a burned-out hulk whose flames had resisted the finest fire-fighting equipment for 15 minutes. Rex Manchester and *Notre Dame* possessed a faint glimmer of Gold Cup glory. And *Miss Bardahl* possessed her second chance.

Driver Musson described his strategy for winning, and the exact way the final heat was re-run, in a single sentence:

"I had to get the jump on *Notre Dame*, because I knew if she ever got out in front she would be tough to catch."

Musson was good to his word, creeping up on the inside during a slow start, grabbing the lead at the starting gun, and never relinquishing it. *Notre Dame* was just as stubborn, following in *Bardahl's* shadow all the way. Her Irish luck deserting her, the boat with the shamrock on her tail made one game attempt to overtake her nemesis, charging up the north turn in the third lap. But *Bardahl* beat back the challenge.

*Tahoe Miss*, *U.S. 5*, *Such Crust* and *Madison* were also starters; *Madison* didn't finish the first lap.

The Gold Cup race is a 60-mile affair, but *Bardahl* and the other final-heat finishers had to run more than 66 miles because of the re-run heat.

*Exide* brightened heat 1-A with her record-breaking lap, and finished a comfortable 1200 feet ahead of *Tahoe Miss*. They were followed, in order, by *Miss Madison*, *U.S. 5* and *Gale's Roostertail*. *Mariner Too* didn't finish.

*Bardahl* picked up her first 400 points in heat 1-B, holding first place all the way over *Notre Dame* and *Miss Smirnoff*, who challenged for third in the fourth lap. Trailing were *Miss Lapeer*, *Savair's Mist* and *Such Crust IV*.

While jockeying for position in the north turn at the start of heat 2-A, *Miss Lapeer* cut in front of U.S. 5, driven by Roy Duby, and U.S. 5 almost rode right over *Lapeer*.

"I couldn't avoid him," Duby said. "My sponson was almost right in the seat with him."

*Lapeer's* driver, Norm Evans, got a badly bruised shoulder, but gave the crowd a real fright in return.

He swerved his boat off course toward the pits, driving with one hand and gesturing to his crew with the other to indicate damage. He was almost on top of the official barge before he swerved away, scattering officials. He went down the course, again headed for land — this time a point of land swarming with overheated humanity. Many had waded out into the shallow water to get cool and for a better view. They raced ashore like a tidal wave, trying to avoid the boat, which swung out on the course, circled it, and headed to the pits for repairs.

In the anti-climactic heat, *Notre Dame* held first place throughout, and a long lead over *Such Crust*, U.S. 5, and *Exide*, who limped around with engine trouble and barely finished.

Heat 2-B was the most hotly-contested of the day, as *Bardahl* and *Tahoe Miss* fought for the lead through all five three-mile circuits. *Bardahl* finally nipped past the Nevada boat in the south turn of the fourth lap and held on to win. *Miss Madison* was an easy third, but *Mariner Too* and *Smirnoff* were five feet apart at the finish, *Smirnoff* trailing.

The finish of 3-A was pretty much to form, as *Notre Dame* grabbed an early lead and stayed there. *Savair's Mist* made a game run for the money but steadily faded, ending last. In the middle of the pack were *Madison*, *Smirnoff* and *Such Crust*, in order.

In Heat 3-B the judges announced that all boats in the heat except *Exide* had jumped the gun. Penalty — one lap extra. *Exide* coasted home an easy winner, while *Bardahl* led the delinquents around for second.

It was all prologue, however, to the stuttering final heat, which was truly heated in every sense of the word.

A number of innovations made interesting racing for the Gold Cup meeting. Only 12 boats could enter the race, and the two top qualifiers on the first two days were guaranteed starters. Other boats could be bumped by later, higher-speed qualifiers. *Smirnoff*, *Madison*, *Exide* and *Mariner Too* won the safe spots. Competition was high as 18 boats entered the camp; three never qualified and three couldn't make the ladder.

A change which definitely had some bearing on the outcome of the race permitted engine changes between heats on race day. *Exide* and *Bardahl* took advantage of

the change — *Exide* perhaps to its sorrow.

And then, there was the talk of the nitrous oxide, or "laughing gas" injections, small bursts of which would increase acceleration. *Exide* used it in the Diamond Cup, which it won, and *Bardahl* admitted experimenting with it there. Neither boat admitted using it in the Gold Cup, but too strong a burst could pop a plug — an ailment *Bardahl* complained of.

The strangest part of all, perhaps, is that the winner of the race, *Miss Bardahl*, should never have been there in the first place. Ole *Bardahl*, the owner, had a radically-new "cab-over-engine" designed hydroplane built. It was delivered to the *Bardahl* camp this spring. The Green Dragon was to retire, even be sold, and the newcomer would take its place.

The boat required more work — may not be finished in time for any race this season. So, for the first time since 1935, and the second time in Gold Cup history, a boat has won three consecutive Gold Cups. It proves you just can't break an old boat of winning habits.

#### FINAL GOLD CUP SUMMARY

Boat/Finish	Points	Total Time*	Avg. Speed*	Won
1. <i>Miss Bardahl</i>	1,500	34:54.4	103.132	\$10,500
2. <i>Notre Dame</i>	1,400	34:19.4	104.864	7,466
3. <i>Tahoe Miss</i>	1,050	36:51.0	97.693	5,133
4. <i>Miss Exide</i>	969	.....	.....	3,733
5. <i>Miss U.S. 5</i>	788	37:04.6	97.096	2,567
6. <i>Miss Madison</i>	750	.....	.....	1,750
7. <i>Such Crust IV</i>	691	39:31.2	91.093	1,238
8. <i>Miss Smirnoff</i>	479	.....	.....	817
9. <i>Gale's Roostertail</i>	296	.....	.....	584
10. <i>Mariner Too</i>	264	.....	.....	467
11. <i>Miss Lapeer</i>	169	.....	.....	408
12. <i>Savair's Mist</i>	127	.....	.....	292
13. <i>Miss Budweiser</i>	127	.....	.....	.....

\* Only 5 boats finished four heats



More than a thousand pleasure boats anchored at the two-mile-long log boom in Lake Washington for the Gold Cup races

JOHN VALENTINE

At start of the fourth heat, *Miss Exide* leads *Notre Dame* and *Miss Bardahl*... moments later, in the backstretch, *Exide's* engine burst into flames (Right) *Miss Lapeer* is briefly out of control as Evans points out the damage to his crew in the pits... note jagged edges by the tail

