

BIG SCENE IN SEATTLE

Unlimited hydro Miss Bardahl, growing old gracefully, took the Gold Cup to home grounds for the 57th annual classic, and copped the trophy again—for the third straight year—before 500,000 fans



Although well placed as they approached the start of Heat 3B, all but Miss Exide jumped the gun and had to run an additional lap.



Miss Bardahl, running poorly all year, blew an average of three spark plugs in each heat.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL THOMAS

On only the rarest of occasions has a sporting event drawn spectator crowds in excess of 500,000. But it happened in August in Seattle when those glamorous unlimited hydroplanes gathered on Lake Washington for the 57th running for the Gold Cup.

This is a race between the top 12 qualifiers—and to qualify, a contender must clock over 100 mph for three consecutive and continuously run laps over the three-mile closed course. Rules for the event allow as many engine changes as necessary. The winner, *Miss Bardahl*, used three engines and finished using an engine her driver, Ron Musson, doesn't like.

The race is over a three-mile course; four heats of five laps each for a total distance of 60 miles.

Saddest note of the day was the burning of *Miss Exide*. She was running third on points and leading in the final heat when she caught fire. The Coast Guard was criticized for failure to take prompt action to control the fire, but strict adherence to the rules required continuation of the heat until the driver hit the water. Not until the heat became too much for him did Bill Brow abandon ship. At that point, *Notre Dame* was on the way to victory. But the fates were against her, for in the rerun of the heat, it was the "green dragon"—*Miss Bardahl*—all the way. ⚓