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SPECIAL FEATURE FOR THE 1980 SOUTHERN "80 The Tack sets the pace



Drags

Winners of all classes on Sunday will receive valuable awards. Undoubtedly the most sought after trophy will be that for boat with the fastest outright time for the 80 kilometre event. The trophy for the boat which powers its way to this honor is the Leigh Johnson Memorial Trophy donated by Leigh's wife, Linda, and his father.

First, second and third place getters in all classes will receive trophies giving even the slowest boats an incentive to beat the clock to the finish line.

Worth winning

An added attraction for Sunday's Southern 80 is the barefoot drags championships. Object of the drag champs is for drivers to race through a specified section of the river near the boat ramp as quick as possible.

Closed

The Murray River will be closed from Torrumberry to EchUCA on Sunday. Permission from the Maritime Services Board allows the Moama Water Sports Club to close that section of river for staging the Southern 80. Casual users are excluded from that section of the river for the day. Control over the river is exercised through several patrol boats kept in constant contact by the EchUCA-Moama Club.

Last year's winner of the Southern 80 the Coleambally boat "The Tack", (above). The Tack will be back again this year, again with Reg Cowie at the controls. EchUCA's Tony Beehag observing his brother Craig skiing and Craig Arnott filling the second ski. With the exception of Craig Arnott, the team will be the same as last year's successful combination. The Tack has not been resting on its laurels since that 1979 success, but has been busy building a enviable reputation.

Reg took the rather stock-looking boat to the nationally contested Bridge to Bridge ski race last year, and turned in the fastest time for a country outboard powered boat.

Name of the game

Most of the frantic action on Sunday will come from boats with names like "Uproar", "Harada", "Moonshine", "Cookie", "Cinders", "Rebel" and "Locomotion."

These, and other expert class boats should rip through Sunday's course at remarkable rates restricted only by the 120 bends of the Murray River and the ability of skiers to stand up.

Outright speed will not worry "Cookie" as she has been clocked at 205 km/h, a speed unlikely to be achieved on Sunday because of the tight bends.

"Cookie" features a new Howard built tunnel hull with an impressive 300 plus horsepower Johnson SSS outboard providing the motion.

"Cinders" won the 1978 event and Len Retallick will be back again this year with his 351 Ford powered Seacraft wooden hulled boat keeping much bigger boats honest.

"Harada" has reputation of being a crowd pleaser and despite problems last year still holds the outright time record for the event.

Power comes for a massive 454 cubic inch engine nestled in a Shepiro Craft hull.

At the controls of Harada will be "Slack" Jack Skipper while EchUCA ski ace "Sloppy Knoppy" (Leigh Knopp) will ski with team-mate "Wave down" Webster.

Harada holds two records for the Southern 80 — the overall

On the wall of the Cowie home at Coleambally trophies verifying 1979-80 championship wins in the Victorian and New South Wales standard production out class as well as the national title.

Reg also the Victorian unlimited outboard champion with his impressive boat.

Many of the times recorded by Reg in winning what traditionally lesser classes have been better than "faster" classes.

The Tack is a boat well worth watching on Sunday people keen to see it in action will need to be early leaves Torrumberry at 9 a.m. and should be at EchUCA the hour.

fastest time, and the highest failure rate. "Uproar" is being brought down from Queensland for day and could well blitz the water with the sheer power of a supercharged 454 Chevrolet engine.

The Banana Benders may have some trouble with the water conditions and seemingly ending bends between EchUCA and Torrumberry.

"Moonshine" could be the watch as it comes to the Southern 80 as the reigning Australian champion in the six litre class. Some 40 metres be Moonshine will be the crew team in Geoff Birtles and McCormack who have a strong grip on their respective row on Sunday as the Moonshiners are predicting skiing speed 140 km/h.

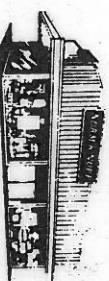
Also setting a cracking pace Sunday will be "Violator", being urged on by a 454 engine. Violator has an impressive record as do its ski team! Sherri and Trevor Stolt, a crew certainly qualifies chance for outright honors. Although the boats get in the lesser classes — they correspondingly drop off.

Some of the closest tussles the day often come in the class, which is made up of recreation skiers as against professionals of the expert

Above: The 1978 winner of the Southern 80, Len Retallick, works on his boat "Cinders" before the start of last year's trial.

Moama Water Sports Club appreciates the assistance of Mike Echo CB club, St John Ambulance, Lions, Tisdalls Winery, EchUCA Marine and the Wharfside Service station.

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