

2.8 in big ski race

Big crowds watched the finish of the Southern 80 ski race on the Murray River at Echuca on Sunday, and by turning out helped to set the seal on a good day for the organiser, Moama Water Sports Club.

Club president, Mr Barry Beehag, said yesterday that it had been hoped for a few more entries than the 28 who took part — but the success of various other aspects of the day more than made up for this.

He said that organisation had been extremely smooth, and there was talk of next year's Southern 80 being a points score event on the Victorian Water Sports Association register.

The club had also gained new members out of the event — one of its main objects — and Mr Beehag was confident that all the competitors, local and out of town, would be in it again next year.

Fastest overall finisher on the Torrumbarry-Echuca course on Sunday was "Suicide" in class 3.

Suicide burned up the course in 42.05 minutes to register a win for driver Len Retallick, observer Brian Atta and skiers Steve Bowers and Roy Turner.

For Turner, 18, it was the fourth time that he has been a winner in the race.

It was Melbourne boats which mainly dominated the day, though the locals had winners in Glastron, driven by Col Healey, in the class 1 novice section and Bantu, driven by John O'Mahoney, in class 4.

Results were: Class 1, novice: 1, Glastron, 1.12.02.

Class 1, outboards: Mercedes team Tunnel 49.14, 1; Idle Wild 1.06.19, 2; Pogo, 1.07.52, 3.

Class 2, novice: Evil, 1.08.45, 1.

Class 2, novice: Ericson, 1.06.25, 1; Aggression 1.09.18, 2; J.W. 102 1.27.58, 3.

Class 2: Mean Mach-

1977 AUST. SPEED SKIING TIT

Rough water titles into fia

BY LESTER FREEMANTLE

After a promising start with Australia's top ski racing boats in action in the men's open division, the Australian speed skiing titles were soured by continually worsening water conditions which prevailed throughout the weekend.

The titles were held on the Waranga Reservoir, Victoria, on January 29 and 30.

Weather conditions were hot and any wisp of wind would whip up the reservoir which has no natural barriers such as mountains.

It was felt after the first day of the Victorian titles was blown out at the same venue, that this was not the spot to play host to most of Australia's fastest skiers and boats.

However the decision was already made and unfortunately many Victorians worst fears were confirmed at the Australian titles.

This was a great pity for competitors from NSW, Queensland, South and West Australia had travelled long distances to be part of this event.

Officials have no control over the elements but they do determine and assess the suitability of a site.

The highlight of a disappointing weekend must surely have to be Ray Wheeler's win behind Firebird in the men's event against extremely stiff competition.

Ray ski'd immaculately as the beautiful red Haines Hunter sliced around the course.

The spectacle of this event was incredible with 30 high powered craft in action.

As Saturday progressed weather conditions became worse and with only three events completed by 3 p.m. the next event was stopped by mountainous waves.

Sydney boat Louise 'J', owned and driven by Norm Griffin, made several trips underwater crashing through waves.

All other boats encountered severe difficulties with water coming in and picking up fallen skiers.

Sunday morning provided no change in conditions and the program got under way around lunchtime and running evenings through until sunset (and beyond).

In the final event on Sunday, women's and girls', boats of the like of Firebird, Thunderbolt, Clockwork Orange and Rambler have never shown the underside of their hulls to the crowds so much before.

The site of high powered machinery spearing skyward

Competitors proved the starts and conducted

The Australian title

I only hope that thi
of easterners to make t
remember, as '77s a year
further than forward w
started at all.

The engine class ev
mirror-like conditions b
departed to return home

RESULTS — AUST

MEN: 1, Firebird, 37.29.

DIVISION 2 WOMEN

Tack, 19.33; 3, Aztec, 20.

BOYS: 1, Assassin, 33.51.

JUNIOR GIRLS:

Thunderchicken, 39.27; 3

SUB-JUNIOR BOYS

not available; 3, Impetuou

SUB-JUNIOR GIRL

not available; 3, Miss Q, ti

JUNIOR BOYS: 1,

3, Rolco III, 51.04.

WOMEN: 1, The Tul

3, Hitail, 65.16.

GIRLS: 1, Thunde

available.

DIVISION 2 MEN:

3, Harada RC, 48.52.

CLASS 1: 1, Luanlee

36.18.

CLASS 2: 1, Cowra

3, Aunty Jack, 37.10.

CLASS 3: 1, Crazy

Suicide, 33.45.5.

CLASS 4: 1, Locom

CLASS 5: 1, Stingi

available).

CLASS 6: 1, Wild Ch

3, White Night, 39.59.

CLASS 7: 1, Screw

Converter, 48.14.

