



Media Release

ALL IS SET FOR THE 2016 SOUTHERN 80

31ST JANUARY 2016

The Beechworth Bakery Baker's Blitz is the main race on the Saturday afternoon of the 2016 Southern 80. This year's event, on February 12th, 13th & 14th, is no exception!

Since last year's winner, Hellrazor, announced their retirement from competitive Water Ski Racing in October, it has left the field wide open for a 'new' face to be crowned the winner of the 2016 Southern 80. They will then adorn the range of merchandise, posters and pictures for the next year.

In the Beechworth Bakeries' Bakers Blitz, six (6) Superclass boats are aiming for the pole position in the Sunday afternoon of racing, leaving at 2 minutes apart, and starting at 2pm.

Leading the Superclass boats is Mercury Force, who placed second outright last year. Don Gulley will drive his 1350 HP, Force hull, down the course, hoping to better his best time of 6.38, which was set last year. Assisting him in the boat is experienced observer Kevin Boylan, and Jake Tegart & Kristofer Knights will be doing the skiing out the back.

Sapphire is the second away. The boat which won the 2015 Barrie Beehag under the name Blazen, is hoping the new paint work will provide luck in bettering their best time on the Beechworth Bakery Bakers Blitz course, of 6:49, set in 2015. Family pride will come into play with the tussle between Sapphire and Merc Force, where skier Ben Gulley will be chasing his Uncle Don down the river. The other skier in the Sapphire crew is Echuca local, Lloyd Woolman, with Tim Pickford as the driver of Sapphire and Chris Gelle observing.

Third boat away over the 16 kilometre course from Five Mile Reserve to Victoria Park Boat Ramp is 99 Psycho Clowns. They had an engine malfunction at the Australian Titles, which has hampered the preparation for this team in the lead up to the race. They are a crowd favourite with Jessica Pearse, the only female driver in Superclass, they are looking to better their time from 2015 which was 6:45. Observer Daniel McMahon, and skiers Codie Rigg and Steve Berry are looking for victory.

Fourth boat away an Echuca boat – The Mistress, with experienced Southern 80 competitor Leo Welch steering the 510 HP Force hull boat down the 124+ bends of the river. Leo won the race outright in 1989 & 1990, observing in the boat Island Cooler, and is thirsty for a win as a driver. In the boat is Moama observer Brian Griffin. Skiers are locals Dylan Stevenson and Zac Welch, and they will be looking to better their time of 6:48 set last year.

Superman is the fifth boat away, with Dubbo driver Darren McGuire leading the Force boat down the river. The Superman team have had a fantastic season, so far winning the Ted Hurley Classic at Wentworth, and the Bridge to Bridge on the Hawkesbury river in Sydney. They will be looking to better their time from last year of 6:52. Brett Armstrong is the experienced observer with the two Daniels (Cotton & Graziano) doing the skiing.

For further information regarding this media release please contact

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2015 Club Marine Southern 80

6th, 7th, 8th February 2015

The last Superclass boat away is Stinga. Experienced driver Greg Houston is steering the boat hoping to beat the best time his team has done the course, in 2003 with 6:53. Danny Cropper is the observer, and knows the course well as he has won the event twice. Skiers behind the boat are Jack Houston and Raymond Ball.

Following the Superclass boats there are 29 boats in the President's Dash, with Elm Street to lead the field. These boats are from a mixture of classes including Unlimited, 6 Litre, 8 Litre. Together the Beechworth Bakery Baker's Blitz and the Presidents Dash are showcasing the top 35 teams competing in the 2016 Southern 80

Some interesting facts about the Superclass field:

- All boat hulls are Force hulls, with Superman being the larger of the hulls
- The following competitors have previously won the Southern 80 multiple times
 - Chris Gelle (2008, 2007) both as a skier – observing in Sapphire
 - Kevin Boylan (1987 as a skier and 2007 as an observer) – observing in Merc Force
 - Danny Cropper (1997, 1988) as a skier – observing in Stinga
 - Leo Welch (1989, 1990) as an observer – driving The Mistres
- Greg Houston (driver Stinga), Kevin Boylan (observer Merc Force), Chris Gelle (observer Sapphire) all were part of the Stinga team which won the race outright in 2007.
- All teams are running leg boats (Inboard motor, with and outboard , which steers the boat)
- Jessica Pearse driver of 99 Psycho clowns is the only female driver to compete in Superclass and is the youngest at 27 years of age.

The best place to watch these boats come home is from the Victoria Park Boat Ramp. Entry is \$35 for a weekend and \$25 per day. Here, a range of food and drinks are available to be purchased, along with trade displays. Tickets can be pre-purchased via www.southern80.com.au or at the gate on the day. Bring along your chairs, picnic rug for a great family day.

For further information about the event go to www.southern80.com.au or contact Moama Water Sports Club 03 54806754