

Many hot boats chase

Len Ratallick's "Cinders" is favoured to win the 1981 Southern 80 on Sunday, but plenty of other boats are in with a chance too.

elusive 40 minute barrier.

Cinders finished out-right second in last year's ski trial over the 80 kilometre Murray River course from Torrumbarry to Echuca. Powered by a 351 Ford and having drawn the first starting position Cinders will give first place a shake for sure.

The only boat that beat Ratallick last year — Barry Tudor's Violator — will not be racing.

Violator set a new record time for the course in 40 minutes 33 seconds.

This year boats will be working to break the

Len's 'Cinders'

Boort, also with 454 power. Both boats are capable of speeds around 150 kmh, or 90 mph.

Race organiser Barry Beehag, "Locomotion" is another boat to watch out for.

The black and white chequered boat has a 427 fuel injected Chev engine and is owned by Peter Waterhouse of Melbourne.

Mr Beehag is very pleased with the number and quality of entries for Sunday's ski race.

Boats entered range from the 150 kmh Jaws to 70 kmh family boats. Skiers range from novices who've never raced before to State

champions from as far away as South Australia, northern NSW and Queensland. One Brisbane skier is flying down to race in the Southern 80.

An Echuca lad Aaron Johnson will have the distinction of being youngest competitor in the event. Aaron is only six years old.

He is the son of the late Leigh Johnson — a state speed ski champion. Aaron will ski behind local boat "Seeyah" owned by Geoff Sands.

Moama Water Sports Club, which runs the Southern 80, will honor Leigh this year with a special trophy. The boat to record fastest time in the marathon will win the

Leigh Johnson Memorial trophy.

Not quite as young as Aaron Johnson, but still a keen little competitor is 12 year old Link Kelly.

Link will ski behind his father Bill's boat "Inky". He recently placed second for the Australian Under 13 speed ski title, in Queensland.

Summing up the factors which will divide winners from also-rans on Sunday, Barry Beehag says speed skiing requires an all round team effort.

A powerful boat, mechanical reliability, an experienced driver, and skiers with stamina and concentration are the main requirements.

Race promises thrilling end

A good crowd is expected at the Echuca boat ramp on Sunday to witness the exciting Southern 80 ski trial finish.

There have been a record 105 boats entered for the event — the 16th of its kind on the Murray between Torrumbarry and Echuca.

Moama Water Sports club organisers say spectators will see some thrilling sights at the finish line from 9.30 am into the early afternoon.

First boat away at Torrumbarry is "Cinders" which should complete the 80 kilometres in around 40 minutes.

Soon after 9.30 a.m. crowds will see the hot craft flash past the chequered flag at speeds

around 150 kmh — with two skiers in tow.

Boaters won't be allowed on the race stretch of river between 8am and 4pm.

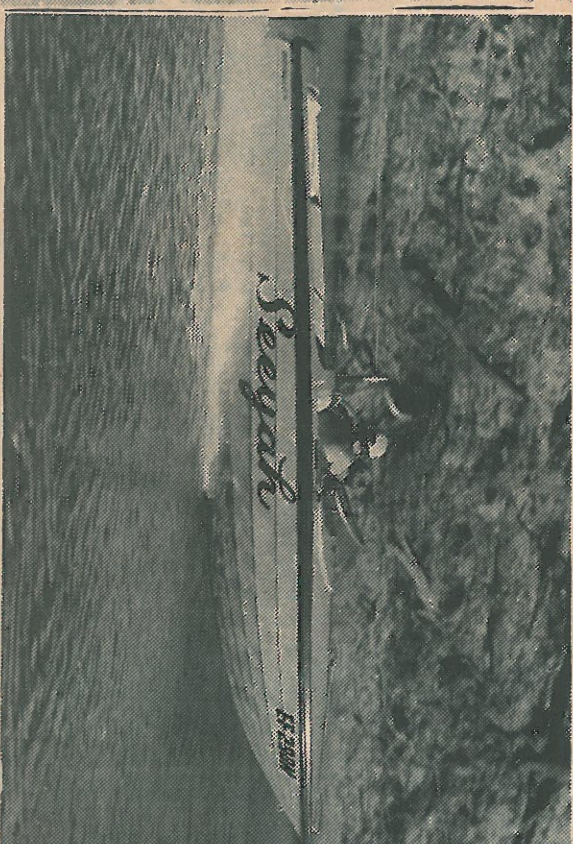
Admission to the boat ramp viewing terraces is free.

Echuca and Moama Apex clubs will provide plenty of food and drink for spectators, who are asked to park cars away from the boat ramp area.

After the 105 boats have finished the race, "barefoot drags" will probably take place.

Barefoot skiers chip in a fee each and the winner takes all.

Right — Winner of last year's Southern 80 "Violator" won't be racing this year, so Len Ratallick's "Cinders" has a good chance. He'll be trying to crack the 40 minute barrier, almost chased by "Cinders".



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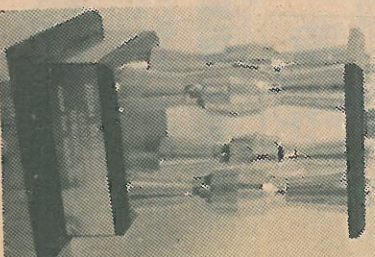
Local boaters out in force

Seventeen local boats will be in the field of 105 due to compete for \$3000 worth of prizes in the Southern 80 on Sunday.

Most of these will be crewed by locals and they'll tow local skiers. Local boats to look out for on Sunday include Ross Bulley's "Beautiful Noise", Peter Whitten's "Ozone", Geoff Connell's "Dr Hook" and Bill O'Brien's "Invader".

Others are — Cigarette (K. Wilson), Strugler (Leon Sharp), Cris (Bill Cakebread), Midnight (Tony Atkinson), Donzi (Gordon Rickards), Snatch 11 (Gary Thorne), Smokey (Harley Nichols), Orange (Des O'Reilly), Gilllight (Barry Grooves), Invader (Bill Simons), Seeyah (Graham Trist), Damm (Dennis O'Neill) and Kangaroo (Geoff Sands).

Barry Grooves is the



• The Leigh Johnson Memorial Trophy.