

STREET SCENE

Inside **S²**

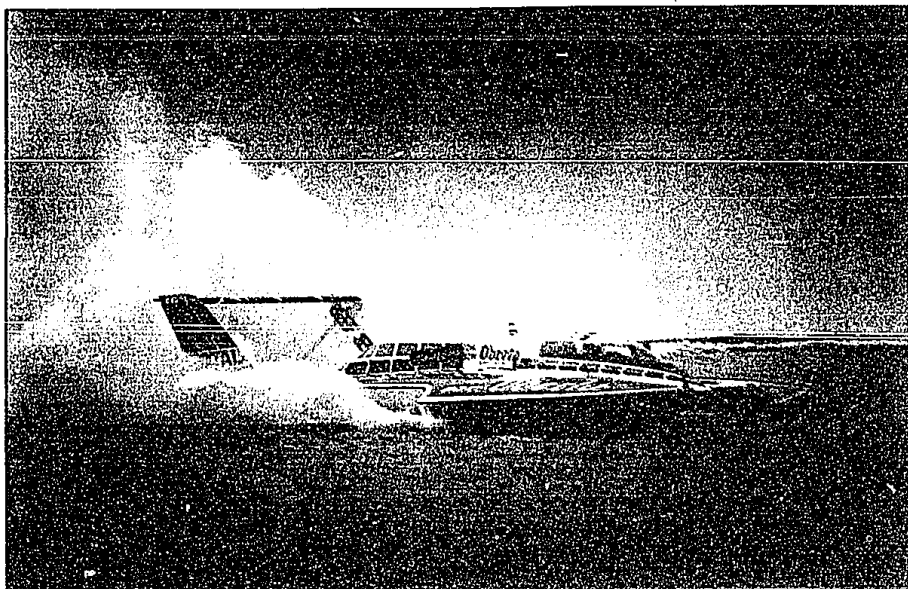
Punt, pass and kick

The eyes of the world have turned to Rome, Italy, and the focus of attention this month isn't the Pope. It's the monthlong round robin World Cup Soccer Tournament and for once, the U.S. team, not to mention a few locals, will be there. For more about the competition, see Page 6D.

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★10



The throttle wide open, the recognizable rooster creates a fine mist behind the Oh Boy! Oberto unlimited hydroplane.

ROBERT PETERS



BILL HANSEN

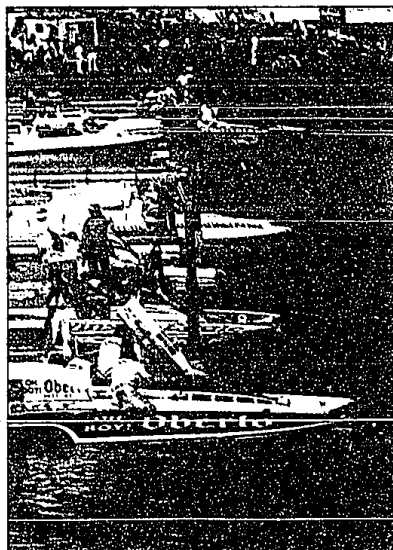
Mark Tate reached a goal this year — racing an unlimited hydroplane — and when the Detroit APBA Budweiser Gold Cup kicks off this weekend, he'll be there, driving the Oh Boy! Oberto hydroplane.

Hydroplanes show 'spirit'

By Pat Schutte
staff writer

In what has come to be known as the "Superbowl" of hydroplane racing, Detroit is set to host its 75th anniversary Detroit American Power Boat Association Budweiser Gold Cup hydroplane race Thursday-Sunday, June 7-10, on the Detroit River — off Jefferson Avenue between Burns and Marquette Drive.

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The protective canopy elevated, the pit crew of the Oh Boy! Oberto hydroplane works gets the boat ready for racing.

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Oh Boy! Racing for gold

By Pat Schutte
staff writer

Mark Tate of Canton Township has finally made it. Like a baseball player patiently moving up through the minor leagues and finally getting that chance to play in the "big show," Tate has earned the right to sit on the porch with the big dogs of his sport.

Since age 13, Tate has been racing power boats . . . with a well-documented level of success.

From a \$1,500, nine-foot long, five-horsepower, J-Stock Outboard Hydroplane, capable of speeds around 30 mph, Tate, under the careful tutelage of his racing family — father Joe Tate Jr. and grandfather Joe Tate Sr. — began weaving his way up through the ranks, leaving shattered records and opposing boats in his wake.

In 1979, Tate was voted the Marine Prop "Rider of the Year." In 1981, Tate broke the 850 cc five-mile competition record in St. Petersburg, Fla., by two mph.

That year he was also elected to the American Power Boat Association Inboard Hall of Fame. The following year he set another record in the five-mile competition record in the 1200 cc class.

And his most impressive record to date, in 1988 Tate was the first driver ever to qualify for the national finals in four different classes.

Yet, with all of his trophies, titles and records, Tate had not reached his goal, a goal that he has always had in the back of his mind — to drive one of those big guns, to race an unlimited hydroplane.

WELL, WHAT a coincidence. As the Detroit APBA Budweiser Gold Cup gets ready to celebrate 75 years of racing on the Detroit River this weekend, guess who's entered as the driver of the Oh Boy! Oberto unlimited hydroplane?

Here's a hint. Last year's Oh Boy! Oberto driver, George Woods, has since taken the helm of the Mr. Pringles boat. One guess, please.

Nice choice! Mark Tate, all of 30 years old, but having raced for 17 of those 30 years, will pilot the 6,000-pound, twin WWII aircraft engine, 2,600-horsepower, 200 mph-plus, Oh Boy! Oberto hydroplane on the APBA unlimited hydroplane circuit this summer.

And oh boy, is this self-employed industrial coatings expert fired up about it!

"I'm excited, but not very nervous . . . yet," said Tate a week before the first race of the season in Miami. "This is a goal that I have worked many, many years for."

The jump from the Grand Prix boats that Tate has driven, off and on since 1983, to the unlimited boats should be as natural as the progression from the little outboards he used to drive before he got into the in-board classes. Should be . . .

"We're talking about a boat that weighs almost two tons more, generates 1,400 more horses, and travels on the average of 60 mph faster," said Tate on the difference between a Grand Prix hydroplane and an unlimited hydroplane. "The trick will be to just relate to this and drive the horse to weight ratio accordingly."

THE GRAND Prix boats that race in the Detroit River run for the Silver Cup title, versus the unlimiteds that run for the Gold Cup title.

Tate's ready. The owner of Oh Boy! Oberto, Jim Harvey, chose Tate out of a field of other drivers with more unlimited experience (Tate has yet to drive one).

Mental Floss

by JUDGE NILSSON

To be or not be: Dave Barry at 40

By Jill Hamilton
special writer

Pulitzer Prize winning humorist Dave Barry was at Borders Book Shop in Novi recently to sign his latest book, "Dave Barry Turns 40." When he got to the store, he was the subject of immediate attention. A few clerks fawned over him, a couple of patrons shyly introduced themselves and legions of the press hounded him — the Observer & Eccentric and the Novi News, at least. Barry managed to break away for a few minutes to talk about his job as what he calls "a writer of soporific humor."

Q: How do you react to all this attention?
Barry: Where people recognize me is in Miami because my picture's in the paper. When we go out to dinner, sometimes people will come over or

buy me a beer — which is the real reason I got into journalism in the first place.

The absolute height of wilderness for an author on a book tour is equivalent to what would happen if you parachuted a reasonably low level rock star into a nearly vacant Alaskan village. Really famous writer — I'm not saying I'm one because I'm not — but a really, really famous writer would usually get a lot less attention walking through an airport than the local weather person would.

Newspaper fame is a low-level kind of fame — not that I'm complaining. I can't imagine what it would be like to be really, really well-known and have people saying, "Look! He's having creamy Italian dressing!"

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