

Regatta Review

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NATE BROWN TAKES CONTROVERSIAL VICTORY IN THE CHRYSLER/JEEP SUPERSTORES DETROIT APBA GOLD CUP

DETROIT, MICHIGAN (July 18, 2004) - Approximately one hour after Dave Villwock drove Joe Little's Miss Budweiser to an apparent victory in the winner-take-all final heat of the the 2004 Chrysler/Jeep Superstores Detroit APBA Gold Cup win on the Detroit River, race officials announced that Villwock had been disqualified for infractions that occurred before the start of the race. Nate Brown, driver of the U-10 Miss Detroit Yacht Club was declared the winner.

Director of Competition Rick Sandstrom explained that a referee in a helicopter above the first turn called the infraction as the boats were establishing their racing lanes before the start of the final heat, but officials wanted to review the video taken of the incident before announcing the disqualification.

Sandstrom said there were two lane infractions by Villwock, the first occurring as the field was forming three quarters of a lap before the start. Sandstrom stated that the U-16, Miss Elam Plus, driven by Terry Troxell, had established lane two at the apex of the turn, with JW Meyers in the U-8 Llumar Window Film running in lane one. "The U-1 (Villwock) came over into lane 2, striking the U-16," explained Sandstrom. "The U-1 then moved back out into lane 3, which left room for the U-16 to recover and come up between boats and reestablish its lane. The U-1 then accelerated ahead of the U-16 and turned left a second time, pushing the U-16 over into the U-8."

Sandstrom said the video replay clearly confirmed the helicopter referee's original call, and he was forced to make the disqualification. What would have been Villwock's sixth Gold Cup instead became the first for veteran driver Nate Brown of Preston, Washington, and his race team, the USA Racing Partners of Las Vegas. Second place was awarded to Steve David of Lighthouse Point, Florida, driver of the Oh Boy! Oberto. Troxell finished third in a damaged Miss Elam Plus, and Meyers boat failed to finish after being damaged during the pre-race collision.

The delayed victory announcement was met with disbelief by winning owner Kim Gregory, who gathered himself to say, "This is not the way I would prefer to win a Gold Cup, but the rules are in place for a very good reason. I respect the Hydro-Prop officials for making the correct call in a very difficult and controversial situation."

As the U-10 team got word of the referee's decision, bedlam broke loose in their pit area. Brown emerged from the team's transporter to hoist the 100-year-old cup above his head. He was joined in the celebration by Mike Weber, regular driver of the Miss DYC, who was sidelined by back injuries suffered 2 weeks ago in Madison, Indiana.

An emotional Brown said, "It should have been Mike in the boat, but I'll take it. Having my name on the Gold Cup after all the years I have spent racing boats is a dream come true. This team worked very hard and brought this boat a long ways this weekend. I was on Mark Tate's team when we won the Gold Cup 14 years ago, and our team manager told us then how special it was. Well, look at me now. And it is incredibly special."

Villwock and Budweiser team owner Joe Little immediately filed a protest, and asked that the American Powerboat Association review the call. Villwock told reporters and officials that the move he made was a legal one, which he and other drivers had used before.

Final Standings: Chrysler/Jeep Superstores Detroit APBA Gold Cup:

Place / Driver Boat Average MPH

1. Nate Brown Miss DYC 141.195
 2. Steve David Oh Boy! Oberto 136.544
 3. Terry Troxell Miss Elam Plus 126.425
 4. Greg Hopp Miss Chrysler/Jeep 122.646
- J.W. Meyers Llumar Window Film (DNF)
Dave Villwock Miss Budweiser Disqualified

O'Doul's High Point World Championship Points after two events:

Boat O'Doul's High Points

1. U-6 Miss Elam Plus 273
2. U-1 Miss Budweiser 270
3. U-10 Miss DYC 240
4. U-16 Miss Elam Plus 232
5. U-100 Al Deeby Dodge 220
6. U-8 Llumar Window Film 203
7. U-2 Miss Chrysler/Jeep 113 (tie)
7. U-25 Bell Forklift 113 (tie)

The Chrysler/Jeep Superstores Detroit APBA Gold Cup will be televised on the Speed Channel on Sunday, August 1 at 5:00 pm Eastern Daylight Time.

MISS BUDWEISER PRESS RELEASE REGARDING DISQUALIFICATION

Joe Little and the Miss Budweiser team appeal Hydro-Prop decision to disqualify the team after Dave Villwock drove to victory on the Detroit River.

DETROIT, July 18, 2004 -- In an unusual event, the Miss Budweiser team was disqualified here today after winning the APBA Gold Cup on the Detroit River. Hydro-Prop officials allege that Dave Villwock, driver of the Miss Budweiser made contact with the U-16 boat driven by Terry Troxell prior to the start of the race as the drivers worked to score up in lanes.

The team was presented the APBA Gold Cup, the team's 15th and Dave Villwock's sixth after the race but was then notified by Hydro-Prop official Rick Sandstrom almost an hour after race completion that Hydro-Prop decided to disqualify the Miss Budweiser team, and then gave the trophy to second place U-10 team.

Joe Little, president of Hydroplanes, Inc., owner of the Miss Budweiser team along with Villwock forged a written appeal to the American Power Boat Association (APBA). Tom D'Eath of the Detroit River Regatta Association, organizing body of the Detroit Gold Cup race, accepted the appeal on behalf of the APBA and will present the appeal for review to the appropriate individuals within the APBA.

"This is an unbelievable decision by the sanctioning body," said Joe Little, president of Hydroplanes, Inc. "I think it is very unfortunate that the Miss Budweiser team and fans have been robbed of a 15th and final Gold Cup today in our final year of competition. We filed our formal appeal with APBA regarding the decision to disqualify the team. This is not the way the 100th Anniversary of the Gold Cup should be celebrated and we hope after the appeal process that the cup will be restored to team."

TOM D'EATH JOINS HYDROPROP TO MANAGE RACE OPERATIONS NEWS FROM THE DAY BEFORE THE GOLD CUP FINAL

DETROIT, July 17 - Gary Garbrecht, Chairman of Hydro-Prop, Inc. announced today that 60 year-old Tom D'Eath of Sarasota, Florida will join Hydro-Prop as a partner and Chief Operating Officer. D'Eath will assume responsibility for the day to day race operation of the Budweiser Unlimited Hydroplane Series as of Monday, July 19, 2004 the day after completion of the 2004 Chrysler Jeep Superstores APBA Gold Cup race in Detroit.

In 2003, D'Eath formed the Detroit River Regatta Association and resurrected an ailing Gold Cup, staging that years race in an amazing six weeks. As a driver Tom D'Eath won three Gold Cups, first in 1976 driving George Simon's Miss U.S. in his native Detroit. In 1989 and 1990 he drove Bernie Little's Miss Budweiser to victory for the legendary owner. Prior to 2003, D'Eath was instrumental in establishing the American Power Boat Association's Vintage and Historic category and overseeing it through tremendous growth in it's early years. APBA President Steve Hearn said, "The APBA is very excited to have Hydro-Prop and Tom D'Eath partnering in a joint effort to continue the rich tradition of Unlimited Hydroplane racing in North America. His work with our Vintage Category as well as at the APBA Gold Cup here in Detroit has proven that he is not only one of our all- time great boat racers but an excellent administrator and promoter as well."

Kim Gregory of the USA Racing Partners, owner of the U-10 unlimited hydroplane called the news "Just great. Tom is one of the most respected guys in the sport." Garbrecht emphasized D'Eath will have full autonomy in dealing with new and existing race sites, officials and other logistics and added, "We think having a person with his background, experience and reputation handling Hydro-Prop operations will be very positive for all of us including race sites, teams and officials." D'Eath said he looks forward to the challenge and said, "I think I know enough of all sides of the sport to make a positive contribution and that's

what I'll try to do. My goal will be to make the APBA's premier class all it can be."

- Brian Reed - DRRA Volunteer