

OPFA

OFFSHORE POWERBOAT ASSOCIATION

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799 Route 70, Brick, NJ 08723
(908) 910-8025

Mothers Treated to OPA's Season Opener

The Offshore Powerboat Association (OPA) enjoyed the start of their scheduled eight race season in picturesque Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey for the first annual Lake Hopatcong Grand Prix presented by Broadco Restoration. After achieving numerous championships as a throttle man, Jay Muller became Race Promoter Extraordinaire and invited the offshore boat racing world to his back yard. With most race courses being four to five miles in lap length, Jay wanted to put a twist and shortened the course to 2.3 miles which is similar to the size of the courses that the 200mph Unlimited Hydroplanes compete on. This proved to be brilliant as the racers had no margin of error as yes the amount of laps almost tripled and more importantly from the spectator perspective, it was non-stop action, while being able to see the whole course from your seat. Everyone assumes that a race on a lake will be calm and for the better part it is, however add a 2.3 short course and ten boats per race, what you have is what is called in the offshore boat racing world a "washing machine". On most ocean courses racers can establish a rhythm and even though the ocean is still not for the faint of heart, a "washing machine" effect creates total water confusion which prevents any form for rhythm which adds to the diversity and challenge of the OPA sites on the schedule.



Boats started arriving on Monday and filed in all the way into the wee hours just prior to the main event. On Saturday, the teams took to the waters for testing, which unfortunately had to be shortened by an almost monsoon like rainstorm for three hours. The action didn't stop there as several of the race haulers started sinking in the "dry" pits and then the show of getting them unstuck ensued.



Sunday morning came and the sun was shining bright. Over 1000 spectators showed up to the Lake Forest Yacht Club crowding along the shoreline to get a glimpse of this new show on Lake Hopatcong and par for the course, the racers did not disappoint. At noon, Class 5 & 6 took to the course. The exciting news from Class 6 coming into the season was that the Smith Brothers/CRC team had upped the ante and built a higher horsepower motor that was more commiserate to the rest of the competitors. They came out and settled into 2nd place, but unfortunately an ignition issue transpired on the third lap which forced them to retire and gave them a 6th place finish. Repeat Offender emerged as the winner for Class 6. In Class 5, it was a quiet offseason for the better part with the exception of defending World Champion, Mighty Macs being sold to a new team, Cisco. New owner Kevin Congdon made one of the best moves for his new team by retaining former owner and throttleman; "Fast" Eddie Simmons and they went out and led from start to finish taking the win.



Race 2 provided the ever entertaining Super Stock class with Talbot Excavating emerging as the victor. Class 3 became a battle of attrition and not necessarily who could navigate the tricky course layout. Bull on the Beach was the last boat standing and achieved 1st place. Velocity Racing led from start to finish running away with the Class 4 victory over defending National Champion and World Champion R&S Racing/Twin Screws Boatwear.



The finale for the day consisted of the Extreme, SVL, and Class 1. The SVL class never disappoints as over time these late 90's hulls have proven to be some of the most reliable rock solid boats competing today. Tug It was joined by guest driver Wil Ros in their new to them rig which formerly was campaigned as Buccaneer Pawn. As tough as spinning one of these machines out is, Wil has almost become the master and he has it down to such a science that he can spin, not have any damage, and continue on through the duration of the race. Will wasn't alone this weekend as three other boats were able to manage the spin out, two in practice and Pirate Racing in the race with Pirate being able to accomplish the rare spin and win feat that is rarely ever seen. The Extreme class was the most anticipated race of the weekend as you had two new competitors in the class that reaches the speed of 134.9 mph. Phoenixparts.com, the defending Super Cat Light class National and World Champion, pulled their Mercury Racing 525's and decided to go with larger horsepower and move into this class. Newcomer Broadco Restoration acquired the former "Speed Racer" MTI. The build-up came to a screeching halt as during testing Broadco established some mechanical gremlins and was unable to debut, but was able to bring the Broadco/JEM Motorsports Class 1 entry and move it into the Extreme class to compete which allowed the ever so "Evil" one, Ed Smith, to take the victory in Class 1 with his team Cleveland Construction. Broadco/JEM was able to keep it close in the beginning stages of the race, however as the race went on, Phoenixparts.com was able to take a commanding lead and hold on for the victory.

NEXT RACE: HERITAGE COAST GRAND PRIX in East Tawas, Michigan

For the complete results and more info about OPA Racing go to: www.oparacing.org

Written by Dee Ungarten

Photos provided by Lucididee Fast Boats

