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INTERNATIONAL HARMSWORTH TROPHY RACE

JOHN WARD TROPHY RACE
PRINCE EDWARD GOLD CUP RACE



AUGUST 5, 6, 7, 8, 1961
PICTON, ONTARIO, CANADA

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How Races Are Run

On the north side of that old-time landmark, the 100-year-old barn on the waterfront at Cole's farm, you will see mounted a large six-foot clock with a yellow face. It is clearly visible for a long distance up the Reach and by this clock the drivers in all races will take their time of starting.

Here is how it all works.

At five minutes before the announced time of start of any heat of racing a gun will be fired from the starter's "barge" located on a gallery behind the clock. At this signal a red flag will be raised on the gallery, and over the top of the clock one of five "balls" perched there will be dropped to indicate there are four minutes left before the one minute starting gun. At the end of each minute thereafter a ball will drop until only sixty seconds remain before the start of the event.

At this point the boats are on the course and are now, or should be, up beyond reen Point, manoeuvring for position before making their run down to the starting line. The one minute gun is fired. The red flag is lowered and a white flag takes its place, and a black shadow begins to move over the yellow face of the clock. It is run by an electric motor and geared to move at a rate to complete the "black-out" of the yellow clock face in exactly sixty seconds from the firing of the one minute gun.

This is the instant of the official start. The boats must not pass over that starting line from the firing of the one minute gun until the clock is blacked out to "zero". If they do so they will be disqualified.

But there is a lot of unseen activity going on during this time on the starter's barge. Two men are in charge of the clock. One with a pre-tested Bulova sports time of 100th second accuracy. He calls off each second of that last sixty as the clock is blacked-out. In a second the clock can be switched to manual operation if any mechanical failure takes place. As the starter tolls off the seconds, the referee takes a position along the line of start, scorers become alert, and the chief timer takes hold of a lever that will start a bank of five Bulova sports timers on his timing board with the squeeze of his thumb when the first fair boat crosses the starting line.

Only the referee calls the start fair or otherwise and in his judgement may disqualify boats for crossing the line before the time of the official start. Should, in his opinion, fifty or more percent of the field be over the line ahead of the gun, he may recall the boats for a second start. Watch the action from the starter, if you will. If he raises the red flag again at the fall of the white flag at the start, the field is going to be recalled. When all the boats are in position again to start, the white flag will go up, the gun will be fired again, and the clock will be re-set in motion. This time, however, all boats that beat the gun will be disqualified. Yes, and the referee can disqualify every boat in the heat if in his judgement it is proper to do so. This has happened!

As each boat finishes a three mile lap, scorers record the boat's number on special score pads designed for this purpose. In the running of the Harmsworth races timers assisting the chief timer will record the elapsed time of each boat to cover the



FLAGMAN IN ACTION

lap distance. Others will quickly convert these times into miles-an-hour speeds, transfer the figures to a press information crew who will run off the information on a Ditto machine loaned by the Ditto office in Belleville and distribute the information sheets to the reporters, radio and TV men in a matter of minutes.

There are no "sleepers" on the starter's barge. Everybody has his own job to do. For instance the patrol craft control centre with radio communication to each boat operates from the gallery on the barn. Patrol craft at each turn of the course check for buoy cutting - all buoys must be passed on the driver's left hand. Any infractions are immediately relayed to the control centre and reported to the referee.

Accidents are prepared for in every possible way. If a driver is thrown into the water, all boats detailed for rescue work are on the alert. The boat nearest the mishap will proceed slowly to the spot. Aboard the "Mona", anchored with the RCAF air-sea-rescue boat alongside, is Doctor B. Willensky of Toronto, rear commodore of the CBF. Should the lack of a signal from the driver in the water indicate the possibility of injury, the Doctor will leave the Mona aboard a fast patrol craft and be at the driver's side in a matter of seconds.

A specially-designed stretcher will take the injured driver back to the Mona, or the RCAF craft, which has a service doctor and nurse aboard. If necessary the driver could be flown to Trenton Air Base by a

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helicopter that is on stand-by duty and then flown by plane to Toronto or Kingston for any specialized hospital treatment.

Smoke bombs will be thrown from all patrol craft on a signal from the referee to stop the race in the event of driver injury. This is to safeguard and effect speedy aid to the driver involved. If there is an upset with evidence that the driver is unharmed, the starter may raise a red flag and a yellow flag. This warns the other drivers to slow down, maintain their position, keep a sharp lookout for an overturned boat, until they are signalled to begin racing again.

They say that it takes five men behind an army to keep one soldier fighting. And in boat racing it takes a lot of work of many volunteers to ensure the safe and proper operations of a boat race. And it all began back as far as last January when, accompanied by a surveyor, members of the Prince Edward Yacht Club trudged over the ice on Long Reach to measure and lay marks for the present three-mile course. Then a few weeks ago the same committee began construction of the buoys seen on the course. The material used is a special plastic foam made by Courtaulds Moulded Products of Cornwall.

Assisting somewhere in the race area on land or water are Army units, RCMP units, Boy Scouts, Provincial Police, and a special detachment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police with a fleet of boats for course patrol of spectator craft. The "pick-up" patrol boats in the centre of the course are loaned by Canadian boat manufacturers and are manned by their personnel.

A green flag displayed by the starter indicates to a driver that he has one more lap to go to complete the race. Checkered flag is the finish flag. Note that only the winner gets a gun at the race finish, but all boats are shown the checkered flag as they come across the finish line. A black flag is used to clear the course and send all boats back to the pits. A yellow flag denotes postponement of the race.

And *that's* how the races are run!

—A. Finlay Ross