

dash wheel sprint · SOMBC hosts race

By Gerry Harvieux

Members of the Southern Ontario Model Boat Club hosted 23 racers Sunday for the Dash Wheel Sprint, the first officially sanctioned race to be held in Tilbury at Northside Park.

“The thing that was significant to me was that all the competitors commented on the park and the pond, they all think it’s a fabulous location and a great spot for future events,” said SOMBC president Tony Jacuzzi. “This was the first and most junior in scope of the races we hope to have.”

While many of the racers themselves refer to their craft as “toy boats”, there’s little about them that would leave a spectator with an image of a child’s play thing. The craftsmanship, engineering and competitive nature of the racers is evident at every turn.

“Some guys are real craftsmen. A lot of the boats you saw today were nothing more than sheets of plywood in a modeler’s shop at some point,” Jacuzzi said. “Other guys like to race and are ultra competitive and there are others who are a combination of both.”

And at speeds approaching 70 mph, these boats can be tough to control. Finding the balance between speed and stability is the key.

“That’s why we practice,” Jacuzzi said. “Some guys might say their boat will do 80 mph, but it’s to get it to do that on a course with six other boats, it’s a lot different during an actual race. Sometimes it’s not the fastest boat but the best handling.”



Tilbury Times photos: Gerry Harvieux
 Clockwise from top: 1. Bill Green of Windsor, winner of the Gas Thunderboat Class in the pits before the race. 2. Kerry Norton from the Thames Valley Model Boat club (London) launching the 1/8 scale nitro powered "Miss Bud". 3. Attention to detail is evident in every boat in the competition. 4. Speeds reached close to 70 mph Sunday. 5. Bert Dygert and Chuck Adams from Michigan and Mike Menter from Buffalo, New York on the drivers stand. 6. Ron Mitchell and Gary Iles, both members of the SOMBC in the retrieve boat. It's not a good sign when your boat comes out of the water in more than one piece.

