



Irisher McCarthy won season opener in first open race in brand new boat

## COOK, BROWN, U.S.' BEST IN '79

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after reading a story about Don Aronow in a boating magazine.

Using a pair of bored-out big cube (497 c.i.) blocks put together by the little known Mike McNamara-John Betts engine team, that churned out a booming 750 horses each coupled to MerCruiser outdrives, "Top Banana" averaged 72 mph in the event off Newport Beach, California.

The race got off to a nostalgic start as actor John Wayne waved to the fleet as it passed his home on the waterway. Wayne had been named the official starter for the race and had managed to visit the docks the day before despite being in the final stages of terminal cancer.

Veteran ocean racer, sportsman-industrialist Bob Nordskog and his crewman Norm Teague were tossed in the ocean when Nordskog's 38' Scarab "Skyhawks" did a triple gyration at 80 mph. Both escaped serious injury.

The only boat that gave McCarthy's "Top Banana" a testing was "Ajac Hawk", a 37.5' prototype hull from the famed Cigarette Racing Team shops in Florida. Driven by the 1978 Rookie of the Year, Jerry Jacoby of Old Westbury, N.Y., "Ajac Hawk" trailed "Top Banana" home by only one minute!

"Top Banana's" crew was throttleman Paul Lesniewski of Stonington, Ct., and navigator Ron Morrison of Warwick.

Defending Bushmills champion Joey

Ippolito of Hallandale, Fla., was fifth in the Bernie Little owned 38' Scarab "Michelob Light". Former world champion Betty Cook of Newport Beach, took third in her 38' Scarab "Kaama".

Both Ippolito and former two-time U.S. champion Joel Halpern in the Cobra "Beep Beep" lost time when they stopped to render assistance to "Skyhawk's" crew. A single open Class II hull, the 29' "Scarab" driven by Ron Cain of Marina del Rey, Calif. also finished, the only time a Class II entry would all season.

The overall and modified winner in the three class combined performance division of the 43-boat battle was Ft. Lauderdale's 41 year old Harry Roth, whose modified 32' Cobra "Harry O" was fashioned by Halpern's Hollywood, Florida boatyard. "Harry O" turned in an impressive 66.5 mph average using a twin set of toyed-with 450 hp MerCruisers. The performance classes ran on a shorter, 102 mile course. It was Roth's third overall win . . . the prior two coming at the tail end of '78.

1978 national overall performance and production class winner Bill Gazell of Jackson, N.J., won that division in his 30' Sutphen "Great Adventure" and Palos Verdes, Calif.'s Art Kaiser, was the fastest sports class driver in his 28' Cigarette "Impaction" using two 500 hp MerCruisers.

*Bushmills Grand Prix, (205 miles) Newport Beach, California, March 17, 43 starters - 24 finishers, Open Class Winner Charlie McCarthy, Warwick, R.I., "Top Banana", prototype Jean*

*Claude Simon design, 2/750 hp McNamara-Betts MerCruisers. Average speed - 72 mph. Performance Class overall - Harry Roth, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., "Harry O" 32' Cobra. 2/450 hp MerCruisers. Average Speed - 66.5 mph for 102 miles. Production Class - Bill Gazell, Jackson, N.J., "Great Adventure", 30' Sutphen, 2/350 hp MerCruisers. Modified class - Harry Roth, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. "Harry O", 32' Cobra, 2/450 hp MerCruisers. Sports Class - Art Kaiser, Palos Verdes, Calif., "Impaction", 28' Cigarette, 2/500 hp MerCruisers.*

### Race No. 2

#### Bacardi Trophy Race

(194 miles), Miami, Florida, May 12 -

By the time the vaunted open boats hit Miami, Florida for the May 12th Bacardi Trophy Race the rookie with the show biz monicker, Charlie McCarthy, had the points lead and defending Bacardi champ Joey Ippolito, was hard fixed to figure what quarter his enemies would come from.

One of the biggest threats would be a batch of Rocky Aoki's Japanese friends who showed up to race in a leased boat never having been on a course before and unable to utter a real word of English.

Betty Cook made the scene with a brace of boats, the veteran of 22 races, the 38' Scarab deep vee "Kaama" and a wicked looking new English Cougar Cat of like size, with almost four feet more beam and at least ten mph more speed. Former U.S. champ Joel Halpern also brought his 35' Cougar Cat "Beep Beep". Neither would dare to go to sea by race time as murderous 10-15 mph winds from the southeast churned the Atlantic to 4-8' seas.

It took exactly 2:13 for Lady Cook to do in the menfolks for the seventh time in three years in the very same boat that carried her to that historic femmes first on March 5th of 1977 off Newport Beach, Calif.

Chicagoan Howard Quam, and his Ft. Lauderdale throttleman Keith Hazell, in the 38' super light Kevlar Bertram "Flap-Jack" . . . the team that would prove to be the only real deep vee challenge to the vaunted cats all season long . . . boomed into the lead as the 19-boat open fleet exploded out of the Miami ship channel like batter made from nitroglycerin.

But it was too rough a day for the quick, light "Flap-Jack" and a far better one for the veteran Billy Martin in his new 39' Cigarette "Bounty Hunter" and Ippolito in Bernie Little's 38' Scarab

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