



After selecting their rough-water hull, Cook and crew led the way to Miami.

owned by Howard Quam, a pancake-house mogul from Chicago, took the lead. Right behind him were the two beer boats, *Michelob Light*, with Ippolito, and *Busch Natural Light*, with Henn, followed by Betty Cook in *Kaama*. The fleet headed south, and at the first checkpoint, Fowey Light, *Flap Jack* still led, followed by Ippolito, Cook and Martin. But the seas were already taking a toll. On the way to the light, Ippolito's throttleman, Jack Studeville, injured his knee. With Studeville in considerable pain, Ippolito slowed *Michelob Light* down from 75 to about 50 mph, and at the second checkpoint *Kaama* slipped by them. Realizing that the throttleman couldn't continue, Ippolito stopped his boat before the turn into the rough 45-mile leg out to Bimini, and Studeville jumped overboard to be picked up by a spectator boat.

As expected, the Stream proved a test for men, woman and boats. When a battery terminal broke loose halfway up the run to Bimini, Henn headed back for shore. A bad bounce knocked the wind out of Cook, and *Kaama* stopped for a couple of minutes while she recovered. *Flap Jack* got in all kinds of trouble. Her trim tab controls went out near Bimini. Next the distributor rotor broke, and Quam got seasick while making repairs. On the trip back to Miami, there were fuel-injection problems. By the time the fleet recrossed the Gulf Stream, *Flap Jack* was in fifth place, and 11 of the 17 starters in the open class had dropped out. One was Aoki in *Benihana*, who thus kept intact his per-

fect record for non-finishing:

The *Top Banana* was also getting the worst of it. On the way out of Government Cut, McCarthy's cloth helmet liner slipped over his eyes, blocking his vision at a crucial moment. Twice the boat came to a stop while he adjusted his headgear. Then, returning from Fowey Light, *Top Banana* missed the turn into the Gulf Stream leg. While trying to reround the mark, the boat's bow slammed into the water and almost snapped in half. But it proved to be one tough Banana. Though a large crack had appeared across *Top Banana's* midsection, just behind the dashboard, boat and crew plowed on. However, on another bounce, McCarthy was briefly knocked unconscious, and throttleman Paul Lesniewski cracked an elbow. Still, McCarthy was fighting Ippolito for third spot, behind *Bounty Hunter* and *Kaama*.

The final battle took place on the closing north-south runs from Port Everglades to Fowey Light and back to the Government Cut finish. Though *Bounty Hunter* had a two-minute lead at the end of the rough Gulf Stream crossing, Cook's lighter Kevlar boat showed its superior speed in the smoother waters

closer to the coastline. After the final, swing-for-Miami point, *Kaama* had overhauled the *Bounty Hunter* and gained a two-minute edge. Cook won with an average speed of 69 mph. *Top Banana* was third.

Because she had placed third in the Bushmills, Cook now shared the lead with McCarthy for the championship with 625 points. Her prize was \$13,000, which assuredly won't pay the bills. But the Bacardi folks also came up with a huge crystal trophy, hand-etched with the picture of a race boat. The trophy was designed by Tiffany, of course. **END**