

It ain't easy being king



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bert Henderson finished first at the Hydroplane Racing League's season-opener in Florida in the Stuart Sailfish Regatta this past weekend.

Bert Henderson is making the adjustments to defend his hydroplane title

JONATHON BRODIE
THE RECORDER AND TIMES

Bert Henderson knows he will have to step up his game if he wants to defend his hydroplane racing Grand Prix crown.

He started things off right this past weekend by grabbing the top spot in the Hydroplane Racing League's (HRL) season-opener in Florida in the Stuart Sailfish Regatta.

This season, Henderson will be looking to claim his third Grand Prix crown in five years, but he's well aware things don't get any easier after you have climbed to the top a couple of times already.

The Brockville-born racer is complimentary to his competitors,

mentioning there are probably six teams capable of beating him this year and he even lists them by name, indicating that he knows who he has to keep an eye on.

He points to ultra-hungry competitors like Andrew Tate and Brandon Kennedy or there's rivals like Eric Langevin and Marty Wolfe, who Henderson has already noticed stepping up their game. Henderson points out, though, every competitor is gunning for him.

"Our goal, for sure, is to defend our championship. It certainly isn't going to be easy, but we've obviously come out to a good start. The competition is extremely tight this year and there are some really good teams," Henderson said. "That means you got to bring your A game every time. If you make a mistake on the course, they're more than capable as professionals and will take advantage of any mistake that I make."

Henderson and his team, who were named ACHA crew of the year in 2015, made some adjustments to their GP-777 Steeler hydroplane to make sure they stay ahead of the pack.

Henderson pointed out some of the new things on his boat, including new headers to give him more torque and a smoother throttle response, different pieces inside the engine, and the company that built his propellers has, "really been stepping up and helping us."

He's purposely vague about his boat's updates as to not, "give the secrets," Henderson said. Whatever he needs to do to stay on top of the hydroplane world, you can rest assure that Henderson will do it.

It's not all about the boat, though. It's the person behind the wheel as well.

Before races, Henderson isolates himself and gets mentally focused on what he'll need to come race

time, imagining everything in his mind that might come his way in a run from start to finish.

He credits his support team as a huge help in keeping his mind prepared and there might even be an edge there for him with his brothers, Kent Henderson and Tyler Kaddatz, in the hydroplane racing game as well. There's no one else in the HRL, that Henderson could think of, that has that kind of family advantage.

"It helps you mentally be focused to know you have that kind of support behind you," Henderson said.

Next up for Henderson is a showdown at the Nickel Cup in Ganoque on June 4 and 5. You have to imagine the support system will be out in full force for Henderson with his hometown about 50-kilometres west on Highway 401 and he admitted the pressure will be on for him at the event.

@jonathonbrodie on Twitter

Continuing the clichés on a level playing field



JONATHON BRODIE

Athletes and reporters, typically couldn't be more different. Competitors are usually fit, sports reporters tend to be round or on their way to that shape. Most athletes have a deep hunger inside them to compete, while journalists have a strong desire to watch.

There is at least one thing shared between people in the sports world and the people who write about them – clichés.

Clichés are littered, and I'm using that word purposely, all over sports.

Athletes use them and coaches can't get enough of them, but the corny adages don't need to be used in reference to just sports and that's probably why report-

ers squeeze them into articles as well. We, as journalists, identify with clichés too.

I'm also only as good as my weakest link and considering this is a one-man sports section here at *The Recorder and Times* that can be concerning at times.

If I can get that third coffee in before noon then I can usually take it to another level. Four coffees and it's gut-check time for me, but that's more of a literal term as I will actually have to get my rotting gut assessed by a doctor.

Also, a reporter always has to keep their head in the game. In fact, it's all we really have to do as there isn't much physicality to the job, except for the occasional wrist cramp.

I even once hiked up a mountain, albeit a small mountain, to get a better idea of a story about people preparing to trek up part of Mount Everest. If that isn't

taking one for the team, I don't know what is.

Teams in every sport always say, "We have to be on the same page." That's a literary term right there, book or newspaper.

Overcoming adversity? That's all sports journalism is. Try forgetting your SPF 40 sunscreen when watching a baseball game in 35 C weather or taking that extra swill of bad coffee that tastes like moth balls served at cold arenas.

Speaking of the cold, keeping on your toes is more than just a cliché for reporters, as well. Have you ever watched a football game in December through a blizzard where it's so cold you have to stand on your toes, just so you don't have to keep your feet flat on the icy grass in an attempt to avoid frostbite any small way that you can?

There are some must-win games in sports and in journalism

there are some must-win articles. Just like every game, every article is important, but, for example, when you meet someone who was told by doctors they would never walk again and then years later, after much determination, that person is participating in a triathlon, that's an article you want to knock out of the park – hey, another cliché.

Not all clichés apply, though. People call me a lot of things, but no one is referring to me as a warrior.

Two stories a day, knocks down the adage of, "One game at a time."

Sure, I don't give a full 60 minutes, but typically I give 110 per cent to roughly 500 words. And if I let down for even a noun, I'll hear about it from someone.

They do, however, say, you're only as good as your last game. I should point out, this isn't my last article.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Gold at EOSSAA



The TISS Pirates had a strong showing at the recent EOSSAA Track and Field Championships by claiming the top titles in the combined junior and senior categories.

Big standouts for the Pirates included Claire Cushing (midget girls' 400- and 800-metre midget races), Tom Nedow (senior boys' discus and shot put), Aiden VanBeek (midget boys' 200- and 400-metre races) and Lucas Woodhall (midget boys' discus and shot put) all winning multiple individual golds.

Van Beek also set a new midget boy's 400-metre record at the event and he was also part of the midget boy's 4x100-metre relay team, that also included Ata Yilmaz, Ethan Givogue and Derek Pryer, that broke the meet record as well and finished first.

Other TISS gold medallists included Emily Carmichael in the women's open 1,500-metre steeplechase; Katherine Harper in the senior women's triple jump; and the midget girls' 4x100 and open girls' 4x400 relay teams. In total, TISS will be sending 47 athletes to the East Regional Championships in Belleville on Thursday and Friday.

Other gold medal winners from area schools include St. Mary's Lexi Kundlacz in the midget girls' 300-metre hurdles and the high jump, and the latter event she ended up breaking the EOSSAA record; St. Mary's Jared Elliot in midget boys' javelin; North Grenville's Cailan Loebel in junior boys' 3,000 metre run; St. Michael's Austin White in senior boys' 400-metre hurdles; and Ganoque's Gabby Sebrango in senior girls' discus.

Regatta results

The Brockville Rowing Club (BRC) had 14 athletes racing this past weekend in the 2016 South Niagara Rowing Club's High School Invitational with each rower coming home with at least one medal.

Gold medal winners for BRC included Lynden Whitley and Will Mayotte in the senior mens' doubles; Nick Everett in the senior mens' single and the club mens' single; Natalie Peddell and Domenica Howley in the senior womens' double; and Leigha Geraghty and Helene Dippel in the junior womens' double.

BRC silver medal winners included Peddell, Howley, Kelsey Smith and Alaina Ng in the senior womens' quad; Whitley and Mayotte in the senior lightweight mens' double; and Claire Eastwood, Colin Marshall, Joey Nichols, Max Birnie and Thomas Gordon in the junior mens' coxed 4+.

The recent regatta is used as a tune-up for the Canadian Secondary School Rowing Association Championships, which will be held June 3-5 in St. Catharines, Ont.

Volleyball camp

The local Titanium Volleyball Club is holding registration dates for its summer camp.

The camp will run from July 11 to 15 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at BCI. The registration dates are May 25 and 31, and June 1 at the Hardy Park courts from 6 to 7 p.m. Forms to sign up for the camp will be available at registration.

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