

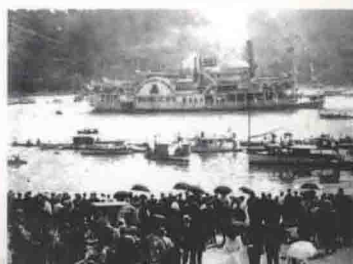
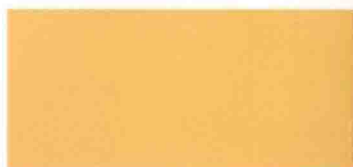


THE MADISON REGATTA

Hydroplane Racing in Small-Town Indiana

FRED FARLEY & RON HARSIN

Foreword by Steve David, Five-Time National Driving Champion



THE MADISON REGATTA

Hydroplane Racing in Small-Town Indiana



FRED FARLEY & RON HARSIN

Charleston  London
THE
History
PRESS

Published by The History Press
Charleston, SC 29403
www.historypress.net

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First published 2011

Manufactured in the United States

ISBN 978.1.60949.300.4

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Farley, Fred.

The Madison Regatta : hydroplane racing in small-town Indiana / Fred Farley and Ron
Harsin.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-1-60949-300-4

1. Motorboat racing--Indiana--Madison--History. 2. Hydroplanes--Indiana--Madison--
History. 3. Regattas--Indiana--Madison--History. I. Harsin, Ron. II. Title.

GV835.9.F38 2011

797.1'40977213--dc22

2011012306

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*This book is dedicated to one of hydroplane racing's
most respected veterans:*

Mr. Graham Heath

formerly of Madison, Indiana.

*The above photo shows the authors of this book with Graham Heath and
his wife.*

Left to right: Fred Farley, Hazel Heath, Graham Heath and Ron Harsin

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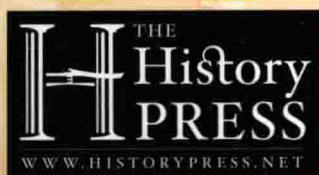
Foreword by Steve David, Five-Time National Driving Champion



HYDROPLANE HISTORY IN THE HOOSIER STATE



Each summer, a small miracle occurs in southern Indiana, when the little town of Madison becomes the hydroplane racing capital of the world as 100,000-plus people flock in for the Madison Regatta. The townsfolk, not merely content to host, also own the *Miss Madison*, one of the most successful hydroplanes on the circuit. In recent years, *Miss Madison* has emerged as the top hydroplane in the world, winning both the driver and hydroplane points standing multiple times. Roar down the Ohio with Fred Farley and Ron Harsin and revisit the long history of racing in this town and the sixty-plus years of the Madison Regatta.



\$19.99

ISBN 978-1-60949-300-4

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Foreword

MY "WALK-ON PART" IN THE MADISON LEGACY

The town and team this book is about are as fundamentally American as mom and apple pie. Born as a frontier town, maturing into a major river port on the Ohio River, home to industry from the 1800s to this very day and facing struggles of every sort, it survives. These Hoosiers are a hearty bunch, and I have a front-row seat to their story. For the first thirteen years of my Unlimited hydroplane driving career, they, amongst others, were my competition.

I stepped away from the sport midway through the 1999 season after my father died. Dad had been my racing partner since birth, and without him with me, it became void of passion. Enter my adopted town of Madison. Charlie Grooms, team manager of the *Miss Madison* Unlimited hydroplane, called me in February 2001. In the straightforward, look-you-in-the-eye way of midwesterners, and Madisonians in particular, he asked, "Are you done with your pity party and ready to race again?" Thus began my "walk-on part."

While that was Charlie speaking, I know it was Dad in heaven who wrote the script. You see, the *Madison*, their boat, had always been his favorite. Imagine my dad rooting for my competition! Now, almost eleven years later, I know why he loved them. He knew, as I do now, that when the right ingredients come together in a race program, magic happens.

It isn't just one person or bountiful funding that makes a winner. It is the input of lots of people from varying backgrounds, with a common purpose and a deep passion. This passion, this drive, fueled the birth of the town



of Madison and, to this day, fuels the number one Unlimited hydroplane in the world.

In truth, I'm just a visitor to this team, its driver for coming on eleven seasons now. But I also know that I'm a part of its legacy. A part that I can never forget didn't start with me and will not end with me, yet a part that is as much a part of me as my heart and lungs. These people are my family; this boat is in my blood. When I drive the *Miss Madison* (sponsored and known in racing circles as the Oh Boy! Oberto, the souls of every

Madisonian who has backed this team for the past fifty-plus years rides with me. They've been racing longer than any race team in any motor sport in history. I know that our racing can bring cheers or tears, based largely on what I do. This is no small responsibility. Nor is it any small honor.

As you read through these pages, lovingly crafted by two of the best writers in motor sports, I hope you feel the same passion for this town and this boat as I do. Better yet, drop by Madison any July Fourth weekend to witness its regatta. For sixty years, they've staged the largest motor sport event in Indiana, outside of the Indianapolis 500. As you walk the streets of Madison, you will undoubtedly feel the energy that is embedded in its brick streets, its vintage homes and its people. You'll sense what it is that gives America heart and what continues to fuel this town and this team.

Live well,
Steve David
National Driving Champion 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are indebted to all who helped make this book a reality. A special thanks in the memory of Ms. Rita Cline for providing her collection of past Madison Regatta programs for use in collecting information and photos for this book.

Thanks to David and Jean Johnson for opening their hydroplane museum to the authors and for giving their time and assistance in the creation of this book.

We wish to thank Joseph and Janice Johnson for their ongoing assistance.

We also wish to thank Tom and Jacqueline Bertolini for allowing us access to the boats, drivers and crew members at the race sites; without this access, a majority of the information in this book would have never become available.

Special thanks to everyone who allowed us to use their photos and art designs, especially the *Madison Courier*, *RoundAbout Madison*, *Propeller Magazine*, *Today's Sports Magazine*, *SkidFin Magazine*, and the *Unlimited News Journal*.

We wish to thank all of the photographers who contributed photos to this book, including the Madison Historic Society, Rita and Robert Cline, David and Jean Johnson, Dale Wilson, Mark Campbell, Don Ward, David Williams, Bob Carver, Rich Ormbrek, Ron Harsin, Carl Trivett, Thayer Cueter, Russell Bishop, Mark Terao, Clifford Ellis, Brad Luce, Bill Osborne, Phil Kunz, P. Gleeson, Hal Stein, Ray Krantz, John C. Hillery, Bill DeGlopper, Bill and Judy Fisk, Leslie Field, the Towne Studio, Brian Reed, Unlimiteds Detroit, Jeff Dunn, Mike Millenbach, Vicki Fewell, Bill Knodell, Randy Roe, Bernie Schwartz, Larry Wilson, Denise Taylor, Tom Turrill,