



MEDIA RELEASE

22 FEBRUARY 2007

OFFSHORE POWERBOATS GEAR UP FOR A CLASSIC ON HOBSONS BAY

The Australian Offshore Powerboat Series moves to Melbourne this weekend for the *Hobsons Bay Classic* after the opening round last weekend in Geelong.

Hobsons Bay will come to life on Sunday at noon when the incredible sounds of more than fifteen teams roar around the bay, some at speeds of more than 250km/h in what promises to be a day of high fuelled adrenaline.

Last weeks opening round in Geelong saw *Simrad* duo Ross Willaton and Luke Durman the only Class-1 entry to make it to the finish line, mechanical problems forced *Acme*, *Smorgon* and *Maritimo* to pull out in a disappointing start to the year.

Things will be a little different this week, with teams having a chance to refine their set ups for round two and really push to challenge the defending champs, *Simrad*.

“Although we won last week, we still had a few issues and will look to change our gear ratios this week and improve the boat even further,” said *Simrad* throttleman Ross Willaton.

After winning last year’s title running diesel powered engines, the *Simrad* team changed to twin V12 Lamborghini’s this year, with their closest rivals in *ACME* and *Maritimo* both running Mercury powered boats in 2007.

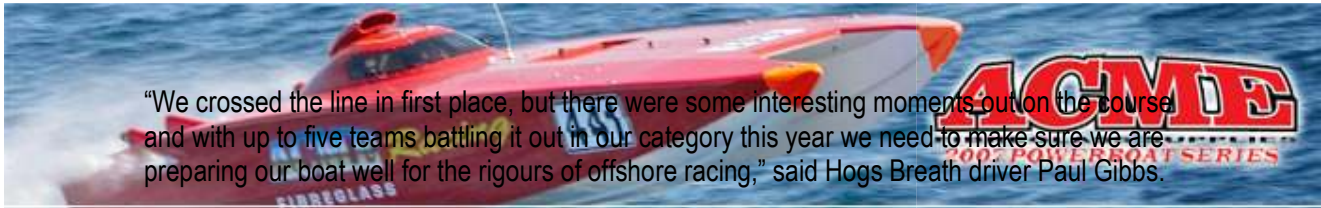
“We had some problems last week, we blew an engine in testing and then a very minor electrical fault forced us out of the race which was quite frustrating,” said Peter McGrath who will take over throttle duties from Bill Barry-Cotter in the *Maritimo* boat this week.

While the Mercury engines have a slight horsepower advantage over the Lamborghini’s, reliability won out last week and the challengers will need to get things right if they are to conquer *Simrad* this weekend.

Smorgon were off to a reasonable start in Geelong under the guidance of new pairing Mat Humphrey and Steve Jellick, before a piston problem forced them out of the race.

After receiving rookie of the year honours last year, Mat Humphrey has made the step up to Class- 1 in 2007 and if the *Smorgon* boat can stay out on the water, the team is set for a much improved year.

The Class 3- four litre field produced some outstanding racing last week in Geelong, with the introduction of new teams and the advancement of last year’s rookies, *Kwozzy* and *Ezy Does It* pushing last years champions in *Hogs Breath Racing* to the limits.



"We crossed the line in first place, but there were some interesting moments out on the course and with up to five teams battling it out in our category this year we need to make sure we are preparing our boat well for the rigours of offshore racing," said Hogs Breath driver Paul Gibbs.

Spectators are advised all boats will be on display at the race village located at PMA site off Nelson Place, Williamstown on Saturday 24 February with practice and testing scheduled for 3:30pm till 4:30pm.

Teams welcome spectators and their support on Saturday, with many drivers and throttleman happy to take questions from interested spectators.

Racing will kick off at midday on Sunday 25 February with best viewing points from Point Gellibrand and Cyril Curtain Reserve.

Spectators will also be able to catch the action from St.Kilda Beach and Port Melbourne piers between midday and 1:30pm.

Visit these websites:

www.aopc.com.au