

SURFURY, the powerboat which defends the Wills International event it won in 1968.

By Jack
Knights

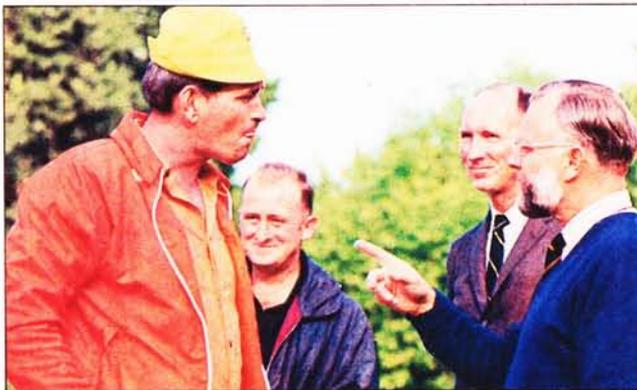
POWERBOATS roar into action this morning when the first of the two world championship events to be staged in Britain this year is raced off the South Coast.

The Wills International runs over a course of 167 miles, starting off Southsea Pier, north of the Isle of Wight to Weymouth, returning south of the Isle of Wight and

finishing off Hill Head buoy. The race begins at 10 a.m. and should finish around 1.30 p.m.

The winners of the 1968 Wills International, Charles and Jimmy Gardner, driving Surfury, defend their title against 35 boats, many of them new to the powerboat scene this year. Total prize money at stake is £3,550 for the Class 1 and Class 2 races.

The International Daily Express Offshore Powerboat Race, Cowes - Torquay - Cowes, is raced on August 30.



Surfury co-driver Charles Gardner (right) talks to another power-boat ace, America's Don Pruett

WILLS, POWER and SAIL

Three powerboating and four yachting events will be sponsored by the W. D. & H. O. Wills tobacco company this year. The various events promise to attract a large number of entrants and will prove to be major attractions on the summer's boating scene.

Amongst the power boat events the Putney/Calais Rally should have the most spectacular appeal, as well as being extremely gruelling for both drivers and navigators alike. But even more spectacular, for it has those ingredients that make for exciting power boating—a long course through sometimes difficult waters, and yet with plenty of spectator points and the possibility of a large field—is the Wills International Powerboat Race. It will be held on June 14, and prize money of £3,550 will be awarded to make it amongst the country's richest and the world's toughest power boat races for Class I and II power boats. The first boat across the finishing line will receive £1,000 and the Wills Speed Trophy.

The race will be the first of the two World Championship Series to be held in Great Britain this year. The course covers approxi-

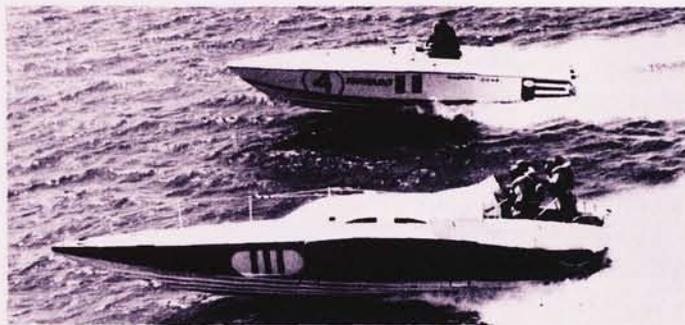
mately 167 nautical miles from Southsea Pier along the south coastline to Weymouth Bay, out to the Shambles Light Vessel, back into the coast, south of the Isle of Wight to the Nab Tower and finishes off Hill Head buoy. Navigation problems are considerable and bad sea conditions can be expected around Shambles LV, St Albans Point and St Catherine's Point.

Several new boats being built especially for the BP Daily Telegraph Round Britain race will be competing.

It will be organised by the Royal Southern Yacht Club and will be raced under the rules of the RYA and the Union Internationale Motonautique.

Prizes will be: first overall £1,000; 2nd overall £300; 3rd overall £100, plus 10 other cash prizes.

The race is eligible for seaworthy vessels capable of making



Surfury and Tornado in a magnificent finish during last year's Wills Trophy. Only 2.2 seconds separated the winners.

safe offshore passages as generally defined by the UIM offshore rules and boat categories for Classes O.P.II, C.I. and C.II. Entries will be limited to 100. The entry fee will be 10 gns and will be accepted up to the first post June 2. Late entries may be accepted at the discretion of the race committee upon payment of an additional fee of 20 gns.

The Putney/Calais event is the longest Class III event in the

world. Starting from the Thames Rowing Club, Putney at approximately 7.00 am on June 8 and the boats race from Putney to Ramsgate/Calais/Ramsgate/Putney.

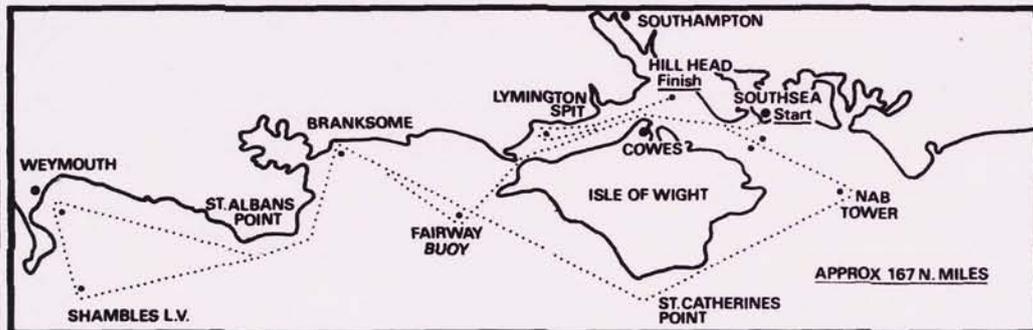
Wills will pay £10 start money to every boat that competes, and between 30 and 40 are expected to enter. Speeds of 50/60 mph will be reached and compulsory stops for refuelling are scheduled at Ramsgate, both on the outward and return journeys.

Last year's race was won in the record time of 5 hours, 23 minutes and 20 seconds by Keith Horseman in Vertigo Two.

Finally on the Wills power boat scene is the Wills National Race for Class III power boats, to be held at Hamble on August 23. Full details for this race will be announced later.

Yachting events to be sponsored by Wills this year will be a yachting regatta on July 5, a trophy race for yachts on July 11, the Wills National 505 Championships from July 20 to 25, and the Wills Trophy Series from August 2 to 4.

The course for this year's Wills International Powerboat Race.



Big-name race also rehearsal

Start of the Wills International Power boat Race from Southsea on Saturday, as well as featuring the big power-boat names in the line-up, will act as a rehearsal for the start of the Round-Britain race next month.

The 160-mile course of the Wills race begins at 10 a.m. near Horse Sand Fort. The boats come close in to South Parade Pier before swinging westward down the Solent towards Poole Bay.

The will pass Durlston Head, round a mark in Weymouth Bay, before turning eastward, round the back of the Wight to the Nab, thence to the finishing line between the Forts.

Mr. Bill Thornback, Sailing Secretary of the Royal Southern Yacht Club, which is controlling the race, said he expected the leaders across the finishing line soon after 1 p.m.

Among the racers will be the Gardner Brothers' Surfury, last year's winner, two Italian entries, Tommy Sopwith's new Shead-designed T2, and his winning boat in last year's Cowes-Torbay-Cowes race—Telstar, now owned by Maurice Hart.

WOMEN, TOO

Lady Arran and Lady Aitken will be among the women drivers taking part.

Entry to watch among the smaller boats will be Scavenger,

just 21ft. long, which won the Putney-Calais race last week-end. She is owned by Martin Jensen, with Tim Christie as co-driver.

The Lord Mayor of Portsmouth (Coun. W. J. Evans) will be at the Royal Albert Y.C. signal station on Southsea Front to fire the maroon at the start of the race—similar to the starting signal to be fired by the Duke of Edinburgh for the Round-Britain event.

Power race makes start off Southsea

Top European powerboat drivers are taking part in the Wills international powerboat race, which starts off Southsea tomorrow at 10 a.m.

Nearly 30 boats are expected in the starting line-up near Horse Sand Fort. After the rolling start, in which boats approach the line gathering speed, they head inshore to the first mark — an orange buoy near South Parade Pier.

Then the fleet heads west, through the Solent and Poole Bay to the turning mark off Portland Harbour. Homeward bound, they go round the back of the Wight, through the Solent again from eastward to Lymington Spit Buoy, where they turn for the home run to Hill Head Buoy.

First finishers are due home about 2 p.m. after the '60-mile tussle. Starting arrangements off Southsea will be similar to those of the Round Britain race, which the Duke of Edinburgh is to start at Southsea on Jul. 26.

The Lord Mayor of Portsmouth (Coun. W. J. Evans) is to signal the start by firing a maroon from the Royal Albert Yacht Club, on Southsea Front tomorrow.

ENGINE TROUBLE

Favourites in the fleet include T.2, Tommy Sopwith's new Don Shead design, built by Souters of Cowes — provided trouble in one engine can be righted in time.

Telstar, the boat in which Sopwith won last year's Cowes-Torbay-Cowes race, is to be driven by her new owner, M. G. Hardy.

T.2's racing number is 400. Telstar's 403.

Watch for a small outboard-powered yellow boat, No. 541, Scavenger by name. She was the winner of last week-end's tough cross-Channel marathon from Putley to Calais at an average speed of 41.5 m.p.h.

At the wheel of Avenger Too (No. 350) is Finnish rally driver Tino Makinen. Lady Aitken is driving Seaspray (606) a Ford-powered works entry for the

Round Britain.

Damage to her boat in the Putley-Calais deprived Lady Arran of driving, but she is co-driving in A Bullen's Powerboat Magazine (288).

A strong Italian challenge is being made by F. Consetino, driving White Tornado (£7) and V. Balestrieri in Red Tornado (4). Both boats are to American Richard Bertram's design.



W. D. & H. O. Wills International Offshore Powerboat Race (Saturday, June 14)—winners Balestrieri and Pruett quench a hard earned thirst.