

At the Ragged Edge: Hydroplane racing and the sport's most famous competitors

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At the Ragged Edge: Hydroplane racing and the sport's most famous competitors A. J. Muntz At the Ragged Edge chronicles the world's fastest boats and among the most extraordinary of sports spectacles. The focus is on the lives of two of the sport's most famous competitors: Gar Wood was a mechanical genius and a perfectionist. A self-made millionaire who once held more patents than any other living American, he devoted his considerable fortune and skills to becoming the world's greatest speedboat driver. Whether he was fighting off the challenges of racers from other nations, setting speed records, or racing a train down the Hudson River as a publicity stunt, Gar Wood always managed to create a good story for the press and, in the process, became a phenomenon. He was brash, had a vivid imagination and, through his many exploits, became the first to cast national attention on the sport of boatracing. Bill Muncey was a showman and a strategist. At once both cocky and self-effacing, he understood marketing and competed at a time when the ability to represent the sponsor was nearly as important as the ability to push one's foot to the throttle. But, he was skilled on the racecourse, too. He knew how to get the best from his equipment and, most maddening to those he raced against, had the uncanny ability to get into the heads of his fellow competitors and take appropriate advantage. Driving boats capable of traveling the length of a football field in one second, without so much as a seat belt to hold him into his open cockpit, he also knew the sport's danger, the tragedy of losing friends, and the pain of his own harrowing accidents. Along the way, you'll also meet Chris Smith and Ted Jones, two designers and boat builders who would revolutionize the sport; Henry Segrave, one of England's most decorated racers; and Bernie Little, a brash millionaire who spared no expense to have the fastest boat possible. Together, these characters, and many more, tell the fascinating story of hydroplane racing's first one hundred years.

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