

# Torrid Tunisia to cool Cowes!



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**THE Grand Prix in Tunisia was an experience that most of the P1 fraternity will want to forget.**

Soaring temperatures into the 100s with 85 per cent humidity is not ideal when you are putting yourself into fireproof overalls and sitting in a cockpit similar to a greenhouse.

I had planned ahead for Nigel and I in *Lucas Oil* by purchasing "Artic Vests" – a vest filled with gel that you freeze and put on just before the race. They worked brilliantly.

Even so there were some pretty sizzling moments. Not least the hour that Nigel and I spent sitting on the top of the boat watching the racing from the centre of the race course.

Our race boat is suffering from gremlins that are stopping us from getting a spot on the podium.

On the Sunday we only made half a lap before having to pull off the course, hence the grandstand view of the racing. It was a useful team bonding time thought and it was very interesting and revealing to watch and learn from other drivers' techniques.

It is frustrating but we are at the half way point of the season and there is still much to learn and lots to play for. I am afraid to say severe Customs

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*Shelley suited up in the 100 plus heat of Tunisia*

delays of up to 36 hours, along with upset stomachs all added to the trip to North Africa being a challenge for all of us.

Bring on a good old British Classic - The Cowes-Torquay-Cowes Powerboat Race Well that is what I thought when I started writing this but I am afraid that on 29th July P1 announced that CTC was cancelled because of poor entries.

Billed as the most famous

endurance race in power boating first held back in 1961 and the first offshore race held in Europe, you would have thought power boaters from all parts of the globe would have flocked to be a part of it as Powerboat P1 tried to revitalise the classic race by running it again after a break of three years.

The official word from Powerboat P1, the commercial rights holder to the race, came from Chief Executive, Jim O'Toole who said: "A race of this nature requires significant investment and we believe at least 40 entries were needed to justify the six-figure event costs.

"This decision was not taken lightly and we know that the powerboat community will share in our disappointment but will understand the reasons."

I feel for P1. They have really tried. They extended the entry date, they added a shorter course for smaller boats and the big chiefs even attended the Prize Giving at the end of the Round Britain Race, handing out leaflets to the potential 47 entrants who had just competed in that event.

CTC would have been a walk in the park for most of those teams but I guess the money is just not there. No



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I am not bleating about the over-used depressing credit crunch, I think it's more to the point that the RB boys and girls saved up and planned for a year knowing that it might not happen again for another 25 years and now they don't have any more money left.

Some of the P1 teams are in the same boat. The season, and the conditions, have been hard on us all and the equipment has been hammered. That all costs money and the P1 teams are saving the machinery for the races that count.

One of the few entrants, in fact he was the first entry into the classic race for 2008, was British racer Richard Carr who had entered his Union Jack painted P1 Evolution boat *Honeyparty.com*.

Before the cancellation was announced Richard said: "CTC is the Wimbledon of power boating. I have been going since I was 13 years old and my interest in power boating started from this great race. I believe it must be preserved at all costs and we are going to do it nonstop hopefully!"

Well Mr Carr may still have his chance because as I wrote this I was told of another change of events. Word on the pontoon was that CTC will happen and is going to be organised by Mike Lloyd and the Cowes Organising Committee who successfully organised the Round Britain Race in June this year. – confused? I was.

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