

# Lucky escape that made me stop and think



**Shelley Jory-Leigh**

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AS the boats line up at the end of the month for the start off the Royal Yacht Squadron of the 50th Cowes Classic Celebrating the anniversary of the Cowes Torquay Powerboat Race I'll be enjoying the festivities on shore in the race village.

Under doctor's orders I am not allowed to race for three months which will mean I won't be able to retain the First Lady Driver trophy that I've secured the last two years running.

Unfortunately during testing for rounds five and six of the UIM World Championship Grand Prix of the Sea in Poltu Quatu, Sardinia, Throttleman Patrick Huybreghts and I in Spirit of Belgium were involved in a second serious incident in a month.

The conditions were good, there were lazy rolling swells and we came off the crest of the wave as I have done many times before. We both had full control and it felt fine. But, as the bow landed it was destroyed on impact, causing the boat to stop violently. We were thrown forward on to the console.

I could feel the water around my calves and realised Patrick was only semi conscious. I radioed for urgent assistance and the SNAV OSG team were with us immediately.

I would like to offer huge thanks to them and the safety crews and medics for their help and support.

This incident, coming so soon after Malta has made me stop and reflect on my life as a powerboat racer and the dangers involved.

As many top water sports men and women know the sea is just so unpredictable. Although I take every precaution and train as hard as I can for each race nothing can prepare you for the feeling when you face real danger and life threatening conditions.

I've been very lucky in my racing career and have only had three incidents in the 15 plus years I've been racing, but when two happen back-to-back in such a short space of time it makes you stop and take heed.

This time I was lucky I only suffered head injuries and broke my nose in two places. I'm now well on the way to recovery but will finish the season watching the sport I love from the shore and deciding which way forward I go from here.

Good Luck to everyone competing at every level . . . and stay safe!



## Young stars will do us proud

OVER the weekend of 14 and 15 August, ten nationalities will visit Lancashire Powerboat Racing Club at Carr Mill, St Helens, for The Formula Future World and Continental Championships.

The competition itself consists of a series of time trials where competitors have to prove their ability in a series of boat handling and manoeuvring exercises.

The competition is extremely close and the top teams are frequently separated by less than a 1/100ths of a second which leaves no room for errors.

Participants aged eight to 18 are split into classes dependant on age to battle it out on various courses, demonstrating skill and speed against the clock.

The competition designed to raise awareness and developing skills in junior power boaters will see teams represented

from, Malaysia, Czech Republic, Great Britain and entries expected from Italy, Russia, Germany, Norway, Poland, Estonia, Slovakia, and Portugal.

The British team are made up of youngsters from Offshore and Circuit racing disciplines as well as competitors from the Honda Youth RIB Championship organised by the RYA.

All of these youngsters show promise and the skills to become the next generation of British and World Champion powerboat racers.

A couple of years ago a few of the top UK racers were challenged to compete against the youngsters in boat handling skills and they wiped the floor with nearly every one of us. So I wish them all luck for the competition and I'm sure they will do us all proud.

## Power meets sail

ROTARY Watches chose Cowes Week, the biggest event in the sailing calendar, to launch the Aquaspeed iPhone app. It incorporates an interactive watch design facility alongside a fast-paced powerboat racing game.

The application, available to download free of charge for a limited introductory period from the official Apple iTunes store is designed to celebrate the company's 115 years as a designated watch manufacturer and commemorate the sponsorship of Shelley.



Shelley on the wheel during the 2008 Cowes Torquay Cowes

Photo: Graham Stevens

## 50 years of classic racing

THE British Powerboat Racing Club will host the 50th Cowes Classic Celebrating the anniversary of the Cowes Torquay race founded by Sir Max Aitken.

This year's celebrations are due to start at Cowes on Wednesday August 25 and will include the UIM Marathon Series World Cup including the Solent 100 race on Friday 27 and the Historic Cowes Torquay Cowes on Saturday August 29.

More than 40 of the world's top UIM Marathon Class racing boats will be competing over the weekend.

The focal point of the festival will be the Race Village at Cowes Yacht Haven. Visitors will be able to see the dry and wet pits close up and mix and savour the atmosphere and



1969 Cowes Torquay Cowes

Photo: Graham Stevens

air and fireworks displays.

The Cowes Torquay Cowes is one of the oldest and most demanding endurance challenges in world of powerboat racing and the highlight of every powerboat racer's calendar.

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