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Press Release

For Immediate Release

The fastest show on water returns to Lake Hollingsworth

With speeds over 150 mph, the Orange Cup Regatta will satisfy anyone's need for speed

LAKELAND – If you like watching jets takeoff, the Orange Cup Regatta is for you.

Considering most commercial airliners start to defy gravity at 150 mph – or roughly the speed of a powerboat racing on Lake Hollingsworth from March 1 to March 3 – you won't find a faster game in town. Or a bigger one – the Orange Cup Regatta is the largest powerboat race in the state.

“When people hear ‘regatta,’ they think of sail boats,” said race organizer Gene Engle. “This is the furthest thing from that.”

The race this weekend will be the 81st running of the Orange Cup Regatta, the second oldest sporting event in Polk County. The race was cancelled twice by Gene's father Walter during World War II. Gene himself had to cancel the race twice due to Lake Hollingsworth being dredged.

“This year it looks like we'll be blessed with clear weather and very little wind,” said Engle. “We expect at least a couple of records to fall. The conditions should be perfect.”

Known as the “Lake of Records” to powerboat racers the world over, Lake Hollingsworth, has, in recent years, continued live up to its name. Just a few years

ago racers broke three world records on the lake, include average speed in the race of national modified inboard boats.

This year, there will be nine classes of boats on the water. The boats will begin to arrive Thursday.

The Orange Cup Regatta is one in a series of races where drivers with boats in various classes compete for points that go toward the crowning of an American Power Boat Association champion.

“This race is also popular among the racers because it is one of the first races of the year, so it gives them a good excuse to get themselves and their boats out of the cold up north,” said Engle.

Here are two different ideas for stories about the upcoming Orange Cup Regatta

The Orange Cup Regatta will take place this weekend, March 1 through 3. March 1 will be a testing day. The boats have been unwrapped all winter, so March 1 gives them a day to make sure everything is running just the way they want it. There is no charge for admission during the duration of the event.

Below are story ideas related to the Orange Cup Regatta.

The science behind high-speed boat racing:

Safety is the highest priority when it comes to racing powerboats on Lake Hollingsworth. So besides the four EMS-trained divers that are along the water at all times, other precautions are taken.

Most boats designed for today’s racing are designed with capsules, designed to provide the pilots with a pocket of air – and safety – should an accident occur. And some of the boats have a door on the boat to allow for quicker access should the boat be upside down.

Additionally, racers must wear an oxygen mask while racing. Still, dive teams have supplemental air tanks available should the racers lose their oxygen masks.

Powerboat Crews

Each boat comes in with their own crews. Just like NASCAR, the boat mechanics are on hand during the race, ready to go at a moment's notice to keep the racers on the water.

An initiative of the Polk County Board of County Commissioners, Central Florida's Polk County Sports Marketing is responsible for recruiting sporting events to Polk County and marketing the county as a venue for competitive sporting events and recreational sports such as golf, tennis, cycling and water skiing/boating. During the past year, 225 PCTSM events generated more than \$130 million in economic impact for Polk County. Polk County Tourism and Sports Marketing is Florida's only sports commission to be awarded both the coveted "Sports Commission of the Year" award by the Florida Sports Foundation.