

# FULTROT

Daniel de Kort, a former asst. managing director of a local bank in charge of treasury turned petrol head, now runs the non-profit SDDK Motorsports which, among others, seeks to promote Curacao motorsports to a more sustainable level. Daniel is a former go kart racer with a couple of podium finishes and a professional mountain motor pro stock car owner and driver. Unbeknownst to most, he's the local Curacao International Raceway track record holder, a FIA-accredited race photographer, a classic car owner and restorer, and a reluctant motorsports event organizer. Daniel will be contributing to Curaçao Sports Weekly with a wide variety of topics regarding motorsports.



## Racing a J-Hydro

In the previous Fultrot we covered how to build your own J-Hydro. This article follows up with how to go racing.

As Powerboat Racing Curacao (PRC) plans to initiate hydroplane competitions in 2020, the organizational aspect must first be addressed. Before starting out, it's important to find out about the public interest, as this will determine the scope, the number of categories, race duration, etc.

Since safety is of paramount importance, we'll cover it right off the bat. All hydroplanes must be certified by the PRC, whether they're locally built or not, to ensure the structural integrity of the hydroplane. Also, drivers must wear special safety gear, as outlined in PRC rules and regulations; these must be adhered to always. Whether at a test, a demo or a race, at least one recovery boat will be present, as is customary elsewhere. Additionally, in the beginning, PRC will guide all drivers and teams, as this is a new

sport for us. As required by international regulations, each driver must use a full-face waterproof helmet, a special driver jacket (floatation), and cut-resistant clothing. These are available through Life Line Race Gear. PRC will try to minimize the costs by bundling orders and through other means.

Fortunately, Curacao has a great deal of places where the sport can be practiced. Of course, as nature respecting individuals we'll do our utmost to minimize any negative impact, maybe even avoid it all together. Consequently, if we have to stay away from a certain area due to the presence of flamingos, for example, we'll do so. Actually, a hydroplane race course doesn't have to be big. Having said that, the following all have one or more suitable areas: Spanish Water, Piscadera Bay, Santa Martha Bay, Sint Joris Bay, Fuik Bay, and maybe even Waaigat. The greatest aspect of J-Hydro racing is how it brings people together, as it requi-

res a small team of 3 or 4 persons to prep and launch a hydroplane. So, not only is it time well spent during the construction phase of the hydroplane, but also at the bay, on race day. Envision a little village (pit area) with all the boats on small trailers underneath tents, where team members, family and friends gather to help out or just offer their support. As the engine is transported separately from the hull, all the components are put together upon arrival. This includes attaching the outboard engine, the throttle cable and steering lines, and lastly the aluminum turning fin. Next, everything gets tested on land, to ensure safety.

The actual racing is where the fun, the so-called adrenaline, comes in, while skimming just centimeters on top of the water at 40, 50, or even 60 mph. It all depends on the driver's steering abilities, which starts with trimming the hydroplane just right to suit his/her driving style. Then, body placement, steering and



Two J-Hydro's at the Seafair Festival in Seattle, WA.



J-Hydro driver safety gear

throttle input is what controls the hydroplane. When throttling out of a corner, one slides back to allow the sponsons to catch and trap air, and consequently ride this cushion of air so as to minimize drag with the water. As the next buoy-marked turn quickly approaches, one slightly eases off the throttle while moving one's body forward, hence increasing friction with the water, once more. When lined up to make the left-hand turn, lean a bit outwards towards the left sponson (this is why the upper left side of the hull is less restrictive), to put more weight on it, since the turn fin is located there. The hydroplane will turn

on a dime, and the process is started all over again, until the next turn. Are you ready?

If you are interested in hydroplane racing, whether as a driver or just for helping out in the organization, please get registered. Alternatively, if you know someone who might be interested, kindly pass along the information and have them register, as well. Once registered, we'll get in touch with them to provide more in-depth information. One can register by visiting [www.sddkmotorsports.com](http://www.sddkmotorsports.com), clicking on 'hydroplane' in the menu bar, and filling out a simple form.



J-Hydro during 2018 Championship race in Nashville, TN.