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Chasing Tales: Part II

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By Justin

Chasing Tales: Part II

The Return of Stand Up Comedy

Text and Photos by Robby Myer



POLLS

What's your idea of the perfect PWC getaway?

- A week exploring the Colorado River, camping out each night under the stars.
- I want to circumnavigate New Zealand on my own. Anything less is for wimps.
- Chasing glacial waves in the Arctic Circle. Got a dry suit and tow board?
- Cruising around a nice resort, like Golden Eye or Atlantis, taking breaks for the occasional massage.
- I already live this vacation: It's called the National Tour.
- It doesn't matter where I go, as long as I get to ride my ski and leave everything and everyone else in my wake.

Something unusual happened this year over Memorial Day weekend during our regular summer kickoff up at my folks' joint up on Clear Lake. My nephews had gotten their hands on an old 550 and were beating that poor ski like a dog that crapped in the kitchen. Of course they broke it and came looking to Uncle Rob [me] for some help. So, I found myself rummaging around in the shop attic, looking through old boxes of parts – boxes of my history.

I found an old Ocean Pro 45-degree intake manifold, a part from my very first Modified that made me remember how I sat in awe as I watched

Darren Maltbie put a mano-y-mano beat down on the great Larry Rippenkroeger at the Manteca Waterslide Park back in '89. I remember drooling over Darren's reed cylinder mod and thinking it was the most magnificent thing I had ever seen. I can still remember the smell of burnt race gas emitting from its rear exhaust. He ran Castrol.

I paused for a second to take a look around the attic. WorldOne, my 1992 World Finals-winning 550 Modified ski sat in a corner, literally covered in spider webs and guano with a 1970's holdover oil lamp sitting in its tray. Another hull over here, a square nose over there, and right under me currently acting as the bench I'm using to root through these boxes is the 750 SXi Pro that Tim Bushman built for me a handful of years back when he was struggling to make a buck turning wrenches. I wonder if this thing will fire. Of course, it didn't.

Then, like a Florida lightning storm rolling in, it hit me. I realized I had tons of old parts still, and thought, "I ought to get all these buckets running." I felt a rush of enthusiasm wash over me. I had a genuine stand-up stoke for the first time in more than a decade. I was going to have every freaking boat in this attic running by the end of the summer.

Avoiding the guano, I pulled the hood on WorldOne, a paradox of a machine really. She has sentimental value, a reminder of the most glorious moment in my life. She's an antique by all definitions, but a beast nonetheless. Preserved in her glory, she still runs some 17 years after putting the smack down on Rob Flores at the '92 Finals. Actually, I got my ass handed to me in the Modified class where I hole shot all but one 750. Then, like a dumbass, missed a buoy trying to pass him on the first lap; I think I ended up 7th or 8th. I still got the overall though and that's all you can find with a Google search, so that's all that matters.



(Above: Getting good ol' WorldOne to fire up has been a chore.)

I'd pull that screaming bitch down every other year or so and waste an entire weekend trying to get her fired, only to have her blow out another pump, making me put her away for a few more years. She is truly a marvel of Jet Ski engineering from back in the day. She's bored, stroked, has

stuffed cases, a set of 46mm Boswell Mystery carbs, and sci-fi boost ports so ahead of their time that the wacko genius behind her build now, so I've heard, does consulting for Formula One. I doubt that even today there is a faster 550cc stand-up in existence.

Yes, all you keyboard slappers, the gauntlet has been tossed.

Then there's mom's square nose, the first Yamaha standup in Lake County. It hasn't run since...I don't even remember. Then there's another race hull that I seemed to have most of the parts to build up, a few friend's skis, and this SXi Pro. It's a mishmash buildup of one of my old Pro Tour motors, a Skat pump with a swirl prop that I had to promise Glen at Skat-Trak, who hand-made it for me some 15 years ago, that I wouldn't – under any circumstances – tell anyone about getting it. Apparently, there was a long list of racers far more worthy than me asking for it, but I just so happened to order the pitch that he had just cut by mistake so he shipped it to me.

All of this was meticulously placed into a Factory Kawasaki race hull of undisclosed vintage that officially doesn't exist. I don't know all the history, but it turns neat, is ultra stable at high speed and rumored to be somewhat of a half breed, so that's what I call it. I determined Halfbreed was my best chance at a runner, down through the hole she went.

I didn't get anything to run that first weekend, Halfbreed needed a starter Bendix and WorldOne required a battery, so I cruised around on the new stock RXP's we got the year before that my daughter uses to develop her female indecision upon. "Faster, daddy!" she screams. That's my girl. "Not that fast, Daddy!" Damn, still has some of her mother in her. I realized I really wanted to get some stand-ups running and, for once, I didn't want to have to wrench for three quarters of the weekend to make it happen. I decided to take WorldOne home to work on it.



(Above: "I don't even know what the hell this goes to...")

Of course, it needed a few parts. It started to become real apparent that finding old parts was a treasure hunt at best. I mean, who has an exhaust gasket for a 650 Jet Sport exhaust pipe? It's hard enough to find someone

who remembers the name Jet Sport. I discovered there was an oracle of information available at the smattering of PWC forums out there, all with a number of resident gurus, their high post count a bona fide badge of personal watercraft wisdom, and if they hadn't heard of it, well, I really don't know all that much, being a Newbie. So, whatever.

I hit up Dan Fitzgerald at Jet World; Dan got me started on my way.

The real treasure, I would find, was the reconnection of so many old friends. Guys I raced back then, like Dan, now had shops. An early apprentice, Tim Bushman, a guy I literally babysat his first year on tour, now has a parts manufacturing business and pierced nipples. Weird.

I was flattered that most everyone still remembered a half-assed Pro from the early nineties like me. Well, everyone that was from back then anyway. A few guys were still in the game and everyone seemed to want me back in. I started to get the warm and fuzzys until I thought about it. What the sport was seeking was just another gate filler, even MacCluggage called to try and coax me in. As if that psycho hasn't run me over enough.

I spent the next few weeks just trying to get the parts together to get what I had running. I was on a mission to hit four start buttons and hear four barks. As of this writing, I'm two for four, but the journey to do so has gotten a spark kindled that reminded me how much I enjoyed the days of blasting around the lake with a handful of throttle and no particular destination.

So in my course of getting these old slugs running, I got back in contact with Johnny from Blowsion Colors. He painted a helmet for me once way back when he was young and handsome in hopes that my younger sister might discover his talents and throw herself at him. He was always real fond of her bikinis; she was always real fond of wearing them.

He asks me if I'm the same Robby Myer that used to have the hot sister. I tell him, "Yeah, and you painted a helmet for me once!"

Then he says, "Yeah, listen, I've painted helmets for everyone at one time or another, but your sister...is she still hot? Is she all MILF'ed out?" I say, "Well, I don't know, I guess so." And then he breaks out with the invite, "Hey Robby! You should bring her up to the Surf Slam this year, in fact, you should race it!"

He goes on to tell me about this exclusive invite-only surf event he has every year has been turned into a race that everyone who ever was and anyone will be there can race it. I start getting excited and then stop for a second. Wait a minute! I'm as washed up as a sand dollar, wasn't all that good to begin with and now 15 years older in both body and equipment. What am I thinking? Then I get to remember that discussion I had with Macc and what he said.

"Yeah, so what," Macc said. "It ain't like it'll be televised, the only people who will see that you suck are people who already know it."

I start thinking maybe Macc's right. What does it matter? It ain't like I haven't had my ass handed to me before, and what's the big deal? There's no money in it. I've got no sponsors to let down, no championship to chase,

and no bikini to impress. I'm serving a noble cause here, the sport needs worthy gate fillers for stars like Macc to put a whippin' on in dramatic fashion. I mean, this is in the good interest of the sport, right?

I always thought that if all the races were in the surf, big surf, ugly surf, the kind of surf that eats boats and spits them on the beach in a heap of fiberglass bits, then Jet Ski racing would be like Supercross moto is today, exciting. But no, instead we make it into a boat race and kill it. But that was in the '90s, people have forgotten and may become interested again, if only we could bring what interests the masses.

And what interests the masses you ask? Carnage and death-defying stunts.

So I start thinking, what could I do to make it more exciting? And I get this bright idea, the unknown variable, the mysterious armored big rig that comes out in Deathrace 2000. Now I'm fired up. Yeah, I'm going to go out there and get right in the way of the leaders. When they come around to lap me, they're going to have to try to predict just which way this old fart is going to dart. Hell, chances are I might even get a good start, then they have to get around me two or three times! Yep.

In this condition, I'm bound to make at least one real squirrely maneuver per lap and that makes me the unknown variable that exists in any sporting event. Sort of like the kid at the World Series that reached out and made that close one a homer that cost whoever the game, remember that? Well, that's gonna be me, brought in by the promoter to wreak havoc and create controversy. That's right, a little entertainment interjection – hell, I might even wear a mask. So be forewarned frontrunners, at Surf Slam. If you're in the lead come lapping Robby Myer, or dare I say El antiguo uno perezoso, pass with caution, Robby's old, unpredictable, and looking for a good time. So what the hell, I'll get slammed, either in the surf or in the bar overlooking the surf. One way or another Robby Myer is back to his old tricks, stinking up the track, promoting debauchery, and tellin' the Tale in the spirit of reviving standup racing. The only difference is now I'm married, so I probably won't have quite as much fun as I used to.

-Robby

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