

The 2011 ULHRA racing season started with a festive beginning at the Wenatchee Washington, Apple Blossom Festival Parade. Four Boats took part in the parade; the UL-1, UL-929, UL-11 and the UL-77. After regrouping, the boats headed up-river to Entiat for one day of testing and one day of racing.

On Saturday there were just a few hours to prepare for testing, and only a couple boats made it on the water. The UL-1 discovered engine problems and had to put in their backup engine. The UL-11 also developed engine problems and borrowed parts from the ailing engine of the UL-1. Both teams were up late preparing for Sunday's race with the 1's crew leaving the pits at midnight and the 11's crew leaving at 2:30 AM.

Rod Bourke was making some adjustments to his engine and somehow dropped a valve into the cylinder. He thought he was going to be done for the weekend, but during a "Break" from working on the UL-11, Crew Chief, Scott Main came over and lent a hand. Using a coat hanger fed through the sparkplug hole, a penlight, some mojo and tenacity; after an hour or so, Scott was able to lift the valve back through the guide, and the UL-5 was back in business. Scott also helped on several other teams throughout the weekend, enabling three other boats to continue racing.

David and Chris Grant had an issue with their ring gear, and with Scott's assistance made the adjustments that allowed their engine to start. After what appeared to be a successful test Sunday morning, the UL-3 seized their oil pump. Again calling on Mr. Main, Scott took another break from the UL-11 and tried in vain to fix the UL-3's oil pump. The damage was just too severe, and that was the end of the Grant Race Team's weekend.

Heat one started with five boats, The UL-1, UL-5, UL-11, UL-77 and the UL-929. The UL-5 driven by Rod Bourke had lane one, followed by Paul Becker and the UL-1 in lane two, Vince Xaudaro with the UL-929 in lane three, Kevin Eacret, driving the UL-11 in lane four, and Dan McCulloch piloting the UL-77 in lane five.

It was a good start with Paul Becker and Rod Bourke leading the charge, followed closely by Vince Xaudaro and Kevin Eacret. Nearing the exit pin of turn one, Kevin Eacret, in the UL-11 passed the UL-929 and made a rocket fast straight-away shot at Paul Becker in the UL-1. By the time the boats made it to the Start / Finish line, Paul Becker held the lead with Kevin Eacret overtaking. Out of turn one again it was Kevin Eacret in the UL-11 ahead and gaining distance from the UL-1. Kevin took a commanding lead for the rest of the race and won the first heat of the 2011 season. All five boats left the beach and returned under their own power. Finish order for Heat 1 was the UL-11, UL-1, UL-929, UL-5, and the UL-77.

Heat two, the Final, started a bit strange, when Dan McCulloch in the UL-77 cut the course at score-up and was disqualified. In the process of doing this, Paul Becker in the UL-1 went through the rooster tail of the UL-77 and took on a load of water, suffered some hull damage, and was never able to get the boat back up to speed. It looked like a good start for Vince Xaudaro in the UL-929 and Rod Bourke in the UL-5, with the UL-11 closely behind. The start was under review with the UL-929 leading the race and the

UL-5 directly on his hip; the UL-11 took a hop in turn one and was trailing by a full rooster tail going down the backstretch. The UL-929 took an impressive lead and the final running order was the UL-929, UL-5, UL-11, UL-77 and the UL-1. But wait, the start was under review, remember? The referee's determined that both the UL-929 and the UL-5 had jumped the gun. So let's take a look at the finish order now. The UL-11 wins the race, followed by the UL-1, UL-929, and the UL-5. Again, the UL-77 was disqualified.

Wrapping up the first weekend of racing in 2011, the standings and points look like this.

UL-11	Kevin Eacret	94Five ROXY / Power Punch / K&N Engineering	800 points
UL-1	Paul Becker	Miss Sammamish Mortgage / WW College SCI	600 points
UL-929	Vince Xaudaro	Miss Hyundai Assurance	450 points
UL-5	Rod Bourke	Miss Vestus Foreclosure Group	338 points
UL-77	Dan McCullough	Coulee Miss	127 points
UL-3	Chris Grant	Prilosec OTC / Kelly Excavating & Site Development	0 points

The UL-72 is still undergoing repairs from the fire and explosion that occurred at Spring Training a few weeks ago and was unable to attend the Apple Blossom Cup.

Darren Bartels  
UL-11