

# "Madison" Movie Models

by Don Mock



A very unique experience, a few of us here in R/CU had this past year, is being involved with the filming of the Hollywood movie "Madison." It's the true story about Miss Madison driver Jim McCormick and the events leading up to his "Cinderella" victory in the 1971 Gold Cup. Jim Caviezel, Bruce Dern and Jake Loyd are the primary stars. Most of the filming was done in Madison, Indiana with some shooting taking place in L.A. The Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum here in Seattle supplied all the full-sized classic hydroplanes. We were contracted to build and drive the R/C models needed for the crash sequences.

This is the first time R/C hydros have ever been featured in a full-length movie. We built four 1/6th scale models of the museum boats which included a Miss Madison, Atlas Van Lines and two versions of the Miss Burien hull which did double duty in the film. R/CU's winningest driver and APBA Champ David Jensen and I built the boats with assistance from David's father Gary Jensen, Jim McKeon, Roger Newton, Troy McIntire, Howard Price, Bob Hulliger, Terry McKeon and many others.



The boats, of course, had to be dead scale including fake Allison engines and believable looking drivers. With a lot of deliberation, we decided to use our same 1/8th scale engine set-ups to power the boats. The hulls, however were setup to make scale left turns rather than typical R/C right turns. All four of the 5-foot long boats ran surprisingly well with their Picco .67's. With smaller props, such as Octura 455 two-blades, the boats performed amazingly, rolling, blowing over and spinning out at will.

After nearly a year of postponements, the model filming finally took place at the end of October at Southern California's Lake Castaic. Our team from Seattle consisted of David and Gary Jensen, Harry Gatjens and myself. Beautiful weather and a perfect running site greeted us as we tested for two days before filming day.

We spent half the day shooting the opening sequence in the film. Intentionally bumped by the Miss Budweiser, the Miss Madison spins into the path of the oncoming Town Club. The Town Club driver makes a suicide right turn to avoid the Madison and crashes violently,

killing him (a bit of Hollywood fiction added to the plot). Everything up until the spin out was performed by the full-sized boats while filming in Madison.



David Jensen driving the Madison and me with the Town Club, were directed to drive straight at the camera and perform the stunt as close as possible to the shore. As difficult a challenge as it was, we performed several perfect crashes as David would spin the Madison and I would try to barely miss it and crash.

The little hydros were very well built as we would simply drain them out after a crash, re-fuel and toss them back on the lake. We did this many many times without so much as a scratch to the models (except when I turned too late and plowed into the Madison a few times). Later in the day we ran the other boats getting running shots they needed before the time came to destroy the beautiful little Miss Madison. The script called for the Miss Madison to experience a major engine explosion ripping off the sponsons and coasting to a halt a smoldering wreck. With the help of the movie's special effects coordinator the model's sponsons were sawed off and the boat was beat up and sprayed with black paint to look burned. A pyrotechnic expert then installed a smoke bomb and the boat was taken out on the lake to film the aftermath of the explosion.



The film's director and producer were very pleased with our performance. Although the total time you'll see the models in the movie will be less than five seconds. (A lot of work for five seconds!) Look for the movie in your local theater around spring 2002.