

SALIDA

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Swiss Boatmen, Ris And Römer, Win Salida-Canon City Ark. River Boat Race

ONLY ONE BOAT FINISHES

SALIDA, Colo., June 20 (UP) - With the first annual Arkansas River Rough Water Race less than 24 hours old, civic leaders of Salida and Canon City went to work today to perfect what promises, to be one of the world's most popular boating classics.

Everyone agreed that the initial running of the contest yesterday was a rousing success even though only one boat, manned by two Swiss boatmen, completed the treacherous run.

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Pueblo Man Guesses Nearest On Boat Race

Louis Amidon, of Pueblo, was the lucky guesser on the time of the first annual Salida - Canon City boat Race. His guess for the time it would take one of the boatmen to navigate the rugged 57 mile course down the Arkansas river was seven hours 38 minutes, 12.7 seconds.

The correct official time was seven hours, 38 minutes, 3.6 seconds. So he missed the correct time by 9.1 seconds.

The total ticket sales was approximately \$1500, the ticket committee from Salida and Canon City Chambers of Commerce stated. The purchase of every \$1 ticket permitted the buyer an estimate on the winning time. The guesses ran all the way from three hours to well over two days.

Amidon, who is \$750 richer today after the race, drove to Canon City from Pueblo to catch the D&RG special that followed the boatmen down the river early Sunday morning.

Just before jumping on the train, Jim Sterling, of Canon City cornered Amidon and sold him a chance on the time. Amidon will long remember the first annual Salida-Canon City boat race which netted him \$750.

Robert Ris, 32, of Basle, Switzerland, and Max R. Römer, 24, of Biel, Switzerland won more than \$ 2000 for the feat.

Five other boats entered in the race were forced out of the running by the murderous waters. Four of the craft were either smashed or upset and the fifth had to be abandoned when it rushed out of control toward dangerous rapids. There were no serious injuries of the riders.

An estimated 10,000 persons lined the banks of the rushing Arkansas between here and Canon City.

In places, U. S. Highway 50 - which parallels the river most of the way - was jammed with cars packed bumper-to-bumper. A special train, arranged by the Denver and Rio Grande Western, carried hundreds of passengers on the other side of the river and struck with the boatmen clear through the Royal Gorge, which begins 12 miles above Canon City.

Ris and Römer led the fast-diminishing pack from the very first. When their boat skimmed across the finish line in Canon City seven hours and 39 minutes after they started - it was more than three hours ahead of the single remaining boat.

That craft was piloted by Bob Wildgen and Jim Pickerell of Canon City. The low-slung job had shipped so much water that it became almost impossible to maneuver by the time it reached the Royal Gorge. Sinking rapidly, the boat and its exhausted occupants were pulled out of the water by Red Cross crews.

With the withdrawal of the Canon City boat, the race all belonged to the two Swiss. They collected more than \$ 2000 for their efforts. The winning purse was \$ 1000 and they took half of the entry fees. In addition, they picked up a special \$ 500 bonus for scooting their 14-foot Kayak-type boat beneath the Royal Gorge bridge.

The first casualty of the race happened just seven miles from the starting line. Bill Anderson and Paul Pasquale, two Salida amateurs who piloted a strange brightcolored craft - an all-metal affair using an airplane belly gas tank and two pontoons - were forced to leap out of the boat when they approached the first portage point along the course.

Other contestants pulled over to the bank and carried their boats across a low-hanging bridge. But Anderson and Pasquale were apparently unable to make the bank. Their boat was heading for a small rapid with virtually no clearance. They abandoned ship and were pulled to shore.

Next to go down was John A. Wells, of Thermopolis, Wyo. His bright red metal canoe was heavenly battered and was leaking too badly for him to continue. He was forced out of the race at the 21-mile mark.

Wells, winner of the Memorial Day Wind Race at Thermopolis, was handicapped by a last-minute change in partners. He withdrew from the contest when he saw that the rain swollen Arkansas had risen another two inches just before the race. Wells had to start with a brave but inexperienced Salida man, Joe Scales.

One of the closest escapes and biggest surprises of the race was the upset of J. Kessler, Long Island, N. Y. Kessler, National White Water Champion, was participating but not competing in the contest because of his amateur rating. He maintained a close second place behind Ris for the first 23 miles. Then, after having successfully negotiated a long and rough section of rapids, his floatboat struck a half-submerged log. The craft was upset and Kessler was pinned beneath it. He had to be pulled out by nearby rescuers.

Later, he was asked if he would try to recover the expensive craft.

"Oh, no," he laughed. "I never ride in a boat I've tipped." He said it was the 120-th time he had had to abandon a boat in his 20 years of experience.

A little farther downstream, disaster overtook the miniature Grand Canyon cataract piloted by Preston Walker, general manager of the Daily Sentinel in Grand Junction, Colo., and a veteran rapids-shooter.

Walker had maintained a calm steady pace from the start. With the other contestants out of the running, he seemed a virtual cinch for third place. Later when the green craft of Wildgen and Pickerell had to pull out for repairs, he moved automatically into second place.

Midway in Spikebuck creek rapid a wave lifted one of Walker's oars from the oarlock. The time it took to replace it in the big water was just enough to make it impossible for Walker to miss a gigantic "hole" at the foot of the rapid.

The 75-pound boat was not heavy enough to go through the Hole and was flipped on its back. Walker climbed on to the overturned boat but swift water tore the light craft to pieces under him. He was pulled out of the river a half-mile downstream. He had to withdraw because his boat was too badly damaged to continue. With no competition, Ris and Römer began moving cautiously. They frequently portaged their single-seat boat, a feat they handled, with notable ease, since both had extensive experience in mountain-climbing.

Their entry in the race was sponsored by five Salina businessmen who asked to be referred to only as "Heart of the Rockies" - Salina's motto.

WINNERS IN THE SALIDA-CANON CITY ARKANSAS RIVER BOAT RACE

Röbi Ris**Max Römer**

Ris handled the boat most of the run. But he was frequently relieved by Römer, who by trade is a bookkeeper. Römer said that Ris had been white-river boating for 16 years and that he has been with him for four years. They landed in New Orleans from Antwerp, Belgium on a six-month tour of the United States last February. Most of the contestants had not come prepared for the Arkansas in its current raging conditions. Swelled by recent heavy rains, the river was flowing at its highest in five years. Kessner described it as „a good river, as good as most and better than many. Only one thing, it was too Muddy“. He suggested that the course be shortened to about 20 or 25 miles.

„As it is,“ he said, „it is more like an endurance contest than a boat race“!

Other boatman agreed. Römer said, he felt a shorter course would be better and Walker suggested that officials break the present run into a two-day race.

But sponsors of the run, with something definite to go on now, gave no immediate indication of how they will conduct the race next year, except to say that the race would be conducted annually.

Switzerland, and Max R. Römer, more than [redacted] for the feat. Canon City boat, the race all belonged to the two Swiss. They collected more than [redacted] for their efforts. The winning purse was [redacted] and they took half of the entry fees. In addition, they picked up a special [redacted] bonus for scooting their 14-foot Kayak-type boat beneath the Royal Gorge [redacted]

Im völlig vergilbten Zeitungsausschnitt der sich in den Clubunterlagen befand, waren die \$-Beträge mit Tusche überschmiert. Mit Lupe, Spiritus und etwas Fantasie habe ich sie rekonstruiert. Ob es ganz genau stimmt, kann ich nicht beschwören!

Siehe nebenstehenden Ausschnitt.

Nach dem Motto: Der Schweizer spricht ja nicht vom Geld!