



2004 RALLY — CAPTAIN'S LOG by Nigel Hook

Rally Brief

This was the 31st annual running of the Nuestros Rios Son Navegables. It is rare to find an event with such a legacy, and it is that point that helps to mark its uniqueness. The concept originated in the seventies to prove that the vast array of rivers in Venezuela offered more than beauty, they were a practical mode of transportation as well.

The Rally today serves multiple purposes by providing a challenging platform for a 1200 mile endurance race, by shortening the reach between the remote villages and civilization, and by serving as an excellent vehicle to promote the wonders of Venezuela.

ESPN will air a one-hour prime time show on this expedition on Sunday, December 19 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET.

CITGO Relationship

In 1996, I was introduced to CITGO by Irwin Jacobs, CEO of Genmar. Genmar is the world's largest independent boat manufacturer producing in excess of 65,000 boats per year. Mr. Jacobs was keen to assist our team in promoting the Wellcraft Scarab brand image through our racing program and contacted CITGO to gain their interest in primary sponsorship for the team. This was accomplished in unison to the FLW Bass fishing team that ran Ranger Bass boats, a Genmar sibling company along with Wellcraft.

Mr. Jacobs' right-hand man at the time was given the task to assist our team in putting together a marketing packet to for CITGO. Nine years later I meet that person again, none other than Sam Youngwirth, Winnercomm VP for ESPN.

For many years the CITGO sponsorship brought the successes of multiple National Championships, APBA/UIM World Championship, and APBA/UIM World Speed Record, which led to my being inducted into the APBA Hall of Fame.

Through this relationship we were introduced to Cox Marketing Group. From the onset, they were primarily focused on NASCAR's Winston Cup. I got the chance to meet CITGO driver Michael Waltrip, and subsequently Elliott Sadler. I had the privilege to work with Elliott at presentations such as the annual CITGO President's Meeting and the Las Vegas SEMA Show. We reciprocated visits at each other's races, and Elliott actually brought his family to our race in Sarasota the day after the Pepsi 400 in Daytona.

When CITGO decided they wanted to sponsor the Rally in 2004 and hire a driver to win the event, they didn't have to look too far. The fruits of our relationship together can now add a first in class in the speed race, a second in overall, and a third in class for points in the Rally. On behalf of CITGO, PDVSA and the Nuestros Rios Son Navegables I am now honored to be the ambassador of the Rally to the rest of the World boat racing community.

How I got started

On June 1, I received a call from Patricia in the office of Mr. Arciniegas, a direct report to the Executive Vice President of CITGO Petroleum. After a follow-up call on June 3 and a conference call with the race organizers and Cox Marketing Group on June 4, we commenced our plan. By the next week we had our tickets and plans for our reconnaissance mission to unfold the mysteries of the Nuestros Rios Son Navegables.

Scouting Trip

June 20, 2004 (Sunday)

AA flight **San Diego** thru **Dallas** to **Caracas**, we arrived at the JW Marriott in Caracas at 10:00 p.m.

- Angel Arciniegas (CITGO)
- Sam Youngworth (ESPN/Winnercomm)
- Vaughn Esper (ESPN/Winnercomm)
- Doug Cox (Cox Marketing Group)
- Nigel Hook (www.nigelhook.com)

June 21, 2004 (Monday)

Breakfast meeting with Nexus Principals Fernando Duprat and Carlos Martel. Flight from **Caracas** to **Puerto Ordaz** on Aeropostal arriving 6:15 p.m. Stayed at the Inter Continental Guayana. Met up and flew with Enrique Cenci and Francisco Arteaga from the Nuestros Rios Son Navegables organization, and Miguel Alcaras, pilot of the PDVSA race boat and Fernando Duprat from Nexus.

June 22, 2004 (Tuesday)

Private plane to **San Fernando**, the starting point of the race. We flew at relatively low altitude the whole way the Orinoco. Miguel pointed out key landmarks and hazards that we should be knowledgeable about. Met with Governor of the State, Dr. Louis Lippi in his office, accompanied by Venezuelan National TV.

June 23, 2004 (Wednesday)

Private plane from **San Fernando** to **Puerto Ayacucho**. Met with the First Lady of the Amazonas State, Judith Guarulla, and her assistant Roseanna. Went on a river rapids tour and swam with Marina Nella, caretaker of a 60 acre ranch on the Amazonas. Had lunch at Rosanna's aunt's restaurant called La Pusana, famous for its wild game.

June 24, 2004 (Thursday)

Flight back in the private plane from **Puerto Ayacucho** to **Caracas**.

June 25, 2004 (Friday)

AA flights from **Caracas** to **Miami** to **Tampa** for the OSS race in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Subsequent to the Scouting trip, I determined that we needed a twin-engine inboard-powered catamaran of around 30 feet in length. I drafted a short list of options and started making calls. One of my first calls was to Ian Hawkins at Ilmor. I had a very good relationship with Ian and we came from the same neighborhood in England. After discussions with owner Paul Ray, they were on board.

Next were calls to the media to gauge their interest for major coverage of the event. Without exception I received thumbs up all around. In exploring options for the best boat I made several calls. One of the clear choices was Eliminator boats of Mira Loma California. These are very fast boats and tend to excel in calmer water, which was generally anticipated on the Orinoco. Eliminators also look terrific and have a well-earned reputation of having the finest gelcoat artwork in the boating industry. Each new boat has its own creative graphics package that is set into the mold and, in fact, no boat looks the same. The Eliminator also has the advantage of being on the narrower side as far catamarans go and this would be beneficial for the narrow roads the rig was going to be towed on.

In conversations with Brett Seber, an experienced racer in Eliminator boats, he offered to expedite the building and preparation of the new boat and was very interested in being part of the team. He also ensured Extreme Trailers and Teague Custom marine were invited to the opportunity. Brett had raced with me last year in the Oceanside POPRA race and we hit it off. As Eliminator already had a 28 Daytona running the Ilmor V10's and attaining speeds of 127mph, it seemed like a perfect combination. To add the icing on the cake, Ian Hawkins was going to make himself available to join us to ensure everything ran smoothly.

The biggest glitch we ran into was the shipping date from California. On our original plan the agreed upon departure date from Miami was to be August 20, but with a couple weeks notice we had to move the shipping up to August 12, which preempted our testing and dialing in time for the new Eliminator Daytona 33.

It was a wise move as the race boats only arrived in San Fernando the early morning of the day before the race. Timing is everything.

The Rally — 2004 Nuestros Rios Son Navegables

August 24, 2004 (Tuesday)

AA flight **San Diego** thru **Dallas** to **Caracas**. Check into JW Marriott, drinks with Mr. Arciniegas and preparation for Wednesday's Press Conference.

August 25, 2004 (Wednesday)

Breakfast meeting with Mr. Rivero, Executive Vice President CITGO, and Mr. Arciniegas which included further preparation for the day's National Press Conference. In joint attendance at the Press Conference at Centro La Estancia was Francisco Arteaga, President of Nuestros Rios Son Navegables, and Miguel Alcaras, pilot of the PDVSA

race boat. Checked into the InterContinental, Tamanaco where we waited to greet the rest of team who were just arriving.

August 26, 2004 (Thursday)

Flight from **Caracas** to **San Fernando**. BBQ lunch of local meats at Cachapera Rabanal Carne Asada. (Photos dsc00005-10). Arrived at Don Sancho Hotel. Mr. Arciniegas conducted our first team meeting with both production and race crews to ensure the whole performance was orchestrated smoothly.

As soon as we got to the ramp marking the start of the race, I revisited my spot on the bank that I marked out on the scouting trip. I stood there for 15 minutes, looking at the river, which was to become our home, our friend, and perhaps our adversary for the next eight days. I watched all the debris. I estimated the strong flow rate of the current. After a while of visualization, any apprehensions faded as I saw our team vanquish the river and succeed in this expedition in front of us.

August 27, 2004 (Friday)

Breakfast with PDVSA at the Buffalo Ranch. (Photos dsc00016-18). The owner of the multi-thousand acre ranch, which has been in the family for many generations, gave us a personal guided tour through their cheese and candy factory (Photos dsc00019). I learned that cattle couldn't survive in this environment in the Apure State and that the Buffalo had triumphed as the natural survivor.

Speeches were given by our host, and execs from PDVSA and CITGO. Sam Youngworth, Vice President of ESPN's production partner, Winnercomm, gave a few words on our behalf. Perfectly conveying how we all felt about the hospitality, Sam remarked, "We feel like we are a baby in its Mother's arms!" Getting down to the business at hand and the reason we were all there, Mr. Arciniegas conducted our first racing and production strategy meeting.

Later that day, we were introduced to our wonderful Venezuelan Navigator (who would save our bacon many times during the Rally). Everyone called him PANCHO, but his real name is Francisco Torrealba. Pancho helped guide us through registration of the CITGO Eliminator ILMOR team with the Nuestros Rios Son Navegables organization.

The area was buzzing with a frenzy of excitement with a mixture of locals, racers and foreigners creating all sorts of curiosity. I don't think many people had ever seen the immaculate beauty of the gel coat work on the CITGO Eliminator ILMOR. Even Miguel Alcaras, pilot and builder of the PDVSA race boat that is a Skater replica, ran his fingers over the art work on the starboard front sponson admiring the beauty.

Inspection was carried out and signed-off by Enrique Cenci. We were assigned Number 56 in the Libre Class. (For a description of the classes see the final section.) The team prepared the boat and packed the contents for the race. All decals were applied that were required for the race.

We tested the CITGO Eliminator ILMOR just before it started getting dark, and we were rather cautious running in the water too fast because of poor visibility in seeing debris. Miguel and Carlos from the PDVSA Skater advised us to be really careful because with

the sun setting it would be easy to hit something and put a hole in the boat. It was a good test session though, just from the perspective of getting out onto the river and catching a glimpse at least of what lay ahead of us.

With all the excitement in the town, the crowd control was dismal. Getting the trailer back into the water on the only ramp in town was a major frustration, as it got dark. It was pleasing though to see the great enthusiasm from the other racers and locals who all wanted to get a closer look at the infamous CITGO Eliminator ILMOR V10. (Photos dsc00020-30)

August 28, 2004 (Saturday)

7:00 a.m. Mass. 8:30 a.m. Pilots meeting. 9:00 a.m. Start of Race. Although we had been advised that the start of the rally may take a steady 10 knot idle until the fleet had emerged beyond the boundaries of the town to avoid excessive wakes from drowning the riverbank housing, I believe rampant enthusiasm prevailed. All 120 race boats blared off into the horizon leaving **San Fernando** in their wake.

We ran at around 5,000 RPMs, which gave us a speed of around 95 mph with 7 people on board. Fortunately, we were able to take our own ESPN Cameraman, Jan Glenn, along with for all the stages except the final day's high-speed sprint. We were well prepared by having our crew chief and chief mechanic on board in case of any problems. We were also pleased to invite major CITGO marketer, Woody Garrow, to join us for the first few legs. Woody joined Sam in the Triton bass boat for the remainder of the days.

11:00 a.m. arrived at **San Rafael de Atamaica** for end of first leg. Collected 200 points.



In the Special Activity – we won the Bocce Ball competition. I hit the coconut on

the second the throw. (Photo dsc00038)



This stop was very hot and not much shade, but plenty of cold beer at La Propia Rumba!

(Photo dsc00050)



All the boats were lined up on the riverbank, everyone was drinking and dancing to the beat.

(Photo dsc00035 – eventual speed winner on RHS next to canoe)



Mike Seebold and Eddie Rhodes arrive shortly after. (Photo dsc00037)



Sam arrived.
(Photo
dsc00040)



PDVSA 28
Skater
Baretta of
Miguel
Alcaras.
(Photo
dsc00048)



(Photo
dsc00049)



Security par
excellence
by the
Venezuelan
National
Guard.
(Photo
dsc00046)



(Photo
dsc00047)



We explored
the village
with Mr.
Arciniegas,
Woody and
Sam. Had a
few cold
ones at a

Licoreria off a side street. (Photo dsc00051)



(Photo
dsc00052)



Nick, Ian
and Pancho
checking out
the
mechanicals.
(Photo
dsc00036)

“Pre-start” havoc was created when Brett, in trying to get my attention, fired up our big V10 engines. Everybody stopped dancing, shut down the music, started their engines and took off! We let the commotion settle before pulling out.

At the beginning of the second leg (first stage), we were behind. We stepped on it to catch up, passing boat after boat in the narrow river bends, unfortunately not realizing our huge rooster tail was drowning many of the boats we left in our wake! This raised complaints in the following mornings drivers meeting.

The leg to **Cunaviche** was very demanding from a navigation standpoint, and we might have fared better playing the tortoise instead of the hare. As we were flying by most of the other boats, we missed the crucial turn-off marker. A yellow flag typically hanging from a tree at a fork in the river indicates turns in the course.

Many boats went off-course, but our speed took us further off-course than most of our competitors before we realized our mistake. At this point it seemed thirty or forty boats were lost and running in all directions on the flooded plains. My main concern was that we could possibly run over fence posts or other obstacles. We had been advised to keep to the center of the main river, which was not always possible with the traffic out there.

There was an occasional village hut close to the river, which for all intents and purposes was in the middle of nowhere. I was wondering what the village people must think of all these high powered boats coming racing through their “back-yards”!?!

I had one eye on the gas gauge with growing concern and the other eye on the horizon gauging the likelihood of the storm that was brewing. We were running at speed going nowhere trying to find our whereabouts in a hurry. The GPS was really of no use even though we had the weigh points marked. The multiplicity of rivers and turns were too new and too close to designate which turn in the maze we need to take.

Thank goodness for Pancho, our Venezuelan Navigator and savior! We had been traveling too fast for him to keep his bearings, but he had the bright idea of visiting one of the local villages huts to get directions. Pancho climbed onto another boat that could take him safely into the “driveway” of the hut. We now had our own local navigator – a twenty-year old Indian who guided us through some “back-roads” as the storm finally hit us drenching everything and everyone around. Visibility was now hampered as we meandered off-course but headed in the right direction. We could see the radio tower of Cunaviche and knew we were close. We were also very close to exceeding our allowed elapsed time for the leg. We had become the lead dog and all the lost boats had tucked in

behind us traveling down tiny rivers just wide enough for our 33 foot Eliminator Daytona.

We finally arrived at our destination. The storm was still pounding, and everyone was mired by confusion. We held up our number and pulled into a center island to get our refueling number. This number determines the sequence in which boats are called to refuel. (Photos dsc00056-59)

Arrived in **Cunaviche**. Collected 200 points (Eventually).

With the village soaked with the extended downpour, our Nexus scouting team secured a building for our teams to “camp” in. Although the building only offered a concrete floor, the shelter was welcome. The building was to have been used as a dance hall and bar. Some quick negotiations by Carlos, one of the principals of Nexus, secured our haven along with 300 cases of beer!

The Nexus crew had dinner ready for us, followed by plenty of discussions of the day’s activities. Mr. Arciniegas conducted our regular team meeting to draw up the plan of attack for tomorrow’s mission for both production and race teams. Meanwhile the Nexus crew put up all the tents, and one-by-one the guys retired.

August 29, 2004 (Sunday)

Last to bed and first to raise the Nexus crew, aided by Woody, erected a “shower” by hanging a hose over wall. This single hose was the only available running water and also supplied the bucket to flush the WC.

In the Pilots meeting at 7:30 a.m. we discovered we hadn’t been awarded our 200 points for making the leg. With everyone speaking in Spanish it was difficult to make our point, so we asked our navigator Pancho to check into it for us. Pancho’s diplomacy in conveying that we did make the time limit, but it clearly wasn’t registered with all the chaos, saved the day. Later on in the race our points were re-awarded for this leg. Thank you Pancho!

Essential to surviving this expedition is a proactive team. Fortunately for us, Nick and Ian, while making their pre-race inspections, spotted a drip from a hydraulic steering line. Tracing this back they found a pressure fitting had split. Some ingenuity from Nick and help from Ian had the pressure fitting replaced in short order. The next challenge was re-fitting the pressure line, which had been located in precarious position. This required removing many parts off the front of the engine and headers for access. It also required a lot of nail biting by the onlookers aware of the other race boats tearing away from the multiple starts down the winding narrow river. (Photos dsc00060-62)

8:00 a.m. Start. To settle the knots in our stomachs while we were tied to the dock making repairs, we had the chance to mix with the locals and hand over some giveaways that we no longer needed on the boat at that time. Better late than never, we headed out in procession with Mr. Arciniegas and John in the support boat to ensure we made the right turns. Once in the open Orinoco river we were able to blast away and catch up with the rest of the race boats. After about 25 miles along the great expanse of the Orinoco, we headed upstream on the **Rio Capanaparo** to **Escuela Granja** (the Farm School).

Collected 400 points. We were probably within the first 50 boats to arrive and it was good to be able to call on the performance of the fast Eliminator 33 Daytona with the powerful Ilmor V10 engines to catch up so quickly.

One of the unique elements of the Nuestros Rios Son Navegables is the Baptism Ceremony for newcomers. Everyone in the race boats and support boats who were new to the race suffered this public welcome and embarrassment. To me this was the turning part of the race. From this point forward I truly felt like I was “in” it rather than “on” it, if that makes sense.

The baptism ceremony comprised of each new team being called up in front of the Neptune panel of four Rally “Elders”, made to kneel in front the panel, and after many words (in Spanish) being anointed over the head and shoulders with a disgusting mixture smelling of old sardines, methylated spirits, and pancakes. I’m not sure whether this had the same repellant effect on the mosquitoes. In fact, I think it had the opposite effect. Needless to say we rushed to wash off in the river at the earliest opportunity. It took many repeated washings with any soap and detergent we could find to eradicate ourselves of the pungent aroma. The silver lining was that the river was refreshing to swim in.

Now we were no longer rookies.

This was also our first stop where we presented gifts to the villagers. PDVSA, CITGO and Mercury donated educational and medical supplies and an all important 40HP Mercury Outboard engine – this effectively gives the villages an “expressway” access to the country!

Captain Kirk, our infamous Expedition Producer for ESPN, set up chairs and camera crew for the next interview of Seebold and Hook. Mr. Arciniegas conducted the team meeting.

After the barbeque dinner, many drinks, and the customary “stories”, now getting bigger and bigger, the team members retired to the camp tents.

Personally, I preferred the boat. Our Eliminator 33 Daytona was graced with a luxurious sun bed on the transom which I fancied taking advantage of. This way I could play Sentry and stare at the galaxy. (Photos dsc00063-70)

August 30, 2004 (Monday)

6:00 a.m. wake-up call from Justin. Breakfast, wash-up in the River, boat check-up.

7:30 a.m. Pilot’s Meeting.

8:00 a.m. Start. We were in the first start for fast boats along with the CITGO Triton Tunnel boat (with Eddie Rhodes and Mike Seebold) and the CITGO Triton Bass boat (with Woody and Sam Youngworth).

We headed back down the Rio Capanaparo to the vast Orinoco and out to our first stop to pick up a refueling number at **El Jobal**. Collected 200 points. (Photos dsc00071-75)

We were the third boat to arrive at this leg and about to pull into a “slip” on the riverbank when we lost another hydraulic steering line. A different high-pressure fitting blew! With

the Orinoco running at a good 5 to 7 knots, we were now at the mercy of the current, drifting with no steering.

Pancho jumped out to get our refueling number, while we got a tow-line and secured a resting position tied off the side of a tug boat in harbor.

Again Nick and Ian were feverously fixing the problem as Pancho was on the radio asking for extra hydraulic fluid to replenish our loss. Our fellow Venezuelan competitors were always first to jump to our rescue and quarts of hydraulic fluid showed up from several boats to help us out. We were almost ready to roll when the lines holding the tugboat to which we were tied broke loose and we got whipped around in fierce current. We took our first whack to the impeccable gelcoat work of the Eliminator, justifiably regarded as the finest in the industry.

With these teething problems resulting from a brand new boat, it was rewarding to be able to depend so reliably on the Ilmor V10 engines which never missed a beat and ran so flawlessly in such challenging conditions. Heading out of El Jobal, after missing the fast boat start again, we were passing boat after boat. It was during the approach to **Piedra Parguasa** that we encountered the strangest water conditions. Like nothing I had seen before, there were huge swirls more than a couple of hundred feet in diameter and at least five feet deep at the center. I wasn't too sure whether we could blast right over it or should try to circumvent. We were running at over 90 mph, so decisions come up fast and our Pancho was urging me to steer around it. I ended up making a sweeping turn around it in the direction of the swirl. Our boat started fishtailing badly as if we were on ice without snow-studded tires.

We made the right choice. Mike Seebold said he saw the big 30 foot inboard Spectre Cat try to run over it and they landed on the side of the boat almost flipping over. People had warned us of these conditions but I had discounted them. Now, I was humbled. This is a serious hazard, more than equal to running on 7-foot seas in the ocean at full tilt.

The next stop was the quaint town of **Puerto Carreno, in Columbia**. We were one of the first boats to arrive and were invited to pull up into the prime dock space at the harbor. We were greeted ceremoniously by the Captain of the Columbian Port, with a dozen Columbian girls waiting to pin Columbian flags on us. Puerto Carrëno was well prepared for the arrival of all the boats and made everyone welcome. Our team took a guided walk five minutes into the town for a lovely lunch and refreshments.

At 2:30 p.m. we joined the start of the final leg of the day to **Puerto Ayacucho**. We had planned on racing with Mr. Arciniegas on this leg, but formalities with the reception kept him occupied. We got a decent start running third back out into the Orinoco River. The first two boats went left around the approaching island and Pancho urged us to veer right to stay on the west side. It took all our confidence in our Venezuelan Navigator not to follow the lead boats, but our faith was proven valid as we emerged out around the island in solid first place. We were keen to reach Puerto Ayacucho in first place, but also highly aware of our plan to preserve the equipment as we were not yet half way through this endurance adventure.

No more than ten miles from the finish, we lost the outdrive off the port side. Completely sheered off — we must have hit a submerged tree or something. At 100 mph this can do

incredible damage and actually almost turned the boat over as it violently swerved to the left. We got a swift tow from our support boat and made it into port with still plenty of light. Being just a few hundred miles from the Equator, Dusk crept in shortly after 6:00 p.m. We collected zero points. If we had collected 200 points here, and everything remained the same, we would have won the Rally. (Photos dsc00078)

The reception at Puerto Ayacucho was splendid with thousands of people lining the riverbank and harbor walls. With music blaring and the beats pounding, we felt a lot better. This was one of the few stages in the race where our magnificent trailer from Extreme Trailers was ready to meet us. It was an opportune time to pull the boat out for repairs and we had a spare day. (Photos dsc00079-88)

When we first got to our hotel we were eager for a shower, dry towels and a mattress to lie on. Our timing was rotten however. While we were waiting to be assigned rooms, the establishment had an electrical fire in the main office, which shorted all the electricity. One more delay. We eventually got to our rooms, which were welcome albeit rather primitive. Dinner was back in town, but roommate Doug Cox and I elected to pass on that and get an early night, only to be ravaged by a couple of pesky mosquitoes in the room.

August 31, 2004 (Tuesday)

Free day in Puerto Ayacucho. 9:00 a.m. breakfast with PDVSA out of town, past the Turtle Rock in a small village with huts by the rapids. A splendid array of food and refreshments were made for us along with music and terrific company. We were presented with authentic baskets carrying local hot source, geographic book of the area and various artifacts. We had photographs with our friends from PDVSA, Noelia (Photos dsc00103) and Doreem Garcia. (Photos dsc00091-102).



Nick and Ian (Photos dsc00108)



Mike and Nigel (Photos dsc00109)

Several challenges confronted us. Probably the toughest was the problem of getting our spare outdrives out of customs. Apparently they had been shipped with too great a declared value, which detained them in Customs with a much longer clearing procedure. Mr. Arciniegas came to our rescue with a call to the Admiral on duty, and with some swift maneuvers from Nexus the drives were cleared and ready for overnight shipping on a private plane.

Another challenge was how to remove the studs left in the outdrive housing. Without drilling these out we would have no way to bolt on the new ones. Nick, our “Jesse James”, devised a clever manner to extract them without having to procure an unlikely drill press.



During the day, I got the privilege to talk at length to one of the founders of the race, Karl Wallner. (Photos dsc00111) Karl lives in Valencia and can be reached at propeller@telcel.net.ve. Karl is in the commercial propeller business, and recounted how the race got started back in 1973. I also had the pleasure of meeting an American family originally from Korea that has been out in this Amazon State for 14 years as a missionary. The mother, Grace Kim, had one son and two beautiful daughters who lived with her and had grown up primarily on their 60-acre ranch on the edge of the Amazonas.



To give us a flavor of the Amazon, one of the soldiers offered us a “baby” Boa Constrictor he had caught for 10,000 Bolivars (about \$5 USD). It seemed like a great deal, but I thought we might encounter some problems in either customs or immigration on the way home. (Photos dsc00113-115)



We also got to meet many of the other teams. One team was from Columbia and invited



Mr. Arciniegas, our Leader and Mr. Arteaga, Nuestros President (Photos

us to a similar rally in their country for next year that also finishes up on the great Orinoco. (Photos dsc00110) dsc00116)

September 1, 2004 (Wednesday)

9:00 a.m. We had a team member waiting patiently for the plane to arrive with our spare drive.

10:00 a.m. we had the drive in Nick and Ian’s hands ready for installation, which normally takes an hour at least. Within 45 minutes the drive was installed. When ESPN cameraman Jan Glenn asked Nick for a comment, Nick replied of the cuff, “We did it just in the Nck of time!”

10:30 a.m. Pilots Meeting was in progress as the team worked incessantly to repair the boat and get her ready for launching. We also made the start just in the Nick of time.

11:00 a.m. Start of the Rally to **Paso Puente**, where we refueled. The refueling was done in groups of about 10 boats at a time. A petroleum tanker was stationed roadside by a dock and 10 fuel lines were lined out for the boats to refuel. Kind of like a litter of puppies feeding from Mother’s milk!

Special activity was Darts. We selected Ian to do the damage. Most Englishman are fine dart players as it has become a national pastime in British pubs, so it came as a big surprise when Ian missed the target on all three throws! He claimed he needed a pint of beer in his other hand to maintain his balance!

Moving up the **Rio Parguasa** the scenery changed from the wide-open expanse of the Orinoco to a jungle-like, heavily forested tropical river, full of S bends.

Before arriving at our campsite, we took shelter under the bridge in Piedra Parguasa as the skies had decided to empty again. Fortunately for me and while it was still dry, I had decided to give Ian a turn driving. Through the storm Ian had pulled the cover of his raincoat over his face to maintain somewhat. The rest of us where crouched under the deck taking shelter.

Once at the bridge we tried to tie off, but with the current so strong, both Pancho and Nick fell overboard trying to get the lines attached. After the rain stopped we headed further upriver to our campsite at the village. We unofficially gave away shirts and shoes, and in return the villagers gave each boat captain a billet-carved wooden paddle. Officially on behalf of CITGO, many educational and medical supplies were gifted, as well again as a Mercury 40HP outboard by Mercury Marine. (Photos dsc00118-30 and Photos dsc00137)



This was one of my favorite spots as the villagers were so friendly, which surprised me because they are far from civilization. The temperature in **Maracas** was quite mild after the rain. In the shade of the forestation, the Ocuque sisters, Maria Carolina and Maria Alexandra, cooked us delicious Mediterranean pasta. This pair were always first up and last to go to bed, and took care of every team member's eating and drinking wishes – which was usually another cold beer!

September 2, 2004 (Thursday)

An early rise again was required as the start of the first leg of the day was back down the river 30 miles, through tight S curves, to **Piedra Parguasa**. (Photos dsc00141-155).

The Pilot's Meeting there was at 9:30 a.m. and the start was scheduled for 10:00 a.m.



The first mark of the course was in **La Urbana** and then onto **Caicara** for refueling. Refueling for both Petroleum and Polars – the Venezuelan Ice Cold Beer. Like every stop we got to see how Venezuelans like to have fun: lots of music and dancing at every opportunity. (Photos dsc00165) The welcome from Enrique Cenci.

One this leg we got to run with Mike Seebold and Eddie Rhodes in the CITGO Triton Tunnel boat. They were doing a fantastic feat of keeping up with us in the 18-foot two-seater Seebold tunnel – they were literally flying across the Orinoco! (Photos dsc00147 and Photos dsc00163)

We got to **Parmana**, the final stop of the day, in first or second place, and so got to choose the best spot to anchor off the beach. When Sam arrived in the Triton bass boat, they parked next to us and became our boarding path to shore.



The special Rally activity at Parmana was the hula-hoop. Unfortunately for me, the foreign environment had caught-up with my stomach and I was feeling a bit under the weather, so we elected Pancho – the biggest guy on the boat – to be our hula-hooper. I wish this had been on camera. Pancho didn't let us down and won this event, helping to recover some of our lost points.

The host at Parmana had graciously rigged up a shower for us to funnel into and get cleaned up. After dinner, Mr. Arciniegas surprised us with some first class entertainment. Our multi-talented leader had been hiding his talents as a performer, singing and playing the Cuatro (Venezuelan Cowboy guitar).

Later some of us wandered into “town” to the local outdoor bar/dance hall. Having a mining style headlamp, I lead the way so we'd avoid the cow patties in the mud lane. None of us stayed there too long and headed back to camp. I took my customary post onboard, or rather under the deck of our chariot.

September 3, 2004 (Friday)

8:30 a.m. Pilots meeting. I was still the worse for wear, so I handed our papers to Brett and asked him to go in my place with Pancho.

9:00 a.m. Start. The preparation of having other team members familiar with running the boat now had come in handy. I asked Nick to take my shift at driving. We left **Parmana** and headed out to **Santa Cruz** and then onto our final destination, **Ciudad Bolivar**.

Arriving at Ciudad Bolivar was a crowning achievement.

First, it filled my heart to see my wife standing on the shore. We had only been gone ten days, but it seemed like many more. Janet, along with Brett's wife Suzanne, our journalists, team member Tony Wiese, and Power Boat Magazine sharp shooter, Tom Newby awaited us.

Second, I felt like we had overcome our biggest challenge – to get here. From this point we were in our chartered territory: A flat out high-speed run for the last 65 miles to the checkered flag.

The fuel tanks were precision filled with just sufficient fuel to make two test runs in the morning, then complete the sprint run with little to spare. By special arrangement, we garnered high-octane avgas from the nearby airport. This enabled Ian to recalibrate the

engine ECUs (computer brain boxes) for maximum power. Our team checked the boat inside and out, every fluid, every nut and bolt.

Our team member Tony Wiese showed the value of our offshore racing experience with a typical-to-us modification of Sam's CITGO Triton Bass boat, but what was obviously quite novel to everyone else. While raising the height of the Mercury Outboard, he used a batch of bicycle inner tubes to tie the outdrive leg to the transom. This cured the chine-walking problem and increased the top speed by 5.7 mph.

September 4, 2004 (Saturday)

The big day and an early start as we departed the hotel at 6:30 a.m. We were able to get in two fast runs to test props and make our selection for the day. Downriver we clocked our best speed of 115 mph with just a couple of hundred RPMs off max. We tried the smaller pitch and lost speed. With a tank full of fuel, we felt the bigger pitch props were right on. The two long outdrives had sapped quite a bit of efficiency compared to the normal shortie outdrives. The extra hydrodynamic drag probably accounted for the 10 mph being robbed from the terminal velocity.

After 1135 miles we were fortunate to be there in such relatively good shape, and most importantly the engines were purring in harmony – still never having missed one beat and still on the original oil after 30 hard hours.

10:30 a.m. Pilots Meeting. 11:00 a.m. Start. The team onboard the CITGO Eliminator ILMOR for the final speed run was Mr. Rivero, Pancho, Brett and myself. Nick was the co-pilot in the CITGO Triton Bass boat (and won his class). Ian went ahead in a support boat.

The key to the start is the timing of the speed to hit the dropping of the white flag across the start line at full speed. With our acceleration we were able to muscle into fourth place on the starting line and positioned perfectly in the center with the eventual winner (24 foot Skater) to our port and two other boats ahead to our starboard, Andrea II and Lago X. We moved up into third place fairly quickly, having a slight edge in speed over the triple Mercury Outboard powered Andrea II. We were tracking evenly with the other two boats, until Lago X slowed with problems and we moved into second place. With a quick look over my shoulder, I could see no other boats in sight so I knew we had only to focus on the Skater ahead of us.

We were seeing a steady 114 mph on the GPS and the Eliminator was carrying nicely. We faced a dilemma. If we let the cat fly its own way to optimize the top speed this had us going off course, and to make a course correction we lost 2 mph regardless of trim and tab settings. But it was clear that if we continued on the wrong course at the faster speed we would be just getting further away from where we needed to be. We would still have to eventually make the course correction and then head back to our destination. So it was simple to realize we needed to take the shortest line and we relied on Pancho to keep on track with his usual precision.

12:32 p.m. We crossed the line in **Puerto Ordaz**, about 7 seconds off first place. We did take first in our class and eventually discovered we were third in our class for points in the Rally. We were greeted with a tremendous reception. We pulled into the marina and docked to be rushed by interviewers, cameras, microphones, and interpreters from all

sides. Two boats later and about 15 minutes separated us from our sister boat, the CITGO Triton F1 Tunnel boat of Mike Seebold and Eddie Rhodes. Three boats later our other team boat arrived with Sam Youngworth and our Nick Pavlichek. Puerto Ordaz Aerial photo. (Photos dsc000169)

Personally, I've never seen so much press, and being the Pilot for the main CITGO entry had us squarely in the crosshairs of every media person in sight. At one point I counted 14 microphones in front of me and probably as many cameras, including all the national TV channels. Before we pulled the boats out, we seized the opportunity for a photo shoot of the boats parading in front of the picturesque waterfalls.

We got a few hours to recoup in the hotel before the awards ceremony started. During that time, we had our final staged interview with ESPN. They sat me with my back to the waterfalls and pitched the questions to capture the culmination of this incredible adventure. The format of the interview was quite fun and hopefully will be revealed in the television show when it airs on ESPN on December 19, 2004.

****Opinion Point**

One of the top five memories in my 30-year racing career. The highlight of this expedition for me was that it added an extra dimension to our typical racing matrix. Close to last year's adventure, which took me to Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf to visit our troops as part of the NASCAR USO Tour with Geoffrey Bodine, Jerry Nadeau and Tony Schumacher. Thanks to Rodrick and Doug at Cox Marketing Group, I was promoted to replace Geoff Burton, CITGO's Winston Cup driver of the #99 car.

What differentiates this competition from others is the multi-dimensional element:

- It's a very long race, with daunting conditions for both man and machine.
- It's a masters challenge in high-speed navigation
- It's a charitable event, where educational and medical supplies and machinery are donated to villagers in need.
- It's an eight-day party, where you can't help but embrace the wonderful fun-loving Venezuelan people and other people from around the world.
- It's a tour, on a National Geographic level, of the expansive beauty of Venezuela and Columbia, the plains and the Amazon Rain Forest.
- It's a major accomplishment, particularly as a visitor.

At the end of the day, or eight days, we all had our fair share of cuts, scapes and bruises (and broken shoulder in the case of Doug Cox), dehydration and some complaints in the lower GI tract, but that all pales in significance to the adventure we triumphed in.

ESPN Producer Kirk asked Mike Seebold and myself the question, "Would you do it again?" Mike said, "Maybe, but only in a bigger boat." My reply was, "I'd do it again tomorrow if we had the chance." I think that says it all.

September 5, 2004 (Sunday)

In a perfect complement to the hectic survival of the last eight days, Janet and I joined Woody and Mary on a private plane to visit Canaima and the Angel Falls (Photos dsc00172-179). An amazingly peaceful place several hundred miles south of Puerto Ordaz, and home of the most spectacular waterfalls in the world. Not discovered until the 1950s, this resort is only accessible by boat or airplane.

September 6, 2004 (Monday)

We flew back to through Puerto Ordaz to Caracas arriving late in the evening.

September 7, 2004 (Tuesday)

We returned to New York, ready for the Super Boat International race on the Hudson.

The Race Team

Nigel Hook, Pilot and CITGO Captain

Having always enjoyed a stellar relationship with CITGO and Cox Marketing Group, I doubted this expedition would be anything less than a triumph, and I don't think anyone was disappointed.

After racing in many countries, and indeed many continents, I found this endurance event to be a new challenge.

Even quite a distinct contrast from last year's endurance race from San Francisco to Los Angeles, racing non-stop against the clock in the open seas. Running hard in the ocean for almost seven straight hours was a long, long time. Every hour or hundred miles or so seemed to bring new conditions both in climate and waves. We would transition from relatively flat waves but big swells, to outright rough seas. That was somewhat like a cross-country meet.

In this endurance race in Venezuela, racing in a 1200 mile Rally spread over 8 days was different in that each leg within each stage/day provided a break and recuperation. But eight days, nevertheless, is a long time to remain focused on a race. This was certainly one of the formidable challenges.

Brett Seber, Co-Pilot

I had invited Brett to throttle the boat. Brett had raced with me in the big Scarab in Oceanside last year, where Brett drove and I throttled, so it seemed a versatile combination. After winning in Oceanside, Brett later asked me to help with subsequent promotions bringing Fox Sports Net to cover powerboat racing on the West Coast and also with the APBA National race in Marathon, Florida. (Footage from the TV show available upon request – call Barbara Biers at 619-733-4040).

Brett was invited to the team to expedite the Eliminator 33 Daytona, which was built specially for this event. Brett had raced this boat before and had a close relationship with Bob Leech, owner and founder of Eliminator. Brett arranged for the spare parts to be shipped to Venezuela.

Nick Pavlichek, Crew Chief and reserve Pilot

Nick is my throttleman for our USA national competing Superboat team. Nick is my main man during the 17-race season our team runs in APBA, Offshore Super Series, and Super Boat International.

Outside of racing, Nick runs the Alton Company, which extends and customizes special trucks. Last year at the SEMA Show in Las Vegas, Nick's company took top honors for FORD. We call Nick our "Jesse James" after the star on Monster Garage, because of his extraordinary talents to fabricate and fix anything anywhere anytime. For more information on this, see the September/October 2004 Edition of TRUCK TREND and the article on pages 56 through 59 titled *Show-Truck Perfect*.

Nick was originally introduced to the team last year as a sponsor when his truck company took the team's 2003 GMC Sierra tow vehicle and stretched it from a four-door to a six-door. With a National team consisting of eight people, the six-door truck enables us to travel together at race sites, and gets almost as much attention as the race boat.

Nick and his employees are responsible for rigging and maintaining the #7 super Vee "Lucas Oil" National race boat in the States. Nick was invited to this race for his special "fixit" abilities and also for his talents in piloting the boat should Brett or myself be indisposed for any reason along the long way.

Ian Hawkins, Crew Mechanic

Ian was one of the first people I contacted on preparing for this event, as it was clear that a pair of the new Ilmor V10 Viper motors would be the ideal power plant. Both Ian and I originate from Northampton in England, home of Silverstone and the British Formula One Grand Prix. Ian used to work for Cosworth engineering in Northampton, where I also had close relationships.

Ian subsequently hooked-up with the former Cosworth alumni, Mario Illien and Paul Morgan, founders of Ilmor. Ian's experience was invaluable in many ways, as he had traveled the world supporting the Formula One teams. As far back as the reign of Emerson Fittipaldi, and Jackie Stewart, Ilmor's reputation was built as the designer and manufacturer of the Formula One engines for Mercedes McLaren. Ilmor builds the V10 engines that power David Coulthard and Kimi Raikkonen (who recently won their first Formula One Grand Prix of 2004).

Ian moved to the States many years ago with Ilmor to support Mario Andretti's team. Ilmor also recently added this year's Indy 500 win to the list of credits. Currently, Ian is key man running the new Marine Division of Ilmor. Ilmor is owned primarily by Mario, Paul and Roger Penske. Daimler Chrysler also has a stake in the company.

Tony Wiese, Publicist

Tony is one of the longest standing members of my team. He has been around boat racing internationally for many decades. Tony was first invited to be Navigator on my National team in 1998. His contributions to the team have been invaluable and influenced many areas. As well as writing for several publications, Tony has also brought many sponsors to the team including Alcoa, Goodyear, Nikon Optics and many more. One of most significance, being the Alton Company and Nick Pavlichek.

Francisco Torrealba, Navigator 0 414 429-2049

PANCHO!

Special thanks and tremendous appreciation to –

Fernando Duprat, Nexus Director

Carlos Martel, Nexus Director

Federico Lorente, Nexus Executive Producer

And all the other invaluable members of the great Nexus Team!

PRESS RELEASES

Noticia De Actualidad

26-08-2004

World and National Champions in Venezuela

PDV and CITGO rev their engines in the 31st International Rally “Nuestros Ríos Son Navegables” (Our Rivers are Navigable)

Antonio Rivero, CITGO’s executive vice president: “In combining our efforts with those of our parent company, PDVSA, as well as with the CVG and the National Institute for Tourism, we are contributing in our own small way to the realization of this rally in its maximum potential, thus projecting Venezuela’s beauty and its touristic potential.”

Francisco Jiménez, DELTAVEN’s Managing Director: “For our company it is very important to participate in this competition and support the sport’s development, because it is a way of expressing our appreciation for the admirable welcome that the cities and towns from the Central and Southern regions of the country have given our PDV brand. We feel very satisfied to be able to give you the highest quality standards and cutting-edge technology that back the Venezuelan oil industry’s products.”

Nigel Hook, World Champion: “I’m eager to participate in this competition and visit the wonderful country that is Venezuela. CITGO has given me a great opportunity and I hope that the Venezuelan people, their company, and all CITGO employees will feel proud of our participation and performance.”

Caracas, August, 25 of 2004.- In an impressive challenge through Venezuelan rivers, Petróleos de Venezuela, through its brands CITGO and PDV, present in Venezuela and some 20 Latin American and Caribbean countries, as well as the United States, announces its participation in the 31st International Rally “Nuestros Ríos Son Navegables” (Our Rivers are Navigable), an event that will take place between August 28th and September 4th, 2004.

In this nautical competition, which begins in San Fernando de Apure, Apure state, and concludes in Puerto Ordaz, Bolívar state, CITGO and PDV will display the most advanced engines, as well as their team’s audacity and boldness. These teams will face the country’s inhospitable rivers and some 120 outboard motor boats from countries around the world. Among the participants traveling the 1,970-kilometer course that stand out are Argentina, Colombia, Spain, and the United States.

CITGO: Leaving its mark in Venezuelan rivers

The participation of CITGO Petroleum Corporation, the subsidiary of Petróleos de Venezuela in the United States, in this sporting competition represents their institutional and civic contribution towards Venezuela's integrated development and its international vision. According to Antonio Rivero, CITGO's executive vice-president, "In combining our efforts with those of our parent company, PDVSA, as well as with the CVG and the National Institute for Tourism, we are contributing in our own small way to the realization of this rally in its maximum potential, thus projecting Venezuela's beauty and its touristic potential."

In this competition, Nigel Hook and Mike Seebold, both world champion pilots, will pilot three boats brought from the United States, each carrying PDV and CITGO logos.

"We can't forget the competitive nature of this rally," noted Rivero. "We have selected professional pilots, world champions, in order to act as ambassadors of outboard motor boat racing. We hope to make this a much more competitive event, not only this year, but in the years to come as well."

Hook, a professional pilot since 1974, built a boat especially for this rally. Despite having earned three APBA championships in the United States and a world title, this experienced pilot has never had the opportunity to run courses as remarkable as those offered in the rally "Nuestros Rios Son Navegables."

"Venezuela's topographical conditions are very different from those in the United States," says Hook, holder of the speed record between San Francisco and Los Angeles at 6 hours and 48 minutes. "After making a scouting trip of the zone in June of this year, I decided that the craft most suited to winning this event would be a catamaran like the Eliminator. That is what I have brought and I am anxious to participate in this competition and to visit the wonderful country that is Venezuela. CITGO has given me a great opportunity and I hope that the Venezuelan people, the company, and all CITGO employees will feel proud of our participation and performance."

Pilot Mike Seebolt, member of the CITGO team, expresses his point of view about his participation in this rally, "I think that it is incredible and I am very excited. I have prepared myself for weeks in order to face this challenge and I only want to begin the race. I have been waiting to meet the other pilots and to learn about their cultures."

PDV brings you the Adventure

DELTAVEN, subsidiary of Petróleos de Venezuela and business leader in the marketing of the PDV brand, maintains an active participation in extreme aquatic sports in Venezuela and shows this support through its 30-year commitment in sponsoring the rally "Nuestros Ríos son Navegables". This activity has permitted DELTAVEN to prop its business objectives and promote tourism in Venezuela here and abroad.

Francisco Jiménez, DELTAVEN's Manager Director remarked, "This initiative has our support and participation. Our team will give its best to meet this challenge successfully and to this end it has in its favor the knowledge of the course and experience in this famous rally."

With the presence of outstanding Venezuelan pilots, such as Miguel Ángel Alcaras and Carlos Faría, PDV's team plies the country's rivers in eight adventure-packed days.

Miguel Ángel Alcaras reaffirmed his acceptance of this rally's challenge. "I'm very pleased to share with partners from CITGO, who also have significant experience in championships like this one. They are competitors that drive us to give the best we have". Alcaras, who has participated for five consecutive years in the International Rally "Nuestros Ríos son Navegables," has finished in the top positions and earned the championship title in this event in 2000.

PDVSA, through its commercial brands PDV and CITGO, welcomes the competitors and salutes one more time the initiative "Nuestros Ríos son Navegables". Sports are vital for achieving sustainable development and the improvement of quality of life.

saladeprensa@pdvsa.com

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ESPN To Televisé Powerboat 'Rumble In The Jungle'

CITGO Sponsors 1,100-Mile Venezuelan River Race

BRISTOL, Conn. (Sept. 13, 2004) -- Formula One and Offshore World Champions Mike Seebold and Nigel Hook are no strangers to endurance powerboat racing, but put these two multi-championship winners on the world's third largest river for eight days, add course obstacles like crocodiles, piranha and anacondas, throw in a cheering section of howler monkeys and macaws and you've got a world class rumble in the jungles of Venezuela that will be televised on ESPN on December 19 from 4 – 5 p.m. ET.

The CITGO-sponsored *Nuestros Ríos Son Navegables* was held Aug. 28-Sept. 4, 2004 in Venezuela, more specifically in more than a dozen of rivers including the famous Orinoco River, which originates along the southern borders of Venezuela and Brazil. The 1,100-mile race features Seebold and Hook in their high performance race boats competing against 120 other challengers, including 30 other high performance race boat pilots from around the world.

"We believe that sponsoring *Nuestros Ríos Son Navegables* and getting ESPN through the adventure of producing this TV show will certainly take this unique rally to the next level and project the beauty of Venezuelan grass lands and rain forests" said Antonio Rivero, CITGO Executive Vice President.

The event was the brainchild of two adventuresome Venezuelans 30 years ago who wanted to prove that the rivers of their native country were navigable. Navigation challenges for the competitors included swirling rapids, sandy islands, shifting channels and extreme tidal action. At times, the race resembled a floating party, with overnight stops that included a bikini contest. But as the telecast will show, the final 65-mile sprint to the finish on the final day of competition was no party for any of the competitors or their crews...and neither was the challenge of keeping the high-maintenance machinery in tune throughout the grueling eight-day race.

“We had our share of teething troubles with the new rig and it was a challenge to keep the crew focused through that, but the biggest challenge by far was the navigation,” said Hook, who currently holds the endurance record for racing from San Francisco to Los Angeles in six hours, 45 minutes. “Luckily we had a Venezuelan navigator, or we’d still be out there!”

Hook noted that the best part of the event was “the welcome, friendship and warmth of the Venezuelan people, who made us feel like brothers. We’ll definitely be back next year.”

CITGO, the official sponsor of the eight-day endurance race on Venezuela’s rivers, also sponsors Venezuelan Champion Racecar driver Milka Duno in the Grand Am Series. Duno was the first woman in history to race in the LMP 900 class in the 2002 ALMS Championship. She is the first Latina to win a major international sports car race, the Grand Am Rolex Series’ Grand Prix of Miami last March.

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Also see http://www.abinflatables.com/news_info_rally.htm

BASIC GEOGRAPICAL DATA

Venezuela

Venezuela is located on the northern tip of South America between latitudes 0° 38’ 53” and 12° 11’ 46” North, and longitudes 59° 47’ 30” and 73° 22’ 38” West. It covers 916,445 km², and its borders to the North are the Caribbean Sea, to the Northeast the Atlantic Ocean, to the South is Brazil, to the West is the Republic of Colombia, and to the Southeast, the Republic of Guyana.

Venezuela’s geographical location near the equator gives it a tropical climate, with temperature variations depending upon elevation. There are two main seasons per year: a dry season from November to March and a rainy season from April to October, with some fluctuation at the beginning and end of seasons.

The climate is warm to hot all year, with averages somewhat lower in the dry season; mean temperatures range between 24°C and 27°C. Lowest temperatures are found on the snowy Andean Peaks, where averages drop below 0°C in the coldest month. The highest averages, topping 38°C, are registered in some lowland cities such as Maracaibo. Rainfall varies from a minimum of 400mm a year in some coastal areas, to 4,000mm yearly in the Amazonian forests of Venezuela’s far south.

San Fernando

San Fernando is the capital of Apure State and part of the plains, young, sedentary lands that cover some 300,000km² to form the largest savannas of northern South America, crossed by numerous rivers feeding the Orinoco. This great river bordering the Guayana Shield divides the country into two. Over 2,100km long, it has more than 400 tributaries in a basin of one million km² in Venezuela and Colombia. The Orinoco is not only

Venezuela's biggest river, but the third in the World when measured in volume with a flow of 60,000m³ per second.

Puerto Ayacucho

Puerto Ayacucho is the capital of the Amazona State, the second biggest state of the country, after Bolivar State, but the one that has the least population. The Amazon is called the vegetable lung of the planet, because it's the biggest reserve of oxygen in the World. In this territory you can find lowlands that parallel rivers including the Upper Orinoco, Ventuari, Casiquiare and Rio Negro. This state is the wettest part of the country with high temperatures and a great variety of tropical forests.

Ciudad Bolivar

Ciudad Bolivar is the capital of Bolivar State, the biggest state of Venezuela with 240,528 Km². This city has a lot of history in its streets and you can visit the Angostura Bridge and walk around the colonial area or go to Orinoco Avenue.

Puerto Ordaz

Puerto Ordaz is a city in the Bolivar State and it's known as industrial and modern, where you can get a good mix of technology, parks and arts.

NUESTROS RIOS SON NAVEGABLES — RULES

	Category	Total Power	Type of Engine	Engine Height	Length	Hull	Comments
1 E N G I N E	VTD	FB: up to 250 HP	Commercial	Minimum 5"	Up to 23'	In "v"	Entertainment boat of high board (rail), with standard engine.
		DF: up to 315 HP	Standard				Minimum Board 30".
	VTA	FB: up to 250 HP	Commercial	Minimum 5"	From 20' up to 23'	In "v"	Sport boat of lower rail, with standard engine.
		DF: up to 315 HP	Standard				Minimum board 28"
	TF	FB: up to 250 HP	Commercial	Minimum 5"	Larger than 23'	In "v"	Family boat with cabins and standard engine
DF: up to 340 HP		Standard					
TFS	Free	Racing	Free	Larger than 23'	In "v" or "v" modified	Sport or entertainment boat, prepared for racing.	
VTAS	Free	Racing	Free	Larger than 20'	En "v" and/or prepared	Sport or entertainment boat, prepared for racing. Minimum board 28"	
2 E G I N E S	TFA	FB: up to 500 HP	Commercial	Minimum 5"	From 24' up to 32'	In "v"	Family boat with cabins and two standard engines
		DF: up to 630 HP	Standard				
	TFB	FB: up to 500 HP	Commercial	Minimum 5"	Larger than 32'	In "v"	Family boat with cabins and two standard engines
		DF: up to 680 HP	Standard				
TFAS	Free	Racing	Free	From 24'	In "v" and/or prepared	Sport or entertainment boat, prepared for racing. Requires special conditions for pilots	
VTC	Free	Free	Free	From 24' up to 30'	Catamarán	Sport boat, prepared for racing. Requires special conditions for pilots	
L I B R E	FL	FB: higher than 600 HP	Free	Free	Free	Free	Boat of high production prepared for racing.
		DF: higher than 680 HP					Requires special conditions for pilots

NUESTROS RIOS SON NAVEGABLES — STAGES

Day	Stage	Section	Destiny	Distance		Hour of Exit	Assigned time		Hour of Arrival	Observations	Score Maxima
				km	miles		Group A	Group B			
1											
Saturday	I	1	San Fernando – San Rafael de Atamaica	129	80	9:00 a.m.	2:55	2:00	11:55 a.m.	Control - Activity 1	200
28-8-2004		2	San Rafael de Atamaica - Cunaviche	55	34	2:00 p.m.	1:15	0:50	3:15 p.m.	Control - Gasoline - Spends the night	200
2											
Sunday	II	1	Cunaviche - School Farm	175	109	10:00 a.m.	3:40	2:34	1:40 p.m.	Control - Baptism	400
29-8-2004										It fishes - Queens - Spends the night	
3											
Monday	III	1	School Farm - The Jobal	34	21	7:30 a.m.	0:45	0:30	8:15 a.m.	Control - Gasoline	200
30-8-2004		2	The Jobal - Carreño Port	113	70	Controlled	It frees	1:40		Activity 2	
		3	Carreño Port - Ayacucho Port	76	47	2:00 p.m.	1:40	1:15	3:40 p.m.	Control - Gasoline - Spends the night	200
Tuesday			Free day								
31-8-2004											
4											
Wednesday	IV	1	Ayacucho Port - Parguasa Stone	126	78	10:00 a.m.	2:35	1:45	12:35 p.m.	Control - Activity 3	400
01-9-2004		2	Parguasa Stone - Step Bridge	50	31	Controlled				Gasoline	
		3	Step Bridge - Maracas	74	46	It frees	Free	It frees		It spends the night frees	
5											
Thursday	V	1	Parguasa Stone - The Urban One	105	65	9:00 a.m.	2:20	1:30	11:20 a.m.	Control - Activity 4	400
02-9-2004		2	Urban - The Caicara	105	65	It frees				Gasoline	
		3	Caicara - Parmana	66	41	It frees				It spends the night frees	
6											
Friday	I SAW	1	Parmana - Santa Cruz	217	135	9:00 a.m.	4:10	2:50	1:10 p.m.	Control	200
03-9-2004		2	Santa Cruz - Ciudad Bolivar	121	75	2:00 p.m.	2:30	1:35	4:30 p.m.	Control - Pernota	200
7											
Saturday	VII	1	City Bolivar - Ordaz Port	105	65	11:00 a.m.	1:45	1:15		Control	400
04-9-2004										Premiación - Closing	
										Total Points	2.800

	Gasoline stage	km	miles
1	San Fernando - Cunaviche	183	114
2	Cunaviche - The Jobal	209	130
3	The Jobal - Ayacucho Port	188	117
4	Ayacucho Port - Step Bridge	175	109
5	Step Bridge - Maracas - Caicara	357	222
6	Caicara - City Bolivar	404	251
7	City Bolivar - Ordaz Port	105	65

SPONSORS

