Texas' Water Safari race is 'the toughest in the world'

By JACK WOLISTON
United Press International

NEW YORK (UPI) — There seems to have been a sudden boom recently in canoeing as a competitive sport.

There are a number of events being staged annually across the nation and most are drawing increasing numbers of competitors.

Some of these competitions are fairly mild but a few are truly rugged and recommended only for the stout at heart.

One of the latter is the Texas Water Safari, described by its sponsors as "the toughest test of endurance, skill, equipment and luck in the world."

In their bid for entrants for this year's fifth annual safari, June 17-24, they advise canoeists: "If you are in good shape and dead game, if you want a man-sized bite of adventure — then enter the Texas Water Safari!"

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THE COURSE for this race is 538 miles — from San Marcos, Tex., to Freeport, Tex. —410 miles of it non-stop through the San Marcos and Guadalupe Rivers and 128 miles of it through coastal waters. Four days are alloted for the second stage with racing confined to daylight hours.

As the race committee puts it: "You'll travel through some of the wildest and most beautiful country in America . . . testing your skill, courage and luck against river and bays . . . You're on your own, racing with a breed of man that thrives on rugged outdoor spirit."

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HERE'S A look at the rules in brief:

Boats must be powered by hand (paddles, oars, poles) or sailed. No motors allowed. Any type of boat may be used.

Equipment and food must be carried from the start. Equipment and team members can be discarded on the way, but nothing new can be taken on. You can catch fish on the way, but no firearms or weapons are permitted. Absolutely no help from any source can be given a team after the race begins.

A team can consist of any number of persons (they've ranged from one to six). Entry fee is $50 per team.

There's no age limit except that persons under 21 must present a waiver from parent or guardian releasing the Texas Water Safari from liability.

For the winners there will be prizes totaling more than $6,500 in value along with a number of trophies.

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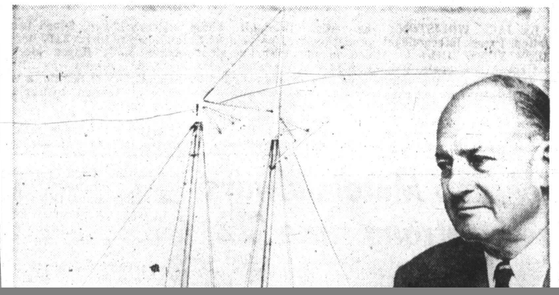
LAST YEAR'S race proved to be the toughest in the four-year history of the event with only 15 teams daring the rain-swollen rivers and gale-swept bays. Just one boat finished. It was manned by Harold and Jay Bludworth, brothers of Houston, Tex.

In that event, Charles Hall and Robert Sanders Jr., of Port Lavaca, Tex.; led during most of the river run only to have their canoe break in two just below Victoria, Tex.

The non-stop 410-mile river run is perhaps the most dangerous leg of the race, with contestants encountering eight dams ranging in height from 15 to 25 feet, numerous low water bridges and log jams.

New oil increases motor life

Increased motor life and reduced maintenance costs are claimed for the new Johnson Premium 50/1 outboard motor oil, introduced for 1967 by the Waukegan, Ill., outboard manufacturer.

Available through Johnson dealerships, the oil is non-metallic and contains a rust inhibitor. The oil's cleaner burning properties increase spark plug life and reduce the possibilities of harmful pre-ignition, company officials report.

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