



Brian McGregor and Paddy Stratton cruise past the boat launch after last year's win.

File Photo

Riverboat races set to go this weekend

Turbulent water, sandbars, jagged rocks all part of the championship excitement

by Brian McGregor

Imagine the jarring impact as the nose of your boat dives into a 12-foot wave at the Cutbank Rapids on the Smoky River - only to be followed by another and yet another.

All three crew members tighten their grip as they realize there's still 30 more miles of turbulent water, sandbars, and jagged rocks ahead of them.

This rare breed of racers are in boats of various sizes and shapes of either aluminum or fiberglass. The engines range from 100 to 550 cubic inch, turbo-charged, fuel injected, blown or natural aspirated.

These boats are propelled by a jet pump enabling them to speed through as little as 3-4 inches of water. The jet boats are driven by a high volume water pump

drawing water through an intake on the bottom of the boat and firing it out the back through a nozzle. The faster you drive the water out the back, the faster the boat will move.

The race team is comprised of three daredevil individuals, each with a distinct job. The driver must not only steer the boat, he also must judge the water

conditions for maximum speed and safety.

The navigator's job is to read the river by selecting the proper channels and route. The mechanic must keep the engine running at top performance for the duration of the race.

Speed and engine endurance are the major requirements to win these river races which may

last for only one day or up to eight.

In addition you will meet many of the world's friendliest people, see some of Canada's greatest scenery and have the most exciting ride of your life.

The Whitecourt Riverboat Circuit Races will be held July 28 and 29. Spectators are welcome.