

# 100 Rafts in Connecticut River Race

By ROBERT E. TOMASSON

About 100 homemade rafts, fanciful and traditional, will push off tomorrow in the ninth Connecticut River raft race, a colorful, bizarre and sometimes raucous contest that can be watched from more conventional boats or from either bank along the almost-five-mile course.

The race begins from Hurd Park, a state park in East Hampton, on the Connecticut River in the south-central part of the state, at 10 A.M., and ends about five miles downriver at another state facility, Haddam Meadows, in Haddam. While the raftsmen and raftswomen who are intent on winning complete the course in about an hour, the river stays alive with unorthodox craft wending their way down until 3 P.M.

As in the eight previous races, many of the rafts are expected to have designs that owe more to whimsy than to nautical principles. One distinctive entry this year will be a raft propelled by two paddlewheels on the front, with power supplied by two seesaws in back.

Last year, the fanciful star of the race was a two-story raft with out-house, player piano and stereo set. It looked most like a partly constructed house that had rolled down a hill, collecting the odd amenity here and there before falling into the river.

## Began as a Lark

The best vantage points are at the two parks, which have ample parking space and picnic areas. There are also some limited parking areas along the river banks, which are in large part heavily wooded and best suited for the venturesome.

The races began in 1975 as a summer lark among friends living around Essex and Old Saybrook. In the first year, some 17 rafts made their way from Deep River to Notts Island in Essex, with a huge picnic following the event. Over the next few years, however, as the race gained acceptance, the number of rafts grew in number and complexity, attracting spectator boats by the hundreds and creating a daylong nautical gridlock at the mouth of the river, which alarmed local officials.

In 1981, the race was moved upriver to provide a more manageable course for the rafts, which this year are expected to have a total of 2,000 crew members. The \$50 entrance fee charged for each raft and \$10 for each crew member are donated to local charities. There is no charge for spectators.

Fun is the order of the day, but strict safety precautions are enforced, and each raft is inspected by a race committee to ensure that it is capable of navigating the sometimes swiftly moving river, which is about

200 yards wide along the course. Rafts must be no smaller than 4 feet by 8 feet and no larger than 12 feet by 36 feet, and must have at least three crew members. Last year, one raft had a crew of 42. The rafts, including rigging, must be homemade, with no commercially manufactured hulls.

## Judging in 2 Categories

Though no engines, motors, propellers, pressurized cylinders or variations thereof are allowed, just about any other propelling device is permitted, including paddlewheels, windmills, treadmills, oars, sails, bicycle-driven wheels and combinations of these. Safety equipment is mandatory.

The race is judged in two categories. The first is made up of the serious competitors, which are determined from last year's top finishers

and from special entries approved by the race committee. The second category is all the other rafts. Prizes include the Mark Twain Award, for best traditional raft; the Pink Oar Award, for the best women's crew, and the Space Craft Award, for best technological construction.

The race site is one of the state's most scenic areas and includes the town of Essex, at the mouth of the Connecticut River, which is now bustling with yachts. Near the waterfront is the Griswold Inn, one of the state's most historic inns and a delightful stop on a summer afternoon or evening.

The racecourse is about a three-hour drive from Manhattan. The most direct route is by the Connecticut Turnpike (I-95) to Exit 68, then north on Route 9 and Route 9A along the river.

# Soviet Says Chess Star Won't Play in California

MOSCOW, Aug. 4 (AP) — The Soviet Union insisted Wednesday that it would not allow its young chess star Gari Kasparov to compete in California on Saturday in the semifinal of the world chess challengers' competition. In a related matter, Abu Dhabi withdrew as the host of the other semifinal.

Florencio Campomanes, the president of the International Chess Federation (FIDE), said that there were strong rumors that the Russians feared that Mr. Kasparov would defect, but that he could not confirm them.

Mr. Kasparov, who is 20 years old, was scheduled to play Viktor Korchnoi, the 52-year-old Soviet defector who now resides in Switzerland. Their match was to be held in Pasadena. The Soviet grandmaster Vasily Smyslov, 62, was to have met the Hungarian Zoltan Ribli, 31, in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates.

## Executive Council Met

The winners of the two semifinal matches will compete later for the right to challenge the world champion, 31-year-old Anatoly Karpov of the Soviet Union. Mr. Karpov won the title by default from Bobby Fischer of the United States in 1975 and successfully defended it against Mr. Korchnoi in 1978 and 1981.

The Russians wanted the Kasparov-Korchnoi match played in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, or Las Palmas, in the Canary Islands, and objected to Abu Dhabi because of the heat there. But the executive council

of the chess federation, at a meeting in Madrid on Saturday, upheld both Pasadena and Abu Dhabi as the sites of the matches.

Soviet chess officials said they had rejected Pasadena because their players were not consulted beforehand. But observers took Mr. Campomanes's remarks as evidence that the Russians did not believe that the United States Government would admit enough Soviet security personnel to prevent Mr. Kasparov's defection.

A few hours after the Soviet statement, an official of the United Arab Emirates Chess Federation announced that Abu Dhabi had withdrawn.

"Since one of the players was reported not to be willing to come to Abu Dhabi, we deemed it necessary to call off the game here," he said.

There was no indication what would happen now. Under federation rules, Mr. Korchnoi would win his match by forfeit if Mr. Kasparov did not play. However, the Smyslov-Ribli match would presumably have to be rescheduled in another location.

## Quintet at Sweet Basil

The bassist Richard Davis is leading a quintet tonight and tomorrow at Sweet Basil (242-1785), 88 Seventh Avenue South. The others in the group are Jon Faddis on trumpet, Ricky Ford on tenor saxophone, Kenny Barron on piano and Freddie Waits on drums. Sets begin at 10 and 11:45 P.M. and 1:30 A.M.; there is a \$7.50 cover and a \$5 minimum.