

Last Year's Alton Powerboat Nationals Champion Talks Strategy Ahead of Weekend Race

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
July 15 2026 2:14 PM

ALTON - With the Alton Powerboat Nationals coming to Alton this weekend, one racer is eager for the chance to mount the podium.

Chris Rinker with Rinker Racing took home first place at last year's competition. With racing set to begin at 9 a.m. on Saturday, July 18, and Sunday, July 19, 2026, Rinker is hopeful he will once again leave Alton with a title.

"We're excited about heading to Alton," he said. "We'll get set up and get ready to rock and roll."

Despite a first-place finish last year, Rinker is the first to recognize that the race didn't go as smoothly as he would have liked. He hopes this year's competition goes off without a hitch.

"Last year was unique. It started out a little bit rough," he said. "I scorched a motor right after I set the fastest lap time and luckily got towed in and was able to get out there and test and qualify and ended up getting a decent enough motor underneath me to win the final."

This year, he is hoping for calmer waters on the Mississippi River. He is excited to once again race on the river and compete against the other drivers.

Rinker is currently ranked fourth, and he said it's "exciting to see these top four or five guys battling it out." He is "glad" to be involved.

As the Alton Powerboat Nationals approach, Rinker is thinking about his strategy and his plans for the weekend. He noted that he struggled with a recent race due to carburation issues. He hopes this weekend's racing is smooth.

“I’m really working hard to get my four-stroke game together. We’re struggling this summer really getting off the beach with the four-stroke,” he explained. “I’ve got one of the best crew chiefs in the business, James Chambers. I’ve got a great team. We normally are spot on every race, but we were just struggling to get off the beach even with two-stroke. The goal is, I’m putting in a lot of testing and time with the four-stroke boat, and I feel like that’s going to be my primary this weekend. I’m pretty excited to get it out there and hopefully get it at the top of the podium.”

Rinker lives in Houston, Texas, and will be traveling to Alton with his sons, who will compete in their own classes. The family will participate in the [meet-and-greet street party on Friday, July 17](#). Rinker enjoys meeting Riverbend residents and getting to know the people in the audience.

He encourages people to enjoy the weekend and soak up the experience. He is thankful for Alton’s support and hopes that they put on a great show for all who attend.

“I just hope we have a great crowd. The Alton people have been incredible. The meet-and-greet event is always great to see people come out,” he added. “I’d really like to see a bunch of people come out to see us and grow the sport in Alton. We’re there to lay it all on the line for the people in Alton and put a show on and ultimately win a series.”

For more information about the Alton Powerboat Nationals, the schedule or how to buy tickets, visit the [official webpage](#).

