SCOTT PELLATON

A graduate of Marshall Elementary, Earl Warren Junior High and Canyon High (1975), Scott Pellaton was born into a watersports family.

His family owned boats, his father’s business partner owned a big boat, and his older brother Tim knew how to get access to boats.

It all conspired to make an elementary-school student curious. Life began as a 20-mph skier with skis. Before long, with brother Tim at the throttle, it became 35 mph.

And then, after he watched Danny Churchill break the world record by going 124 mph at the Oakland Estuary in 1973, he was star-struck. From that moment on, he was on a mission. All of a sudden, 35 mph wasn’t enough.

“I had no idea what I was doing,” Pellaton assured. “I went 112.”

And then reality set in. Even state-of-the-art O’Neill wet suits didn’t come with parachutes in the 1970s.

Pellaton crashed, tore an MCL in his knee and came to the conclusion that, at 100-plus mph, thank goodness the water ski, which was also going triple digits, hadn’t hit him and done more damage than just a ligament tear.

“It’s a giant projectile,” he said of skis. So Pellaton, who entered the Air Force after graduating from Canyon, went ski-less.

He went 68 mph at a competition in Bakersfield in 1977 before recognizing one advantage of skis -- they’re better for the skin at the bottom of your feet.

Unfazed, Pellaton had a new goal: Lee Kirk’s world record of 110.02 mph.

It didn’t take long. Pellaton set a record of 119 mph in 1983.

Enter: the parachute. And, eventually, several new world records, with a top speed of 135.74 mph in 1989 that still stands as the documented mark today.

“From the very beginning, my goal was to be faster than anybody else,” he said. “I had a contract that guaranteed me money if I had the fastest time that year. So I made sure I did.” Seven years in a row.

When Pellaton took up tandem barefoot skiing at a later age, he set the world record at 99 mph, eclipsing the old mark of 87 mph that had stood for 10 years.

Today, the 61-year-old remains surrounded by water. He lives in Discovery Bay and works for Sanger Boats.