

BAHAMAS SPEED WEEK

by Harry S. Morrow

photography: Burton McNeely

PITS

START-FINISH LINE

DESCRIBING the activities, competition and results of such a large scale production as the NASSAU SPEED WEEK sponsored by the Bahamas Automobile Club in a limited space can be compared slightly to the logistics involved in assembling the one hundred cars from twenty-one states and seven foreign countries for the event.

Included in the entries were: 2 Abarths, 2 AC Aces, 2 Arnolt Bristols, 8 Austin-Healeys, 2 Bandinis, 10 Coopers, 17 Ferraris, 2 Frazer Nashs, 21 Jaguars (including 5 Ds), 3 Allards, 4 Maseratis, 5 Mercedes, 2 MG-As, 2 Oscas, 7 Porsche-Spyders, 2 Siatas, 3 Triumph-TR2s, and 1 Pegaso. This assemblage of equipment has probably never been equalled anywhere in the competition Sports Car world at one time. 17 Ferraris and 5 D Jags!! Enough Ferraris for a separate race—and there was one!

Starting with practice day on Thursday, the racing began on Friday with the first of 3 heats for 500cc cars. This event was run on a shorter 2.3 mile course and was made more interesting by the use of 4 chicanes. The first event was won by Johnny Fox of Kentfield, California.

Second race of the day was for production cars up to 2 litres and was won by Edward W. Crawford of Northfield, Illinois in a Porsche Spyder. Crawford took the lead at the end of the first lap and was unchallenged.

Friday's 3rd race was for production cars of two litres which was easily won by Sherwood Johnston of Greenwich, Connecticut in a D Jaguar. There were no incidents. Stirling Moss finished 6th in an Austin Healey 100S which though outclassed in displacement by the others, was brilliantly driven with Moss's usual aplomb.

GOVERNOR'S TROPHY RACE

Seventy cars of all classes lined up for this, the first long race of the week. Nearly everyone except the 500's were entered. Sherwood Johnston in Briggs Cunningham's D Jaguar was among the first away and led the entourage past the starter at the end of the first lap. Followed closely by Phil Hill for five laps he relinquished the lead to Hill but regained it again on the 10th with Louis Brero Sr., second, Marquis de Portago, third. The Marquis finally squeezed

by Brero into second place and was slipstreaming Johnston on the 15th lap directly in front of the grandstand. Sherwood, not realizing Portago was so close, braked early. Portago at 150 miles an hour bumped Johnston and the two went into separate spins leaving 750 feet of skid marks in the center of the track. For seconds it looked as though anything might happen inasmuch as the two were lapping Austin Young in a Jaguar and were being hard pressed by Brero and Hill. Happily, Young kept to his course and was avoided; Brero chose the best side for passing and got through unscathed. It seemed only seconds before Johnston, who had come to a momentary pause outside the course markers, and Portago, who ended up in the center of the straight, had oriented themselves and were off in pursuit of Brero.

On the 17th lap only four seconds separated the four leaders: Brero, Portago, Johnston and Hill. On the 21st lap Brero fell back to 4th and Hill passed Johnston regaining 2nd position. The race continued in this placement (Portago, Hill, Johnston and Brero) to its finish though on the penultimate lap Hill threatened Portago and the result was in doubt until the Marquis crossed the finish line about 20 feet in front of Hill.

Though there were no ambulances or tow trucks on the course during the race, John Dowd flipped his Bandini and Bob Said's Ferrari caught fire and burned. Greb Derujinsky, driving Portago's beautiful Farina bodied Europa Ferrari Coupe turned over with no ill effects other than a smashed top and windshield.

Saturday's events again started with the second heat of the 500cc group and was won this time by Harry Whitney. John Fox was 2nd with Louis Brero, Jr. 3rd. Both Brero and Fox went into bad spins and broke wheels on their cars but managed to limp in ahead of Harry Morrow. The special event for Jaguars only was won by Dr. Richard Thompson in a modified XK. Another special event, this time for Porsche production models only, was won by Art Bunker in a 550 Spyder.

The race for Nassau residents only provided much excitement with a duel for first place between Captain Sherman F (Red) Crise and David Albury. Both of the contestants spun during the five laps but Albury



Phil Hill, after winning the Nassau Trophy Race in Chinetti's new 3.5 litre Ferrari.

managed to squeeze out a well earned victory. It was in this race that Lady Greta Oakes driving her Austin-Healey led her husband, Sir Sidney Oakes in a Jaguar until she was forced out with engine trouble.

The 3rd special event of the day was the Ferrari Classic with 12 of these beautiful machines fighting nose and tail among themselves in a very thrilling race. The race was hotly contested with Hill leading for a time, then Brero Sr., and finally Portago who won in the last stages. Again the racing day passed with no serious accidents or injuries.

NASSAU TROPHY RACE

On Sunday, the final day of racing, the third heat of the 500 cc race opened the program. After a hotly contested five laps Harry Whitney flipped his Cooper and was eliminated from competition with minor scratches and bruises. Louis Brero, Jr. went on to win the event and the overall first place for the Stephenson Trophy.

70 cars lined up for the Le Mans start of the Nassau Trophy Race—the number one race of the week. Among the first out of the pits were Ernest Erickson and Sherwood Johnston with Sherwood going into the lead,

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Unofficial Results

Friday—Formula III, 5 laps, 11.5 miles.

Pos.	Car	Driver	Class
1.	Cooper-Norton	John Fox	500cc
2.	Cooper-Norton	L. Brero, Jr.	500cc
3.	Cooper-Triumph	H. Whitney	500cc

winners average speed: 75.7 mph.

Friday—Prod., under 2000cc, 5 laps, 17.5 mi.

1.	Porsche	E. Crawford	F
2.	Porsche	Bob Davis	F
3.	Porsche	J. Mantz	F

winners average speed: 87.26 mph.

Friday—Prod., over 2000cc, 5 laps, 17.5 mi.

1.	Jaguar D	S. Johnston	C
2.	Jaguar D	C. Wallace	C
3.	Jaguar D	E. Erickson	C

winners average speed: 88.98 mph.

Friday—Governor's Cup, 30 laps, 105 mi.

1.	Ferrari (3.0)	A. dePortago	D
2.	Ferrari (3.0)	Phil Hill	D
3.	Jaguar D (3.5)	S. Johnston	C
4.	Ferrari (4.5)	L. Brero, Sr.	C
5.	Ferrari (4.4)	J. Kimberly	C
6.	Maserati (3.0)	B. Lloyd	D
7.	Ferrari (4.5)	D. Black	C
8.	Porsche (1.5)	E. Crawford	F
9.	Ferrari (4.9)	H. Hively	C
10.	Ferrari (4.5)	D. Collins	C

winners average speed: 92.40 mph.

Saturday—Formula III, 5 laps, 11.5 miles

1.	Cooper	H. Whitney	500cc
2.	Cooper	John Fox	500cc
3.	Cooper	L. Brero, Jr.	500cc

winners average speed: 74.5 mph.

Saturday—Jaguar Race, 5 laps, 17.5 mi.

1.	Jaguar XK	R. Thompson	C
2.	Jaguar XK	L. Brero, Sr.	C
3.	Jaguar XK	F. Windridge	C

winners average speed: 85.75 mph.

Saturday—Porsche Race, 5 laps, 17.5 mi.

1.	Porsche	Art Bunker	F
2.	Porsche	Austin Conley	F
3.	Porsche	M. Marshall	F

winners average speed: 86.02 mph.

Saturday—Local Residents, 10 laps, 35 mi.

1.	Jaguar XK	D. Albury	C
2.	Jaguar XK	S. Crise	C
3.	Jaguar XK	L. Kenedy	C

winners average speed: 81.07 mph.

Saturday—Ferrari Race, 5 laps, 17.5 mi.

1.	Ferrari (3.0)	A. dePortago	D
2.	Ferrari (3.0)	Phil Hill	D
3.	Ferrari (4.5)	L. Brero, Sr.	C
4.	Ferrari (4.5)	D. Duncan	C
5.	Ferrari (4.9)	Jack McAfee	C
6.	Ferrari (2.9)	E. Lunken	D
7.	Ferrari (4.4)	J. Kimberly	C
8.	Ferrari (4.5)	D. Black	C
9.	Ferrari (2.7)	R. Williams	D
10.	Ferrari (2.6)	J. Shakespeare	D

winners average speed: 95.14 mph.

Sunday—Formula III, 5 laps, 11.5 miles

1.	Cooper-Norton	L. Brero, Jr.	500cc
2.	JBS-Norton	H. Morrow	500cc
3.	Cooper-Norton	J. Fox	500cc

winners average speed: 72.66 mph.

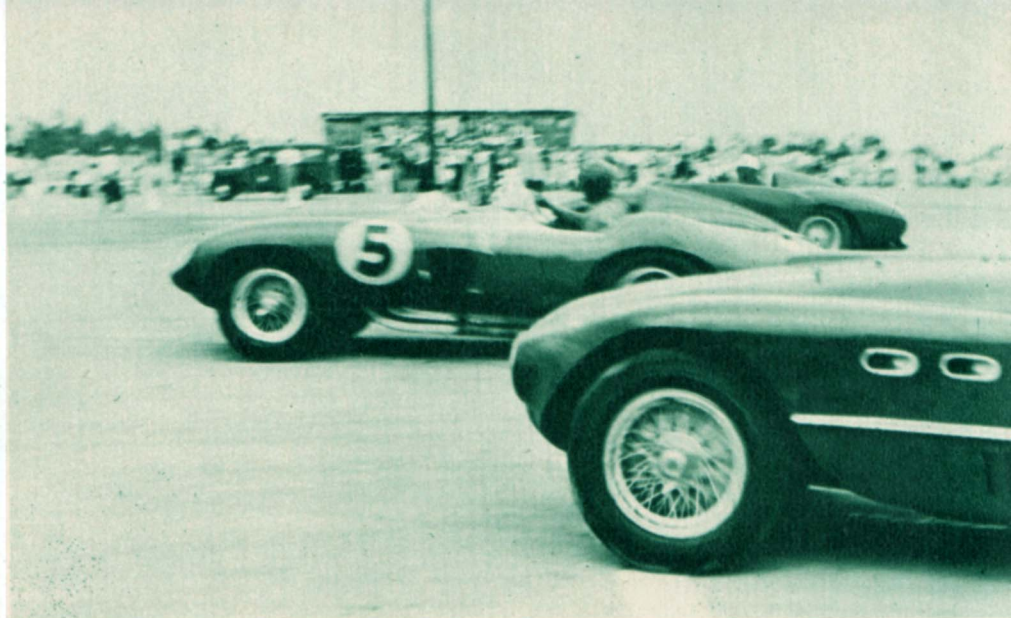
Sunday—Nassau Trophy, 60 laps, 210 mi.

1.	Ferrari (3.5)	Phil Hill	C
2.	Ferrari (3.0)	A. dePortago	D
3.	Maserati (3.0)	M. Gregory	D
4.	Jaguar D (3.5)	E. Erickson	C
5.	Ferrari (4.9)	J. McAfee	C
6.	Ferrari (4.4)	J. Kimberly	C
7.	Ferrari (4.5)	D. Duncan	C
8.	Jaguar D (3.5)	C. Wallace	C
9.	Porsche (1.5)	E. Crawford	F
10.	Osca (1.5)	S. Weiss	F

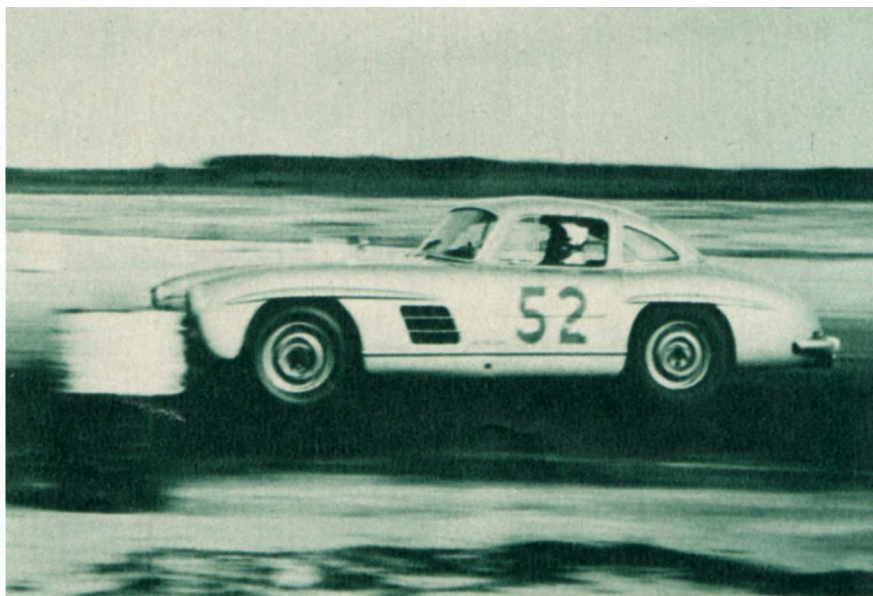
winners average speed: 98.21 mph.

fastest lap: dePortago, 104.226 mph.

ROAD & TRACK, March, 1956

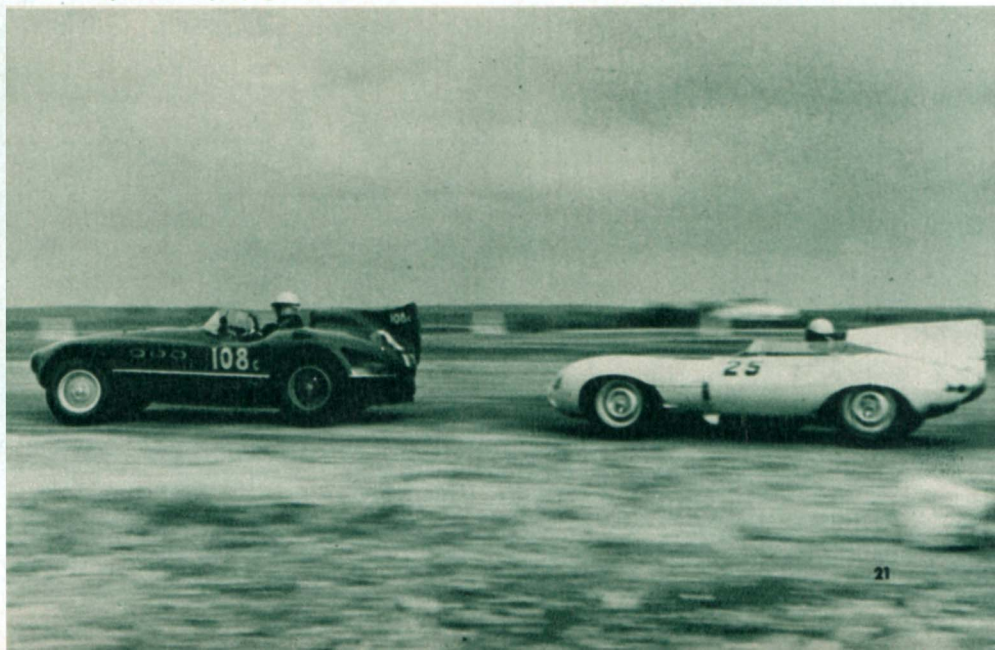


Kimberly and the big 4.4 Ferrari six proved to be the fastest starting combination.



Allen Markelson in the lone 300 SL finished 19th overall, 5th in class D, but ahead of all genuine production sports cars except the D-type Jaguar.

Sherwood Johnston (D-Jaguar) about to overtake Lou Brero in Governor's Trophy race.



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only to relinquish it on the fifth lap to Phil Hill who was never to be headed for the remainder of the race. Actually, after the 10th lap when Johnston gave up second place to Portago, the race became a two-man affair though the leaders, Hill and Portago, did not lap Johnston in 3rd place until the 45th lap. It was unfortunate that Johnston's D-Jaguar threw a rod on the 46th lap, but it put Gregory into 3rd place which he retained for the remainder of the race.

On several occasions, Portago closed on Hill but never got close enough to worry Hill or the spectators. The race was free of injuries but Stephenson and Black collided and Stephenson's car caught fire. The blaze was quickly put out. Stirling Moss had bad luck when his Healey broke a spindle and he was forced to retire.

Both Hill and Portago drove the race non-stop and each figured they had about 5 laps left on their tires, which is cutting it close. The advent of a new name in the winner's circle brought the Nassau Speed Week to a highly successful conclusion.

SEEN & HEARD

Speed records fell on each of the three days of racing. The big record was set Sunday when de Portago was clocked at a lap figure just over 104 mph.

Sir Sidney Oakes working by automobile headlight illumination to repair the generating plant at the hangar so several of the ailing competitors could have light and power to work with during the night—and Sir Sidney then overdue two hours for a dinner engagement!

Nearly everyone trying mentally to compute the dollars and cents equivalent for pounds, shillings and pence when making a purchase.

Stirling Moss may have had only an Austin Healey 100S to drive against a lot of hotter machinery but off the course he had more fun than people, one saw him everywhere—water skiing—swimming—riding a motor scooter in fair company—camping out and generally having a good time.

A number of the competitors were called upon to assist in furnishing background for a British road racing film being shot on the island during Speed Week.

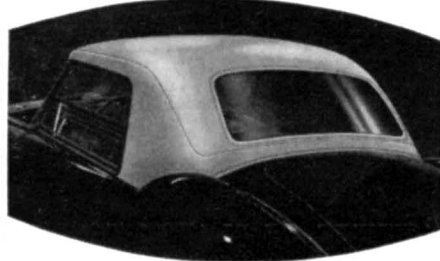
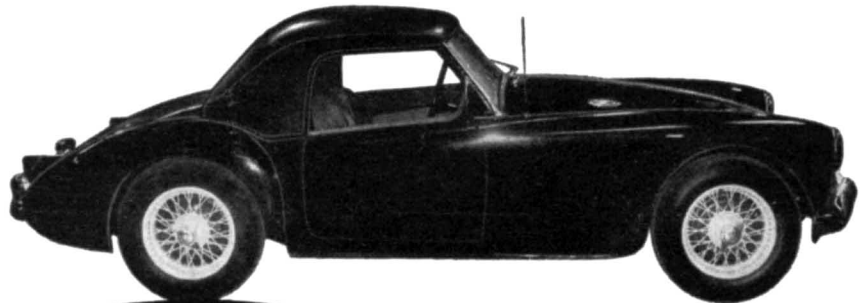
Lou Brero's much raced ex Guiberson 4.5 Ferrari developed heating trouble Friday and Saturday. On Sunday he permitted Dabney Collins to use his rocker arms for Collins' 4.5 Ferrari—and then drove the Collins Ferrari in the Nassau Trophy race but dropped out on the 34th lap.

Sherwood Johnston at the drivers meeting during a heated discussion over the announcement that all races would be a Le Mans start, saying, "What is this a road race or a track meet?"

One pertinent argument against the Le Mans type of start was mentioned by Jim Kimberly when he noted that R.A.C. regulations do not require safety belts and that precious seconds would be lost by American competitors in fastening theirs.

Though the discussion of the Le Mans type start occupied most of the time at the drivers meeting the only concession made by Ken Gregory (the Chief Clerk of Course) and Capt. George Eyston (Chief Race Steward for the R.A.C.) was that car doors need not be opened and closed at the start. ●

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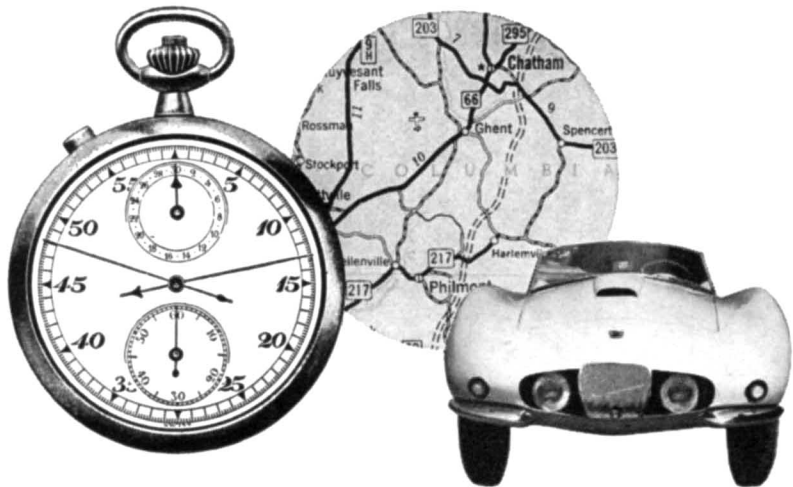
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