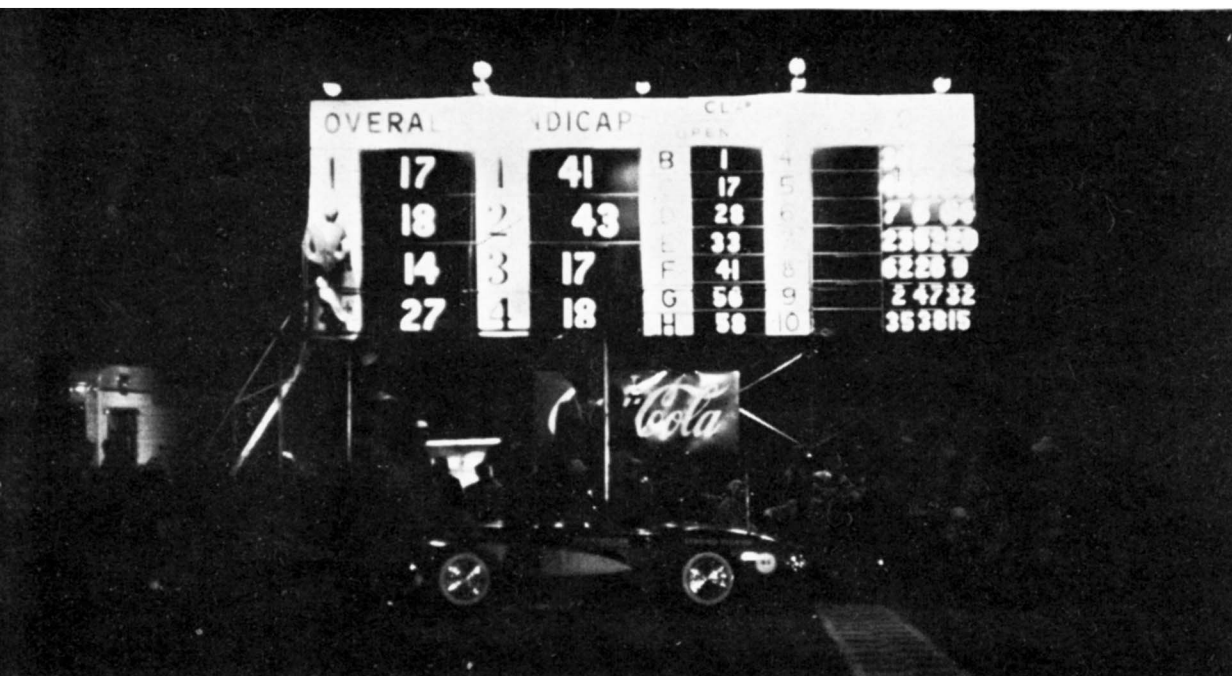


the 12 busiest hours -

Sebring, 1956:

Marquis de Portago just before the Ferrari split a valve and ruined the chances of "miracle order" team finish - 17, 18, 19.



Photos by Irv. Dolin, Dan Rubin, John Christy

While spectators wait for the last of the cars to check in, the scoreboard indicates final rundown of results. Numbers show order of winners.

IN the postmortems that followed the Sebring 12 hour enduro, the consensus among the world's top drivers was that one lap around the 5.2 mile Florida course was equal in car punishment to two laps of the 10-plus miles at Le Mans, judging by past years.

The record bore this out. By the time Juan Manuel Fangio and Eugenio Castellotti had completed 194 record-breaking day and night laps to win, 38 other cars had dropped by the wayside.

The pace was blistering from the start. When the flag dropped at 10 a.m., John Fitch pulled off the line first in a modified Chevrolet Corvette, leaving rubber like a dragster. His lead lasted only until the first turn when Mike Hawthorne in a Lucas-injected factory D-Jaguar caught him at the first turn and charged into the lead. In quick succession Stirling Moss in a straining Aston Martin DB3S, Indianapolis winner Bob Sweikert in another D-Jag and Fangio in a factory 3.4 Ferrari got into line in that order. The terrific torque put out by the bored and stroked Corvette wasn't enough to overbalance the sheer speed put

out by the smaller engined English and Italian machines and Fitch wound up back in the pack but not so far back as some doubters had predicted earlier. Twelve hours later he and Walt Hansgen were still in contention, ending up ninth overall - no bad showing.

Within a few laps, Fangio had caught and passed Sweikert and set out after Moss. Despite the pressure, Moss managed to keep the badly overmatched Aston ahead of Fangio, disregarding the fact that the Aston engine was giving away 30.5 cubic inches to the 3.4 Monza. Hawthorne made every effort to stretch his lead but could never get more than half a mile or so ahead of the dueling pair. This lasted for over three hours until the "come in" signals appeared for Hawthorne and Moss. Moss turned the Aston over to Peter Collins and Hawthorne turned his car over to Ireland's Des Titterington. During the few seconds, the Aston and the Jag were in the pits, Fangio grabbed the lead for the first time. Further back, Sweikert changed places with Jack Ensley and Phil Hill turned the Nassau-winning Tilp Ferrari over to Masten Gregory for what was to be a



Mike Hawthorne's leading Jaguar entered pits with broken brake line. Despite frantic effort to put car into race, crew failed to make repairs.

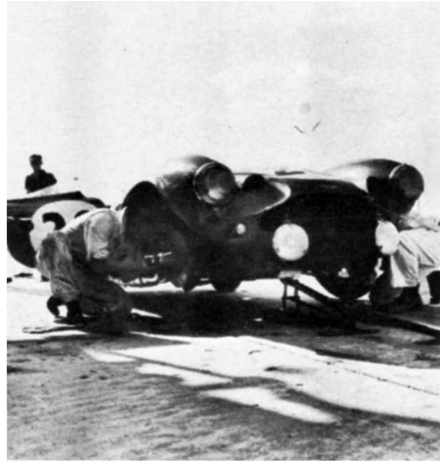
short, hot and uncomfortable 20-minute ride until the oil-throwing 3.5 Monza seized a rod. Collins' ride was also short; the Aston's strained gearbox hung up in high gear putting both the car and the team's top drivers out of the running.

Fangio hung onto his lead until he also was called in for gas, oil, tires and driver change, a stop that took only seconds but long enough to allow the Hawthorne-Titterington D to go into the front spot again. The lead swapped back and forth each time pit stops were made. The only time the one-two combination was broken was at the third hour when the three-litre Maserati, driven by Piero Taruffi and Jean Behra, briefly held down the second spot. The Maserati ran steadily through the whole 12 hours to finish fifth overall and second in class behind the lone Carroll Shelby - Roy Salvadori Aston Martin to last the distance. The extra 30 cubic inches carried by the Ferraris and Jaguars proved just too much to be overborne by the Maserati.

The lead swapping combination was finally broken for good at 8 p.m. when Hawthorne's Jaguar broke the right front brake line and dropped out after bleeding off most of the brake fluid. With Hawthorne and Titterington out, the Ferraris had it all their own way just by playing it cautiously. A second Ferrari team car driven by Luigi Musso and Harry Schell moved into the second position, ten miles behind the leader. The third team Monza driven by "Fon" de Portago and Jim Kimberly had dropped out earlier when a cylinder loaded up with fuel after a pit stop and knocked out an exhaust valve, killing the chance of a one-two-three victory for the men from Modena.



The winning team of Fangio and Castellotti acknowledging congratulations. The victorious duo swapped lead with Hawthorne and Titterington during first 10 hours.



Aston-Martin pitwork was excellent: here a crew changes brakes, getting car out in 2½ minutes total time.



Eventual co-winner Juan Fangio charges through a fast right bend with the factory team Ferrari. Tach tell-tale showed car never revved past 6100 rpm.



Fuel injected D-type Jaguar screams through the first turn of the road section. Car was fastest in race.



The MG team comes across the finish line in numerical order, the only team to finish completely intact.



1955 Indianapolis winner Bob Sweikert placed 3rd with co-driver Jack Ensley. Here he goes through Esses at dusk.

Sweikert and Ensley had been forced back into the pack but not too far — only once was their white D-type lying worse than 10th. Now Sweikert moved in rapidly, eating up the distance between the D and the Musso Ferrari. As the 12th hour flag dropped the Sweikert-Ensley team was in third position, but six laps behind Castellotti.

A second battle had also been going on between the Porsche 550 Spyders and the single tiny French Deutsch-Bonnet, driven by Paul Armagnac and Rene Bonnet, remaining in the race. The Porsche had their class won but were attempting to take the Index of Performance handicap, a prize which is virtually the private property of the D-B cars in international racing. For over eight hours the little French machine thrashed its 45 cubic inches to keep mathematically ahead of the factory Porsches driven by Hans Hermann and Count von Trips and the private, John Edgar, entry handled by Pete Lovely and Jack McAfee. A

piece of bad judgement concerning the amount of fuel left in the tank dropped the D-B out of Index contention but not out of the race. The two Porsches ended the enduro 1-2, in both Index and class categories.

Team of the day, however, was made up of three white MG-A's. Led by Team Captain David Ash, the MG team was the only one to finish the entire race intact and together. A final pit stop half an hour or so before the finish allowed the team to sort themselves out and finish not only together but in numerical order — 49, 50 and 51 — as they crossed the finish line. Top team organization was displayed by the Aston Martin crew. The strategy was obvious as Moss barreled out ahead during the early laps while Shelby and Reg Parnell in the other two cars flew formation back in the pack. The pit crews were perfectly drilled. Team cars were equipped with spot brakes employing arc-shaped spots and each was scheduled for a brake change during the race.

A stopwatch on one of these brake-change stops showed that the car was given a new set of front spots, fuel, tires and a driver change in just two and a half minutes or a full minute under the lap times being set at that point.

FIA sanctioned, attracting the world's greatest drivers and factory teams, Sebring '56 was the best yet, marred only by one accident and a not-too-serious lack of coordination in organization. The accident was virtually unavoidable, a case of a driver, Carlos Menditeguy in a Maserati, coming into a left-right-left series of turns and finding too late that his normal approach line was blocked by a slower car which had every right to be where it was. The result was a flip and rather serious but not critical injuries to Menditeguy. The organizational faults, primarily centering around a plethora of chiefs and a lack of Indians, are certain to be corrected as Sebring takes its place among the top international racing events each year. #



Harry Schell in Ferrari moves up to pass Pete Lovely, left, in Porsche. Both cars placed 2nd in their classes.



Aston-Martin team car driven by Stirling Moss ran 2nd for three hours holding off much larger Ferraris.

Modified Chevrolet Corvette was driven by John Fitch and Walt Hansgen to 9th spot. Car packed brutal torque but lacked top speed shown by European machinery.



RESULTS

OVERALL

Car	Drivers	No. of laps
1. Ferrari,	Fangio-Castellotti	194
2. Ferrari,	Musso-Schell	192
3. Jaguar,	Sweikert-Ensley	188
4. Aston-Martin,	Salvadori-Shelby	186
5. Maserati,	Behra-Taruffi	186
6. Porsche,	Hermann-von Trips	182
7. Porsche,	McAfee-Lovely	179
8. Jaguar,	Mena-Gonzales	176
9. Corvette,	Fitch-Hansgen	176
10. Ferrari,	Rubirosa-Pauley	172

CLASSES

Class B:	Corvette,	Fitch and Hansgen
Class C:	Ferrari,	Fangio and Castellotti
Class D:	Aston-Martin,	Salvadori and Shelby
Class E:	Ferrari,	Rubirosa and Pauley
Class F:	Porsche,	Hermann and von Trips
Class G:	Cooper,	Leech Cracraft and Red Bryon
Class H:	Deutsch-Bonnet, Rene Bonnet and Paul Armagnac	

INDEX

1-Porsche,	Hans Hermann-Count von Trips	1.347
2-Porsche,	Jack McAfee-Peter Lovely	1.325
3-Ferrari,	Juan Fangio-Eugenio Castellotti	1.310
4-Deutsch-Bonnet,	Paul Armagnac-Rene Bonnet	1.302
5-Ferrari,	Luigi Musso-Harry Schell	1.289
6-Aston-Martin,	Roy Salvadori-Carroll Shelby	1.274
7-Jaguar,	Bob Sweikert-Jack Ensley	126.9
8-Maserati,	Jean Bera-Pietro Taruffi	126.5
9-Ferrari,	Porfirio Rubirosa-Jim Pauley	126.4