

# Romp on the Ring

By JESSE ALEXANDER



First lap of the race as seen from Quiddelbach. Through the haze of early morning Moss leads the pack. Hawthorn second, Collins third, Fangio fourth.

NO racing circuit in the world compares with the Nürburgring. For sheer brutal punishment to automotive iron, the 'ring ranks first. Winding and twisting over 131½ miles of black top laid out in the heart of the German Eifel mountains, the Nürburgring is just 37 miles west of the Rhineland city of Koblenz, and was built in the 1920's as sort of a German WPA project. It is the ultimate in road racing courses and 1000 kilometers on it means 44 long and punishing laps — twice as rough on a car as Sebring, for here you set up stresses and strains on a racing car impossible to simulate on the drawing board.

The 1956 1000 kilometer race, organized by the ADAC, counted towards the world sports car championship and thus every major European marque was represented; on paper at least, the race took on all proportions of being 1956's most important sports car event. (As present regs read, the 1956 Le Mans race will not count towards the sports car championship). Ferrari entered four cars to be handled by the following teams: Fangio-Castellotti, Portago-Gendebien, Phil Hill-Ken Wharton, and Luigi Musso-Maurice Trintignant. Officine Maserati came out in force fielding two 3 litre cars to be driven by Moss-Behra and Taruffi-Schell. Two works Jaguars, one equipped with Lucas fuel injection, but both normal D types were being handled by Hawthorn-Titterington and Paul Frere-Duncal Hamilton. Aston Martin brought over two DB 3S's with Peter Collins-Tony Brooks and Peter Walker-Roy Salvadori up. Along with all of the above named front rank drivers, you had a long list of local German talent piloting a multitude of Porsches, Alfa-Romeo Giulietta Sprint Veloces, a smattering of 330SI's, several 220's, and two of the re-named East German cars, formerly EMW and now called AWE for Automobile Werk Eisenach — these were basically the same as last year's car except for the addition of a five speed gearbox. Porsche appeared with two brand new Spys; the cars were fitted with a Mercedes-like low pivot swing axle rear end, a very light tubular space frame that has reportedly dropped the Spyder's weight about 85 pounds. The dohc Spyder engine has received numerous undisclosed factory modifications that make the difference between a factory car and a private entry. These two cars, along with the AWE's ran in the racing sports car class while all the rest of the Spys qualified to run in the



Giulietta Sprint Veloce takes a fast turn in the Karusell. Bonnier-Fraser team in their Alfa-Romeo placed 11th with an average speed of 112.2 Km/hr.



One of the Maseratis paces a T-Bird (!) around a fast, sharp bend.

series production sports car class. Umberto Maglioli had been expected to drive a new 1500 OSCA in the race but the Bologna factory failed to show and Porsche snapped up the young (and fast) Italian pronto. He had never driven a Porsche before in his life and spent the better part of the week before the race circulating around in a normal 1500 coupe getting used to the car and the circuit. When he finally did climb into the Spyder and made a few practice laps there were a mighty few raised eyebrows because this boy is versatile. He fairly flew and made Porsche happy they had grabbed him. Maglioli was teamed with Count Von trips while the second Spyder was entrusted to Hans Hermann and Richard Von Frankenberg. A factory prepared 300 SL as well as two of the very rapid 220a sedans were on hand, aided and abetted by Herren Neubauer and Kling.

Practice was wet, and there's nothing more dismal than the Nürburgring in a pouring rain; few of the teams did any real circulation, though Paul Frere managed to bend his D type seriously enough in practice to have a hurry up call put through to Coventry for a third car. The Jags looked terribly hard to handle on the circuit and if race day turned out to be as wet as practice the Aston Martins were going to have a field day. Jaguar showed up with a 2.9 rear axle ratio and spent a good part of their time switching gear ratios after they found their cars couldn't break 11 minutes in practice. With the stop watch on many of the different drivers from entrance to exit of several long corners, Tony Brooks in the Aston Martin was the fastest on numerous occasions. He is easily the up and coming English driver and is the man to watch. He turned 10 minutes 40 seconds the first day of practice — pretty fantastic when you figure that the guy had never been to the Nürburgring before. Following practice, the Ferrari management decided to give the (2) 12 cylinder cars to Phil Hill-Ken Wharton and Gendebien-Portago, and the two four-barrels to Fangio-Castellotti and Musso-Trintignant. What with improved surface on several corners, some old hands figured that the 'ring was good for at least two or three seconds in lap times, and as Sunday morning rolled around

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Collins in the Aston Martin DB3S laying into the circle of the Karusell. He and Brooks together averaged 124.4 Km/hr and placed fifth.



A typical Nürburgring scene. Here Moss tries to get by a slower car (Giulietta Veloce). Bends are laid out so that cars take them practically in a straight line.



Hawthorn's D-Jag was forced to pause for repairs on leaking reserve fuel tank. A few laps later with Titterington at wheel, car retired with broken axle.



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we were all very happy to see the sun poking through the early morning fog.

The start was set for 9:00 in the morning, and as the drivers lined up opposite their cars for the usual Le Mans 50 yard dash, the impressive Nurburg castle was just visible through the rapidly disappearing mist. The track had dried out fairly well and over 50,000 spectators had massed themselves around the 12 mile circuit. Sprinter that he is, Stirling Moss was first away and shot off into the South Curve with a screaming bunch of iron scratching like mad to catch him. As he came out of the woods and hurtled down to Quiddelbach where we were watching, Stirling had built up a good 10 second lead over his nearest opponent, Mike Hawthorn, also off to a good start — but behind them there was a pile of traffic the likes of which I had never seen before. Several of the fast cars had gotten poor starts and were desperately trying to make their way up through the mob. Moss, however, out in front with nobody to pass, began to build up a good lead. The next time around, Fangio had gotten ahead of Hawthorn and took out after Moss.

### FIRST PIT STOPS

The first driver change occurred about one third of the way through the race; Moss managed to hand his car over to Jean Behra without losing first place; then the next time around the Maserati came to a halt at the side of the track with a broken left shock absorber and as Behra began walking back to the pits, Castellotti, now driving the leading Ferrari, moved up into first place. Despite everything that he could do, Mike Hawthorn was unable to keep up with the Italian machinery. Paul Frere went out with a broken gear box early in the race — the Aston Martins held 6th and 8th places respectively — Collins' car being held up due to fuel feed trouble. At the halfway point the order was: 1st: Fangio-Castellotti (Ferrari); 2nd: Gendebien-Portago (now driving the Hill-Wharton Ferrari); 3rd: Moss-Behra (now driving the Taruffi-Schell car, a Maserati); 4th: Hawthorn-Titterington (Jaguar); 5th: Trips-Maglioli (Porsche).

Despite the re-entry of Moss and Behra into the race in Taruffi's car, the leading Ferrari stayed out in front

for a few more laps, then Moss began to move in on the World Champion. By the end of the 33rd lap the 3 litre Maserati was in second place with only 1 minute 5 seconds separating the two cars. Next bit of excitement occurred when the Jaguar pulled into the pits with a leaking reserve fuel tank. The car lost two laps while it was worked over and then just a few laps later with Desmond Titterington at the wheel, the D type came to rest with a broken axle. In the meantime, a fantastic duel was developing between Fangio and Moss. On the 40th lap,

Fangio came in for a quick refill and while the car was stationary, Moss shot into the lead. The crowd was going wild; 28 seconds separated them but try as he might, Juan Manuel could not catch Moss and they crossed the finish line with a difference of 27 seconds separating them. The Portago-Gendebien-Hill-Wharton Ferrari finished 3rd and just 7 minutes and 50 seconds later the Trips-Maglioli Porsche crossed the line — they had been minus second gear for a better part of the race and both cars were suffering from brake trouble — despite this they both went like bombs.

The Nurburgring had taken its usual toll of machinery. Suspension systems and gear boxes were the principle failures while spin outs and minor shunts took many others off into the ditch. Musso's injuries were luckily mild, his crash being the only serious mishap. Maserati's star is rapidly ascending and along with the victory of Bonnier and Fraser with their 1300 Guiletta Spring Veloce, it was a fine day for Maserati, Alfa and Porsche. The Guiletta, incidentally, turned lap times considerably better than any previous 1300 Porsche times registered by either Trips or Hermann.

Results: General Classification:

- \*1. Taruffi-Schell-Moss-Behra  
Maserati 3 litre 6 cyl.  
129.7 km/hr. average
2. Fangio-Castellotti  
Ferrari 4 cyl.  
129.6 km/hr. average
3. Hill-Wharton-Portago-Gendebien  
Ferrari 12 cyl.  
127.0 km/hr. average
- \*4. Trips-Maglioli  
Porsche "RS"  
125.0 km/hr. average
5. Collins-Brooks  
Aston Martin DB3S  
124.4 km/hr. average
6. Hermann/Von Frankenberg  
Porsche "RS"  
123.8 km/hr. average
7. Barth/Rosenhammer  
AWE  
121.1 km/hr. average

- \*8. Martenson-Seidel  
300SL  
114.1 km/hr. average
- \*9. Nathan-Kaiser  
Porsche Carrera  
112.6 km/hr. average
10. Schulze-Nogueira  
Porsche Carrera  
112.4 km/hr. average
- \*11. Bonnier-Fraser  
Guiletta Sprint Veloce  
112.2 km/hr. average
12. Ringenberg-Walter  
Guiletta Sprint Veloce  
111.5 km/hr. average
- \*13. Kretschmann-Liebl  
Porsche Spyder  
110.8 km/hr. average
14. Carini-Bordoni  
Guiletta Spring Veloce  
109.2 km/hr. average
15. Zick-Plaut  
Porsche Carrera  
108.9 km/hr. average
16. Gunzler-Retter  
Mercedes 220a  
108.4 km/hr. average
17. Thirion-Pace  
Guiletta Spring Veloce  
108.3 km/hr. average
18. Lang-Kuhnke  
Guiletta Sprint Veloce  
107.0 km/hr. average
19. Zeller-Bieling  
Guiletta Spring Veloce  
104.3 km/hr. average
20. Wittman-Hampel  
Porsche 1600S  
104.2 km/hr. average

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\*Class Winner

Taruffi in Maserati circles in Karusell.

