

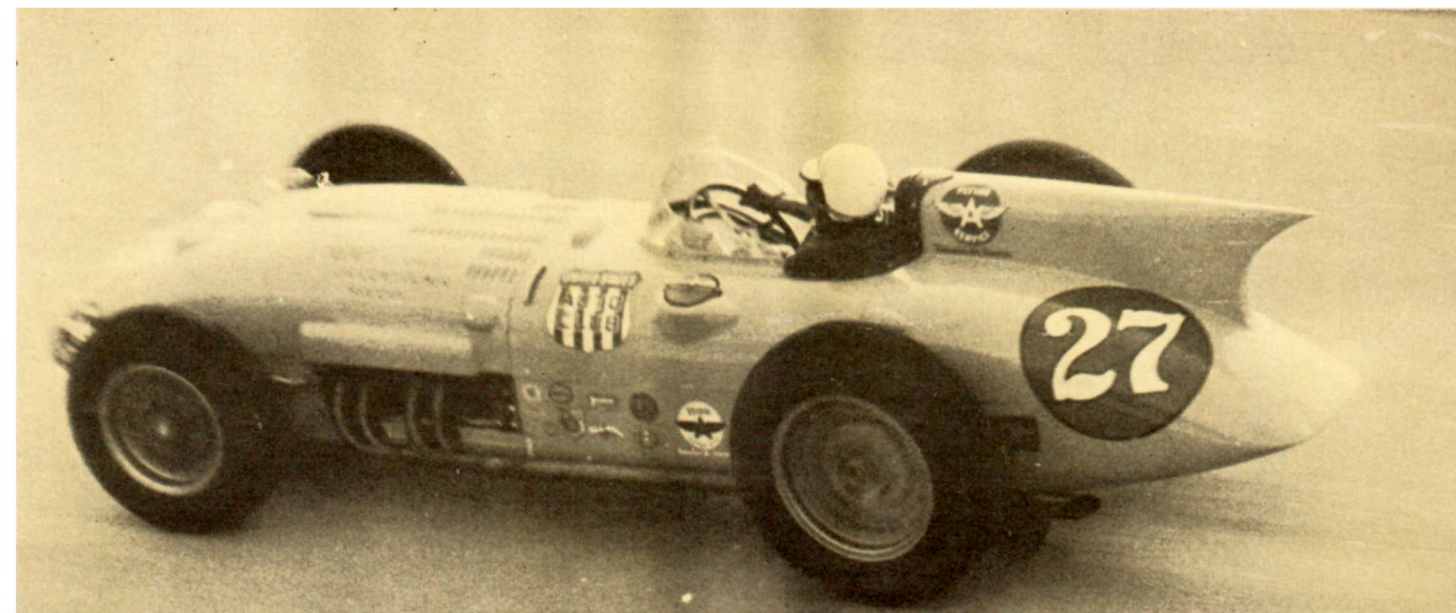
Ruttman, O'Connor, Sachs and Bryan whistle around the bankings, but Europeans, with exception of David Murray's Ecurie Ecosse and Jean Behra, were absent. Neither Ferrari nor Maserati seemed anxious to compete with the Indy cars.

THE MONZA 500:

WHERE WERE THE CONTINENTALS?

By JESSE ALEXANDER

Billed as the "Race of Two Worlds" the Monza 500 turned out to be pretty much a one sided affair with the exception of a trio of outclassed but dead-game Ecurie Ecosse Jags. But never since the days of the big Mercedes and Auto Union had Europe seen racing like the Americans turned on at Monza.



Both Bettenhausen (above) and Russo in the Novis were thought to have a better chance against the Offies at Monza than at Indy. However Russo's flywheel disintegrated during practice, and Tony's throttle linkage fell off.

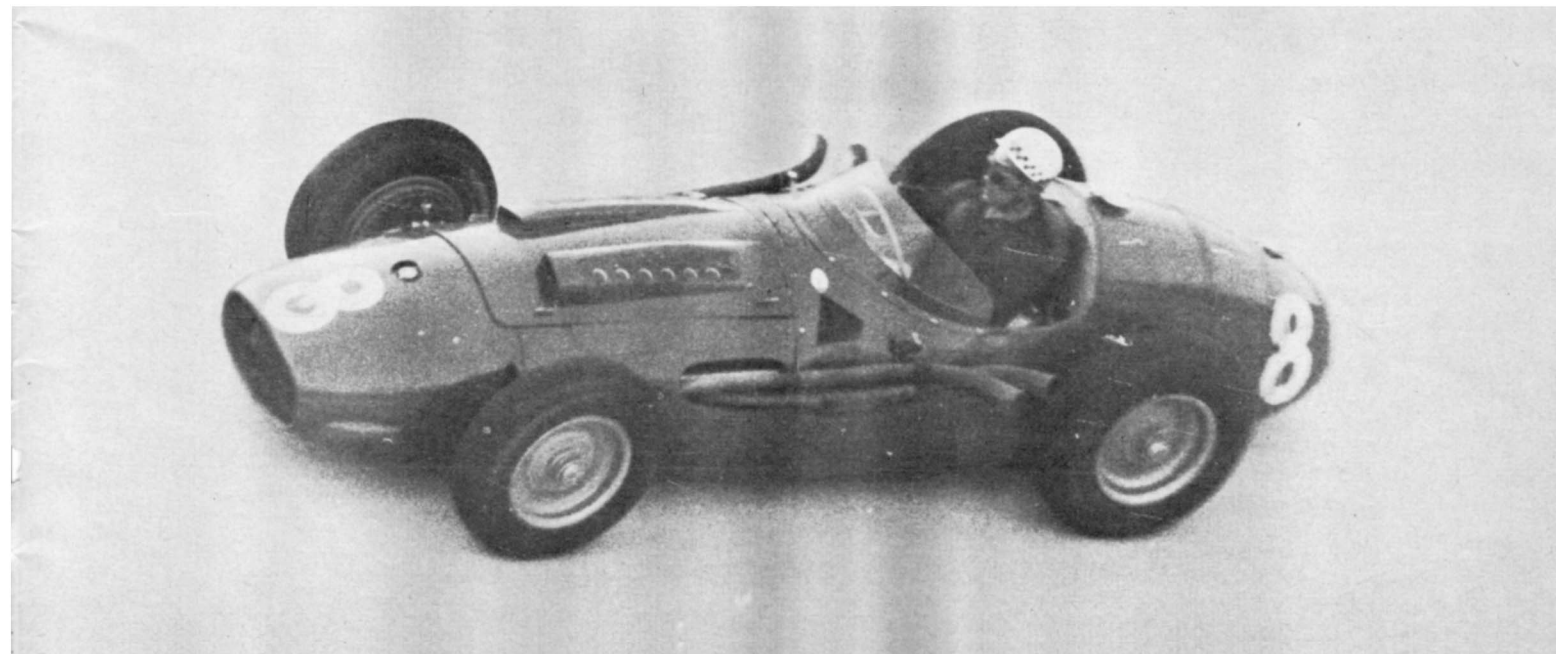
EVER SINCE Juan Fangio's lap record around the Monza bankings was decisively broken last April by Pat O'Connor in the Firestone Kurtis-Chrysler, there has been a steadily increasing controversy over Monza, its suitability as a race track, and the dangers involved in high speed circulation on the bankings. The outcome of the Monza 500 clearly demonstrates the absurdity of all the loud protestations. Most of the controversy, in effect, boils down to a lot of editorial garbage that will only hurt the prospects of any future European-American contest. The fragility of the European Formula I machine, and the lack of progress made in racing tire construction on the Continent, has been pointed up more than ever by the Monza race. Just because one's cars are not completely suited to a track, it is no excuse for staying away and then clouding the abstention with a lot of words about safety.

The original noises were emitted by the "UPPI," an association of most of the top professional European drivers headed by Louis Chiron, and which came into being at the Nürburgring just about one month prior to the date set for the Monza race. This driver's "union", as many people called it, said in effect that the Monza banked track was unsafe and that unless the organizers of the

event did something about improving the safety factor, members of the UPPI would boycott the race. Since the members of the "union" consisted of most of the top European racing talent, every one went around, down at the mouth, saying the Monza race was off, now that the Europeans were boycotting it. Such was not the case, for the organizers of the Monza 500 miler were going ahead full blast with their plans—it was too late to stop. Though the lack of European talent would take some of the fire out of the event, they were by no means indispensable. Further blasts were put out by the UPPI, each blast changing its tune slightly, so that one never really knew where he stood. It now appears that this association is dying a slow death—from foot-in-mouth disease most probably.

Some of the arguments of the UPPI were absurd. Harry Schell said at one point that no man could stand the strain of continuous racing around the Monza bankings. One look at Jim Bryan after he won the race at an average speed of 160.01 mph refutes this claim; Bryan looked absolutely normal and said that he was not overly tired—he chewed on 3 cigars during the event. He was perfectly happy and wants to come back again next year. Many prophets of doom had said that it was impossible to pass safely

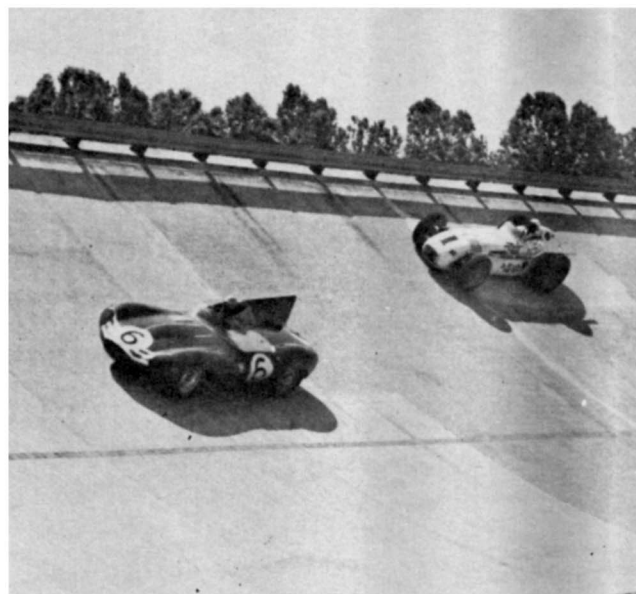
The only Grand Prix driver to buck the Union was Behra. But he was beaten before he started, as his 250F Maserati (below) with a 3.5 liter V-12 engine wouldn't handle on Firestones, and his 4.2 sports car seized its rear end.





During practice, 170 mph slipstream pulled ten \$10 bills from Bryan's pocket onto the track. He parked his car, scrambled to retrieve them.

Credit: World Wide Photos



John Lawrence's Jaguar swoops low as Jimmy Bryan rides high on the piste de vitesse, finding his way to still more money.

Credit: World Wide Photos

on the bankings. Photographs of the D Jags being passed on both sides by Indianapolis cars on the bankings clearly demonstrated that this was purely a matter of taking the correct line—and cooperation between drivers while overtaking. There were no accidents; once Fairman in his D type brushed the upper rail when he moved too close (Dunlop had told him to stay high to conserve rubber) but this was the only hint at any kind of an incident.

Tires were no problem at Monza. All of the cars, except the Jags, were running on a special Firestone tread designed by their engineering staff for the Monza track. They had brought over 400 tires with them, in addition to those required by the ten Indianapolis cars, many in European rim sizes so that they could be fitted to a Maserati or Ferrari if desired. As it turned out, these could have been left in Akron, and with the sole exception of a brief effort on the part of Jean Behra from Maserati, the Europeans were most conspicuous by their absence.

Behra is a brave boy. He has broken practically every bone in his body in the course of his racing career and had just gotten out of the hospital recovering from a crash in the 4.5 Maserati during practice for the Mille Miglia. On the Wednesday before the 500 mile race he talked Orsi into preparing two cars for Monza. One was the new 3.5 liter V-12 engine placed in a 250F chassis. The other was presumably a 4.2 V-8 in the same sports car that he had just driven at Le Mans as a 4.5 version. Both were trucked to Monza on Thursday and fitted with Halibrand wheels and Firestone tires. Ugolini told Behra that he could have his choice of either machine.

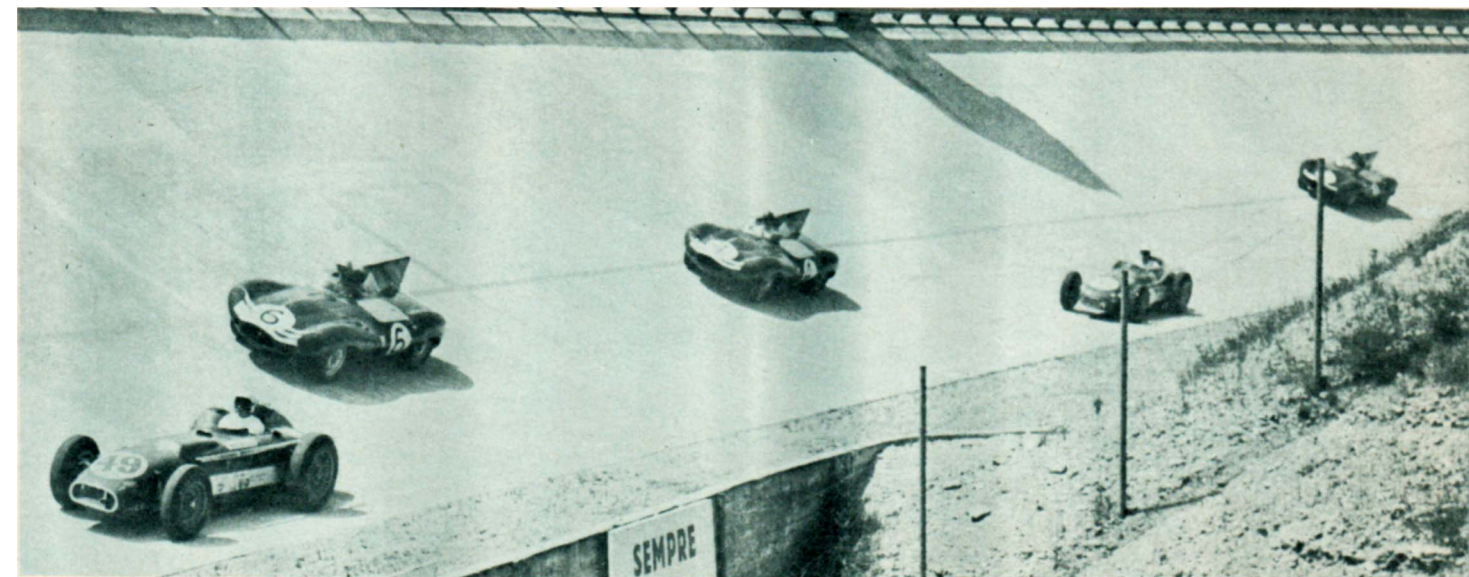
First in the 3.5 monoposto, Behra began to circulate at about 1 minute—lapping steadily but unimpressively, and nowhere near as fast as the Indianapolis cars. After a few laps he came in—saying that the car was not handling with the big American tires on it. Then he tried the sports car, now considerably cleaned up, and the full width Le Mans windshield replaced by a single aerodynamic wrap-around job. Lights were covered up and the whole car was considerably lighter than in its Le Mans form. It too got around in about 60 seconds; but suddenly the rear end seized up as a result of the rubber boot falling apart on one of the half shafts. All the oil came out and she locked up solid. Thus the Italian competition folded up in less than an hour's practice.

We got the impression that Maserati were not really serious in their effort. Chief mechanic Bertocchi was all smiles as the sports car was pushed off the track, and it was obvious that they didn't want to have a real go with the American equipment at Monza, and if it hadn't been for Behra talking them into it, they would never have come.

As for Ferrari, there was no doubt as to his stand on the race. The official word from Maranello was, "why should we build a special car for one race?—it's too expensive." Thus, the fact that Ferrari was a no-show at Monza in no way detracts from his prestige as a racing car manufacturer or builder. The cost of building a special car just for Monza would have been prohibitive, as well as just bad economics. But he had a few words for the "European Driver's Union," too, stating that his drivers were under contract to him and that they would race where he requested them to.

Peter Collins, #1 Ferrari pilot, then backed out of the UPPI stand, saying he would race wherever his boss told him to. The matter of tires with Ferrari was, of course, an important factor. Englebert, the Belgian tire which Ferrari uses exclusively, could obviously not guarantee any safety over 150 mph on the bankings. Ferrari had done some testing at Monza months earlier with Firestone tires, but apparently had decided to stay away completely rather than lose the support of Englebert and run American rubber. Too, in all fairness to the Commendatore, he was busy preparing Formula I cars for the Gran Prix of France, and he had just had to rebuild all of his race cars following Monaco where every last one had been crashed. Thus, he wasn't about to risk his equipment in a race where he didn't stand much of a chance of finishing, let alone winning.

But such was not the mind of David Murray's Ecurie Ecosse. Fresh from his second successive Le Mans victory, the Edinburgh whiskey exporter brought the two Le Mans D Jaguars plus a third machine, stripped them of all unnecessary Le Mans garbage, fitted a special air duct so that the Dunlop tires would get more air than the brakes, tuned up the engines and was ready to go. Ron Flockhart could not drive, for BRM had wanted him for "testing" that week end; but his Scottish compatriots, Ninian Sanderson and John Lawrence with Jack Fairman, had all come to Monza in a fine spirit, ready to have a "bash" with the Yanks. We can't say



Ray Crawford leads Jaguars driven by Lawrence and Fairman, who had to ride high on the walls to save rubber. There wasn't room enough to mount Firestones.

Credit: World Wide Photos

Immediately results were announced, plaudits are heaped upon winner Bryan, still in dirty face, torn coverall, and cigar. Duane Carter stands next to him. Crowd was small, but appreciated Americans' skill.

enough about the sportsmanship of Ecurie Ecosse. If all of the European teams had approached this race in the same spirit as they did, a race in which their cars were more unsuited than any Formula I car, none of the ridiculous statements made prior to Monza would ever have been needed. The Le Mans cars, incidentally, had over 3000 miles on them after Le Mans and then, with the additional 500 on at Monza, Jags have really got something to crow about in their advertising copy. Running on Dunlop rubber, they were told they couldn't exceed 150 mph, thus were kept to a lap time limit of about 1 minute and three seconds—no faster. Lack of space in the wheel wells forbade bigger tires to be fitted, and so, under every conceivable kind of handicap, the Scottish Jaguars were pushed to the starting line on Saturday.

The start itself was far different from Indianapolis. The pace car on the first heat was a non-too-powerful Alfa-Romeo that its driver took extreme precaution not to over-extend. As the cars were in line approaching the start, they were paced at a very brisk 40 miles per. The Offies were vibrating, and the Novi all but fouled up its plugs. To everyone's surprise, the pace-Alfa turned off, the starter dropped the flag (not a checkered flag, but an Italian flag), and the race was on! Except nobody seemed to know it.

While Offy drive shafts were still shuddering from the low speed lugging, the Ecurie Ecosse boys found low cog and charged into the lead. At the end of lap one, Fairman's Jag appeared all by its lonesome and boomed down the stretch with the pack, still spitting and "shooting ducks" a straightaway behind. The British press contingent, still charged up over Le Mans, were ecstatic. Plans were being formulated for an Indy invasion when suddenly things went agley.

Fairman, still all alone, come pouring down off the banking and into the chute. As he got within about 100 yards from the start-finish line, Pat O'Connor, Eddie Sachs, Jim Bryan and Tony Bettenhausen appeared on the banking. Before the Jaguar could cross the 100 yard interval, the Indy foursome had bracketed, passed and disappeared off down toward the next turn. The

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Monza

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Jaguar was kicking up a reasonable facsimile of 150 mph at the time. Scratch one Indiana invasion.

The Americans put on a display of high-speed racing that had not been seen in Europe for a long time—perhaps never. The ruggedness of the cars, the spirit of the drivers and mechanics, and the fantastic speeds they set up in practice impressed all of the European journalists and spectators present. Several negative voices were heard, one was that of Gunther Molter in "Das Auto, Motor und Sport," a popular German bi-weekly automotive magazine. Molter called the race "a farce before it was even started" and repeated much of the arguments about track safety and lack of European equipment to meet the American cars on an even basis. Did the Americans stay away from Roosevelt Raceway in 1937 when the Europeans came to America in their road racing giants to win against our track racers?

The French newspaper, L'Equipe dubbed the Indianapolis racers as "le cirque Americain", or "the American circus". But these were small voices. On the whole, the European press responded in a positive fashion, in particular one English journal.

One thing that impressed the Europeans was the openness in which the "Yanks" agreed to discuss anything mechanical or technical about the race cars. Bad points, as well as good, were pointed out in a frankness that is unknown among European racing teams. One can only hope that this attitude is contagious, and that the American cars and drivers will somehow become more of a part of the European racing scene.

Most impressive in training were the two Novis driven by Bettenhausen and Russo. These supercharged V-8's were coming off the bankings at 190 mph and pushing 200 before the drivers would lift their foot ever so little to go onto the South Banking. Russo threw his flywheel in training; it just disintegrated, and Jean Marcenac, chief Novis mechanic, still hasn't found the pieces. Tony Bettenhausen broke his frame

while turning a record lap of 176.8 mph, 53.7 seconds around the bankings; Linden did 54.6, as well as Pat O'Connor; and interestingly enough, these lap speeds exceeded those set by Hermann Lang on the Berlin Avus track before the war. Alfred Neubauer was on hand at Monza and appeared to enjoy himself immensely, talking to drivers and mechanics. The Mercedes racing manager was most impressed by the high lap speeds being knocked off in practice.

The circuit itself was terribly hard on the equipment. Jim Bryan seemed to think that if they had known exactly how rough it was going to be, they would have brought stiffer torsion bars as well as rubber stops for the suspensions. Everything was bottoming in practice until adjustments were made. Shock absorber brackets bent badly under the stresses and strains and it is interesting to note that the three Indianapolis cars that finished were not Kurtis-built cars. Bryan's Dean Van Lines Special was built by Kuzma as was Parson's Agajanian Special. Ruttman's John Zink Special was built by A. J. Watson.

Most of the retirements were due to fuel tank mountings coming adrift with resultant tank-splitting. Pat O'Connor finally came in with fuel just pouring out of his tank. Ray Crawford retired with a holed tank, but not without a fight. His mechanics worked like beavers during the hour-long interval between the second and third heat to repair the damage. Bob Veith broke his steering as he came off the banking, but luckily escaped crashing when the car took its natural line, steered itself down and headed directly for the pits. Only one Novi got to the starting line, Bettenhausen's car, but he retired early in the race when the throttle linkage fell apart.

The first two heats were Bryan's, while the third belonged to Troy Ruttman. High spots of the race were the sight of two Indianapolis cars running almost wheel to wheel, charging down the pit straight and up onto the turns, roaring onto the banking and passing a Jaguar. One man would go low, the other high—an incredible and thrilling sight.

Consensus was that the intervals between heats were indispensable and if there had not been this time to make repairs, the field would have been practically eliminated in a very short time.

The wonder of every one was the Jaguars. They experienced no trouble whatsoever, and it's significant that they suffered no chassis failure. Towards the end of the race, Jack Fairman in his Jaguar had a short

duel with Parsons, the Jag even passing the Agajanian special at one point.

The Automobile Club of Italy and the Milan Automobile Club deserve every credit for going ahead with the Monza 500 Mile race against the heavy European opposition that developed at the last minute. They lost money due to a terribly poor crowd, undoubtedly from lack of adequate advertising and also because of the time of year; temperatures were high and countless Italians had gone off to the seashore for the weekend to escape the heat. Also, Maserati and Ferrari did not run.

The organizer's loss is estimated at 80 million lira (\$13,000). Also, the organizers have informed SCI that absolutely no starting bonuses were offered any of the drivers, and only expenses—tourist class for one car, two drivers and one mechanic—were paid by the club. This, in addition to the prize money, was the only attraction.

The sportsmanship shown by David Murray and his Ecurie Ecosse in coming to Monza as the sole European entry was terrific, and they took part in a motor race unique in history. Whether it will come about again is not known at this writing. The Americans want to come back, but they would prefer some real competition. The ten gallon hats, the multi-colored race cars, and most of all, the warm friendliness of the Americans disarmed the Europeans. Hard as it is for some of the continentals to admit it, they would like to see the Indianapolis boys back again next year.

Jesse L. Alexander

Results: Monza 500

First heat

63 laps; 2.64 mile high-speed circuit

1. Bryan; Dean Van Lines; 162.15 mph
2. O'Connor; Sumar Special
3. Linden; McNamara Special

Second heat

(63 laps)

1. Bryan; 160.21 mph
2. Ruttman
3. Parsons

Third heat

(63 laps)

1. Ruttman; 158.41 mph
2. Bryan
3. Parsons

Fastest lap

**Bryan in second heat; 175.73 mph;
54.1 seconds**

Overall results

1. Bryan; 189 laps; 3 hr. 7 min., 5.9 sec.; 160.01 mph
2. Ruttman; 187 laps; 3 hr. 7 min., 56 sec.
3. Parsons; 182 laps; 3 hr. 7 min., 29 sec.
4. Fairman; Jaguar; 177 laps
5. Lawrence; Jaguar; 171 laps
6. Sanderson; Jaguar; 159 laps

Helmets

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different helmets had been voluntarily submitted when the tests began. They were conducted in Inglewood, California, at the of the Mine Safety Appliances Company. Protection Inc. manufactures the Toptex aircraft helmet, and owns specialized test instrumentation that is almost unique. The second set of tests used the lab's Impact

Pendulum Facility, a complex device for measuring acceleration imparted to the head.

Most of the U. S. crash helmet manufacturers are located in the Los Angeles area. They were invited to submit helmets for testing and to be present during the tests, and most of them came. Also present were representatives of the Civil Aeronautics Authority, the National Safety Council, various motor sport clubs, and motoring publications. While the tests were arranged by Dr. Snively, the highly technical test procedures were supervised by George Nichols, Chief of Associated Projects at

Northrup Aircraft, and consultant to Colonel Stapp in his rocket sled research. Nichols was aided by Herman Roth, distinguished human factors engineer, pioneer in aeromedical research, co-designer of the impact pendulum device, and an executive of Protection Inc. The description of the tests which follows draws heavily from Nichols' report.

These tests were conducted to establish the performance under impact and repeated impact of the types of crash helmet currently available. The data obtained is decisive and critical but of course cannot represent the total range of impacts