

NASSAU SPEED WEEK took place for the fourth time early last December, with over 100 cars invited to compete in the 14 scheduled events and a variety of things different from last year. For one thing new three-and-five-mile circuits were laid out on an airfield abandoned only six weeks before and the events were substantially more international. Drivers such as Olivier Gendebien, Joakim Bonnier, Peter Collins and several entries from the Latin-American countries joined Stirling Moss, Phil Hill, Carroll Shelby, Masten Gregory and a horde of lesser-known American drivers who had already discovered the pleasures of post-season racing in Nassau — admittedly for no money prizes, but all-except-food-expenses paid for the chosen few. There was a gap caused by the absence of Fon Portago, who had competed at Nassau every year; he was missed even by people who had never known him — perhaps most of all, by a large number of natives who were sure his famous number "13" brought them luck and money. (The number has been permanently retired at Nassau.)

The Week of Speed was a bit different this year, too, though still filled with parties. The early birds, arriving on Saturday, November 30th, were able to practice on a three mile course, used the next day for the opening races. A ten lap opener for cars of all classes (and definitions) was followed by the 34 lap, 102 mile Nassau Tourist Trophy Race. The former was won

quietly (53 seconds) by Curtis Turner (NASCAR) in a Corvette SR-2. His only serious opposition was Jim Jeffords (USAC) in a similar car which broke its rear axle on the 8th lap, permitting von Kaesborg (M-B 300SL) to move up to second. Jim Orr, in a superbly tuned and very neatly driven AC Bristol, finished third, and Dick Thompson (Carrera) fourth.

One hour later came the big stuff. Masten Gregory with Scuderia Buell's big 4.7 Maserati (larger liners in a 4.5), Richie Ginther in John Edgar's much-used 4.9 Ferrari, Stirling Moss in a borrowed-from-the-factory 3.7 Aston-Martin DBR2, Johnny von Neumann in a brand new, sparkling handsome 3.0 Ferrari (which is evidently the newest new-look for sports-racing machinery), Olivier Gendebien (Belgian winner of the 1957 Tour de France) with Buell's Testa Rossa, Lance Reventlow in his new twin-cam 1.5 Cooper-Climax, Curtis Turner again in his Corvette, plus some 30-odd other machines lined up on the grid for the start of the Tourist Trophy Race.

The newly prominent and, as it turned out, deservedly praised young Mexican brothers, Pedro (17) and Ricardo (15), were out to be seen by most Eastern U. S. drivers for the first time.

When the flag fell, Masten Gregory put his foot in it, to take a flying lead, quickly followed by Moss and Ginther. It was apparent that Moss's Aston was no match for

the other two. Moss maintained second for four laps then was passed by Ginther's Ferrari. Moss dropped slowly back until, on the 17th lap, he was forced into the pits by persistent misfiring. He and Aston-Martin race manager, Reg Parnell, stood impatiently in the pits for long minutes before the mechanic could locate the obscure distributor short (a centrifugal advance spring broke, and a tiny fragment lodged next to the breaker points, shorting them out). Some eight laps passed before the car got back on the course.

By this time, the winning positions were fixed, Ginther laying a quarter-minute behind Gregory until four laps from the end when he was slowed by traffic in the turns. Paul Goldschmidt's (NASCAR) dropped out when his Lister-Bristol lost its oil, and John Fitch's new two-liter Maserati retired again with its recurrent valve trouble. Gregory and Ginther were the only cars to finish all 34 laps, both of them lapping an odd little Fiat Special nineteen times in the progress.

After the races Sunday evening (the last of the events, was in semi-darkness), a few people settled down to some serious mechanical work to get cars back in shape for the following weekend, but the majority went back to their complimentary hotel rooms and dressed up for the "freebee" cocktail party, entertaining pleasant thoughts of some serious beaching during the next few days.

The next morning made it apparent that there was to be none of the latter.

Monday was chilly, grey and altogether great weather for sleeping — which most

everyone did for the next few days. A few roused themselves sufficiently on Tuesday to welcome the twenty or thirty cars, drivers, mechanics and families that arrived on the morning boat from Miami. And along with a general rear-axle changing (preparatory to the next weekend's events to be run on the five-mile course), there were the usual handful of panel beaters, engine tuners and gear-box rebuilders puttering away at the hanger.

Things got underway again on Thursday with mandatory day and night practice on the longer course. Well, "got underway" is a slight exaggeration, for Thursday was what might be called "Nassau Day" — the day when *everything* gets thoroughly loused up.

As if a flag marshall shortage wasn't enough, when everything was ready to go, about an hour and a half late, a water wagon ran over the main communications line.

So off they went, finally, to find that a last minute change in the five mile course had shortened it to something closer to 4.5 miles, slower than expected but still *very* fast. The course, in most places, was so immensely wide that there was slim chance indeed of finding a right line through many of the corners. The airport is surrounded by marshy land and low, scrubby bushes; where the scenery began and the road ended was exceedingly hard to determine in the getting-on-toward-dusk light. Spins were not infrequent.

Night practice was held after an hour rest, but long before that, most of the drivers had realized that on a course with such poorly defined edges, surrounded by such desolate country, there wasn't much sense in running at night. After practice there was a driver's meeting. Bill Smythe, Clerk of the Course, suggested a re-scheduling of start times on Sunday which pleased (or appeased) everyone. Late into the night, a frantic amount of gear ratio changing was going on, the "five-mile" route not being exactly what had been expected.

There were three 5-lap heats early Friday afternoon for the two-section Governor's Trophy Race. Though the racing was keen, the entries were not representative, as it was not necessary to qualify for the final sections. Class winners were Naylor (Sadler), Shelby (Maserati), von Neumann (2.5 Testa Rossa), Fitch (Maserati), Crawford (Porsche RS), Dietrich (Elva) and Hanna (D.B.).

In the first section of the final, cut from 20 to 15 laps, Crawford and Ricardo Rodriguez finally came to grips, making it quite a race. Crawford led off, Rodriguez passed on the second lap, Crawford re-passed on the third, and then the experience of the 27-year-old Chicagoan became obvious. Although Ricardo drove smoothly and with great skill, Crawford continued to inch ahead, the race with a 45 seconds lead. Bob Said, apparently re-oriented by the previous weekend's race, proved that all his enthusiastic talk during the past two years was not just blather—he drove Hellburn's old and much-tested Testa Rossa (fitted with Chinetti's newest 2.0 engine) to a decisive third overall and first on handicap, though behind two 1500 cc machines. The handicap, reasonably enough was based on previous best performance in class rather than displacement, thus insuring that it would not go automatically to a Porsche pilot.

Very late in the afternoon, the second section of the race roared off the grid. Moss and Turner got off first, but the combination of Phil Hill and Tilp's Caracas-winning 4.1 Ferrari immediately proved their superiority over the rest of the contenders. Masten Gregory was never more than a few hundred yards behind Hill in the early laps, but Hill's driving was flawless, his car running perfectly and his lead never really in question. Having lost water on the starting line, Turner retired on his third lap while eighth. Moss held on to third spot in the obviously slower Aston-Martin till halfway through the race when Shelby passed him in Edgar's 4.5 Maserati. Ginther, Bonnier, von Neumann and Rod Garveth followed behind Moss—an order which did not change. Hill began to draw ahead of Gregory at about this time, piling up a substantial lead—fortunately, for on the last lap, less than a mile from the finish, he blew a tire. He was able to keep control of the car and was still moving at around 80 mph when he crossed the line, still a safe nine seconds ahead of Gregory.

Came Saturday—Island Race, Ladies Race, a bunch of five-lappers for *marques*—generally a dull-sounding, hiatus-for-the-big-boys sort of day. To the contrary: it is agreed by all who were there that *the* most exciting races of the whole meet were the two five-lap heats of the Ladies Race. Denise McCluggage and Ruth Levy (co-drivers at Caracas in Denise's RS Porsche), the latter having borrowed the 3.7 Aston-Martin from Moss, put on two duels which were utterly unbelievable. Throughout the first heat, Denise's Porsche repeatedly slipped by the bigger car in the corners and Ruth just as repeatedly re-passed with

her faster car on the straights. Denise finished ahead by about an RS-length.

In the second heat, Suzy Dietrich flipped her husband's polished aluminum Elva far out in the scrub-brush country; uninjured in the process, she earned the title Miss Reynolds-Wrap of Nassau. But on the last turn of the last lap, Mrs. Levy pushed just a *little* too deep into the corner, couldn't make it, and flipped the Aston. She was thrown out, but unbelievably, also was not injured. Stirling's car was, somewhat, and this was to have a major effect on the next day's racing.

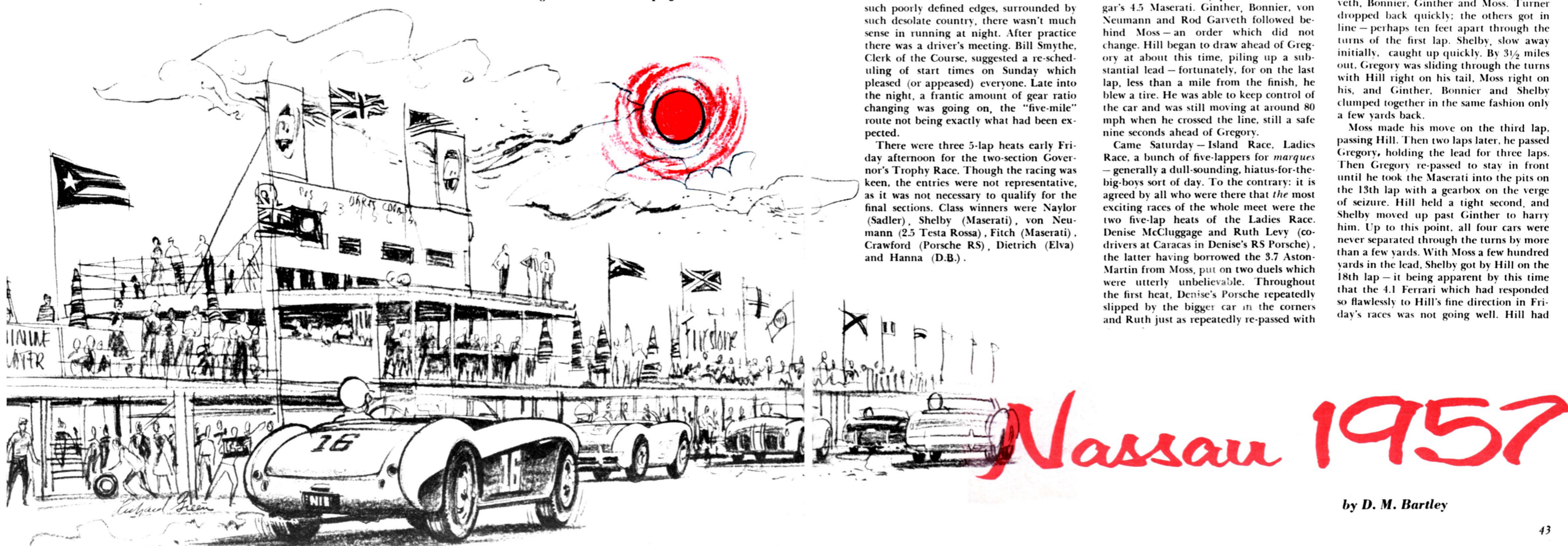
The excitement was some small consolation for the mass of Ferrari and Maserati drivers who had sat around the track all day for their 5-lap events—which were finally canceled for lack of time. The second heat of the Island Race was postponed to start Sunday's already busy schedule.

Complex negotiations were affected Saturday evening, and resulted in Jan de Vroom renting his 3.5 V-12 Ferrari to Temple Buell. He, in turn, loaned it to Moss. He won the 100-mile preliminary Sunday noon so easily that it embarrassed him.

Moss, apparently not the least bit winded by the 100-mile sprint, relaxed for 45 minutes or so, then ran-not-walked to his car in the LeMans start of the 250-mile concluding event of the meet.

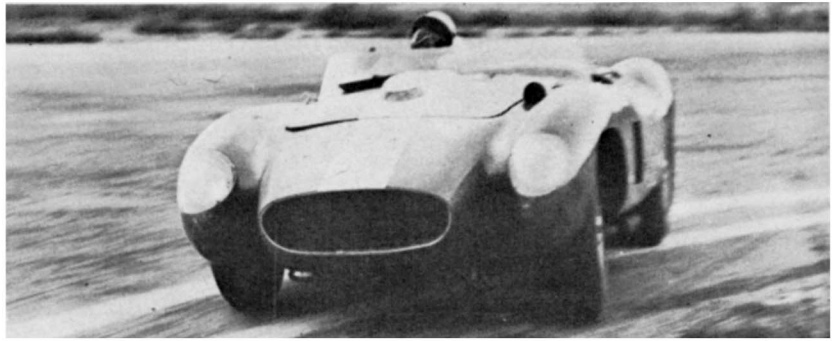
The first laps were as close racing as anyone is ever likely to see, Gregory, a blazing first away from the start, Turner a This-can't-be-the-CORVETTE second, followed by a pack consisting of Hill, Carveth, Bonnier, Ginther and Moss. Turner dropped back quickly; the others got in line—perhaps ten feet apart through the turns of the first lap. Shelby, slow away initially, caught up quickly. By 3½ miles out, Gregory was sliding through the turns with Hill right on his tail, Moss right on his, and Ginther, Bonnier and Shelby clumped together in the same fashion only a few yards back.

Moss made his move on the third lap, passing Hill. Then two laps later, he passed Gregory, holding the lead for three laps. Then Gregory re-passed to stay in front until he took the Maserati into the pits on the 13th lap with a gearbox on the verge of seizure. Hill held a tight second, and Shelby moved up past Ginther to harry him. Up to this point, all four cars were never separated through the turns by more than a few yards. With Moss a few hundred yards in the lead, Shelby got by Hill on the 18th lap—it being apparent by this time that the 4.1 Ferrari which had responded so flawlessly to Hill's fine direction in Friday's races was not going well. Hill had



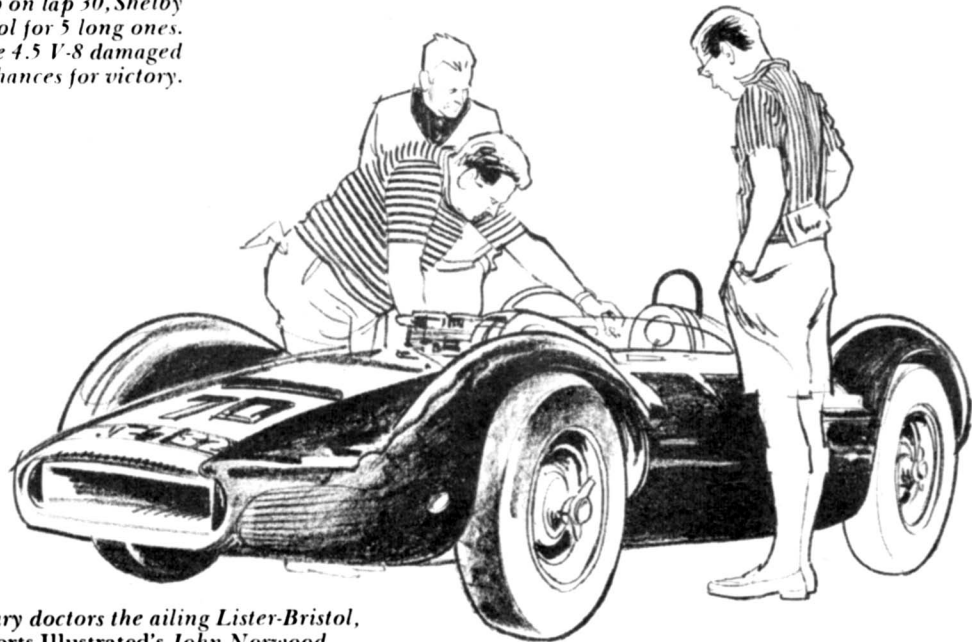
# Nassau 1957

by D. M. Bartley

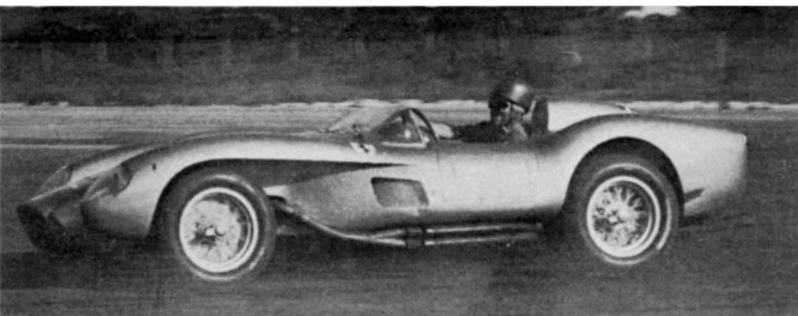


Moss points the aggressive 3.5 Ferrari's "new-look" nose right up the camera's lens.

After quick 33 second stop on lap 30, Shelby was held by traffic control for 5 long ones. Impatient revving of the 4.5 V-8 damaged clutch, costing him his chances for victory.



Freddie Kingsbury doctors the ailing Lister-Bristol, looking on is Sports Illustrated's John Norwood.



When von Neumann remained faithful to his old 2.5 for Friday's 5 lapper, Richie Ginther took boss' new 3 liter out for airing, docilely followed him by 25 seconds, 19 ahead of Naylor.

Many hands make light work. Rodriguez's car, 1 of dozens aboard, emerges from S.S. Florida.





*Fantastic, furious, but hardly feminine. Denise McCluggage won as Ruth Levy finished a mere RS-length behind.*



*"Local boy makes good." Moss, now building a home in the Bahamas, scored two wins.*



*Carroll Shelby, well-known Dallas dealer, held lead after Moss' 60 second stop, dropped back to second as clutch slip slowed him.*

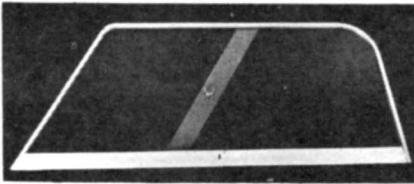


*Bob Said showed that his loud talk is not hot air, winning Governor's Handicap impressively in early model (but late-engined) Testa Rossa.*

*Despite post-practice promises, the finish of the 250 mile race took place a good half hour after sunset.*



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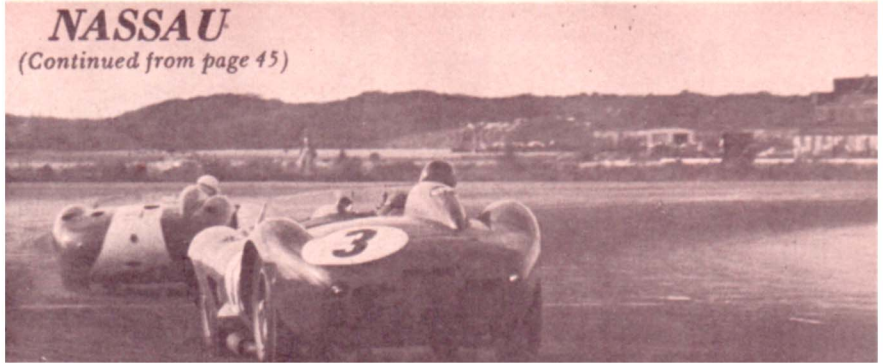
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(Continued from page 45)

only one pair of Englebert tires which properly matched the rear axle ratio, and he had used them at the rear. Hoping that the slightly larger front tires (which were all he could get) would do for the 250 mile event, he found that they didn't. The car handled poorly and could not attain peak revs. The same was somewhat true of the Gregory car, which had changed axles before this event — erroneously, it was revealed, by the failure of the car to perform up to snuff, even before the differential failed.

By the half-way point of the race, Moss, who had inched out a reasonable lead, stopped for fuel and tires. Shelby passed into first place, and Moss pulled out behind him in second, with Hill a not-too-far-back third. Bonnier, now ahead of Ginther, was fourth. Curtis Turner had held seventh place for a time, but he spun, lost five places, and soon after retired with a broken right-rear spring U-bolt.

Gendebien, going very quickly, led the two-liter cars, immediately followed by the dueling Crawford and Rodriguez who swapped positions five times in six laps, Crawford finally settled into over-all sixth place by the 15th tour. Von Neumann, again driving his older 2.5 Ferrari, had retired after a fine run just behind the leaders (all three of whom had lapped the field at the end of the first hours).

At the mid-point, George Reed's bored-out 4.9 Ferrari was the only Class B car still running; Peter Collins was ahead in a very small Class D field with the till-now well-hidden 2.6 Ferrari-Healey; Chuck Daigh had kept Reventlow's Maserati just ahead of Bob Said and far ahead of the other two-liter cars before he turned it back over to Lance (Gendebien's engine blew up after a few laps of running far up front); the Crawford and Rodriguez Porsches were miles ahead of their nearest class contenders. The four Elvas, with only a single Lotus to beat, had it all their own way. Howard Hanna's D.B. was the lone Class H car still in the field.

Moss got back out front ahead of Shelby — gaining perhaps four seconds a lap. By the 34th tour, the Shelby car developed a malfunctioning clutch. It has been held up unduly when trying to re-enter the fray after a tire change, and Shelby had slipped the clutch in impatience. So Moss pulled ahead a little on each remaining lap. Shelby, a clear second, about a minute ahead of the struggling Hill; Bonnier, driving very smoothly several miles behind, stayed in that order till the end.

Crawford, one of the finest Porsche drivers in America, inched his RS ahead of the

Ginther 4.9 Ferrari and stayed there for 12 laps, gaining slightly on Bonnier until he broke a rear axle five laps before the end; Rodriguez had a malfunctioning gearbox — no synchromesh — throughout this event. He had twice managed to re-pass the Reventlow-driven Cooper during the second hour, but made a late pit stop which permitted Bob Said, now in a very laudable sixth over-all spot, and Reventlow to pass him.

Bruce Kessler, driving Helburn's Testa Rossa Ferrari, had placed it immensely well before turning the wheel back to its owner who followed Rodriguez across the finish line. During the last half-hour, the cars were running in darkness, lights blazing and exhausts snapping. Close to the finish, Rod Carveth's Aston broke a front shock, and missed the last turn before the pit straight. Carveth tore down some 150 yards of steel mesh fencing and, to the utter horror of Maj. Parker and race organizer "Red" Crise, the incident was not noticed by anyone until Carveth walked back to the pits. Fortunately, in spite of serious damage to the car, he was not hurt.

Red Crise now has a permanent installation to work with, so by next year Nassau has every likelihood of becoming one of the finest — it is already one of the fastest — sports-car racing plants around. After the races, Crise, Parker, Bill Smythe and a handful of the drivers went over the course making suggestions for improvements — re-surfacing, narrowing the road, adding flag stations for more complete coverage, etc. Wouldn't be a bit surprised to see Nassau on the F.I.A. Manufacturer's Championship calendar one of these years. It has all potentialities required and couldn't be a pleasanter place to go.

D. M. Bartley

