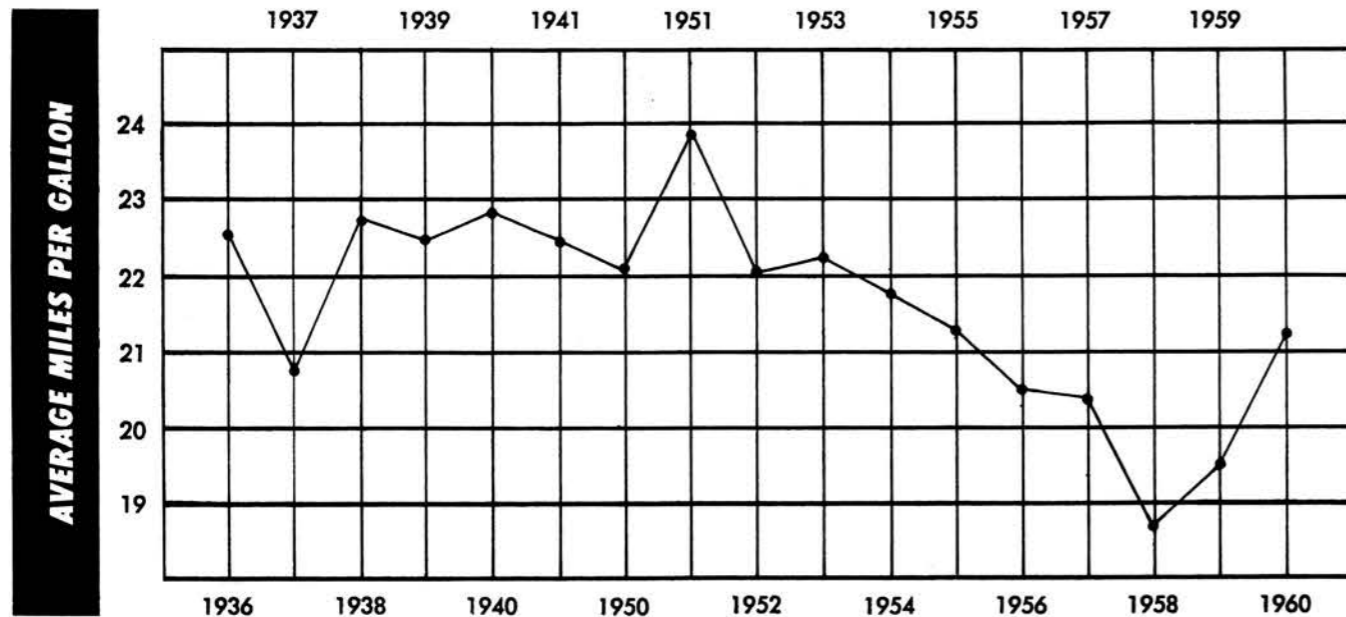
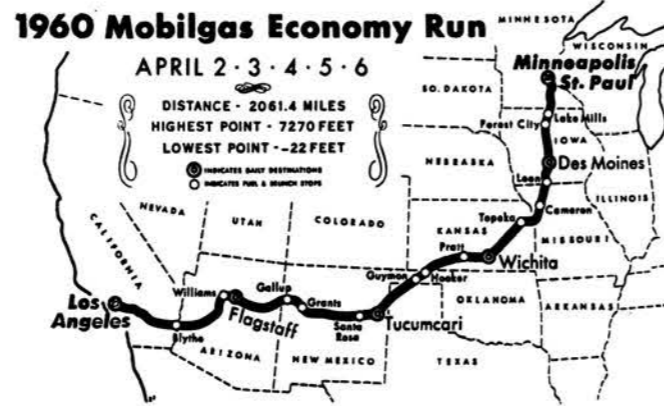




WINNING PLYMOUTH V-8 is flagged off on its way to Minneapolis with veteran driver, Mary Davis at wheel. The route of the Run (right) was plagued by heavy winds which had effect on results.

Annual Economy Run Sees All U.S.-Car Classes Improving Their Thrift Potentials



INCREASED attention by an economy conscious U.S. motoring industry added new excitement to the 1960 Mobilgas Run. More than any similar event this economy derby is given national attention and acceptance. This can be attributed to a demanding course, strict enforcement of regulations and realistic results. Those results for this year point out one most important trend: in all categories, from compact to luxury, Detroit cars have bettered their economy performance substantially.

The most interest this year naturally centered about a category of cars which has come into being on the premise of economy, the compacts. This was only the second year that the new-sized vehicles competed in the Run and it was the very first outing for the new compacts from the Big Three automakers. All of the new makes were represented with the exception of Mercury's recently announced Comet.

Final results of the five-day, 2,061.4-mile event placed a familiar name in the winner's circle, the Rambler American, last year's compact champion. But the 1960 winner had a gas consumption average more than three miles per gallon better than the 1959 American. The reason for this surprising improvement was the simple fact that this year's American entrant was from the new and optional Custom series, which is powered by a relatively modern ohv six-cylinder engine (see road test, page 64). The standard American Deluxe series was not even entered. Had this L-head-equipped compact competed and succeeded in obtaining its winning average of last year (25.2878 mpg), it would have finished far down in the standings, behind both Valiant and Corvair.

The second and third place showings of Valiant and Corvair respectively would seem to announce the fact that the cars' designers have found means to cure their sorest points. When these two were tested by MOTOR LIFE soon after their announcement, they offered disappointing mileage figures which were never better than 22 mpg. The five-mpg jump, even though obtained by expert economy drivers, should help their reputation considerably.

Surprising in reverse was the poor performance of the Ford Falcons. Even under hard MOTOR LIFE testing, this compact came through with mileage figures some

(Continued on page 75)

FINAL RESULTS of 1960 Run (right) helped to boost overall averages after a slump in recent years (see chart at left). All cars in the event, including compacts, had to be equipped with automatic transmissions.

MAKE	DRIVER	PLACE IN CLASS	MILES PER GALLON
COMPACT CLASS			
Studebaker Lark VIII	Dick Griffith		23.2838
Studebaker Lark VI	Bill Corey		21.8585
Corvair	Patricia Sawyer		26.2162
Rambler American Custom	Les Viland	1st	28.3533
Rambler Deluxe	Tommy Thomas		23.2076
Ford Falcon	Bill Stroppe		25.6343
Ford Falcon	Ruth Doushness		25.6421
Valiant	Art Rene	2nd	26.4700
Valiant	Ginny Sims	3rd	27.2992
Corvair	Vince Piggins		27.0315
AVERAGE MPG FOR CLASS			25.4997
LOW-PRICED SIX-CYLINDER CLASS			
Plymouth Savoy	Pierce Venable	3rd	24.7360
Plymouth Savoy	Mary Hauser	1st	24.8265
Dodge Dart	Vicki Wood		23.9037
Dodge Dart	Woody Bell	2nd	24.7429
Ford Fairlane	Dan Jones		22.4843
Chevrolet Biscayne	John Fitch		21.2904
Chevrolet Biscayne	Betty Skelton		21.4874
AVERAGE MPG FOR CLASS			23.3530
LOW-PRICED EIGHT-CYLINDER CLASS			
Plymouth Belvedere	Jim Fosdick	2nd	22.5256
Plymouth Belvedere	Mary Davis	1st	22.8899
Chevrolet Impala	Melvin Hilliard		18.4537
Ford Starliner	Loretta Colange		21.0054
Ford Starliner	Art Chrisman		20.9914
Chevrolet BelAir	Ruth Levy		20.2345
Chevrolet BelAir	Chuck Daigh		20.4236
Ford Fairlane	Ak Miller		21.5802
Dodge Dart	Lute Eldridge	3rd	22.2885
Dodge Dart	Patricia Jones		21.7326
Chevrolet Impala	Sunnie Baker		18.6132
AVERAGE MPG FOR CLASS			20.9762
LOW MEDIUM-PRICED CLASS			
Oldsmobile 88	Jim Parkinson		18.2401
Pontiac Catalina	Marta Retzlaff		19.7329
Chrysler Windsor	Grant Slife		18.0209
Buick LeSabre	Betty Shutes		19.0670
Studebaker Hawk	Jim Peterson	1st	22.9899
Dodge Matador	Link Paola	2nd	21.1214
DeSoto Fireflite	Al Cottle		21.0139
Mercury Monterey	Byron Froelich	3rd	21.0696
Mercury Monterey	Nicky Ward		20.7221
Pontiac Star Chief	Smoky Yunick		19.0424
Pontiac Star Chief	Fran Foster		18.0729
Pontiac Catalina	Mickey Thompson		19.3778
Buick LeSabre	Dr. W. Vandenbos		19.0722
Oldsmobile 88	Lillian Warner		18.2022
Rambler Ambassador	Jim Moore		20.2492
AVERAGE MPG FOR CLASS			19.7351
UPPER MEDIUM-PRICED CLASS			
Buick Invicta	Judy Allred		17.6966
Buick Invicta	John Rich		18.4910
Buick Electra	Dan Bridges		17.9076
Buick Electra	Barbara Nieland		17.9581
Pontiac Bonneville	Dan Francisco		16.7715
Pontiac Bonneville	Judy Thompson		17.1469
Thunderbird	Verne Houle	3rd	19.8912
De Soto Adventurer	Hart Fullerton	2nd	20.3627
Oldsmobile 98	L. E. Jann		17.1785
Chrysler Saratoga	Eleanor Edwards		19.8165
Chrysler New Yorker	Mel Alsbury, Jr.	1st	20.8715
AVERAGE MPG FOR CLASS			18.5538
HIGH-PRICED CLASS			
Imperial	George Alsbury	1st	20.5036
Cadillac	Pete Novotny	2nd	18.8170
AVERAGE MPG FOR CLASS			19.6603
AVERAGE MILES PER GALLON, ALL CLASSES			21.2259

two mpg better than those cars entered in the Economy Run. This obvious inconsistency is explained by the car's gearing. The first Falcons had a 3.31-to-1 rear end ratio. In January it was changed for a better performance ratio of 3.56-to-1. Ford attempted to use the original gearing in the event but it was not considered "stock" by the sanctioning group, USAC. When you discover that the winning Rambler had a 2.87-to-1 ratio, the results are more understandable.

Poorest showing in the compact car class was made by the Studebaker Lark Six. It was bettered even by the Lark V-8. The latter's 23.2838 mpg was a teaspoonful better than the Rambler Six in the standard Deluxe body.

Within the popular low-priced field Chrysler Corporation dominated both the six- and eight-cylinder classes. Last year Plymouth didn't even bother to enter its six-cylinder products, possibly for fear of embarrassment at their thirst. The 1960 picture was certainly brighter for both the Plymouth and the new Dart had the slanting ohv Six. The older make captured first and third places while its young ally grabbed second and fourth spots. They were followed by a Ford and two Chevys (last year's winner) in that order.

Results were basically the same in the eight-cylinder class with the exception that Plymouth bagged the first two spots and Dart settled for the next two. Behind them were three Fords and four Chevys, again in that order.

The Plymouth-Dart showing wasn't unpredicted but many observers thought that, of the two, the Dart might produce the better figures for reasons of weight and design. Plymouth's better standings can be traced to a factor that can't be forgotten in events of this kind, the more experienced drivers.

The low-medium price class winners were cars of varied personality, a Studebaker Hawk, a Dodge and a Mercury. Their counterparts in the upper-medium price class, Chrysler New Yorker, DeSoto Adventurer and Thunderbird, were nearly as colorful. Demarcation lines were not quite as clear in both of these categories but generally Chrysler (Corporation) seemed to do a little better than Ford and Ford a little better than GM.

Only two entrants fought for luxury car honors and in that duel Imperial outdid Cadillac, a reversal of last year's results.

Certain limitations, both natural and man-made, were placed upon all cars in the event. Every entrant, including the compacts, had to be equipped with an automatic transmission. From the low-price eight-cylinder class through the high-price, all cars had to be equipped with power steering and power brakes. During the course of the Run itself extremely high winds hurt performance, particularly on the first and fifth days. •

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