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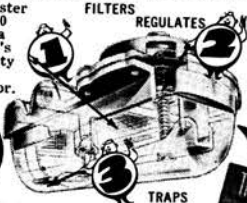
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BY DON STEWART

RACING CARS

THE QUESTION mark car in the 1957 Sebring fray was a large, hairy red beast by the name of Maserati 450-S. The bench racers assembled that particular Saturday were all in agreement that the huge V-8 would break before the team of Fangio and Behra could complete the rather arduous 12 hours.

Of course Messrs. Behra and Fangio proved them wrong. The old theory, begun by the original Maserati brothers and carried forth as gospel since 1937 by the brothers Orsi, had succeeded again. The theory? Build them super-light, then insert as large and high-revving a powerplant as possible.

Well, for the coming year of motor sports, apparently the old theory is back in play. After two years of fooling around with an esthetic (though super-slow and super-expensive) Gran Turismo, Maserati is back into serious sports car activity with their latest hybrid, the Maserati 2.9 liter "birdcage." Why buffs have coined the car a birdcage is obvious once you view the maze of tube that makes up its multi-tube framework. Weighing in at 1,420 lbs., the new sports-racer is currently enjoying the most pleasant of power-to-weight ratios and, by virtue of its weight advantage, it also enjoys superior braking qualities without imposing undue stress on the anchors.

Pilots in the States have been eating up courses like Riverside in the new Masers and perhaps, if Ferrari's latest three-liter proves no faster than it was in winning the Buenos Aires 1,000-kilometer sports car race, the trident of Maserati may be flashing in front of several checkers this season.

Another new car is also in the news. This one's slightly less agile than the Maser above—it turns but one way—left! Its owner, the California man with the smile and the money, J. C. Agajanian, has selected an all-around motor racer from Texas, named Lloyd Ruby, to pilot it and its constructor, A. J. Watson, a young man with a big name at the brickyard, is

confident that the new Indy machine will be a front runner when speedway owner Tony Hulman histrionically shouts, "Gentlemen, start your engines," next May 30th.

Ruby is a newcomer to the 500-mile classic, having passed his driver's test in the special late summer session last year. In 1959, Aggie put his faith in Chuck Daigh, also a newcomer for the one-way circuit but the tired old number 98 just wouldn't do it. I remember at the time, just minutes after Aggie and Chuck had decided to stop trying to qualify in the ill-handling machine, Aggie made a statement about having Watson get busy on a new machine for 1960.

I, along with several others, assumed that Daigh would chauffeur the new one. Probably, Chuck is so wrapped up in the Scarab Formula business that he can't spare the time for another Indy attempt. At any rate, Ruby is a more-than-adequate auto racer and Aggie is hungry for another win. Maybe this could be his year.

* * *

As stated herein a while back, 1960 appeared to be shaping up as the year when rear-engined racing cars would command the wins and respect over the more conventionally-placed drive line assemblies. Furthering such thinking, comes the report from Lotus that its new Formula Junior machine will have its powerplant behind the driver in fashion of Lotus's arch rival, John Cooper & Company.

The new F-J Lotus employs the 997 cc. Ford 105E engine in a multi-tube frame. Mounting a Renault Dauphine gearbox (upside down) behind the engine and wrapping the whole works up with centrally pivoted lower wishbones and driveshafts that form a part of the upper wishbone assembly, Colin Chapman has arrived at a neat and rather inexpensive independent rear suspension.

The front end is typically British with wishbones and an anti-roll bar sprung with coils mounted on telescopic shocks. Lockheed Al-fin drums with 198 sq. in. of lining area (total) complete the running gear. •