

# Racing Roundup

New Speed record was set at Daytona recently when a '61 Ford, driven by Curtis Turner, roared over the Tri-oval at speed of 153.505 mph.

Firestone crew makes a final tire check prior to Ford run. Turner bettered former mark by more than a mile per hour in NASCAR-sponsored meet.



by Bob Russo, Racing Editor

DAYTONA BEACH, preparing for the NASCAR Speed Weeks February 1 through 26, was the recent scene for some sizzling lap speeds over the Daytona tri-oval. Bob Osiecki's Mad Dog III, with veteran driver Curtis Turner at the wheel, made a valiant stab at the \$10,000 prize offered by Speedway prexy Bill France to the first driver to cut a 180-mph lap. Unfortunately, Mad Dog III fell short due to what was described as handling problems. The car, a Chrysler-engined streamlined Plymouth (see MOTOR LIFE, Feb., 1961), had a tendency to lift its rear wheels in the tight turns, according to Turner, and there wasn't enough time to correct this during the allotted run period.

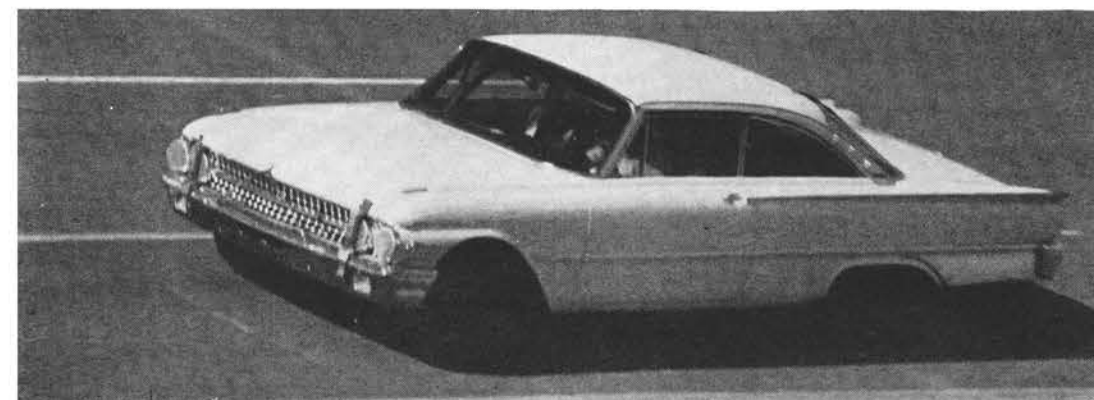
Max Muhleman, who aptly covered the construction details of Mad Dog III

in the February issue, reports that Osiecki has not given up in his quest for the magic 180-mph lap. He hopes, according to Max, to install the brutish 825-hp, fuel-injected engine in an Indianapolis roadster chassis for another attempt. Currently, the Daytona single lap mark is held by such a chassis, powered by a four-banger Meyer-Drake Offy engine, and stands at 176.887 mph under the auspices of the late George Amick. While negotiating for such a chassis, Osiecki has entered Mad Dog III in the Beach trials in February, to assault the flying mile course.

MEANWHILE Muhleman, who does an outstanding job of reporting racing and other sports events for the *Charlotte News*, stayed close to the second speed

story to come out of Daytona recently, and this one also involved Curtis Turner. This time Turner was on a successful speed run. The story is illustrated on these pages, showing Turner taking a '61 Ford equipped with the hot 375-hp V-8 engine on a 153.505-mph record lap over the Daytona track. The Starliner bettered the former one-lap mark, set last July with Jack Smith's Pontiac, by more than a full mile per hour. Previously, few Fords had been able to crack the 145-mph mark at Daytona.

The Champion Spark Plug Company backed the run and the car was set up by veteran mechanics Glen and Leonard Wood. Turner's comments after the run were: "That's the fastest stock automobile I ever crawled into. If anything

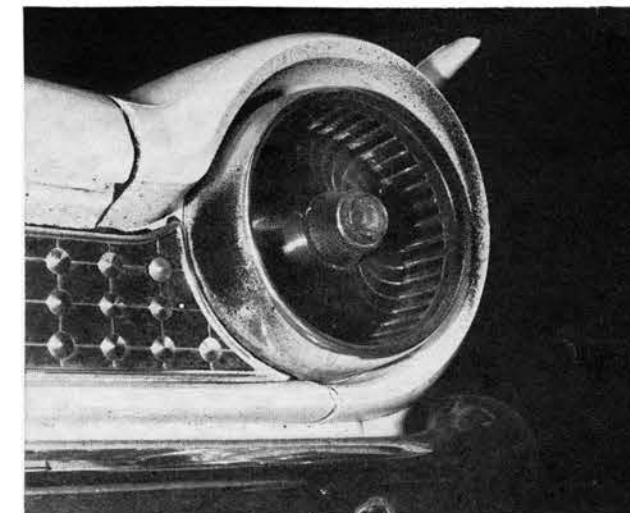


Five-mile, two-lap record of 153.335 mph also fell under Turner's throttle foot. Car is shown here on straightaway.

DAYTONA INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY PHOTOS



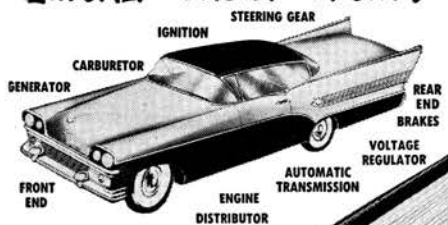
First try was unsuccessful so mechanic Glen Wood (right) suggested carburetion change. Turner, looking pensive here, thought it over.



Close-up of tail light and rear bumper shows the powdered rubber shed from rear tire in speed run.

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## Racing Roundup

continued

outruns the Pontiacs this year, this should be it. It never gave us one bit of mechanical trouble, and it looks like a great race car."

**PREPARATIONS** for the 45th annual 500-mile Classic at Indianapolis are moving into high gear, although considerable time remains before track activity will get underway on May 1st. Several driver changes have already been made, and from Tulsa there is a report of a new rear-engined, turbine-powered mount being readied by John Zink, probably for the capable hands of Troy Ruttman. We're staying close to this one and will have a full report plus pictures in our pre-Indy coverage.

Owner Lindsey Hopkins has added the Braund Plywood Special, built by Quinn Epperly last year, to his stable, and will have veteran Tony Bettenhausen and upcoming Wayne Weiler as drivers at the Speedway. Jack Beckly will again be handling the wrenches. The car purchased by Hopkins was originally signed to Parnelli Jones before Braund sold it. Now there is some speculation that Jones may sign with the Agajanian stable. Could be a good combination, especially with Danny Oakes twisting the nuts and bolts. Jones, in our opinion—and we're not alone here—is the most promising driver we've seen in many years.

Indianapolis qualification record holder Jim Hurtubise will be behind the wheel of the Demler Special with veteran Tiny Worley as head mechanic. Quite a combination here, too. All three—driver, mechanic and car—have great reputations. The car, incidentally, built in 1958 by Quinn Epperly, has finished second, third and fifth in its three starts at the Speedway.

**FANS WHO ATTEND** this year's Memorial Day Classic will be greeted with new grandstands along the main straightaway. Part of owner Tony Hulman's continued improvement program, the new stands include an elaborate press box which was sorely needed. Eventually, all of the old stands north of the starting line will be replaced.

**MECHANIC SMOKEY YUNICK**, who was assigned to handle Jim Rathmann's Ken-Paul Special at Indy this year, was suspended by USAC for one year for participating in non-USAC-sanctioned events. Smokey, a veteran stock car mechanic and a good one, for years was a member of NASCAR where he prepared many winning cars. He has

also been a member of factory-sponsored teams and research programs. A couple of years ago, when he bought a Speedway car and came to Indianapolis, he naturally had to join USAC, which frowns on its members affiliating with competition not sanctioned by them. In Smokey's case, because of his livelihood in preparing stockers, he was OK'd to set up cars running under the NASCAR banner, but was not supposed to take an active part in the pits during races in which these cars were run. According to the suspension notice, Smokey did take part in pit activity and so was set down, for an entire year. He applied for an appeal hearing which was set for mid-January. It does seem unfair that a man who makes his living as a chief mechanic the way Smokey does cannot be allowed to operate without all this hassle. Perhaps some good may come of this recent action so that some sort of working agreement between USAC and NASCAR can be accomplished to cover these cases.

**INCIDENTALLY**, we've been swamped with queries on where to write for tickets for Indianapolis and Speed Weeks at Daytona. If you plan to attend either or both, you may write to: Tickets, Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Speedway, Indiana. You will be sent a seating diagram showing location of seats available and the price. For Speed Weeks, send your letter to: Daytona International Speedway, Drawer S, Daytona Beach, Florida.

**DON CAMPBELL'S** Bluebird, potential world land speed record holder, is being rebuilt faster than predicted. Duplicate aluminum components were ready in November to repair those damaged when the car crashed during a trial run at Bonneville last September. A new attempt at besting 400 mph is being planned over a course consisting of the 13½-mile record strip, the 10-mile National Drag strip and the area in between at the Salt Flats. This area will be smoothed down for the run and will give Campbell more room for dicing. His difficulties came while trying to correct the car on a strip only 100 feet wide.

Latest guess as to why the Bluebird slewed off course seems to make the most sense. The left wheels apparently were running on the black oil line used for sighting down the long straightaway. This may have led to unequal thrust, causing the car to swerve and lose traction.

**AUTOLITE** is preparing to donate a raft of attractive trophies to some 60 NASCAR Sportsman and Modified drivers in 1961. •