A FINE DAY FOR FORDS

Tiny Lund Becomes the Horatio Alger of Daytona

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THE CHEVROLETS WERE FAST but frail, the Pontiacs were strong, but not strong enough, and when the flag fell on the fifth annual Daytona 500, there they were, five fastback Fords rumbling across the line in a neat, noisy formation.

It was the winner, 265-lb. Dwayne "Tiny" Lund who captured the headlines and most of the space in the wire-service results, and well he should have, because his was a Cinderella story of impressive dimensions. Ten days before the 500, Lund had pulled Marvin Panch from the smoldering wreckage of Briggs Cunningham's 427 Ford-Maserati GT in an act of unvarnished courage. Out of gratitude the injured Panch and car owner Glenn Wood gave Lund the seat in their No. 21 red-and-white fastback Ford for the big show. Pure Horatio Alger; live right and you shall be rewarded.

Assuming this to be valid, there were many people at Daytona Beach who lived right; and most of them drove Fords. Not since this event started in 1959 has any single make so completely dominated the proceedings. Even in 1961 and 1962, when they were in a class by themselves, the legendary Pontiacs could not capture the first five places.

The Ford men came to win in 1963, out in the open, steely-eyed and resolute, buoyed by the fact that everyone in Dearborn from Henry's grandson on down was behind them. No sunglasses, no sneaking around the pits under assumed names this time, Ford was going to win this automobile race and everybody had better believe it.

For a while, nobody believed it. Chevrolet played a last minute trump in the form of a new, snorting 427-cu. in., 427-bhp engine and threw the ball park into panic. Junior Johnson and USAC rookie Johnny Rutherford stampeded the competition in the two 100-mile qualifying races and left little doubt that these machines were faster than anything around. Johnson unwound an unofficial lap at 168 mph and Rutherford qualified almost 2 mph quicker than anyone at 165.183 mph.

It was bonus day for Chevrolet backers like Ray Fox and Louis Clements and the redoubtable Smokey Yunick. For many years multitudes had pluckily labored to make the Chevrolets go fast at Daytona, but the famous 409, in many respects a mediocre powerplant, was never up to the job. When the 427 arrived, the Impala hardtops were already equipped with sturdy, bug-free chassis, so the rest was simple.

Pontiacs almost won the race on their reputations. They were by no means fastest, down on outright speed to both Ford and Chevrolet, but they were strong (though the old Super Duty 421 seems to be near the limit at its present 405 bhp rating) and rolled along with a pedigree that demanded respect. Driven by the likes of 1962 500 winner Fireball Roberts, USAC stalwarts Paul Goldsmith, A. J. Foyt and Len Sutton, plus Grand National champion Joe Weatherly and the determined Bobby Johns, the Pontiacs had to be counted. They led the race for a long while and there were many, even a few faint-hearted Ford men, who saw history repeating itself with all the inevitability of an old dream.

Then Goldsmith stopped with his engine gushing oil out of various fissures, Foyt blew a tire, tried to back up to his pit and was disqualified, Johns made a nightmarish pit stop punctuated by a crackling fire in the carburetor and the scoreboard began to read Ford, Ford, Ford and more Fords. Fireball hung on longest, but his engine blew on the 182nd lap and the Pontiacs were gone.

For Holman & Moody, the Charlotte, N.C., Ford wizards, the race was the long-awaited realization of their potential at Daytona. In the two previous 500s, only their star, Fred Lorenzen, had been able to crack the top five and even he had finished two laps behind in his best showing in 1961. Their engines have always been among the best, never seriously lacking horsepower (410 bhp from 427 cu. in. this year) or reliability, but the roofline, touted across the land for its crisp beauty, had never been much of an asset in the wind-whipped slopes of Daytona Beach. At this speedway aerodynamics plays a role of exaggerated importance and the earlier Fords had too much air drag to be competitive. For 1963 Ford introduced a sleek new fastback with a rear window that slanted aft at a lovely, wind-cheating angle. Suddenly the Fords were to be dealt with as full-blown challenges.

HAPPY VICTOR Tiny Lund greets wife.

Lorenzen won one of two Races of Champions run early in February and assured himself of the outside pole position beside savvy Fireball Roberts. Then he qualified at 161.870 mph for the third best time overall. (Under Daytona's rather involved rules for making the race, the two front row men are the winners of the 25-mile "Races of Champions," and time trials determine starting places for two 100-mile Grand National races, from which 28 more starters are selected. The 50-car field is rounded out by the top 20 finishers in a consolation run the day before the 500. Therefore, qualifying has no direct bearing on the big race, ▶

HOT AND HURRIED pace of '63 Daytona was typified by doorhandle-to-doorhandle battle of Fireball Roberts (Pontiac) and Larry Frank (06, Ford).

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but offers valid ground for comparing performance.)

Nelson Stacy clocked fourth-fastest qualifying time with 160.843 mph and the other two Holman-Moody stablemates, Dan Gurney, who may be the most versatile driver of all time, and Larry Frank were close behind with times around the 160 mph mark. Lund provided the first of several surprises he had in store by qualifying his Ford at 160.771 mph for ninth best time. The only other front-line competitor to rely on Ford power was former Grand National champ Ned Jarrett, who qualified at 158.567 mph. Seven other pilots had '63s, six made the race and one, Tommy Irwin, finished tenth. The rest were just there.

ENGINES are changed almost as frequently as spark plugs at Daytona.

While the grand effort of Ford was a complete success, similar campaigns on the part of Mercury, Plymouth and Dodge were monumental failures. From the start of practice none of the three marques even indicated twitches of competitive speed and they were doomed to obscurity by the time the flag dropped.

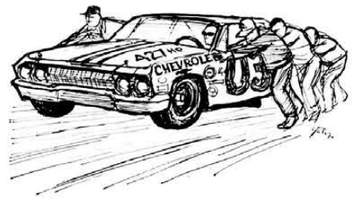
If a frontal assault of sheer numbers would have done the job, Bill Stroppe & Associates might have won the race. They appeared with six immaculately prepared Mercurys, a practice car, several vans-full of spares, legions of brightly garbed mechanics and half a dozen of the best race drivers available anywhere. Whitey Gerken, a USAC stock car veteran, managed to urge his red, white and cream fastback up to 158.506 mph for the best qualifying effort of the team and 15th fastest in the field. Troy Ruttman, Parnelli Jones, Darel Dieringer, Chuck Daigh all clocked fractionally slower. Rodger Ward and Johnny Allen, who was pressed into last minute service with the practice car, ran 156 mph.

Gerken smashed his vehicle in the first 100-mile qualifier and Ward and Daigh had their mounts cleaned-out in a rousing 7-car pile-up in the 50-mile consolation. Ruttman struggled bravely to finish 12th in the 500; Jones was 15th and Dieringer 16th. Allen retired at 111 laps.

The mystery of the Mercury debacle deepens when it is recalled that the cars are nearly identical twins to the winning Fords, using the same engines and practically the same chassis. The Mercurys, at 3875 lb., were the heaviest cars entered (Fords, 3600; Pontiacs, 3535; Plymouths, 3048; Dodge 880, 3705) but the weight at Daytona, where acceleration is negligible, is not a great handicap.

The Mercurys ran excellently at Riverside in their first outing and no obvious reason is in evidence as to why they did not show well at Daytona. Apparently the difference in the 1963 Ford and Mercury grilles is responsible for part of the trouble because all of Stroppe's cars developed wild underhood air turbulence at flat-out speeds. The composition paper air cleaners were actually being shredded by the wind blasts and a vacuum effect over the carburetor venturis resulted. Stroppe said his team was using considerably richer carburetor jets and still getting better gas mileage than the Fords.

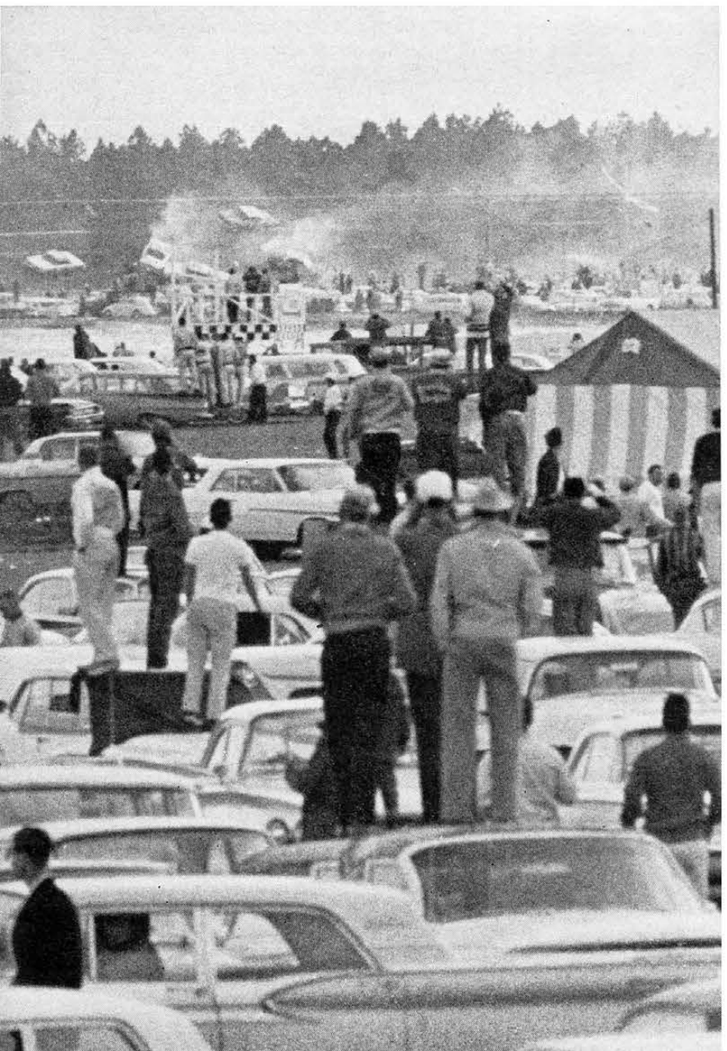
ANOTHER Chevrolet leaves the chase; G. C. Spencer gets a push to the garage.



Making a stock car run over 160 mph at Daytona is a game of millimeters, of super-tuning both engines and chassis. In this department Stroppe and his group may have been handicapped by a 6-year absence from the track and the difference between the Fords and Mercurys may be entirely traceable to this fact. Of one thing the stock car racing world may be sure: development is just beginning in the Mercury camp and the situation may be radically different on both the NASCAR and USAC shorter tracks and at the July 4 Firecracker 400 (up from 250 miles) at Daytona Beach. Ruttman, Jones and Ward will campaign three cars with USAC and Gerken, Dieringer and Daigh will run the full NASCAR schedule.

It was even sadder for Plymouth and Dodge because they could not as readily employ a handy excuse like inexperience. Lee Petty Engineering, backed by a decade of successful tampering with Plymouths, found itself helpless at Daytona. The engines were plenty robust (375 bhp from 426 cu. in.), attested to by their domination of the Speed Weeks drag programs, and they did not lack for drivers, who came from Indianapolis (Jim Hurtubise) and from top-notch NASCAR ranks (Richard ▶

CARS FLEW all directions in big practice race pile-up; fortunately, no one was hurt.



ROOKIE JOHN RUTHERFORD drove Smokey Yunick's Chevrolet (13) to victory in one of the preliminary 100-milers, leading here G. C. Spencer (03), John Rogers (58) and Tiny Lund (21).

It's all in your point of view.

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Petty and Jim Paschal). Petty's 154.785 mph time trial was the best recorded for the group and this 26-year-old star's mastery of the wonderous art of drafting was the only thing which saved face for the team. Running in competition, Petty was able to travel 10 mph faster than the car would go, merely by grabbing tows from faster cars. It was drafting and nothing else that was responsible for his sixth place finish. Both Hurtubise and Paschal dropped out without denting the top ten.

Cotton Owens, who wet-nursed a pair of Dodges driven by two fine young drivers, David Pearson and Billy Wade, had even more headaches. Pearson clocked 146.544 mph, which was even slower than a 1962 model entered

KIDS' wagons were everywhere, were used for hauling tires from garages to pits.

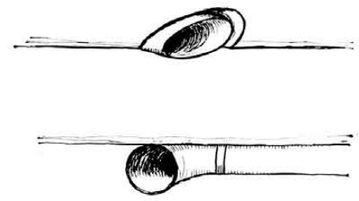
by Larry Thomas. Wade ran 144.671 mph and only three cars did worse. Pearson was in the big consolation race tangle and started the 500 with ugly welts in the bodywork both fore and aft. He went 12 laps. Wade endured the indignity of running near the back for 32 and the Dodges were not seen again.

What happened to the Dodges and Plymouths? No one seems to know, though everyone agrees that starting out with brand new engines and chassis means laborious trial and error tuning before cars can be made ready to race, even by bright, resourceful men like Cotton Owens and Lee Petty. Aerodynamics seems to be a factor, because the Chrysler products are not as well streamlined as the competition. Pearson drove a big 122-in. wheelbase 880 while Wade had the smaller, less bulky 2-door (119 in. wheelbase) similar in body shape to the Plymouths (116-in. wheelbase). They were all slow, that is certain, but the story could be different during the rest of the season.

In case it be mistakenly believed that the entire 500-mile show was a walkaway for Ford, it should be made clear that Ford did not get a sniff at the lead until the 50th lap, and then only briefly during a flurry of pit stops. The first 175 miles belonged to General Motors, initially to Junior Johnson and his Chevrolet, then to Goldsmith and Foyt in Pontiacs and to Rex White and G. C. Spencer in more Chevrolets. All the while, Lorenzen, Stacy, Lund, Jarrett and Gurney hung close in arrears, but they did not lead. Following the departure of Johnson, Goldsmith and Foyt, White and Spencer laid claim to heading the pack and only Spencer's blown engine and White's chronic overheating troubles displaced them.

Rambling along far back, with Smokey Yunick flashing him periodic 166 mph lap clockings, was brash John Rutherford, a threat which never materialized. In his 100-mile victory, the former IMCA sprint car driver had held back until two laps from the end, opened the throttle and promptly went into orbit. He was expected to try the same thing in the 500, drafting along happily, saving fuel and engine until near the end. Then a casual signal from Yunick, who was aiming for his third straight 500 victory, and quick, Wat-

SOME EXHAUSTS were faired into the bodywork, others were more basic.



son, the lead! It was all very simple—but it never happened. Rutherford queered things on the 46th lap when he took a 165 mph spin on the infield grass and then retired to his pit for two laps while Yunick & company furiously lopped away a fender that was rubbing on a right rear tire. He spent the rest of the race charging, finally finishing ninth. His was the only Chevrolet running strongly at the end and it is not impossible that Smokey would have had his hat trick if his talented lad had not boo-booed.

Heading for the wire, Lorenzen appeared to have the race in the bag. But, cursing the NASCAR rule which limits tank capacity to 22 gal., he pitted eight laps from the end for a swizzle of gas. Ned Jarrett took over in what was rapidly becoming an Alphonse and Gaston act, then entered the pits with a dry tank three laps from home. Lund took over with Lorenzen second, Jarrett third and that's the way it ended. Stacy and Gurney were a lap behind.

The fuel shortage bugged the leaders all day. Mileage ranged between 4-5 mpg, forcing the chargers to make five stops instead of the customary four—except Lund, who made only four and you know how he finished (though he ran dry on the final lap).

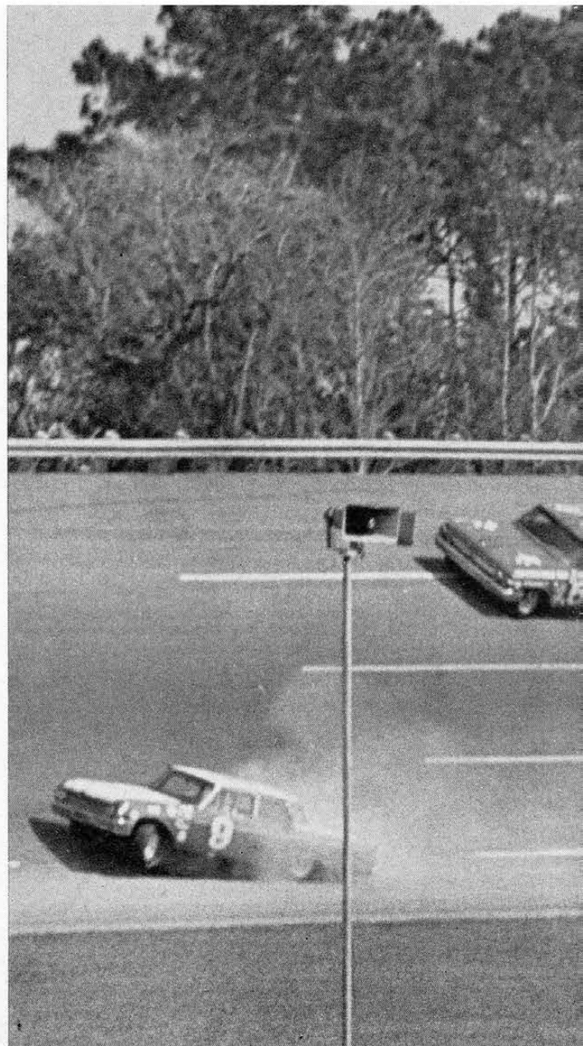
Tire wear was amazingly low. Lund went the distance on a single set (Fire- ▶

FINAL LAP FOUND winner Tiny Lund (21) leading Dan Gurney (0), who placed fifth to give Ford a 1-2-3-4-5 finish.

MASHED MERCURYS are lined up on infield after practice race pile-up.

PRESSURIZED FUELING was not allowed, so crews used 10-gal. cans.

AL TERRELL (9) falls off banking as Curtis Crider motors by.



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stones) and very few cars wore out more than one. Chilly temperatures no doubt helped, as did a damp track at the beginning (the opening 10 laps were run under the caution flag after the race was delayed one and a half hours by a cloudburst . . . not a shower as they said . . . a deluge, a torrent, a brief monsoon, yes, but not a shower). Loyalty was evenly split between brands; Petty's Plymouths, most of the Pontiacs and Johnson and Rutherford used Goodyears, Holman & Moody, the Stroppe Mercurys, Lund, etc., wore Firestones. All the rubber in the place was 8.00-8.20 x 15.

Top drivers can be found at Daytona who will admit in confidence that a first class stock car will just about

SAFETY IS serious business at Daytona: fireman is stationed every few yards.

drive itself around the 2.5-mi. tri-oval. This may be overstated, but the fact remains that the automobile and the brute top end power it produces is the predominant factor in success at Daytona Beach. Nowhere else is a race car distilled into such an instrument of sheer speed. There is no braking, no accelerating and very little steering at the Big D. Momentum is very important, making it clear why the relatively heavy Pontiacs have been able to blow off the lightweight Chevrolets and Fords in the past.

Running 3:1 and lower rear axle ratios, stock cars set up for Daytona are expected to do only one thing: run 160 mph forever at 5800-6000 rpm. For all intents and purposes, lap speed equals top speed because in a given lap engine rpm will vary as little as 100 rpm and never more than 400 rpm. This means a car turning 160 mph laps might run the turns at 158-159 mph and reach 161-62 mph on the long back straight. One driver likens driving the track to a turnpike. "Once you get up to speed, you can back off on the throttle and the car just keeps rolling along," he said.

BELATEDLY, the sun appeared over the 2.5-mile Daytona track, drying it up enough so that the race could be started.

Steering is kept at the relatively slow stock ratios because one doesn't need really fast wheel action to get results at 160 mph.

Drivers agree that the most demanding parts of the circuit are the spots where the pavement makes its transition from high banking to the near-level front and back straights. Blasting off the 31° curves can send an automobile leapfrogging off in some strange directions, they say.

The art of drafting is almost an exclusive Daytona craft. Everyone uses it, the drivers of faster cars to conserve their engines, the rest to keep up. It seems impossible that such goings-on can make a difference in an automobile race, but the fact remains that it does. Just ask Richard Petty.

The Daytona 500 is a big deal, make no mistake about it. Only five years old, it might be described as the second most important automobile race in the United States, at least in terms of general public interest and press coverage. Some years will elapse before it seriously rivals the Indianapolis festivities, but its growth rate will skyrocket in the foreseeable future.

CALMEST man in racing, Smokey Yunick, calmly watches Rutherford make up time.

Stock car racing, Daytona style, is noisy, fast and exciting and provides a magical identification factor for every Walter Mitty sitting in the stands. As one Detroit public relations man said, looking over the 71,000 fans: "Not one of them used a bus, streetcar or a bicycle to get here. They all drove cars, and when they go home, they'll either be riding in the right kind or the wrong kind."

In 1963, Ford was the right kind. ■

DAYTONA RESULTS

Pos.	Driver	Car	Laps
1	Dwayne Lund	'63 Ford	200
2	Fred Lorenzen	'63 Ford	200
3	Ned Jarrett	'63 Ford	200
4	Nelson Stacy	'63 Ford	199
5	Dan Gurney	'63 Ford	199
6	Richard Petty	'63 Plymouth	198
7	Bobby Johns	'63 Pontiac	198
8	Joe Weatherly	'63 Pontiac	197
9	John Rutherford	'63 Chevy	196
10	Tommy Irwin	'63 Ford	195

WINNER'S CIRCLE enclosed happy Tiny Lund, his wife, cameramen by the dozens, and sundry people presenting awards, gifts, trophies, etc.