



ROUND CORNER BY STEVE KELLY

In choosing the SCCA Trans-Am sedan circuit to display their current performance products, American Motors is probably getting the most amount of exposure for their racing dollar as is possible. Other forms of competition, most notably drag racing, require less outlay per car, but exposure is usually on a local level. In order to obtain nationwide viewing with drag cars means either many cars in many areas, or a touring drag team. And while AM does have a touring funny car in the form of Grant Industries' Rebel SST, further support in this area is a rather expensive proposition. Likewise, nationwide support of local racers isn't cheap at all. Participants in Trans-Am racing are more or less "forced" into touring the country if they are to have any success at all. Also, in contrast to a funny car, Trans-Am machines are close to stock configuration.

The Javelin Racing Team cars were debuted at Sebring's 12-hour endur-

ance run in March. Only a single 4-bbl carb was used at the time, which limited them and may be the reason for their only taking fifth place in Trans-Am. But since that time, they've been allowed use of a dual 4-bbl system, and have picked up second place on two occasions and third place in two events, collecting 22 points to put them in third place behind Camaro and Mustang. Both the Camaro and Mustang teams have been in one more race than Javelin. Points are earned by the car that places highest, no matter how many team cars are entered.

Team drivers have been George Follmer and Pete Revson, though in one instance, Follmer's chief mechanic, John Martin, substituted for George and broke the track record at Mid-Ohio in qualifying for the pole position. Revson followed up with a second-best time and started next to Martin.

Javelin race car building has been handled by Ronnie Kaplan of Chicago.

So far, only two machines have been built—quite beautifully, we might add—and a third is planned. The extra car would serve as a back-up, should one become wrecked or disabled prior to a race. Overall, everything is show-car quality on the Javelins.

Kaplan's involvement in the program is a result of Jim Jeffords' association with him when Jim ran sports cars some years back. Jeffords is now President of James Jeffords Associates and Javelin Racing Team, Inc. JRT is factory-sponsored, of course, but independent of AM. This has many advantages, mostly to Jeffords. The team can move quickly and get things accomplished with a minimum of red tape. It also removes any involvement with factory or corporate-level people at AM, which can be costly and time-consuming. Within the Jeffords group, they have a complete staff, including a P.R. director, mechanics, liaison men and drivers—everything needed to run a racing program efficiently.

American Motors' involvement in Trans-Am racing has generated a good deal of enthusiasm. Even drivers Revson and Follmer are happy with the current ability of the cars. Both are experienced handlers, and each race has seen the cars get better as a result of their observations. Revson's remark, "...I think we may surprise a lot of people before this thing is over..." carries a strong message.

And when "this thing" is over, and AM sales are better (which seems to be the current trend), perhaps there'll be room for expansion into other areas of competition. Wouldn't it be great to see a Rambler on the starting grid at Daytona? Great or not, it'd sure be surprising. The racing fraternity needs this kind of surprise. ■ ■



Storming along at a fast clip, American Motors' Javelins have had great success for the short time they've been involved in Trans-Am racing. Interior is all business and neat as a pin. Sheet metal dash contains only necessary gauges and fuse block for easy facility. Fiberglass buckets cut weight, conform to standards. Part of success is attributed to excellent road racing suspension setup and disc brakes. The rear of the Javelin displays quick-fill gas cap, adjustable spoiler, pin locks for deck lid, safety straps for rear window and covered vent to dispose of fumes.