

January, 2013

Below are a few interesting items discovered while skimming through the 1973 Quaker State National Championship Races Program put on by the Mahoning Valley Region of the SCCA.

- Yes, forty years ago SCCA Nationals at Nelson Ledges Road Course had programs and the Regions were able to find sponsors. The cost of the program was \$1.00.
- There were 218 entrants pre-registered in 23 classes divided into 10 groups. Each group received a 20 minute practice session and a 30 minute qualifying session on Saturday with a 25 lap race on Sunday. Would the Stewards of today approve of such a busy schedule?
- Those 23 classes were found in 5 Categories. There were 4 Sports Racing classes (different engine sizes), 6 Formula classes (A, B, and C were by engine size; FVee, FFord, and F Super Vee), 8 Production classes (A through H), 3 Sedan classes (later merged with Production classes into GT classes), and 2 Showroom Stock classes. It was a simpler time.
- Some familiar names from the past include: Reeves Callaway (FV), Don Baker (FF), Dave Weitzenhof (FF), Fred Baker (CP Porsche), Bob Tullius (CP TR6), Mike Rahal (BSR - Bobby's Dad), and F. Reed Andrews (SSS Pinto).
- It was the 10th Anniversary for the track. The Tire Wall was just beginning. Groundbreaking for the bridge took place at this event.
- The Overall Lap Record was a 1:06.6 set by Chuck Sarich in a March 722 Ford Formula B. Jerry Hansen had unofficially turned a 1:05.6 in his Lola T-192 Chevy Formula A (FA cars were 5-liter V8s back then). Bob Sharp held the CP record at a 1:16.1. There were two Showroom Stock classes. SSC stood for Showroom Sports Car and John Adison drove his Porsche 914 to a blistering 1:33.4. In Showroom Sedan (SSS) Ross Harris was almost as fast in his Opel 1900 Coupe. Ross clocked in at a 1:34.2.
- Bob Sharp's son Scott is mentioned. He was 5 years old.
- Neither version of the yellow flag (motionless or waving) mentions "slowing" of the race cars. Caution was advised (extreme if waving) and no passing was allowed. It also indicated you should be ready to stop if the yellow flag was waving.
- The welcoming page from John McGill included several interesting items: "Several more restrooms have been completed for your convenience." "Our Quaker State Tech Building is under construction." And "The racing surface has been newly resurfaced." Looking at the updated track records found in the September 15-16, 1973 Neohio National Program it is obvious a lot of track records were reset on the fresh pavement during the MVR weekend.
- Quaker State and British Leyland were big factors in all the construction projects underway. In addition, there were donations (money, time, and equipment) from many "Friends of Nelson" back then.
- The "Around the course" page was written by F. Reed Andrews. Even back then he was referred to as a "long time SCCA racer". Referring to exiting the carousel onto the back straight he stated: "expect to hit 85 MPH, top speed for an SSS car." Turns 12 and 13 are referred to as "the squiggles" and "12" is taken flat-out before braking for "13". He dirt-tracks his 1972 Pinto through "13".

- When thinking about Reed's description bear in mind there was no such thing as a DOT legal race tire. When the Program describes the Showroom category it refers to them as "real tire squealers, or 'super silent' racers." High-performance street tires were in their infancy in 1973. BFGoodrich had just introduced their Radial T/A line of tires. There were only three "60" series aspect ratio choices and a single "50" series tire, the LR50-15, available. Valley Tire Sales (who sold tires at the track) had an ad in the Neohio Program listing any of the four available BFG Radial T/A sizes for \$35 each. VTS also had a large 13" tire selection. 13" rims were the most common size on sports cars in those years. All were of the "78" aspect ratio variety. Prices ranged from \$23 to \$29 for all but one brand. The 165 SR-13 Conti Steel was expensive at \$35.
- There is another area written by Carole Clopper. Carole raced various vehicles for many years. During this timeframe she piloted a Shelby GT-350 Mustang in BP and she gave her version on driving a big bore car at the track. Her BP class Mustang is about 40 MPH faster down the straight than Reed's SSS class Pinto. I like her comment regarding the last turn: The best trick at 13 is to keep the competition behind you,....." Dah.
- How about a few more lap records? Bob Nagel held the ASR lap record at 1:09.1 in the same Chevy V8 powered Lola T-222 he raced in the Can-Am series. John Greenwood was quickest AP in his big-block Corvette at a 1:14.5. And Randy Canfield managed to turn a 1:22.4 in his Austin Healey Sprite 948 to establish the HP record.
- There are a several Spectator Safety Suggestions. "Don't sit or stand on the fences" was one of them and it was emphasized by a photo of someone standing on a guardrail post.
- There is a page devoted towards thanking all the various volunteer groups for their efforts. Lake Erie Communications was in existence. There were new Fire and Rescue trucks in 1973. While most of duties performed by these wonderful people have altered little over the years one big difference was noticed in a description of the timers and scorers. "The timing tower on the front straight is staffed today by top notch timers and scorers. It is an art to be able to time 2 or 3 cars with one stopwatch...." By the way, these were mechanical, not electronic, stopwatches.
- There were numerous photos of cars and people. Included were a couple featuring Paul Newman, a VW Beetle racing side-by-side with a Corvette (I wonder who was passing who?), paving machines at work, the old timing tower, and plenty of action shots.
- There is a page about race tires. It looks like it was a Firestone submission. In one area it mentions "The current trend is toward 'slick' tires; that is, those tires that look bald." The next paragraph goes on to say the jury is still out on bald versus treaded tires in dry conditions and "Only experience and testing can answer that question."
- Advertisers included Buggy Stuff (Youngstown), Sheehe Motors (Audi/Porsche in Warren), Dave Parilla Enterprises (tires in Vienna), Wholesale Tire Company (Youngstown), Pit Stop Shop (Garrettsville – located on the track property), Steve Perry Service Center (American Gas Station in Boardman), "billet" landscaping (location unknown), British Leyland Motors, Sainato Motors (Warren), Winner's Circle (Rocky River), Rustic Oaks Lodge (Newton Falls), Vic & Walt's (Youngstown, Akron, and Canton), European Motors (Youngstown), and Quaker State.