

MOTOR TREND

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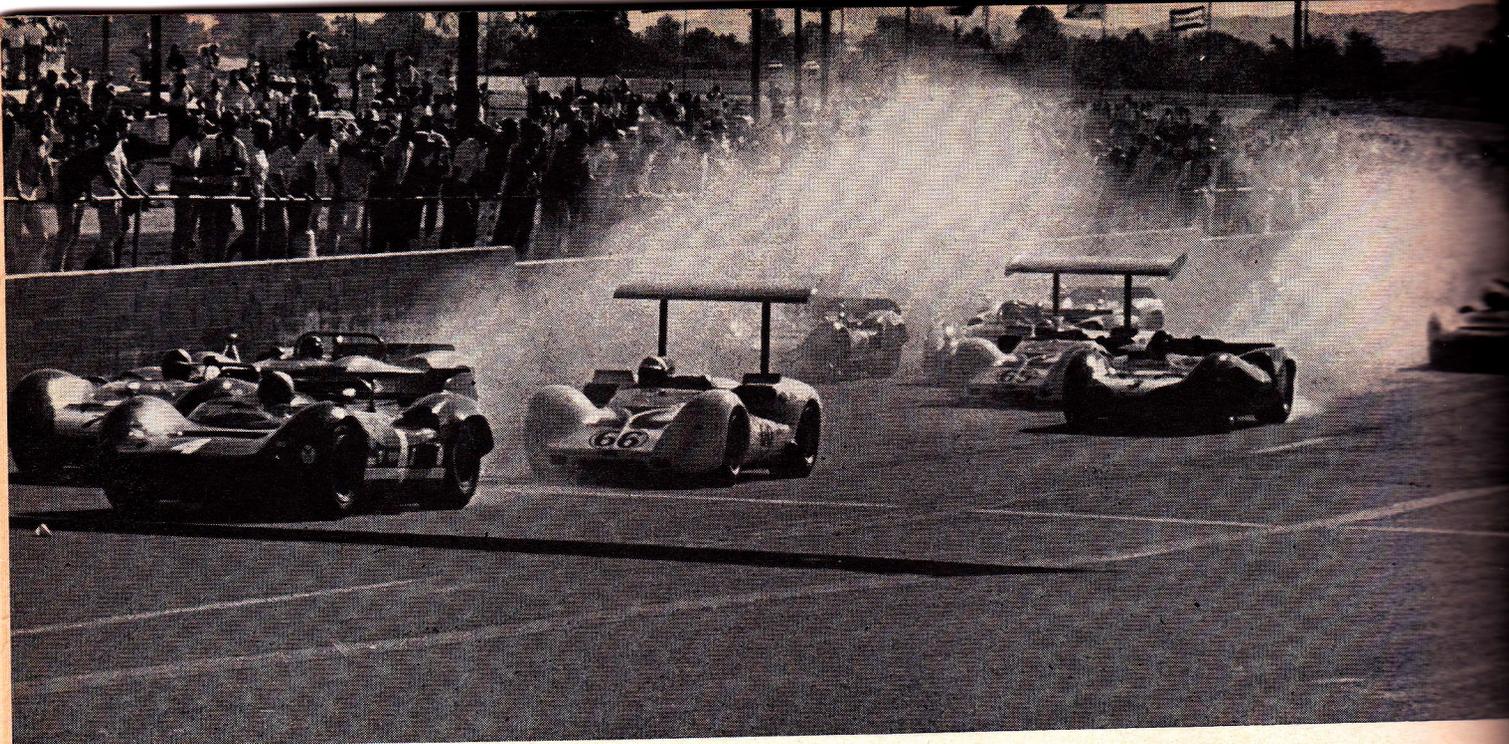
ANNUAL AWARDS ISSUE

MT SELECTS

CAR OF THE YEAR

WHY IT WON. THE
STORY BEHIND ITS
DEVELOPMENT. '67½
STYLING INNOVATIONS.
RACING PROGRAM.





RACING'S ELUSIVE POT OF GOLD

WHAT OTHER BUSINESS GIVES YOU A 1-IN-30 CHANCE OF PROFIT? YET THEY ALL CAMPAIGNED CAN-AM.

BY BOB THOMAS

HORSE RACING is acknowledged as the Sport of Kings. It is, of course, because the jockeys don't own the horses or buy the oats. The kings do.

Motor racing is not a sport of kings. It is not, of course, because many of the jockeys do own their own "horses" and do buy the oats. Naturally, they find that money still makes the world go 'round. And those who have more of it

usually go 'round faster than those who don't... especially over a route as devious as a road racing circuit. Simply stated, you can't beat royalty with a pauper's bankroll.

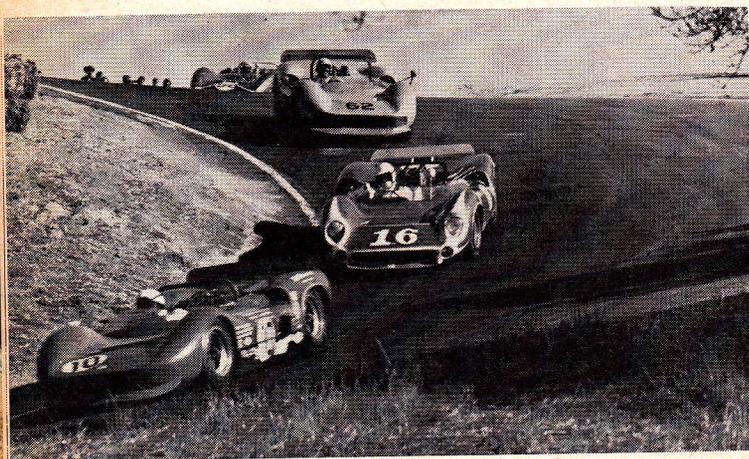
But, in automobile racing, that's a common occupational hazard. In the arena, there's something very Christian about the independent gladiators and something very Lion-like about the teams, particularly factory types.

This "feeding" happened again in North America's newest major racing competition — the Canadian-American

Challenge Cup Series, a 6-link chain of events in late 1966 that marked the maturity of professional sports car racing.

This is not to disparage the Series. It rumbled impressively and successfully from the ski slopes of Quebec, through the rolling dunes of Long Island, to the deserts of Western America. There were growing pains to be sure as it criss-crossed first the northeast and then the southwest, gaining momentum as it went along. And one of them was the fact that independents found it difficult — nigh impossible — to buck the teams.

PHOTOS BY BOB D'OLIVO, JOHN ETHRIDGE, LESTER NEHAMKIN



Chuck Parsons, financed by hotelman Randy Hilton, leads independent George Follmer into the corkscrew at Laguna Seca.



Massive Holman-Moody-Stroppe van, complete with lathe, failed in attempted rescue of sagging Ford fortunes at Las Vegas.

Albeit, when the final accounting was made, most of the money was in the hands of one man — a delightful and articulate little Britisher named John Surtees. But Surtees nevertheless was a "team" as he first opened the series at St. Jovite, Quebec, with a victory and closed it with two, Riverside and Las Vegas.

The most successful of his independent competition — that is, a man without a major backer — was a young (32) Pasadena, Calif., insuranceman, George Follmer, who had the keen sense not to hock family and future on big-time racing, but did use a "12-year nest egg," said his understanding wife, to buy an \$11,000 race car (a Lola T-70 Mk. II) and \$7000 worth of Chevrolet "racing" engines.

Follmer's nest egg was accumulated from sales and resales of automobiles he had campaigned through amateur and pro competition, including winning the U.S. Road Racing Championship in 1965. Yet George, despite his CanAm success, lost money.

The difference between profit and loss for the handsome and heady Follmer can be measured in the final 19 of 468 laps of CanAm running. At that point he "blew" the engine in his Lola at Las Vegas while standing 3rd. "If we'd held on to that 3rd," he said without a trace of remorse, "we'd have broken even or, in fact, I guess we'd have come out a little ahead."

In actual cash the gap between 3rd place and what Follmer collected for 15th place (\$300) was \$2700 in prize money, plus whatever accessory awards he might have received from tire (Firestone) and other firms.

It doesn't take a CPA to recognize that to put a competitive car into the CanAm or any other major circuit a "loner" needs help. Winning isn't enough.

At that, the CanAm "pot" was lucrative by any racing standards, except of course Indianapolis. The six race promoters — Players' Quebec at St. Jovite,

Bridgehampton Grand Prix, Canadian Grand Prix at Mosport, Monterey Grand Prix at Laguna Seca, *Los Angeles Times* Grand Prix at Riverside and Stardust Grand Prix in Nevada — put up \$178,320 in prize money, plus a separate \$55,000 driver championship fund with the help of racing newcomer, John-sur Wax. Also, accessory firms fattened the potential by more than \$125,000.

Thus, up for grabs were awards totaling \$360,000. Or at least it seemed so. But figures sometimes do lie or fib a bit. Accessory money often times is both duplicated and contingent. It's there but it isn't. Tire companies, for example, may offer the same cash incentive, but only one will pay off — the winner.

Follmer, for instance, earned \$150 from Union Oil for a 5th-place finish in the *Times* GP, part of a \$3500 contingency award for the first five positions in the race. That \$150 was all the company paid out that day. The first four drivers were not using their product. Winner Surtees couldn't. He was affiliated with Shell which doesn't pay off in the CanAm series.

For the same reason, Surtees did not collect a special \$4000 payoff that was offered by an additive company, Bardahl, for the first 3-time winner during the CanAm Series. This special contingent prize went begging despite Surtees' victories at St. Jovite, Riverside and Las Vegas.

The cars and drivers, however, don't depend on prize money and accessory awards alone. There are other awards — sponsors who are willing to underwrite expenses. Again, teams have an advantage over independents. Obviously, they are much more attractive pieces of merchandise.

As sponsorless Follmer remarked after the Series: "We are all trying to deal with the same people in searching for sponsorship... a bit here, a bit there. What we really need to do is attract new people to the sport."

To underwrite the CanAm series, Follmer said a lone sponsor would have

to provide about \$20,000. At the conclusion of the first Series in November, Follmer sought a sponsor for the entire 1967 season — the USRRC circuit of American pro races as well as the fall international series. At the time, he estimated it would take about \$75,000.

"The product I've got to sell is myself," said Follmer. "Am I worth that much in promotional or advertising value to someone?"

Even winner Surtees bemoaned the problem of sponsors. Most European companies receive little value from U.S. exposure, he pointed out. Nevertheless, the foreign teams and the well-supported U.S. entries earned most of the CanAm cash.

Team Surtees collected \$54,215 in straight prize money. Accessory money swelled Surtees' total to more than \$70,000. Surtees had estimated the tour initially would cost him \$20,000. After the first four races (a win, two crashes and an engine collapse), he guessed that he was "\$15,000 in the hole," claiming that he had incurred about \$10,000 in added expenses.

Then things improved for the ex-world champion with the wispy, prematurely gray head of hair. He socked away \$17,000 and \$15,000 purses with his Riverside and Las Vegas triumphs and another \$19,250 as Series champion. Also, his one-race teammate (Riverside), Graham Hill, added another \$6115 to the total as Team Surtees overcame its reverses.

The "king in jeans," popular Texan Jim Hall with his "winged" (and sometimes unwinged) Chaparrals that stirred more interest during the series than the personalities because of their flapping, high-mounted airfoils, pocketed \$33,745 in straight purse and Cup-fund money. Phil Hill, America's only world Grand Prix champ who won at Monterey, and Hall, who finished 2nd twice and set track records at four of the five spots the Chaparrals raced, finished 4th and 5th, respectively, in final driver standings.

continued



There is always a surgically clean atmosphere about the Chaparral pits, thanks in large part to Shell's uninhibited support.



Neither all of Shell's money nor all of Hall's men could keep wings on the Chaparrals at Las Vegas. Hall quit, Hill tried.



On their way (in order) to the bank: Debtor (\$1400) Follmer, winners McLaren and Surtees. Auto racing is one of few endeavors wherein one must risk life to lose money.

POT OF GOLD

continued

The celebrated McLaren Motor Racing Ltd., which ran a series balance sheet of \$45,675 to cover all costs including depreciation of equipment and driver salaries, collected \$33,060. Drivers Bruce McLaren and Chris Amon, the New Zealand duo, did it on three team 2nd places and three 3rds. With accessory payoffs, McLaren said the team "about broke even."

Also in the big money was well-backed Mark Donohue, the Brown University engineering graduate. He had a sponsor (Sunoco), an experienced car owner (Roger Penske) and consistency. After a starting grid accident in the opener, Donohue finished five straight races, winning the third at Mosport.

Admittedly, it was not the hare who won at Mosport. Probable winners Dan Gurney, McLaren, Amon, Hall and Dennis Hulme all stubbed their toes while running ahead of Donohue. Surtees never got beyond the first turn in an eager but ill-fated start.

Nevertheless, Donohue was 2nd in overall points behind Surtees (21 to 27) and 2nd in prize money — \$25,850 with a victory, a 3rd, two 4ths and a 5th place showing.

Actual earnings below the four major teams — Surtees, Penske, McLaren and the Chaparrals — were extremely modest indeed.

There were other inducements and rewards along the way, especially for the "kings." Some had unheralded sponsors who merely required that their product be used — for a fee. Firestone and Goodyear, for instance, engaged in a serious and expensive bit of tug-of-war for leading drivers and thus might be dubbed "kingmakers."

And sometimes it takes more than "fat" purses to attract top cars and teams. One race promoter, much to the displeasure of his colleagues and the administrating Sports Car Club of America, paid "start" money to assure the appearance of leading foreign and U.S. drivers and teams. "Money" drivers Graham Hill and A. J. Foyt, for example, raced only at Riverside.

The Surtees and McLaren teams

drew advances to offset the overseas trip. It was also common knowledge that top American teams were paid to show. It was estimated an additional \$25,000 was spent by the promoter referred to for appearance money. And it should be emphasized that his expenditure, not the overall attraction of the circuit, may have been the factor that assured big names for the entire tour.

This year it is expected that foreign teams will be paid a special appearance fee to overcome added transportation costs. Very likely it will amount to \$5000 per car. If this is shared by all promoters, then the one who "paid the freight" in 1966 can add the money to his base purse and gain the prestige of a bigger prize that is not attendant with "hidden" payoffs.

Money, of course, does not guarantee success. The Mecom team of Texas, which was rivaled only by the Chaparrals for resources, never got off the launching pad. Ironically, it was Follmer who provided the team with its only points — two for 5th place at the St. Jovite meet.

Follmer was a stand-in for the little Scot, Jackie Stewart, for three races. With Mecom, Follmer won \$940 "free and clear because I wasn't paying any of the bills," he said with a grin. On his own, he won purses of \$100, \$2350 and \$300, and \$550 from the driver's fund for a 10th-place Series tie.

Meanwhile, Mecom floundered, plagued with ill-performing Ford engines, some supercharged. And, at Laguna Seca, John Mecom Jr. could restrain himself no longer when both Stewart and Parnelli Jones, his drivers, were stricken in qualifications with engine failures. "I'll never use another Ford engine in one of my cars again," he declared.

Then, at Jones' behest, he bought a \$5000 Chevrolet engine from Penske. After an overnight installation, Jones won a stirring 100-mile heat at Laguna Seca. That battle, however, was not the war. And the Mecom team remained snakebitten through the balance of the series. Later, Mecom said he would skip Group Seven in 1967 to concentrate on Indianapolis where he had a winner (with Ford) last year. Inadequate incentives for big teams was also mentioned as a "stay-away" reason.

Ford, which has both feet in racing, fared badly in the CanAm. Chevrolet, with only its toes in the water, won five of the six races. Ford's only winner was Gurney at Bridgehampton. It was also the only race the great American driver finished. There was almost another. At Mosport, his car's electrical system and victory expired together only 10 laps from the end.

FoMoCo did make one late factory effort. It dispatched the U.S. national champion, Mario Andretti, to the final two races with a Lola equipped with a special 427 "Le Mans" engine and automatic transmission. It was an impressive bid, exhibiting the potential of money as Mario came to the races in Holman-Moody-Stroppe's lathe-equipped "workshop on wheels." But the time was too short for experimentation.

The Chaparrals swooped in on the Series at Bridgehampton, the second stop. Their "wings" caused a sensation. They were fiberglass sections that were mounted more than two feet above the engine, adjustable by foot pedal which also actuated, less conspicuously, a "spoiler" in the nose of the sleek little Chevrolet-powered car.

Hall, the Caltech innovator who has successfully worked with spoilers, automatic transmissions and wings in road racing, bristled when a "ban the wing" movement began within racing circles. "Why ban it?" he asked. "Is it merely because it doesn't look like last year's car?" he added facetiously.

Other "wings" materialized on the CanAm tour — some crude, some operable, some worrisome. Concern arose because they added just one more complex maneuver for a busy driver who does not have the Chaparral luxury of a clutchless, shiftless transmission, and thus a free foot and/or hand. Also, as Hall found out at Bridgehampton and Las Vegas, the wings can come unglued.

CanAm champion Surtees doubted that he would use a wing despite broad holding and air braking contributions next fall. He praised the idea and the Chaparral application, but cautioned others by saying: "The car should be designed as a whole, not by adding bits and pieces. Hall's car was designed as an integral unit."

Many changes are seen for next year's Series. Group Seven cars, bulbous but low and light with their ferocious and huge engines — virtually all American powerplants — will not be seen in England this year. They were discontinued, reportedly because sponsors could not support the "Big Bangers," as they are called, as well as Formula 2 racing. It passed with regrets, mainly among the competitors. Nevertheless, these machines will continue to be made in England, primarily for export to North American tracks.

McLaren and Lola, the principal

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builders, exported more than 60 cars to this continent in 18 months, representing a cost and freight total of nearly \$1 million. And too, Surtees has predicted that Group Seven would not only return to England by 1968, but with it, expansion of the CanAm Series overseas.

Road racing, of course, has always been recognized as an unusual sports mixture of very efficient professional drivers and very rich semi-pro or amateurs who can own fast cars but not necessarily drive them fast. Then there is the fellow in between who may hold the bread-and-butter stake in professional road racing in North America on a strong international level.

For example, he could be the rising star, Follmer, who owned, worked and drove his own car with one-third the budget of the big teams. Follmer estimated that it cost him about \$3000 per race to compete. He started with the brand-new \$11,000 Lola, picked up a \$5000 rebuilt Chevrolet engine for

the average race cost at \$3000 per car, prepared for us a detailed cost analysis of his two-car team for the 9-week CanAm Series.

In it, McLaren's team manager and partner, E. E. (Teddy) Mayer, categorized costs into five groups: *transportation* (\$10,950), involving round-trip freight and air fare charges for cars and personnel, and such items as tow trucks and car rental; *per diem expenses* (\$7875), seven people at \$15 per day; *wages and fees* (\$17,300), four mechanics, team manager and drivers at \$500 per race per driver; *depreciation of equipment* (\$7350), pro-rated over a full season; and *miscellaneous expenses* (\$2200)—for a grand total of \$45,675.

Expenses for the overseas teams are flexible. It is generally accepted that they will sell their cars in this country and thus eliminate return freight charges and duty for American engines that might have been acquired in the U.S. As Surtees explained, engines that might cost \$4000 each in the States would move up toward the \$6000 bracket if taken back to England due to heavy duty impositions.

Surtees "lost" only one engine en route to his title, a new one that blew at Bridgehampton. After that he invested another \$7000 in rebuilding and beefing up his engine reserve while in Southern California preparing for the final three races.

A stock engine, such as the Ford or Chevrolet push-rod versions which are outfitted with expensive accessories when rebuilt, is one-third or one-fourth as costly as a pure racing engine, but the upkeep is high. In the long pull, many experts feel one is as expensive as the other.

Then there is the natural hazard of racing—accidents. No matter how minor, they cost money. Surtees is still smarting over an incident at Laguna Seca when Parnelli Jones and he smacked together as Jones passed the Englishman for 3rd place and eventually won the race.

"Irresponsible," was Surtees' evaluation of the affair. "If everybody owned a car himself instead of driving someone else's, these irresponsible acts would not occur."

Young Follmer's budget likewise was dented at Monterey when he lost part of the fiberglass body on his Lola. He went into the sock for an \$800 replacement. How much money had been set aside in the Follmer kitty for emergencies? "About all we could have handled was \$1000 or \$2000," he said.

Through all these pressures, Follmer "kept his cool." He admits that he got some help money couldn't buy, especially at a critical time, just before Riverside, when his chief mechanic quit, apparently due to the long hours.

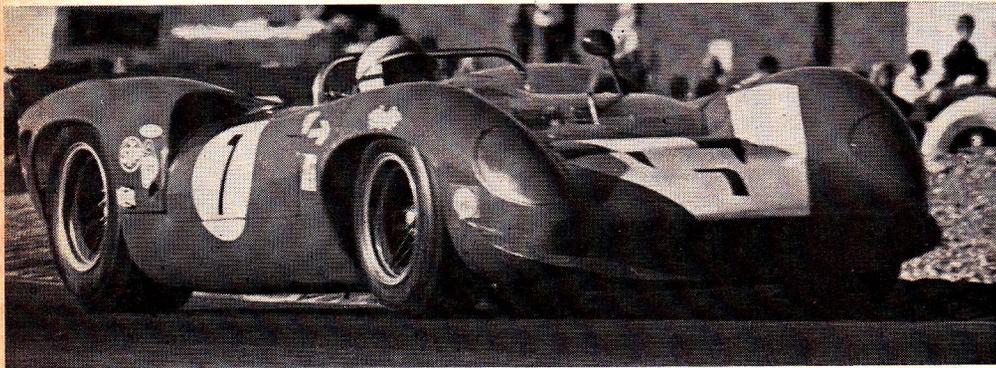
"Several people offered and did help us," said Follmer, including, he pointed out, the Mecom crew which had worked on his car when he was a part of the Texas team. "Wasn't that something!" he said. "All it cost was a steak dinner."

All in all, however, the Series was a whopping success, witnessed by a quarter-million people. And attitudes changed along the way. Surtees at first seemed unsure about returning for the second Series. "It is very difficult to build my car just for these events," he said, obviously alluding to the demise of Group Seven in England. "Also, it depends on my other programs for the coming year."

But when he bundled up his team manager—lovely wife Pat—for the return to England after his triumph, Surtees had decided not to sell both his CanAm Lolas.

"No, I've got to keep one as a test car, so that when I build the new one for the Series, I'll have something to compare it with."

And a man nearby merely smiled a non-committal smile. He was Eric Broadley, the man who builds Surtees' and all other Lolas. /MT



Surtees' lucky 7 represents: 2 cars @ \$21,000 each; 2 spare engines and gearboxes @ \$6000 each plus \$4000 worth of extra parts; and finally 28 tires @ \$90 each.

\$3500 that a previous car owner had bought, blown and couldn't afford to reclaim after the rebuilding, and a spare. For the latter, Follmer purchased a stock Chevrolet engine for \$500, then had it rebuilt for racing for an investment of \$3000.

Most engine conversions of stock-block engines run about \$5000 with labor and "goodies." The principal commercial builder is Traco Engineering in Culver City, Calif., which specializes in Chevrolets as well as the more familiar Olds.

In addition, Follmer's budget included \$1000 a month for mechanics, plus per diem costs of \$8 for food for each crew member and motel bills.

One driver-owner, Charlie Hayes of Rockville, Md., even issued a press release prior to the Stardust Grand Prix, openly seeking an offer for the next year because, as he put it, his own operation had nearly broken him financially. McLaren, builder-driver who pegged

Immediately after the Series, Surtees sold one of his own Lolas, fully equipped for racing with a Traco Chevrolet engine, for \$14,000. "It was worth more, perhaps," he said. "Others are asking more, but I did not want to haggle about price." He estimated that "with all the changes we make in a new car you'll probably find its real cost is about \$25,000.

McLaren concurred. A production McLaren—and nearly half of the CanAm cars were built by Elva of England to McLaren specifications—cost about \$10,000, sans engine. The two models used by the McLaren team contained expensive modifications, mainly in the use of more exotic or special materials. They would be too expensive, explained McLaren, to be production items. Many of his customers make these changes here. Thus, the expenses for an independent, if he is to be competitive, strain the resources of even the most successful "loner."