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YOUR  
1976  
INDIANA  
STATE FAIR  
BOARD

# INDIANA STATE FAIR OFFICIAL PROGRAM

Published By

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State Fairgrounds  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46205

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This year's program cover is a 4-color lithographic reproduction of an original oil painting by artist Ron Burton, Speedway, Indiana, considered America's foremost painter of auto racing action.

Burton pictures Tom Bigelow streaking across the finish line seconds before A. J. Foyt to win the 1975 Hoosier Hundred.

The 8½ x 11 inch cover is suitable for framing. Burton's works hang in the homes, offices and business establishments of racing enthusiasts across the nation.

WTTV CHANNEL 4  
YOUR STATE FAIR  
TELEVISION STATION

# HOOSIER HUNDRED POINT LEADERS

## ALL TIME

1. A. J. Foyt, Jr. ....	2,430
2. Al Unser .....	1,250
3. Rodger Ward .....	1,030
4. Mario Andretti .....	990
5. Don Branson .....	970
6. Jimmy Bryan .....	780
7. Jimmy McElreath .....	680
8. George Snider .....	648
9. Arnie Knepper .....	590
10. Jud Larson .....	580

## ACTIVE DRIVERS

1. A. J. Foyt, Jr. ....	2,430
2. Al Unser .....	1,250
3. Mario Andretti .....	990
4. Jimmy McElreath .....	680
5. George Snider .....	648
6. Arnie Knepper .....	590
7. Tom Bigelow .....	430
8. Roger McCluskey .....	420
9. Ralph Liguori .....	380
10. Sammy Sessions .....	340

## NUMBER OF RACES

1. A. J. Foyt, Jr. ....	18
2. Ralph Liguori .....	14
3. Rodger Ward .....	12
4. Jimmy McElreath .....	11
5. Don Branson .....	10
6. Roger McCluskey .....	10
7. Mario Andretti .....	10
8. George Snider .....	10
9. Arnie Knepper .....	10
10. Al Unser .....	9

## NUMBER OF WINS

1. A. J. Foyt, Jr. ....	1960-61-64-65-68-69
2. Al Unser .....	1970-71-72-73
3. Jimmy Bryan .....	1954-55-56
4. Rodger Ward .....	1959-63
5. Mario Andretti .....	1966-67
6. Bob Sweikert .....	1953
7. Jud Larson .....	1957
8. Eddie Sachs .....	1958
9. Parnelli Jones .....	1962
10. Jackie Howerton .....	1974
11. Tom Bigelow .....	1975

## CHAMPIONSHIP DIRT CAR ONE-LAP TRACK RECORD

September 6, 1975 Johnny Parsons

Ayr-Way-WNAP Special 33.31  
(108.062 mph)

## CHAMPIONSHIP DIRT CAR 100-MILE TRACK RECORD

September 12, 1970 Al Unser

Johnny Lightning Special 1:01:13.70  
(98.039 mph)

# NOBODY LIKES TO POSTPONE

Nobody likes to have a racing event cancelled or postponed, no matter what the reason. However, it does occasionally happen—usually in the form of rain. And when this does occur, everyone comes out on the short end of things; the race promoter who has to pay again for a rescheduling date; the racing fraternity and costs to owners, drivers, etc. and most importantly, you, the loyal fan.

The fact of the matter is, there isn't a thing anyone can do about it. Or is there? We can all gather in prayer that the rain stops, allowing the track to dry enough to get the show on the road. Or if this fails, the race is postponed to another date, if not the next day (assuming we are discussing a weekend) then the succeeding weekend. Needless to say this does not endear the fan from out of town, but if it is any consolation to

these people, no one is more unhappy about it than the promoter or anyone involved for that matter.

The general idea is to have the race when you, the guy who laid down hard cash can, in fact, come and see what you originally paid for—namely the race.

Unfortunately, there is no refund for those fans who are not able to attend the rescheduled event, and this is printed on each ticket. And only as a last resort, will the promoter decide to cancel a race, in which case, money will be refunded at the Administration Building on the first business day following a cancellation. Remember, this is done only as a last recourse. END OF SUBJECT . . . NOW ON WITH THE RACE!

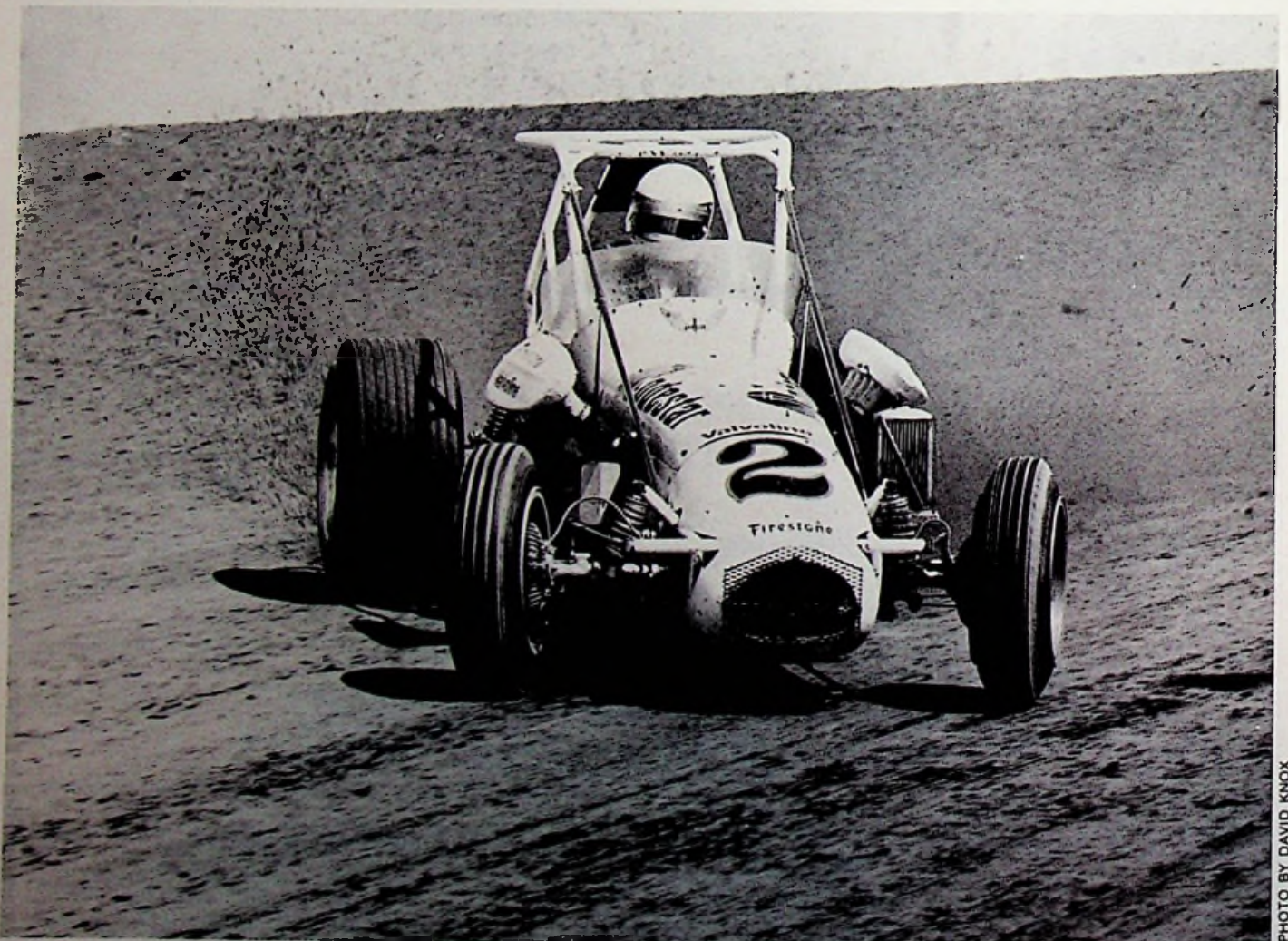


PHOTO BY DAVID KNOX

1975 "Hoosier Hundred" victor Tom Bigelow of Whitewater, Wis. in a beautiful controlled drift while at the wheel of the winning Lodestar Ford powered dirt champ car.

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FOR THE KIDS



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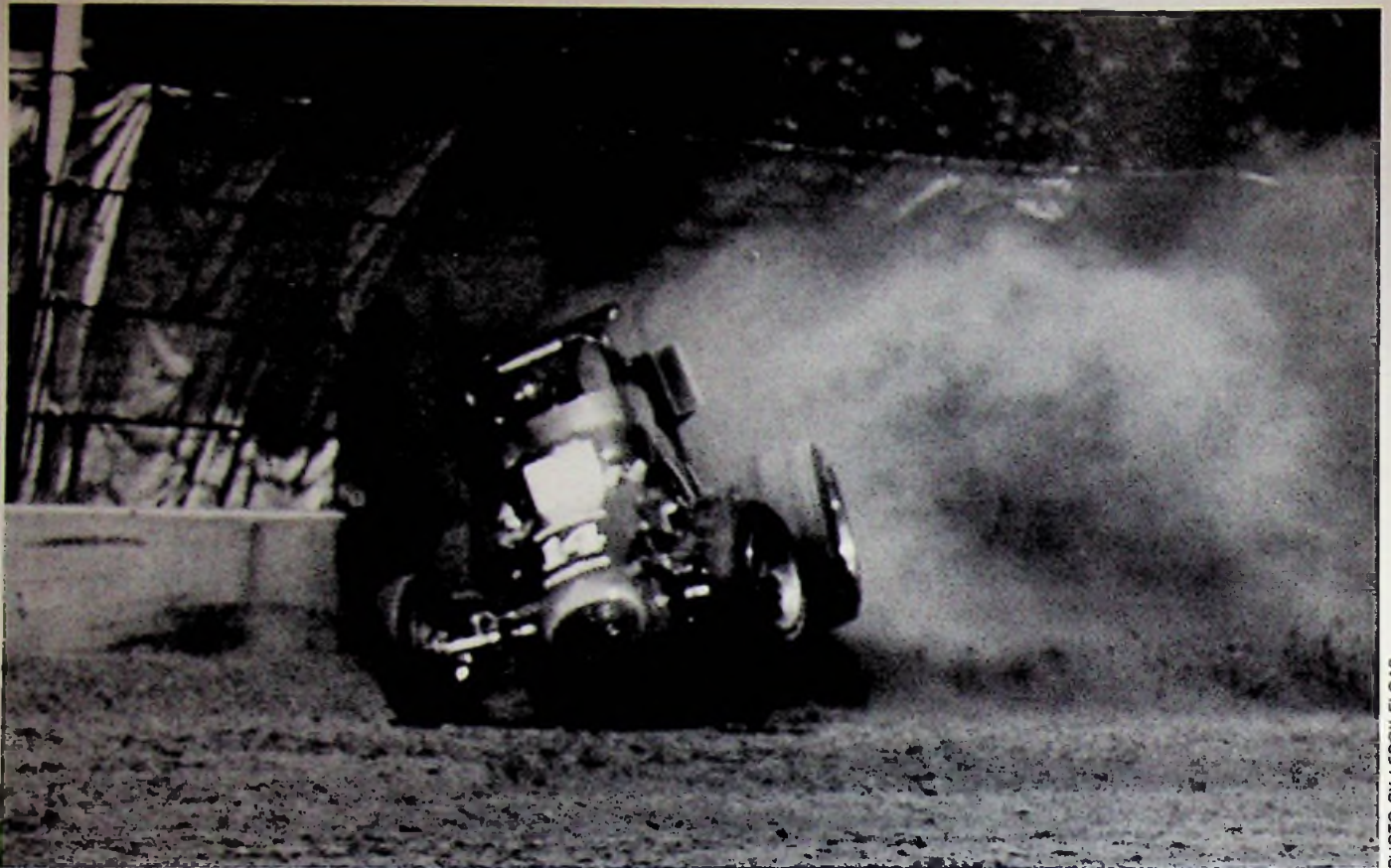


PHOTO BY LEROY ELGAS

The man who finished second in 1975 A. J. Foyt in a bit of trouble during his second qualifying lap. A. J. and crew straightened up everything that was bent in a short time.

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# The Roger G. Wolcott Cup

When members of the 1959 Indiana State Fair Board established the Roger G. Wolcott cup as a perpetual award for the annual Hoosier Hundred, they provided well-deserved recognition for the Indianapolis sportsman who did so much to make this 100-mile championship race the finest of its kind in the nation.

It was Mr. Wolcott who led the movement which brought auto racing back to the Indiana State Fairgrounds in 1953, after a lapse of six years, and he served as chairman of the Fair Board's committee for that first Hoosier Hundred Presentation in September of that year. Safety was his chief concern. But he also worked tirelessly to establish a comprehensive pattern of operation which would assure the continued success of the event in future years.

Racing lost one of its staunchest supporters when he died suddenly in the fall of 1958, as the result of a coronary occlusion; and the Fair Board took official action to honor his memory by authorizing a perpetual Hoosier Hundred award in his name. Final decision concerning the form of such a trophy was delegated to Speedway President Tony Hulman, who was one of Mr. Wolcott's closest friends, and Director Joe Quinn.

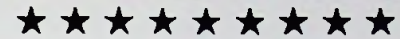
They searched for something which would reflect Mr. Wolcott's interest in the fine arts, as well as the sincerity and the dignity which marked his connection with the sport of auto racing, and they found it among a collection of museum pieces on display in a New York silver shop. It's the George III Irish silver cup and cover, bearing the arms of St. George, and created in Dublin in 1805 by William Ward.

As a perpetual trophy, emblematic of everything that is best in racing, it will be on display at the Bank of Wolcott, pending Restoration of the Wolcott home. The names of all Hoosier Hundred winners are inscribed on the silver band which encircles the base. Each year, however, the Hoosier Hundred winner will receive a miniature replica of it with his other awards.



PHOTO BY STEVE LINGENFELTER

*Last year's "Hoosier Hundred" winner Tom Bigelow with the famed Wolcott Cup.*



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so that your Uncle can help  
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(Look in yellow pages under "Recruiting")

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- 2 Automotive Armature Co., Mooresville, Ind.
- 3 Race Fan Larry Conrad for Governor
- 4 Baker Engineering Co.
- 5 Dr. and Mrs. Phillip Bly
- 6 Robert D. Boone
- 7 Firestone Tire and Rubber Co.
- 8 Parsons Sales, Inc.
- 9 Burgess Truck Sales and Service, Hammond, Ind.
- 10 Firestone Tire and Rubber Co.
- 11 Truck and Trailer Refrigeration Co.
- 12 Butcher Funeral Home, Knightstown, Ind.
- 13 Race Fan Larry Conrad for Governor
- 14 A. J. Foyt Fan Club, Richmond, Ind.
- 15 Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co.
- 16 Carl R. Canfield, Jr.
- 17 Terre Haute First National Bank
- 18 500 Festival Committee
- 19 Gene Flesch, Noblesville, Ind.
- 20 Firestone Tire and Rubber Co.
- 21 Wayne G. Henderson
- 22 Indiana National Bank
- 23 Race Fan Larry Conrad for Governor
- 24 Station Inn
- 25 Hoosier Auto Race Fans
- 26 Libbertt Concessions
- 27 WART Radio, Plainfield, Ind.
- 28 Settle and Kean Construction Co., Camby, Ind.
- 29 Ontario Corp., Muncie, Ind.
- 30 Firestone Tire and Rubber Co.
- 31 Truck and Trailer Refrigeration Co.
- 32 WNDE Radio
- 33 Race Fan Larry Conrad for Governor
- 34 WTHI-TV-AM-FM, Terre Haute, Ind.
- 35 Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co.
- 36 George M. Ober
- 37 S & L Truck Stop, Columbia City, Ind.
- 38 Parsons Sales, Inc.
- 39 WTTV Television Voice of the Fair
- 40 Firestone Tire and Rubber Co.
- 41 Jeff, Scott and Kevin Struble, Terre Haute, Ind.
- 42 Metropolitan Printing, Bloomington, Ind.
- 43 Race Fan Larry Conrad for Governor
- 44 Bruce Cogle Ford Co., Thomasville, Ala.
- 45 Steve Panke, Zionsville, Ind.
- 46 Gene White Firestone
- 47 Terre Haute First National Bank
- 48 WART Radio, Plainfield, Ind.
- 49 WTHI-TV-AM-FM, Terre Haute, Ind.
- 50 Tony Minnick
- 51 Truck & Trailer Refrigeration Co.
- 52 Dick Bowman, Mooresville, Ind.
- 53 Race Fan Larry Conrad for Governor
- 54 J & S, Inc.
- 55 Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co.
- 56 Kennedy Tank and Manufacturing Co.
- 57 Firestone Tire and Rubber Co.
- 58 Parsons Sales, Inc.
- 59 Burgess Truck Sales and Service, Hammond, Ind.
- 60 Firestone Tire and Rubber Co.
- 61 Klincher Lock Nut Corp.
- 62 Lowell's Welding and Trailer Service, Chester, N.H.
- 63 Race Fan Larry Conrad for Governor
- 64 WTHI-TV-AM-FM, Terre Haute, Ind.
- 65 Marr Grain Co., Columbus, Ind.
- 66 R. Merrill Reece
- 67 Terre Haute First National Bank
- 68 500 Festival Committee
- 69 WART Radio, Plainfield, Ind.
- 70 Firestone Tire and Rubber Co.
- 71 Ace Supply, Inc.
- 72 WNDE Radio
- 73 Race Fan Larry Conrad for Governor
- 74 Lovelace Truck Service
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- 85 Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co.
- 86 Park-Rose Press, Inc.
- 87 WTTV Television Voice of the Fair
- 88 Bruce Cogle Ford Co., Thomasville, Ala.
- 89 Parsons Sales, Inc.
- 90 Firestone Tire and Rubber Co.
- 91 WART Radio, Plainfield, Ind.
- 92 Metropolitan Printing, Bloomington, Ind.
- 93 Race Fan Larry Conrad for Governor
- 94 WTHI-TV-AM-FM, Terre Haute, Ind.
- 95 Billy Engelhart Fan Club
- 96 Gene White Firestone
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- 98 Bill Smiley, M.D., Decatur, Ill.
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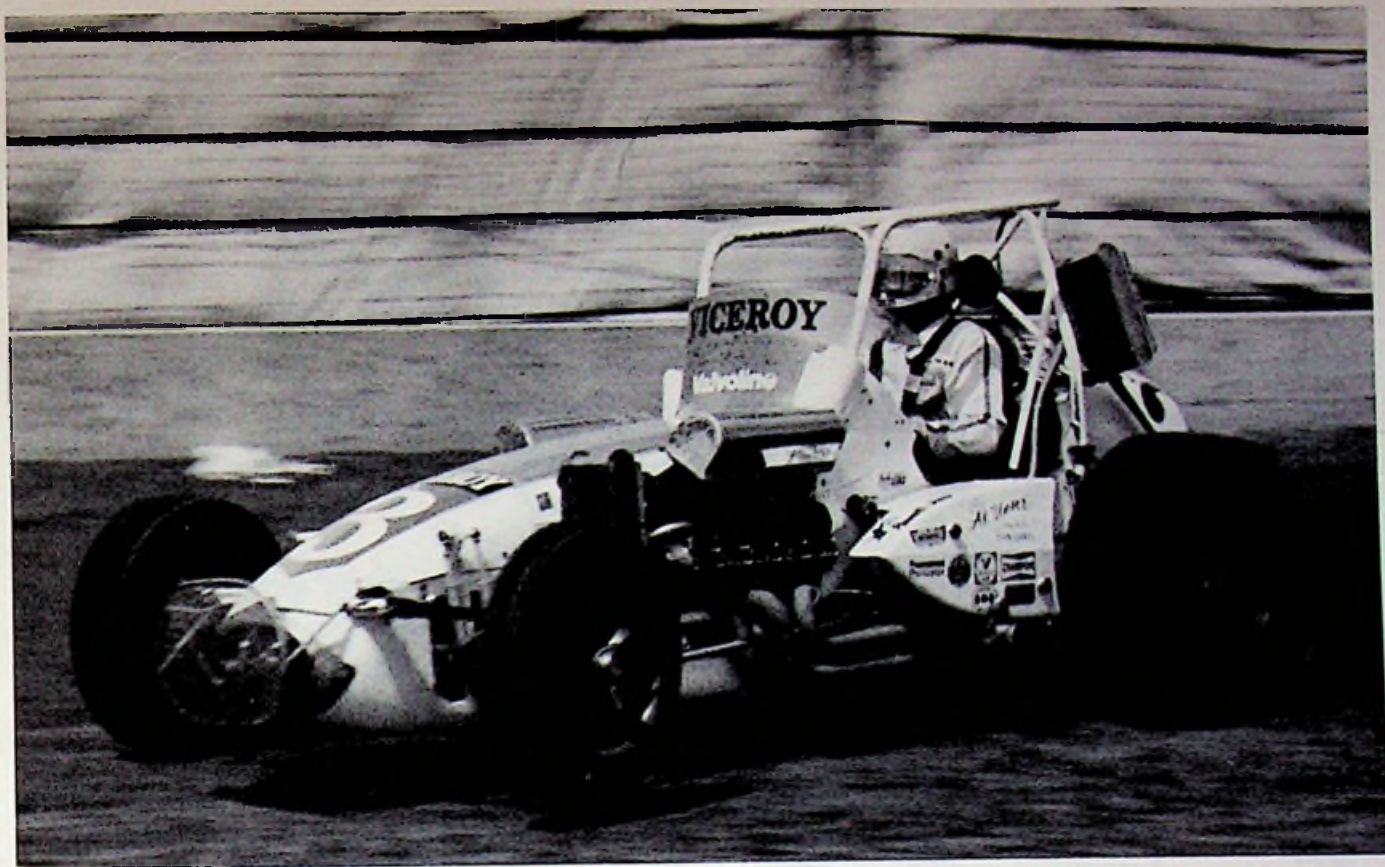


PHOTO BY TOM REEL

*Al Unser, twice winner of the Indianapolis 500 and four time victor of the "Hoosier Hundred" in his Viceroy Ford that went out with engine problems last year.*

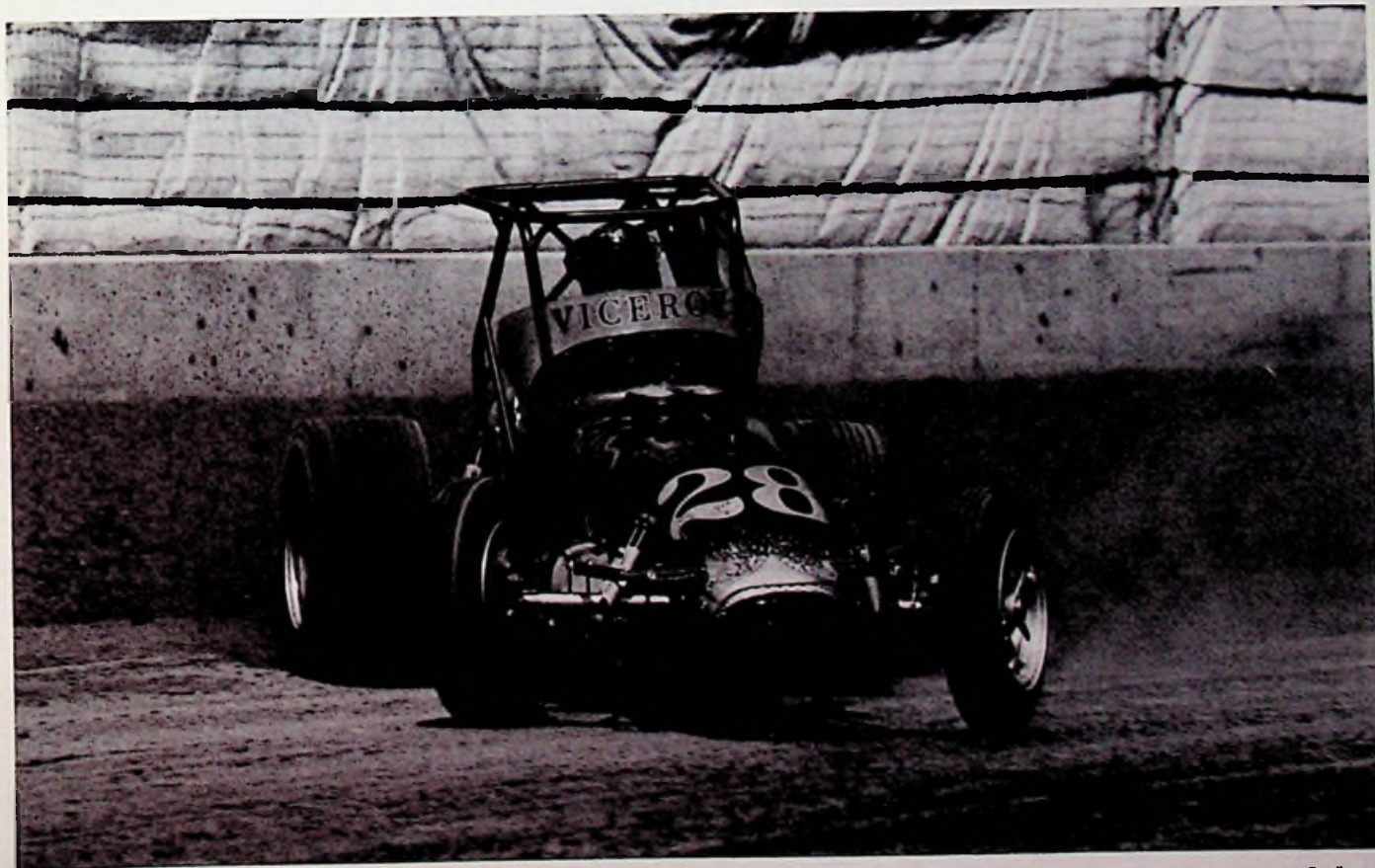


PHOTO BY LEROY ELGAS

*Billy Engelhart in the Scio Cabinet Chevrolet powered car that led for 18 laps before hitting the fence and damaging the suspension.*

# Hoosier Hundred Rookie of the Year

YEAR	DRIVER	CAR OWNER	FINISH
1961	Bobby Marshman	Competition Engineering	2nd
1962	Ronnie Duman	Wyandotte Tool	10th
1963	Johnny White	Performer	7th
1964	Bud Tingelstad	Federal Engineering	5th
1965	Red Riegel	Central Excavating	5th
1966	Dick Atkins	Agajanian Rev 500	6th
1967	Billy Vukovich	Agajanian	4th
1968	Gary Bettenhausen	Thermo King	4th
1969	Mike Mosely	Zecol-Lubaid	17th
1970	Sammy Sessions	Walther	4th
1971	Merle Bettenhausen	Joe Hunt Magneto	10th
1972	Lee Kunzman	Clamato	19th
1973	Duane (Pancho) Carter	Lee Glessner	4th
1974	Jackie Howerton	STP Oil Treatment	1st
1975	Larry Rice	Bowen Olds	10th

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- ★ COMPLETE dinners served in your car
- ★ BREAKFAST . . . served as you like it

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Indianapolis, Indiana

Wabash Ford Truck Sales, Inc.  
Indianapolis, Indiana



# Everything was RIGHT, Race Day '75

By Dick Greene

Rarely do all of the elements of auto racing come together on a given afternoon to produce a truly great race; when, like instruments in an orchestra, each playing a separate part, their efforts blend in concert to produce a classic. It happened a year ago at the Hoosier Hundred!

It began to happen at dawn when the first breath of autumn wafted in from the northwest after a long, hot summer. Drivers and mechanics eyed a superblue sky, felt the briskness of the air, and knew that carburation conditions were going to be ideal. The weather was *right!*

When the sun started climbing a handful of drivers meticulously walked the track, sweeping it with their eyes for flaws and probing the surface through the soft soles of their driving shoes. It still held a little moisture from a rain the day before and had been groomed to perfection. The surface would offer maximum traction without too much drift in the corners. The track was *right!*

Railbirds and out-of-towners who had started from home early began speckling seats in the grandstand as the morning wore on, anxious to study the forty cars entered in the field and to speculate on which twenty-four would survive qualification trials.

There was little doubt that the field would be fast. The best among the men who chase each other for fame and fortune were assembled. Many were champions. A rich purse and the glory of winning the prestigious Hoosier Hundred had attracted the great and the grateful to the nation's finest dirt track. The field was *right!*

The grandstand was near full, the bleachers were filling and an infield crowd was growing when qualifications began at noon. Fans were queued up at the boxoffices and cars were streaming onto the fairgrounds through every gate. A holiday spirit pervaded the growing crowd. The audience was *right!*

It all came together quickly. Two of the first three qualifiers broke Al Unser's single lap record for the track. Bill Engelhart set a new track record by turning the oval in 33.441 seconds, and almost before the applause died out Johnny Parsons cut the time to 33.314, or 108.062 miles per hour. His record time held as the track dried under the wheels of subsequent qualification runs.

The drama heightened when A. J. Foyt bolted onto the track in his brilliant orange-red racer in pursuit of Parson's record and the pole. Charging into the third turn, his right front suspension let go and the crowd moaned as the car tipped up on two wheels and stopped against the wall. Foyt later explained; "I had two choices—hit the wall or flip. I didn't want to flip." In true Foyt fashion, he dragged the car back to the pits, recruited a welder over the P. A. system, and directed emergency repairs just in time to take to the track and try to qualify on the one lap remaining to him. He put the crippled red Number 14 in 14th starting position in the field.

As 24 gentlemen lined up to start their engines on signal from Tony Hulman, fans in the packed stands fidgeted. High drama had already unfolded, and the race hadn't even started. *Everything was right!*

The pace car pulled a straggling field around the track. Drivers jockeyed their mounts into position to form twelve rows of two cars each. Twice around the track searching for a starting pattern that would bring the green flag down—then the pace car darted from in front of the field on the third lap and Parsons led the pack toward racing speed.

Parsons accelerated into the first turn with Engelhart hot on his tail. Cars back in the pack began a fast shuffle, searching for racing room and trying to clear the slower traffic, straining to keep the leaders in sight and gain ground.

It was obvious from the start that the pace would demand a high attrition rate. It started in the second lap. Bruce Walkup, running 5th, was the first to go when he hit the wall. At the end of 100 miles only six cars would still be under power.

By the 10th lap the cars were pretty well strung out. On the 12th lap John Anderson lost it, and Bill Puterbaugh went out on the 14th. By the 15th lap some clues to the eventual outcome of the race began to appear. Foyt had improved his position to fifth place, experimenting with different racing patterns to find a groove. Parsons and Engelhart were racing each other for the lead, careening into the curves with abandon and powering flatout down the straights, milking their machines unmercifully. Pancho Carter had emerged from the pack and was

clearly after an early lead. Tom Bigelow, winner of two previous dirt track championship races during the season, had settled into a groove that brought him around the corners close to the rail. He was driving like he was alone on the track. By some oddity of fate, he would be "somewhere else on the track" all afternoon when the iron began to fly and the track became a junkyard.

Rollie Beale went out on the 26th lap and Steve Chassey followed on the 27th. Meanwhile, Pancho Carter had been closing the gap on Engelhart, who was running second. On the 33rd lap Carter made his move going into the second turn. He tried to slip in under Engelhart, spun, and stacked it against the wall just as Billy Vukovich charged around the turn riding high. Carter saw the car hurtling toward him, hunched down in the seat, tensed for the collision, and felt a rap on his elbow as Vukovich's car rode over him, became airborne for two full flips and landed right-side-up. The red flag dropped, the race was stopped while breathless fans waited for word from the back stretch. Everything was still *right!*

Carter hobbled away from the wreck with a dinged elbow and a sore knee and Vukovich took a slow ride to the hospital to get some stitches in a cut ankle.

The field was shy seven cars when the race restarted, and on the 39th lap Spike Gelhausen tangled with the wall to further diminish the field. Parsons was still winning the race, running at a dazzling speed, and Engelhart was still pushing him.

Going into the first turn on the 40th lap ominous puffs of blue smoke began to punctuate Foyt's progress. Running well behind him, Al Unser's car also began to blow smoke rings, and by the 41st lap the crowd was aware that Foyt's brakes were failing. Arnie Knepper was slowly improving his position behind the leaders.

James McElreath went out at the half-way point and Jerry Miller followed him to the pits on the 51st lap. The field had been cut in half. Twelve cars, still led by Johnny Parsons, went into the 51st lap. Going into the third turn Parson's car faltered slightly, and as he headed for the pit area Engelhart shot into the lead. Parsons had lost a cylinder, but was not done for the day.

Jim Hurtubise, running a consistent race, was slowly improving his position, running a lap behind the leaders when Ralph Liguori hung it up on the 59th lap and Al Unser's ailing car quit on the 63rd. Parsons was running again . . . but now there were only ten!

Engelhart was leading when the race ended for him. He brushed Sheldon Kinser's car going around him on the 68th lap and the front suspension gave up. Kinser's car caught fire, and he leaped from it as he guided it into the pits. As Engelhart pitted, Parsons flashed back into the lead on the 70th lap. He would hold it until the three-quarter mark, then retire from the field.

Still driving as if he were alone on the track, Tom Bigelow crouched behind the wheel of his car and watched the field thin out. His car was fairly humming along, the day was beautiful and he was in the money for sure, riding fast and comfortable in second place. As near as he could figure, he had only three cars to beat going into the 75th lap. Parsons was in front of him going like a bat-out-of-hell, and looming up behind him was A.J., spitting smoke and brakeless and wheel to wheel with Jimmy Caruthers. Then, all of a sudden, he lost track of Parsons and realized that he must be out in front.

Sam Sessions went out during lap 80, and the field was down to eight cars. Hurtubise, now running fifth, was more than a lap behind the third place car as they went into the 90th go-around.

Bigelow was running in first like he was on rails, but in number two position a red racer breathing smoke bore down on him. He knew that he was being chased by a living legend who put little credence in the philosophy that "the quick are the dead". A. J. was coming after him, somehow holding a sick machine together with guts and incomparable skill, wringing speed from it and gaining ground at the rate of a second per lap. Bigelow poured it on . . . and kept it on . . . until he could see the checkered flag ahead. As he crossed the finish line a red racer screamed out of the fourth turn and crossed  $6\frac{1}{4}$  seconds behind him—and gaining!

Tom Bigelow hit the big time for the first time when he won the 1975 Hoosier Hundred. It was the highlight of a frustrating season that saw him win three out of five dirt car championship races and come in second best, pointwise, to a driver who had won less but had driven more consistently during the season. Jimmy Caruthers beat Bigelow out of the championship, but Jimmy lost a race for life to cancer last year retiring a champion.

For Tom Bigelow, the 1975 Hoosier Hundred was all *right*, as it was for 17,000 fans who remember witnessing a classic.

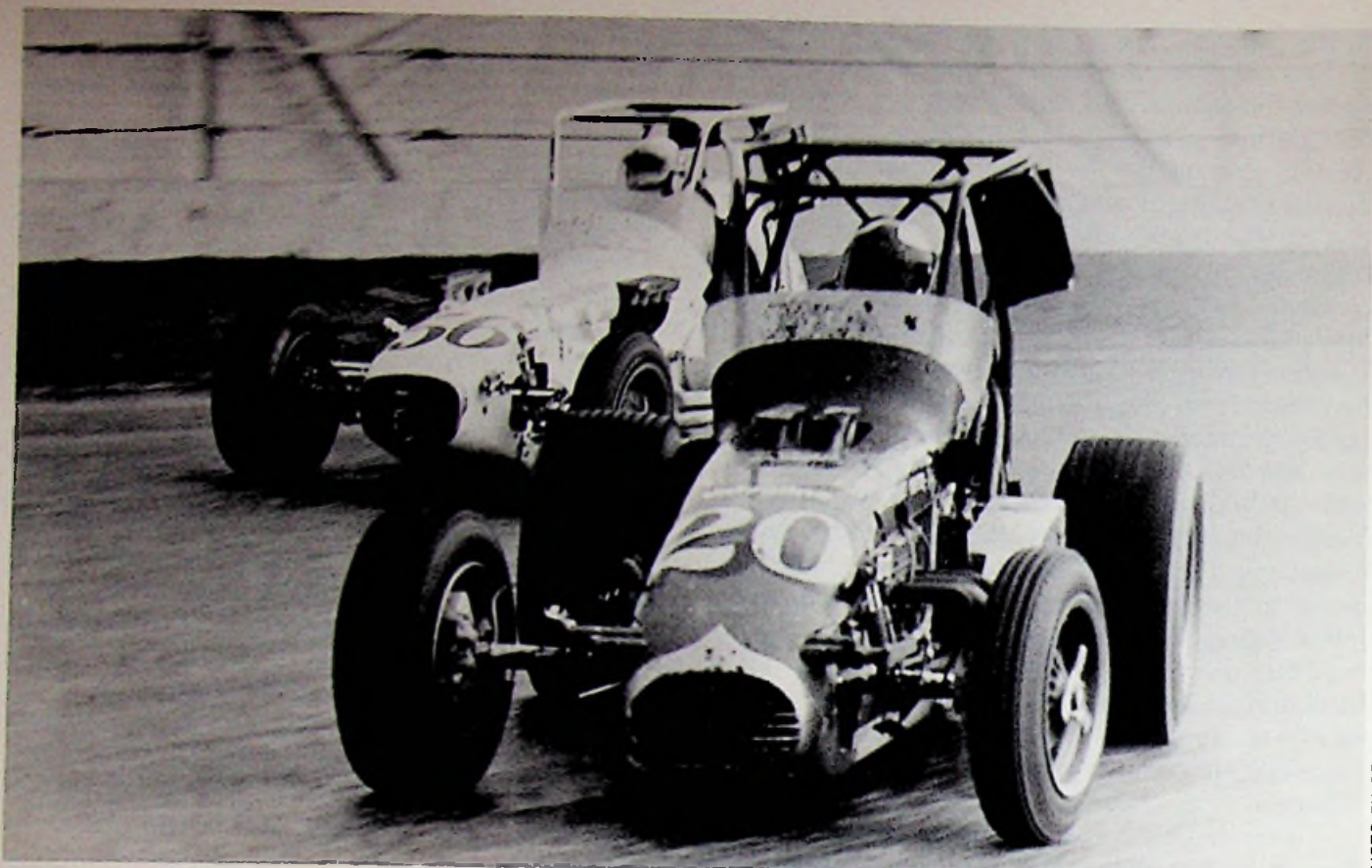


PHOTO BY GERALD WALKER

*Sheldon Kinser No. 20 and Mr. Nice Guy Jim Hurtubise battling it out during the race. Herk finished eighth and Sheldon 12th.*

***MPS***

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# 1976 HOOSIER HUNDRED ENTRY LIST

CAR NO.	DRIVER/HOMETOWN	SPONSOR/ENGINE
2	Tom Bigelow, Whitewater, Wis.	Hubler Chevrolet Co. Foyt
3	Arnie Knepper, Belleville, Ill.	City of Champaign, Ill. Chevy
5	Billy Engelhart, Madison, Wis.	Scio Cabinet Chevy
7	Jackie Howerton, Indianapolis, Ind.	Patrick Goodyear Ford
8	Billy Vukovich, Fresno, Cal.	Ace Nut & Bolt Co. Ford
12	Jan Opperman, Noxon, Montana	Longhorn Racing Chevy
14	A. J. Foyt, Houston, Texas	Gilmore Racing Team Foyt
16	Clark Templeman, Reseda, Cal.	Smith Speed Shop Chevy
17	Larry Moore, Dayton, Ohio	Smith Speed Shop Chevy
20	George Snider, Bakersfield, Cal.	Rhoades Aircraft Sales Chevy
22	Joe Saldana, Brownsburg, Ind.	Weaver Excavating Chevy
23	Jim McElreath, Arlington, Texas	King's Brake-O/Amx Coal Chevy
29	Billy Cassella, Weirton, W. Va.	Donahue Chevrolet Co. Chevy
30		Double A Racing Chevy
31	John Hubbard, Johnstown, Pa.	Mataka-Raceweld Chevy
33	Ronnie Burke, Houston, Texas	Burke Chevy
35	Dana Carter, Brownsburg, Ind.	Sterling-Holt Chevy
36		F. E. Harding Paving Offy
41	Bill Burks, Jr., Benton, Ill.	Tag Hale Engine Co. Chevy
42	Gary Irvin, West Lafayette, Ind.	Hodson Racing Chevy
48	Duane Carter, Jr., Brownsburg, Ind.	Dobbins Chevrolet Co. Chevy
51	Bubby Jones, Danville, Ill.	Weiler Farms/Cogle Ford Chevy
53	Bobby Olivero, Lakewood, Cal.	IGOA Ford
55	James McElreath, Arlington, Texas	Pizza Hut of St. Louis Foyt
56	Sheldon Kinser, Bloomington, Ind.	Genesee Beer Wagon Chevy
57	Jim Hurtubise, Clermont, Ind.	Senter Ford
59	Larry Rice, Indianapolis, Ind.	LeFevre Automotive Chevy
61	Roy Hicks, Socorro, N.M.	Lyle Dill Chevy
62	Steve Lotshaw, Indianapolis, Ind.	Schutz & Thompson Chevy
65	Jerry Miller, Indianapolis, Ind.	S & M Electric Chevy
67	Lee Osborne, Jamestown, Ind.	Adrian & Griffith Trencher Chevy
72	Larry Dickson, Marietta, Ohio	Polak Foyt
74	Chuck Gurney, Livermore, Cal.	Ben's Tire Clinic Chevy
75	Rollie Beale, Toledo, Ohio	The Original Fuzzbuster Chevy
78	Roger Rager, Mound, Minn.	Hill-Prather Chevy
79	Danny Frye, Jr., Florissant, Mo.	First National Bank of Arcola Offy
81		Curtis Chevy
85	Mark Alderson, Brownsburg, Ind.	McGinty Conveyor Offy
91	Spike Gehlhausen, Jasper, Ind.	Spirit of Indiana Chevy
93	Johnny Parsons, Indianapolis, Ind.	Ayway/WIRE Chevy
96		Mendota Equipment Co. Chevy
97	Gary Bettenhausen, Monrovia, Ind.	City of Syracuse, N.Y. Chevy



PHOTO BY RANDY CRIST

1972 "Hoosier Hundred" race rookie Lee Kunzman No. 96 leading Bill Vukovich during hot laps. Kunzman did not make the race but was 1st alternate.



PHOTO BY JERRY NOLAN

This picture, shot with a long distance lens, shows Joe Samana upside down in the second turn in warmups. Joe was not hurt.



PHOTO BY BILL RESER

The greatest moment of the race for the driver in first place, taking the checkered flag as Tom Bigelow is doing here last year.



PHOTO BY KEN COLES

Ronnie Burke No. 33 who drove from 22nd to sixth being chased by Spike Gehlhausen who later spun and hit the wall.



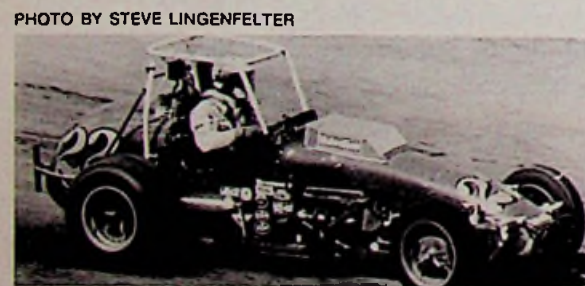
PHOTO BY DON HARTMAN

After the brush with the first turn wall Walkup's car is on the hook of the Holmes Wrecker while Bruce rides side saddle.



PHOTO BY RANDY CRIST

Sam Sessions No. 17 leads Billy Cassella No. 29, Arnie Knepper No. 5, Steve Chassey No. 87 and an unidentified car through the corner.



Rollie Beale in the Glass City machine at speed down the front chute.



PHOTO BY JOHN MAHONEY

A great late race duel between Johnny Parsons No. 93 and A. J. Foyt for second. Parsons had led an earlier 56 laps.

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 1975 HOOSIER HUNDRED



PHOTO BY DON HARTMAN

The nation's fastest Chevrolet dealer Bruce Walkup in trouble.



PHOTO BY JERRY NOLAN

The driver second only to A. J. Foyt in the number of "Hoosier Hundreds" run, Ralph Liguori No. 36, speeding by a spinning Pancho Carter.



PHOTO BY TROTTY HECK

A great shot from the roof of the building in the first turn with A. J. Foyt No. 14 leading James McElreath No. 23, Jerry Miller No. 77, Jimmy Caruthers No. 55, Tom Bigelow No. 2 and Larry Rice No. 59.

## Time-Speed Conversion Table For One Mile Dirt Track

TIME	SPEED	TIME	SPEED	TIME	SPEED
33.00.....	109.091	35.00.....	102.857	37.00.....	097.297
33.10.....	108.761	35.10.....	102.564	37.10.....	097.035
33.20.....	108.434	35.20.....	102.273	37.20.....	096.774
33.30.....	108.108	35.30.....	101.983	37.30.....	096.515
33.40.....	107.784	35.40.....	101.695	37.40.....	096.257
33.50.....	107.463	35.50.....	101.408	37.50.....	096.000
33.60.....	107.143	35.60.....	101.124	37.60.....	095.745
33.70.....	106.825	35.70.....	100.840	37.70.....	095.491
33.80.....	106.509	35.80.....	100.559	37.80.....	095.238
33.90.....	106.195	35.90.....	100.279	37.90.....	094.987
34.00.....	105.882	36.00.....	100.000	38.00.....	094.737
34.10.....	105.572	36.10.....	099.723	38.10.....	094.488
34.20.....	105.263	36.20.....	099.448	38.20.....	094.241
34.30.....	104.956	36.30.....	099.174	38.30.....	093.995
34.40.....	104.651	36.40.....	098.901	38.40.....	093.750
34.50.....	104.348	36.50.....	098.630	38.50.....	093.506
34.60.....	104.046	36.60.....	098.361	38.60.....	093.264
34.70.....	103.746	36.70.....	098.093	38.70.....	093.023
34.80.....	103.448	36.80.....	097.826	38.80.....	092.784
34.90.....	103.152	36.90.....	097.561	38.90.....	092.545

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# Score Card

Starting Position	Driver	Lap	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
93	1 Car No. Parsons	93	93	93	93	93	93					
5	2 Car No. Enslin <sup>not out</sup> <sub>wait</sub>	12	12	12	12	12						
96	3 Car No. Chassey	51	51	51	51	51						
7	4 Car No. Howerton <sup>out</sup> <sub>12 1/2</sub>	48	48	19	19	19						
12	5 Car No. Jan Opperman	7	65	22	22	22						
25	6 Car No. Beale	65	19	56	56	14						
56	7 Car No. Kinser	96	22	74	14	56						
48	8 Car No. Carter Bancho	19	56	74	74	74						
51	9 Car No. Jones, Bubby	56	74	29	29	29						
65	10 Car No. Miller, Harry	22	96	65	65	65						
19	11 Car No. Walker	75	75									
55	12 Car No. McElreath Jr.	55	14	17								
72	13 Car No. Dickson	72	55									
22	14 Car No. Saldana	74	29									
75	15 Car No. Hurney		23									
78	16 Car No. Rogan - out		59									
91	17 Car No. Delhausen		57									
25	18 Car No. Alderson		85									
29	19 Car No. Cassella		91									
57	20 Car No. Hurko		69 <sup>(E)</sup>									
67	21 Car No. Osborne <sup>out</sup> <sub>down 6 laps</sub>											
23	22 Car No. McElreath Sr. out											
69	23 Car No. Rice, Jerry											
14	24 Car No. A.J. Fort											
25	25 Car No.											
26	26 Car No.											
27	27 Car No.											
28	28 Car No.											
29	29 Car No.											
30	30 Car No.											



PHOTO BY PAUL CASTAGNOLI

Billy Vukovich pointed skyward after running over the wheel of a spinning car in the second turn.



PHOTO BY PAT TAYLOR

A. J. Foyt being interviewed by announcer Sid Collins. Foyt now has six wins, four 2nds, three 3rds and a 4th in "Hoosier Hundred" competition.



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LOOK FOR THE "BIG STATUE"



PHOTO BY PAUL CASTAGNOLI

*Billy Vukovich after he finally came down. Bill injured an ankle in the crash.*

# FLIGHT INTO YESTERDAY

## Return to The Hoosier Hundred

By John Sawyer



In victory lane and from the left it's car owner Ralph Wilke, Hurst Girl June Cochran, driver Tom Bigelow, chief mechanic A. J. Watson and Hurst Girl Linda Vaughan.

The big jet chewed its way through the storm laden skies, its nose pointed due North. In the distance spectacular lightning bolts illuminated the night's blackness, as if some heavenly fireworks celebration were in progress. With each electrical flickering the plane's cabin was tinted with an eerie, yellow glow. Most of its few passengers were sleeping; however, one sat bolt upright and alert. Obviously heavy thoughts were on his mind; thoughts which excluded such a trivial event as sleep. I being that restless passenger, it is easy to elaborate on those anxious hours. It was the destination, that was the problem. Somewhere ahead in that inky murkiness lay Indianapolis and one mile of dirt where in just a few hours would take place the 23rd consecutive running of The Hoosier Hundred.

The Hoosier Hundred—need I say more. Every dirt fan from Australia to Flemington knows the magical ring of that title. It has always been the biggest and richest dirt race of any year, that is since its inception in 1953. The Hoosier Hundred—the place where the biggest of the big cars and the bravest of the brave men both receive the great test. This has been particularly true in recent years when dirt track racing on the long miles has anything but prospered. You see, this race is an old-timer's race. It is run with old-time cars: big, upright, long, nasty, dirt cars. It is also run on an old-time track; the kind of race track that sired auto rac-

ing in this country. One gigantic mile of slippery or sticky dirt that can readily make an old man out of a young one. Every year this prestigious event draws an enormous field of cars. They seem to come out of the woodwork, out of long closed garages, or out of the speed shops of yesteryear. They just show up there, as at some mecca for a vanished species. These are the men of the most clannish clan of all, The Big Car Dirt Track Clan. They wear their U.S.A.C. insignia proudly on car and uniform, but it isn't hard to transpose that noble emblem with that of its predecessor, the AAA. Oh sure, every year new, hopeful faces arrive at the old fairgrounds, Bell Helmet Bags in hand. They come to replace those grizzled veterans who, for whatever reason, can't cut it any longer. New or not, it doesn't take the novice long to blend in. He has to blend in because this is The Hoosier Hundred. This is the epitome of big car racing, the epitome of the dirt miles, the absolute epitome of tradition. If blending is impossible, then our newcomer gets out. The Hoosier Hundred tolerates no phonies, it is for real. Hidden within the shadows of its battered dirt lurks the memory of such names as Bryan, Larson, Branson and Langhorne. This is the big league. Like I said, where the big cars and the big men come to play.

The giant jet engines roared and trembled as the flight wore on. They seemed to beat out the

PHOTO BY RICK LANE

rhythm to a song heard only by my ears and repeated the same words over and over; Hurry up, Hurry up, Faster, Faster. Yes, I was in a hurry; I had to find out something. For a multitude of reasons, several years had passed since my last attendance at this annual autumn happening. Would it be the same? Would the machines still be so beautiful and yet somehow so sinister looking? How about those newer individuals that dared sit in them; could they fill the shoes of some of my departed heroes? Change, that is the inevitable commodity. The question was simple. In my years of absence would all of the changes affect the nostalgia, charisma and the pure love that I had always felt for dirt racing's grandest moment?

With each lightning demonstration outside my window, there seemed to follow an electrification of my memory power. Thoughts of other Hoosier Hundreds flashed through my mind, not unlike the lightning crackling through the clouds outside. I remembered back to the first contest held in 1953. Indiana racing enthusiast Roger Wolcott was largely responsible for the creation of the dirt track extravaganza and that first one was incredible. Those of us in the grandstand were hard pressed to know that Bob Sweikert was the winner over courageous Manny Ayulo and Don Freeland, so close were they running at the finish. Then there were the Historic races run by my boyhood hero Jim Bryan. In the darkness of the plane's cabin I could see him again, walking the track looking for soft spots. There he was clad in skin tight Levis, his Western boots stained with the track's mire—nervously flicking ashes from his ever present cigar. The legendary Arizonan won the next three Hoosier Hundreds (1954, 1955, 1956) and I helped cheer him to all three victories. Jim Bryan, now there was one hell of a man!

In more recent years the food for thought was no less inviting. 1965 saw us all watch in amazement as a young Fresno, California upstart by the name of George Snider stuck the gold Agaganian Offenhauser into the front row and actually challenge the vaunted Foyt for that year's title. Also 1965 saw the tragic comeback attempt by "Mr. Guts" himself, Jim Hurtubise. After only a few laps, he had to park his Sterling Plumbing Offy as the rut-whipped steering wheel was tearing apart his wired together hands.

On and on the legends flitted in front of my tired eyes. How about 1967 when a youthful Bruce Walkup, in an experimental Jim Robbins D.O.C. Ford, shattered Roger Ward's one lap

track record? Then again in 1970 when Ralph Liguori pushed Walt Flynn's creation past A. J. Foyt to take second place in that year's edition of the Hoosier classic.

A. J. Foyt, therein lies the story of The Hoosier Hundred for me. Putting aside all nostalgia, in that nostalgia filled moment, there was Foyt. Tough, strong, unyielding he was perhaps the greatest mile dirt driver ever. *Six times* he had conquered the big prize at "The Fairgrounds." Some of the great ones had only come close to victory, but A. J. Foyt was, I repeat, a *six time* winner. On each of those days I had seen him crush the fiercest opposition imaginable. Time and again he blew away the dreams of so many of the dirt giants, that A. J. emerged as more than a giant. He became a virtual "dirt track superman." Particularly dramatic were his "late Sixties" battles with bitter foe, Mario Andretti. I might add that he continually brought some of the most spectacular machines that I have ever seen to the arena on 38th street. Vibrant paint jobs with blinding chrome always rendered them breathtakingly beautiful.

Speaking of Foyt, his dirt track zenith may have been reached right there on the Indiana clay. The year was 1968 and it had been a tough one throughout for the man from Houston—mechanical difficulties had haunted him continually. September 7th was no different and a troublesome machine relegated him to seventh starting position in the field of eighteen. For the average "clay pusher" this would have been excellent; not so for Foyt. He was flat mad and when the green dropped, the war began. Up to the front he came, almost instantly, the angry Ford engine howling in rage at its competitors. Finally only Andretti's white Offenhauser remained to be passed. Suddenly in the fourth corner A. J. turned on the power to its utmost. The huge, red car turned sideways and screamed past Andretti on to the main straight. With the engine wailing near the explosion point and the long chassis still sliding wildly, Foyt streaked past the grandstand. Dramatically he raised his right hand into the air signaling his number one position. No truer thought was ever expressed. A. J. Foyt was certainly, in all ways, number one at The Hoosier Hundred. To this writer he always will be.

Now on this lonely night flight I knew History might be in the making. *Unexpectedly* A. J. Foyt had entered this, the 1975 Hoosier Hundred. It was to be his only dirt start of the season and some said it might be his last at the

Indianapolis Mile. Apparently "old A. J." wanted to try for seven and who would be foolish enough to bet against him.

Abruptly, I was shocked into reality by the flashing, red *FASTEN SEAT BELT* sign. Weir Cook Airport was below and soon all of my questions would be answered. As the wheels touched down, the snarling, dirt car engines seemed to be roaring inside each ear. My Flight Into Yesterday was over and I had come back to The Hoosier Hundred.

"Never go back, never try to capture yesterday," a wise man once told me. Under a brilliant Indiana sun I set out to prove that gentleman at least partially wrong. It was race day; the time for finding out. I hadn't walked more than three feet through the pit gate when the realization hit me. Here was yesterday, it was just as I had remembered it. The sprawling grandstand, the endless stretch of damp earth that had known the pounding of so many desperate wheels. It was all there. However, it was the machines that really tore me up. There seemed to be an endless line of them nosed in against the pit fence; their graceful long tails facing the track where the supreme challenge awaited. A myriad of vivid colors reflected everywhere, as the sun's brilliant rays created their mechanical rainbow. These were the ultimate in dirt track machinery, these were the U.S.A.C. Championship Dirt Cars. Long and low to the ground, they made my spine tingle just the way they had so long ago; the first time I ever saw them.

Hovering around each of these noble beasts were those stubborn individuals who had kept the mile dirt legend alive all of these difficult years. Owners, mechanics, the fearless drivers—these were the members of that clan I spoke of earlier. The dirt track clan that had fought to save its kind of car and its kind of racing. This was The Indiana Fairgrounds, the big meeting place and I, in my small way, was again a part of it.

Then it happened. As if by some secret signal an engine roared to life. Louder and louder it snarled as its mechanic's screw driver probed the sensitive throttle system. Growling and snapping, it responded to the touch as its brethren had been doing for generations. This was an Offenhauser, its fierce, boastful voice gave that fact away. Wham, Wham, Wham, its brazen call echoed off the partially filled grandstand. It was a proud sound, a sound that had thrilled millions from Langhorne to Sacramento. Sadly it was a dying sound; there weren't many Offies

left on the circuit. Just a few die-hards still clinging on. Wham, Wham, Wham, it sounded its angry call and then it was still. Even then the noise lingered. Perhaps it was a memory. Perhaps it was an echo off a bleacher. Maybe it was old Jud Larson out there somewhere in The John Zink Special—WHO KNOWS? Not me and that is for sure. In that place at that time, I figured anything to be possible. After all this was nostalgia at its heaviest, this was The Hoosier Hundred.

Sure there were changes, some things were different. Who could expect otherwise? The greatest has already been mentioned, the decline of the Offenhauser. Chevrolet engines could be seen everywhere. A handful of Foyt (Ford) and Offy powerplants were scattered about, but the Chevy clearly dominated the field. Surprisingly even car number 14, A.J.'s own equipment, housed a Chevrolet beneath its flaming, red hood.

Also there were many new names and many new faces distributed throughout the grounds who represented "the new breed" of "the old guard." Young Spike Gehlhausen was now driving the family car, the famed Midwest Manufacturing Special. He had big shoes to fill. One of the most interesting of the newcomers had come all of the way from Socoro, New Mexico. His name was Roy Hicks and he and his entire crew were justly proud of their beautifully built creation, car number 61. The amazing fact about this team was that prior to its coming East to race the U.S.A.C. Miles, none of its members had ever seen a Champ Dirt Car. They constructed the machine from a U.S.A.C. specification sheet. Sitting in car number 23 was another story, that to be sure. His name was McElreath, but it wasn't "Old Jim." This was James McElreath filling the seat so ably occupied by his Dad all those many years.

Don't get the wrong idea, the veterans hadn't all headed for the hills. About 10:30 A.M. who should come bouncing through the first turn gate but Ralph Liguori. Ralph The Racer was here for his *fourteenth* Hoosier Hundred. Fittingly his ride was car number 36, The Rogala Offenhauser. Down the way from Ralph's pit sat a big, white Ford powered animal. Its enormous tail section proudly carried a huge orange 56. Sitting on that same car's hood was the man who always went with that number—JIM HURTUBISE. Yes, the immortal Hurtubise was back with that same old crew cut and friendly smile. There were others whose names brought back so many memories. Tom Bigelow, Arnie Knep-

per, four-time winner Al Unser, Sam Sessions—the list went on and on. One of the most interesting of the old-time combinations was veteran Bob Harkey testing out the fit of Lee Glessner's ancient Windmill Trucker Offenhauser. Both man and machine knew that Indiana clay so very well from miles of broad-sliding experience.

At approximately twelve noon, after a lively warmup session, it was time for qualification. The pressure was tremendous as forty cars and drivers were on the premises. Obviously with a field of twenty-four to be selected this meant that sixteen disappointed crews would be sitting around Indianapolis that night bemoaning their unfortunate fate. Sad news greeted everyone before the first time trial was even attempted. It was announced that two favorites had already scratched their rides due to insurmountable mechanical difficulties sustained in the warmup. Handsome Jack Howerton, the 1974 winner was out of the picture and so was popular Gary Bettenhausen whose engine had completely surrendered.

As is usually the case in dirt racing, a rapidly drying race track seems to give an advantage to *early* qualifiers. Very *early* in the going it became obvious that speeds were to be extremely fast. Quickly a new record was established by spectacular Bill Engelhart in his Scio Cabinet Special. No sooner had the young man from Madison, Wisconsin come in for a hero's welcome than his feat was duplicated. Johnny Parsons in the Finley prepared Chevrolet, number 93, established a faster speed and again a new track record. "J.P." turned the big mile in 33.314 or 108.063 miles per hour—flat out hooking it on an old horse track.

After this, under a broiling sun, times began to fall off. The real surprise was the drive of James McElreath. Riding the cushion, the boyish looking Texan put the McElreath Enterprises Special into the field for fourth fastest time. A dry, slick track was beginning to test each and every competitor. One of my favorites, "Lil Joe" Saldana, got his Offenhauser upside down in turn two. Even the invincible Foyt met with disaster on the treacherous clay. While riding the narrow rim in quest of "the quick way around," A. J. drove into the third turn wall. A groan rolled forth from the stands when the huge throng observed his re-arranged front end, as old number 14 limped dejectedly into the pits. This put Foyt in a terrible jam. He had wasted one of his two qualifying laps, his car was badly bent, and *if* it could be repaired, he would have to qualify last on an even slicker

racing surface.

On and on the battle raged and one by one competitors were eliminated by too slow times. Finally everyone able had taken a shot at the wicked dirt. Only Foyt had yet to attempt and he was slowly pulling away from the starting line. This was a desperate situation. Desperate for Foyt because he absolutely had to make this race. Desperate for "super brave" Lee Kunzman; his time was the slowest in the field and he was on the bubble. Quickly Foyt came around for the green, he had one lonely lap to do the job. He did so; his time was considerably faster than Lee's speed. Once again Foyt had proven himself to be the ultimate competitor, the Hoosier Hundred Master. What drama and the crowd loved it, every frantic moment of it. Meanwhile a horribly disappointed Lee Kunzman packed away his helmet proving the old adage again to be true. One man's glory is another's sorrow. He was not alone as many other living legends would likewise serve only as spectators. Already in street clothes were the likes of Larry Dickson and Lee Osborne. The strangest phenomena of all was veteran Jim McElreath, who would have to settle for cheering for his son from the sidelines. He had qualified The Holt Special twenty-eighth fastest, obviously too slow. It must have been a strange feeling for the old "rim rider" from Arlington, Texas. Fate—that is the ruling factor in dirt racing. It always has been and I imagine it always will be. Those treacherous hands of fate that deal the good hand to one and the bad hand to another—don't try to figure them out. Jim McElreath wasn't, he just slowly walked down the line to help young James get ready for his first Hoosier Hundred. "The old order changeth, giving way to the new."

Finally the big moment arrived. The twenty-four fastest machines were rolled onto the track, the portable starters were attached and drivers began buckling in for the long grind. Nervous eyes peered through the slits of Nomex hoods or over the scarlet handkerchiefs tied bandit style across taut faces. Over the public address system Mr. Tony Hulman issued his magical command: "GENTLEMEN START YOUR ENGINES." Hurriedly colorful helmets were tugged on and the whirring of the starters could be heard everywhere. One by one the big engines roared to life and slowly respective crews pushed the big cars into movement. What a spectacular sight that is, the scene of a bygone era. A romanticist I am; I have never denied it. Nonetheless, the hardest of hearts would have

to skip a beat or two at the vision of a TRUE field of big cars straining to get underway. Engines growling, dust blowing, frantic crews doing their thing, papers blowing, and anxious drivers poised tensely behind their masked anonymity—this was and is racing. It had brought me 1,200 miles to see it and the thrill of this moment made every nickel spent justifiable. Like Chris Economaki once said on an ABC Telecast—something about BIG CARS and BRAVE MEN. Now twenty-four of both were moving through the first turn and toward an unknown destiny.

With precision like beauty, they came around once for the parade lap. Johnny Parsons on the pole led the way, his head thrown back arrogantly. Back in 14th spot, car number 14 nosed against the tail of the preceding car. It was A. J. Foyt and I could imagine his eyes squinting through the tinted helmet visor, looking to the front. Hurtubise came by in 20th spot, his four cam Ford howling. In front of the grandstand he raised one of his battered hands in salute. Next to him Ralph Liguori hunched over the wheel in that traditional pose of his. Finally the 24th car came by, a half car length behind its partner. Rollie Beale, "The Toledo Cannonball," was the driver and he shot a quick glance at a photographer upon passing. Next time around and it would be for keeps. The battle for glory would be on.

There is only one place to view a dirt race from and that is right in the corner. Only there, right in close, can you absorb the emotion, the feeling, and the drama that always transpires. Wild, sliding machines bouncing through the ruts, their engines screaming to provide the necessary power to avert disaster. Drivers—their arms pumping furiously and their helmeted heads thrashing about with the violence of it all; each of them passionately determined to outcorner the others. You have to feel the sting of the dirt, smell the cooking engines and sense the desperate courage on display in those deadly turns. Dirt races are won or lost in the corners; likewise careers are made or broken in those same curved arenas.

Thus it was that I chose to watch this Hoosier Hundred from between turns three and four, just as close as I could safely be. What unfolded before my eyes was A CLASSIC automobile race. It was an all out fight between the low runners and that special breed of dirt tracker known as "The Rim Rider." The guys with the Fords and Offies set up for the low route and hugged the inner fence as they blazed by. However, many

of those with the more powerful Chevrolets chose the rim—the narrow cushion as their road to fame. There was one noticeable exception to this rule, Hurtubise. He took his rampaging Ford up into the loose stuff like a man possessed. Was I surprised? Of course not, where else would Jim Hurtubise drive?

Immediately Johnny Parsons established himself as the man to beat. He blasted into a commanding lead from the start, riding only inches from the uncompromising wall. Right behind him came Bill Engelhart, if anything, a little closer to eternity than Parsons. Some distance back, there followed a whole cluster of "Rimmers," each of them taking terrible chances to stay on the pace. Bruce Walkup was the initial one to get squeezed out and he brought out the first of several yellow flags early in the race.

Meanwhile, Pancho Carter was really getting his act together. Barely backing off, he began to gain on the leaders. In four laps he passed eight cars and was coming on when disaster struck. On lap thirty, he and Engelhart engaged in a skirmish somewhere in turn two. The cushion being only so wide, someone had to go—that is the way it is in the world of The Rim Rider. In this case, it was Pancho and his car spun right into the path of Bill Vukovich. Vuky ran over him and went into a spectacular aerial act that brought out the caution and sent "The Fresno Flash" to the hospital with leg injuries.

Soon the conflict resumed and it was wilder than ever. Parsons, dedicated to victory, threw all caution to the wind. Bearing down on him was Engelhart who absolutely seemed to be in love with the wall, so close was he to it. Never have I seen two men put big dirt cars so deep into the shadows, at least not since the days of Langhorne. Particularly Engelhart, with his open helmet, flapping bandana and utterly desperate driving style—he truly resembled some ghost from the past.

Complicating this already intense battle was Foyt. Yes, the legendary Foyt. His engine was sick, his frontend was still way out of whack, but he was racing his heart out. He was running hard, using the narrowing cushion like the two youthful chargers in front of him. Here was A. J. trying to run down two characters who had been mere grammar school students when he had first come to The Indiana Fairgrounds. Only his unrivaled skill and unapproachable courage had allowed Foyt to climb into third position. It was nearly impossible to keep the bent machine off the wall and still A. J. pressed on.

With all eyes on the high riders, it was easy

to overlook the big, white car wearing the number 2. Tommy Bigelow was coming to the front via the low groove. Slowly he was gaining on the reckless "rimmers" whose trail was now slimmed to the point of nonexistence. Finally he pulled alongside Foyt and an intense duel developed. Eventually Bigelow got around and he set his sights further ahead.

Incredibly Parsons suddenly seemed to be slowing. Perhaps the brutal pace was taking its toll. Through his dirt smeared goggles, Bill Engelhart saw this. He torqued up his engine and did likewise to his courage and on lap fifty-two, the race had a new leader. Sensing victory, young Bill forced on more violently than before. By now a big hole had formed coming out of turn three, right up next to the fence. Deep and dark it lay there waiting to swallow somebody. Several cars got into it, including Foyt, and the results were nearly fatal. Somehow Engelhart in his relentless ride seemed to miss it. Far ahead he, nevertheless, refused to let off. In spite of all of our cheers, it was only a matter of time. A matter of time until his luck would run out. On lap sixty-eight that ugly hole threw the brilliant, red number 28 into the wall and shattered a torsion arm. Hence came the end for a valiant driver and to a valiant drive. Slowly a broken-hearted Bill Engelhart headed for the pits. Parsons was again the leader.

J. P. too was doomed. His engine was even sicker than sick. He was hanging in on courage and nerve. However, those commodities couldn't hold off Tom Bigelow and soon Parsons was locked into a terrible duel with Foyt to even hang on to second. On lap eighty-three, A. J. got around and started a hopeless pursuit of Bigelow. Parsons motored around for ten more laps until his tired machine "packed it in." Another dream had ended. About that time Jim Hurtubise had to give up as well. Few would question his effort. He had moved from twentieth to sixth place when his engine let go.

Finally the checkered flag fell for Tom Bigelow with A. J. right behind, literally just a few seconds too late to capture that badly wanted seventh victory. It was a sweet triumph for popular Tom, possibly the highest point of his already great career. He and his veteran mechanic A. J. Watson had played it cool. Set up for low running they obviously had planned to stay out of trouble and let The Rim Riders seek their own level. Often that level is disaster, as the frantic high running is rough on man and machine. The Rim Rider—he will either

win big or lose big; that is the nature of his life. On this day "the rimmers" had all lost. The irony of the whole thing lay in the bold lettering on the valve covers of Tom Bigelow's steaming engine. They spelled out brazenly one word—FOYT. Yes, A. J. Foyt had been beaten by one of his own engines.

However, in this day of limitless heroes, perhaps the hero who finished third was the most heroic of all. His name—Jim Caruthers. Steady driving had earned him his high finishing position and helped produce enough accumulated points to win for Jim the title of United States Auto Club Dirt Track Champion. As most everyone knows, this title doesn't tell the entire story. Jim Caruthers' greatest championship lies in the field of courage. Since last winter he had been fighting a tenacious battle with cancer—surgery, cobalt, the whole ugly works. All of the pain, anguish, etc. couldn't drive him from the track. Back he had come with a vengeance. Now he had conquered the biggest cars and the bravest drivers around. Hats off to Jim Caruthers, Dirt Track Champion, a true inspiration to all.

Well, it was all over, the big race was over. So was another season for "The Big Cars." One by one, on their creaking trailers, they were towed out of the old fairgrounds. A lot of snow would fall and a ton of ice would have to melt before their shiny wheels would turn again. About the time next year's corn reaches knee high, the ritual will start once more. The cobwebs will be scraped off, paint will be touched up and engines will be tuned. Beneath the warm rays of summer's sun the clan will again gather at those hallowed spots—Syracuse, Springfield, DuQuoin and The Indiana Fairgrounds. Dirt masked drivers will strap in, powerful motors will sound their arrogant call and huge tires will send chunks of clay soaring toward the heavens. How do I know this? Its simple—that is the way it has always been. Since the dawn of automotive competition the dirt legions have lived and breathed in their dusty world. Like the tradition they represent, they are too tough to die.

As for me, I am grateful to have been a small part of it. Many thanks to my friend, Tom Dick, whose beautiful photos accompany this article. More thanks to the generosity of Bill Hill, Assistant Director of Racing (Indiana State Fair). Without the help of both of these individuals, my visit would have been, at best, difficult. You see gentlemen, you helped perform a miracle, the impossible was accomplished. For just a few hours I captured yesterday. For just a few hours I was a boy again.

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PHOTO BY DON HARTMAN

*Celebrities from the left, 1975 Fairboard President Paul Thurston, announcer Sid Collins, Indianapolis Motor Speedway owner Tony Hulman and Indiana University basketball coach Bobby Knight.*



PHOTO BY STEVE LINGENFELTER

*The five rookies that qualified for last year's race. Standing from the left, James McElreath, Larry Rice and Spike Gehlhausen. Kneeling it's Steve Chassey and Johnny Anderson. Rice was the rookie of the race.*



PHOTO BY RANDY CRIST

*A first for USAC, the father and son duo of Jim and James McElreath competing on the dirt circuit at the same time.*



PHOTO BY SCATTERGOOD/CHRISTIE

*A shot showing the uncongested, people free pit area during last year's "Hoosier Hundred."*

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# IN MEMORIAM: JIMMY CARUTHERS 1975 USAC CHAMPIONSHIP DIRT CHAMPION

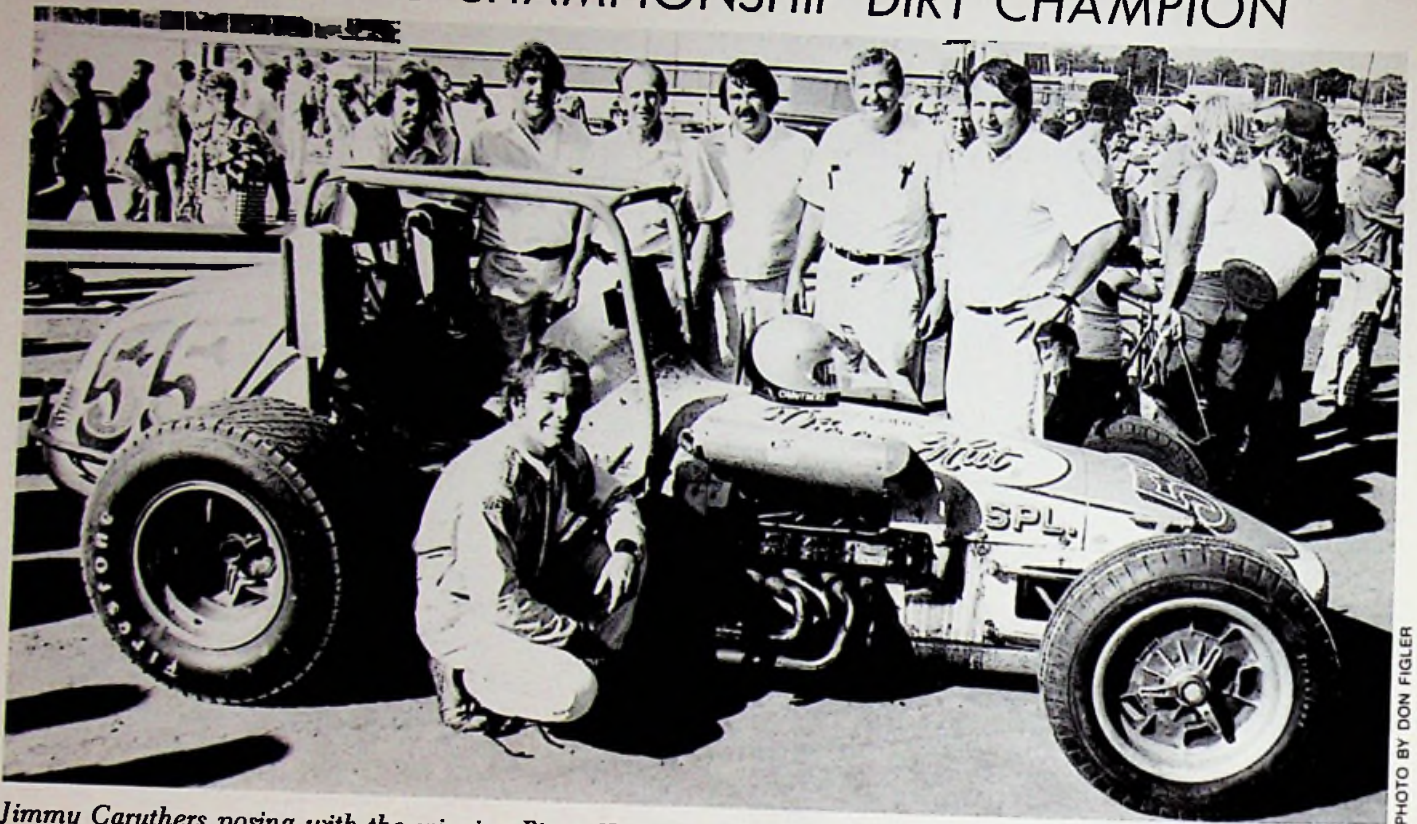


PHOTO BY DON FIGLER

Jimmy Caruthers posing with the winning Pizza Hut car and its crew. Identifiable are owner George Middleton (second from the left) and chief mechanic Larry Griffith (far right).



PHOTO BY KEN COLES

Eventual race winner Tom Bigelow chasing Caruthers during the early part of the afternoon. Jimmy finished third to win the crown without the benefit of a victory.



PHOTO BY PAT TAYLOR

After the race interviews by Sid Collins of Tom Bigelow and Jimmy Caruthers.

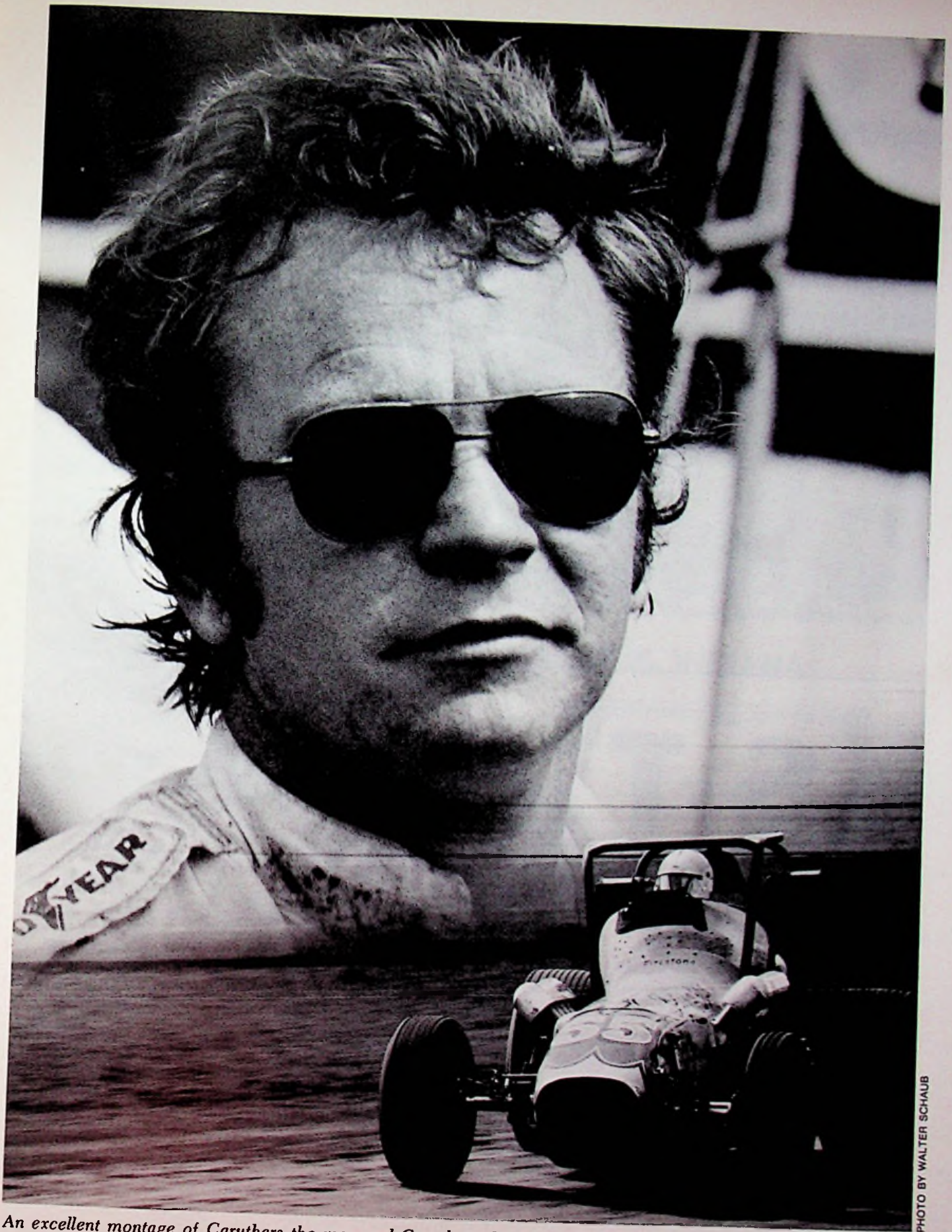


PHOTO BY WALTER SCHAUB

*An excellent montage of Caruthers the man and Caruthers the race driver. This picture was in color but unfortunately could not be reproduced that way.*



PHOTO BY RICK LANE

*For those that have always wanted to see themselves in a race program. 17,000 strong at last year's show.*



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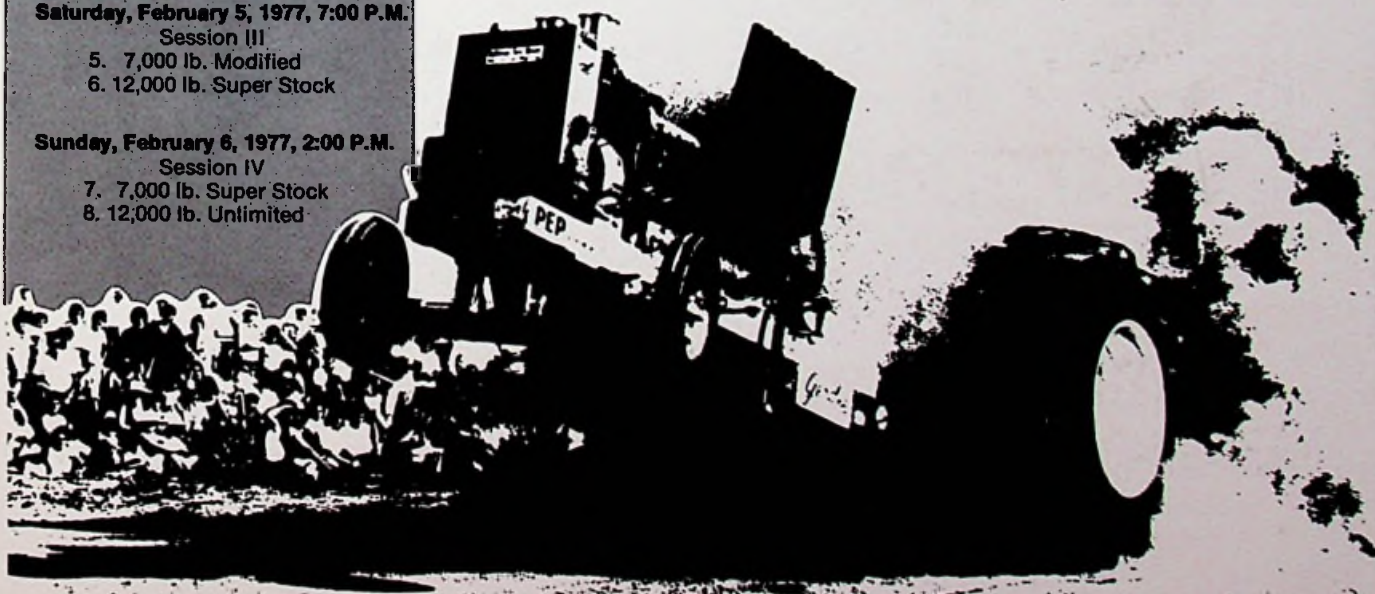
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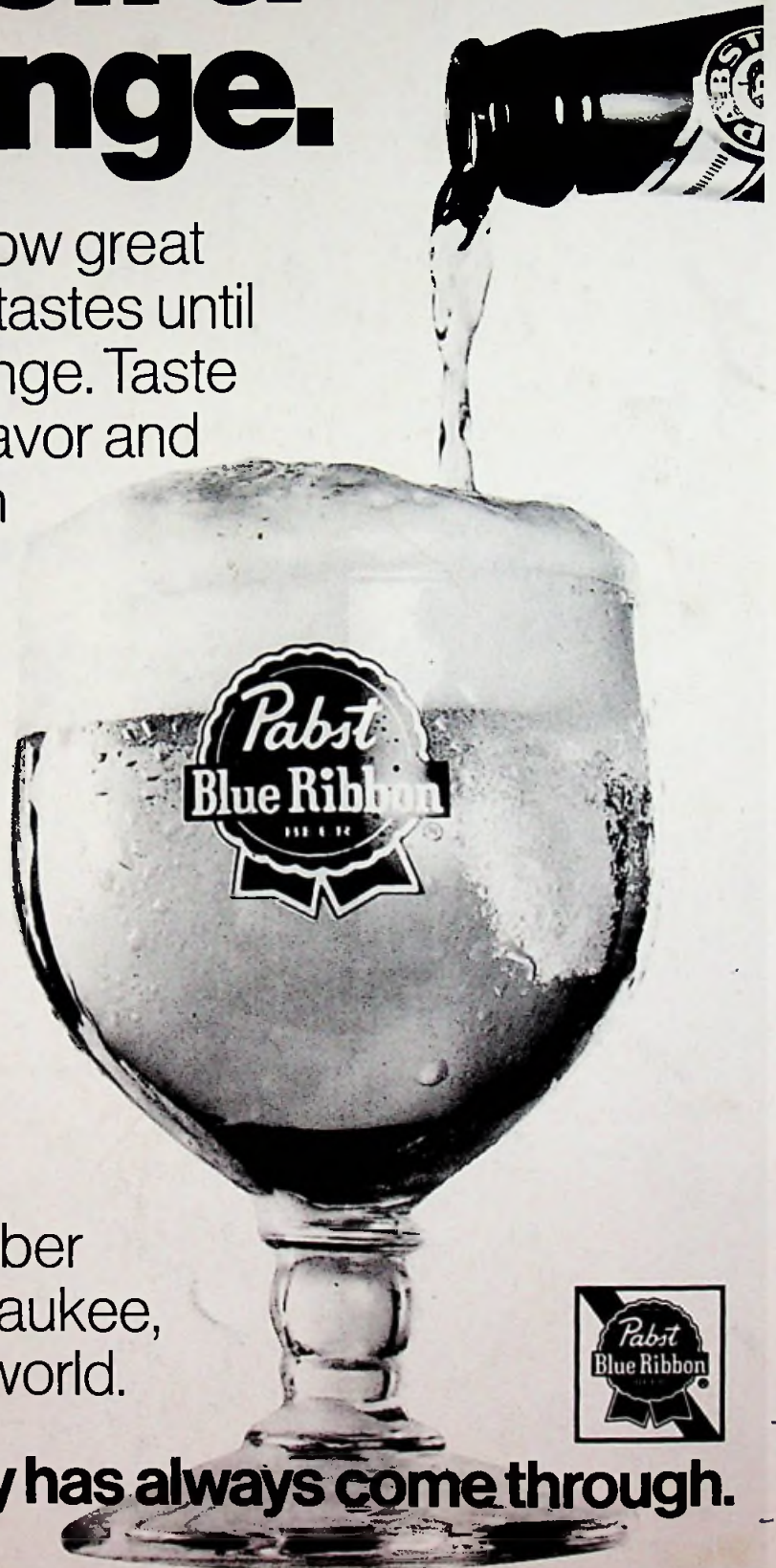
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