



photo by Michael Casey-DiPleco

#59 Jim Stengel, McRae GM-1; #1 Charles Parsons, Lola T332c.

HMP Legends of Motorsports Bobby Rahal Signature Event Watkins Glen International, NY

June 11-13, 2010

-by George Shepard

Carl Sandburg was wrong: “the fog [doesn’t] come on little cat feet.” Sometimes it rolls in like a dark and malevolent Mack truck like Sunday at Watkins Glen. And then there’s the legendary track, which took its toll on racing engines. However the spirit of the event prevailed and participants still had a fun weekend.

Race organizer Bobby Rahal is trying to add more vintage racing weekends in America with greater spectator excitement, more glamour, prestige and social content for entrants. “I think the inspiration came from what we experienced from Europe at events like Goodwood, Silverstone Classic and a number of other events like that, and I think that historic racing there is at a little bit of a higher level. It’s more of a spectator sport; it’s certainly more stringent and disciplined in terms of rules for the cars...



photo by Michael Casey-DiPleco

#81 Larry Ligas, Lola T-70.

and more selective. There are some sanctioning bodies in this country in historic racing that will basically run anything and everything, whether it’s correct historically, or they may not even have cars that are historical at all... Seeing what’s done in Europe, we (Bobby, Zak Brown and Peter Stoneberg) felt that the time was right in this country. There wasn’t anything like that here, so our goal is to replicate that kind of racing scene in Europe and bring it over here...

Everything needs to get back to its roots. Historic racing has kind of evolved over time, and so you have events like Monterey, which is very strict, and it’s quite a successful event. And what we find is the people with the great cars, even the good cars, want more and more to go to events where there are like cars and there’s a respect for what they’ve got, what kind of preparation the car arrives in, that it meets the historical correctness of the cars in that period... By really bringing in the better cars, that draws more and more of the better cars out.

Many owners and drivers agree with that view. John Giordano, the owner of the rare and breathtaking Ferrari 512S, was happy with the event: “It’s a new group that’s starting, which, hopefully, is going to flourish, the right idea: quality not quantity, which is what this [historic racing] was when it started out.... I hope it works. “Either you can join the group, or you can just apply for each race. I joined, and we’ll do three of the four races. I think it’s growing. If you look around, there are a lot of quality cars here.” And indeed, there were.

Driver Tony Adamowicz says that vintage racing compares favorably to the “Glory Days” of racing in the 1960s: “I think it’s gotten even better, and the reason is we’re not cutthroat drivers with cutthroat teams. And so we can share a lot more information because we know how valuable these cars are, and they’re very

unique. There are just a lot of them out there that are not replaceable. And so we have to care for them, and anything we can do to assist and help people along and get information.... It’s really, really nice to have that camaraderie.”

Mechanic John Glenn, who turns a wrench on Charles Rick Parson’s F5000 Lola T-332c, talked of that helpful spirit: “Everyone here helps everyone out.... It’s to promote the sport, you know. And so when somebody’s having a hard time with something, another guy will go help out that other guy with his car.... It’s kind of cool.”

People needed a lot of help after the qualifying races on Saturday. Some of the great cars that were sidelined with engine problems included Charles Rick Parson’s championship-winning Lola T-332c (oil pump failure), Bruce Leeson’s McLaren M10B F5000 car (bent valve), Michael



photo by Ed Kovalchick

In the spirit of making the weekend a happening...

The Porsche Club of America, Pocono Region, set up a tent at turn eight where they enjoyed racing, adult beverages and racing movies over the weekend. Members included Andrew Moore, PCA Region president, Ben Gabriele, Philip DiBello, Ben Croasdale, Karl O’Donoghue, Bob Schmidt, Donna Little, Regina Kozak and Bob Wagner.

Snowden's GRD 272 F-2 and even race organizer Bobby Rahal's Brabham BT29 (broken bearing). The most heartbreaking event was when John Giordano "spun out" in the Ferrari 512S, damaging the chassis and bodywork. He said that he was trying to avoid contact with another car. Everyone in the garage area was stopping by and offering condolences as the car was loaded into its period transporter.

On Sunday, the feature race day, the weather was uncooperative: rain and really heavy, thick, dark fog. The morning warm-ups were cancelled, the start times for events were delayed, and Ira Schoen bedded in the brakes on his 1971 Ford Capri 2000 by running back and forth in an empty section of the Media Center parking lot. He later explained that it was because they missed the warm-up session. "The race isn't the time to bed in the brakes."

While we waited on Sunday, Robert Ryan chatted with this Victory Lane Magazine reporter about his Can-Am 1968 McLaren M6B. "Bruce McLaren was my hero.... What he did in his short

life was amazing." This track was significant for Bruce and his team, and that was part of the attraction for Robert. "It's my first time here.... To know it's a Grand Prix and Can-Am track, it's exciting to be here. Rahal's deal came up, and it just worked out great.... We got here...., and he has this nice little program that gives track orientation using very qualified people like Peter Krause. I got on with it and the rest of the group and just kept notching up [faster speeds]." Robert was a very quick learner, coming in second in the qualifying race for **USRRC/Can-AM/FIA Championship of Makes** cars. Getting out of the corners quickly is important at Watkins Glen. "Can the M6B do it?" Robert noted. "Well, yeah, I've got so much torque in this motor that it's not my problem, but it's getting grip when you are following cars with wings which just stick the cars to the track. I get a little jealous."

Soon Robert was on track in competition in the combined **USRRC/Can-Am** Sunday race. He briefly followed James Freeman in his 1967



photo by Ed Kovalchick

Oscar Kovalchick, former Can-Am driver, entrant in the first-ever Cannon Ball Run, in 1971, and founder of Kidracer, displays the Polish Racing Drivers Of American Pole trophy at the Legends Of Motorsports event.

My View of Saturday at Legends of Motorsport: Watkins Glen 2010

-by Will Silk

The inaugural Legends of Motorsport event at Watkins Glen got underway Friday, June 11th, 2010. While the number of entrants was less than what some may have anticipated, the quality of the machines on tap was second to none. No less than three Porsche 962s, a Ferrari 512S, and a full array of F5000 cars showed up to take part in the weekend's racing activities. Racing groups were established based on entry levels; one for USRRC/Can Am/FIA Championship of Makes, IMSA GT/2 Liter Sports Cars/Thunder and Lightning/Group C/GTP, Formula Libre, and the open wheel class of F5000/Classic Monoposto. Also strolling around was event Grand Marshal Vic Elford, as well as several other living legends from the world of racing including Tony Adamowicz, Sam Posey, Ron Goldleaf, Eric Haga, and Steve Durst. Weather was part of the story.

Saturday's racing was held in nearly unbearable high humidity conditions, though a few quick passing showers rolled by, the sun was out for

the better part of the day. The only thing that was hotter than the temperature was the on track action. The Porsche 962s of Zak Brown, Bill Howe, and Johan Woerheide were quite a sight to behold as they whistled by at speed, pop off valves rapping out under heavy braking going into turn one. Theo Bean drove his Intrepid Chevrolet GTP car very well and the roar of the Chevy V8's exhaust offered a prelude of what was to come later in F5000. Also on hand were several small bore sports racers, perhaps most stunning was the Lotus 23B being piloted by Doc Bundy. John Giordano was present with his Ferrari 512S to thrill all eyes, and especially ears, with the sexy sports prototype and its massive Italian V12 sound. Misfortune struck John however, as the Ferrari found itself bounced off the guard rails in an incident during Saturday's qualifying race. Tears welled up in the eyes of all those in the paddock as the Ferrari arrived back to the garage area after the shunt.

At 4:00 PM the F5000/Classic Monoposto class took to the track for qualifying. Eleven of the classic fire breathing F5000 beasts arrived to fight it out at Watkins Glen just as they had 40 years ago along with a few small bore formula cars from the Monoposto class. Tony Adamowicz in the Riverside International Automotive Museum Gurney Eagle was in the mix, qualifying the same car he drove to a 1969 Formula 5000 Championship in fifth overall, third in the pre-1971 division. Eric Haga was also on tap in the Lola T190 that he piloted in 1970. Eric qualified down in 12th place overall, and offered this comment, "The car's plenty fast, now someone just needs to kick the old driver in the ass." Having two drivers racing the same machines they piloted 40 years ago on the grid is truly an epic achievement. Taking pole in F5000 was Steve Davis in an Eagle MK5, with pole in Classic Monoposto going to Dave Handy in a Brabham BT-29.

With Saturday's racing wrapped up, the track prepared for a 1970s disco party to conclude the

day's events. The F5000 Drivers Association departed for the Glen Motor Inn, where a dinner was held to award Sam Posey with a lifetime achievement award for his accomplishments both on the track and off the track as a writer and commentator. Steve Durst was also present to receive a medal in recognition of Honorary Membership in the F5000 Drivers Association. F5000 drivers and friends enjoyed a fine meal and some great stories. Sam Posey said in his speech, "It's ironic....No, it's perfect; that in the background coverage of the Le Mans 24 Hour Race is playing and I'm here tonight with Tony Adamowicz, who co-drove a Ferrari 512M with me this very weekend 39 years ago in France." The NART 512M that Tony and Sam piloted in the 1971 Le Mans race finished 3rd overall, or as Tony will tell you, "First in class, Ferrari class."

Though rain and mist put a damper on Sunday's climax of activities, those who attended the inaugural Legends of Motorsport event and Watkins Glen enjoyed some hard racing by participants piloting some of the world's most historic racing cars. Sam Posey perhaps said it best: "Historic racing is crucial to motorsports because it keeps alive the tradition and the history of something that actually draws from its past in terms of what's going on today. In other words, you have to understand the past of the sport to really perform well in the present. First of all, [historic racing] is a friendly scene. Everybody here is sharing something that they're enthusiastic about. Nobody gets dragged here against their will. It's a friendly, family situation. Secondly, I would say, don't forget how great these cars were. To hear a Formula 5000 car go by with 500 horsepower and that deep throat of exhaust and then hear the upshift - it's pretty damn exciting. I think if people think that vintage racing means little Triumph Spitfires, that's not the whole story. There's a lot of cars out here today that are extremely valuable and extremely fast."



photo by Michael Casey-DiPleco

#11 Travis Engen, Chevron B17b.

Match SR 3, then “I passed him on the course somewhere after I got my line established. You know, got the [wet] conditions figured out. He was on wet tires; I was on dry tires. That may have made a difference in the end. I just started reeling him in. I just started notching my speeds up, and all of a sudden, I caught him. You know, in one lap I probably closed the distance and then had a passing opportunity, and then we had a bit of a race after that. James was right in my exhaust pipe on the last lap. I thought, ‘Oh, maybe he’s going to make an attempt,’ so I kept on it.” That is when the fog thickened. “The last two or three laps, the fog kept getting denser, and we came up on back markers. You really had to watch for that because nobody had rain lights.”

Archie Urciuoli (1965 Lola T-70 Spyder) was close behind Robert at the start, but the McLaren pulled away. Then Archie found himself in the clutches of Doc Bundy (1967 Lotus 23B) when they entered the corners. Doc actually got by him, but Archie took the position back—only to switch places again. Archie got by him and led Doc for the duration of the race, but Doc

was stuck to him like glue the whole race! They finished third and fourth.

In contrast, the Feature **F5000/Classic Monoposto** drivers had voted not to race on Sunday in the poor and worsening conditions. For the sake of the fans, they did a couple of parade laps behind the pace car.

Only four of eight cars started the **Formula Libre** race. It was an upset. Travis Engen (Lola T-97/20) was the better part of two seconds a lap faster than the rest of the field in the qualifying race. In the foggy conditions his friend Marc Giroux (Lola T-97/20) cut the better part of two seconds off of that time on one of his laps!

Similarly, less than half of the newer cars raced in the **IMSA GT/2 Liter Sports Cars/T&L Group/GTP**. Rob Hurley had a good seat during the start in his 1966 Porsche 911: “It was the



photo by Michael Casey-DiPleco

#17 James Freeman, Matich SR3; #2 Robert Ryan, McLaren M6B; #175 Brian Blain, Lola T163 in the Sunday Fog.

fastest pace lap I’ve ever been on.... We actually did two pace laps and didn’t even ever really catch the field on the pace lap until the very end, and even then we really weren’t tight. And when we came around to take the start, half the cars went in, and I couldn’t see a green flag waving. [When it was finally waved] guys behind me passed me because they had a better start than I did.” Bobby Rahal (1970 Chevron B16) wasn’t happy about it either. “It’s a shame that those fellows pulled off at the start. I think once or twice the fog got pretty bad, but for the most part

Not Just For The Wealthy—Open Wheel On A Budget

—by Ed Kovalchick

So, I’m roaming the paddock at the June Legends of Motorsports race in Watkins Glen, and I stumble on an attractive open-wheel, red Chevron B29, sitting under a Walmart Special pop-up tent, next to an older considerably “used” trailer, complete with the ubiquitous open box of chocolate cookies. Worn, but useable tires are stacked nearby - just in case.

A younger gentleman (the free helper dude, John Vicari) wearing a floppy-billed hat, is working intently at fitting the air intake housing over two massive side-draft carburetors not exactly co-operating. A mobile tool box sits nearby, filled with “used” tools and various parts



photo by Ed Kovalchick

“...I realized this is racing on a budget—nothing fancy, nothing wasted and nothing thrown away either—just in case.”

of various things—“stuff” one might call it. A smallish name in stuck-letters is glued near the driver’s head on the car—Paul Lasko. I like this guy already I thought.

Ok, I realized this is racing on a budget—nothing fancy, nothing wasted and nothing thrown away either—just in case.

It turns out Mr Lasko, who once owned a Triumph/Ducati motorcycle shop in the Detroit area, has quite a self-made resume of budget racing under his belt, including man-handling a Suzuki in motocross, before joining the military in the later 70’s where he became a helicopter crew chief (we will get back to this talent).

Ouch

He resumed motorcycle racing after finishing his military tour and in 1995 everything changed. He was badly hurt in a bike accident while racing a XR750 Harley at Daytona, and as a result he decided racing cars would be a much better choice. Note that Paul is a good-sized man with a powerful handshake.

After gaining his credentials through Skip Barber schooling, the now small motorcycle shop owner, began racing open-wheel cars including participating in the F2000 series. Paul said he “horse-traded” for a couple England-built Van Diemens.

On a “shoe-string budget” in 1999 and 2000 he managed to win the Waterford Hills, Mi F/C championship in a 1993 Van Diemen, and also won the Formula Atlantic series in Waterford in 2001 and 2002 with a 1993 Reynard. “I was my own pit crew, did all my own work, scrounged for parts and basically was just getting by—with a little help from my friends.”

After selling his Van Diemen rides, he picked up a former Unser 1986 Lola T8600, which he said was “nothing but trouble—I couldn’t get rid of it fast enough. I lost the turbo twice and an axle—only finished one race—a win at Waterford Hills.”

New Venture

After the Sept 11, 2001 debacle, Detroit started struggling and so did Paul’s motorcycle dealership venture, so he went to Iraq to work with a contractor repairing and maintaining helicopters for a couple years—“to make some money for racing and retiring debts.”

After returning to the U.S., he found work in Las Vegas, and his cherished Chevron, which he raced at Fontana and Phoenix, and now Watkins Glen. Paul has since moved to Doylestown, Pa.

Paul’s wife Cindy is a key helper at the race track, and friends pitch in. “Our entire year budget for racing is only about \$4,000. We spend about \$1000 or so on a weekend—we camp and cook out. Racing is awesome and spending weekends with my wife and friends is special.”

“Right now I have about \$35,000 invested in the car and spares, maybe \$6000 for the trailer, and I always had the tools. I always trade for things and find deals.

I expect to get 12 races out of an engine and I don’t beat up the car. I try to get two weekends of racing out of the tires - only run the laps I need to. I do side jobs to make racing money too.”

“My 1997 Ford Van has over 140,000 miles so I carry a motorcycle in case it breaks down—which it has.” He laughed on that one, noting he and wife had to ride many miles in over 100 degree desert heat due to one break-down. She was toast.”

Legends Racing

“The Legends is the best event by far of all the races I have ever run. This event is filled with real racers and even the famous drivers are friendly and out meeting everyone. I am racing with the guys I watched on TV, and we are all hanging out together—how good is that?”

“We are racing million dollar cars and also cars like mine, and all of them are on the track. This makes it special. The bang for the buck is great here, fantastic food and other fun too. This is special for a poor boy like me.”

“I don’t have the money to race as often as I want, but I am saving for the Sebring race, one of my favorite tracks. You can count on that.”

I didn’t doubt that for a second.

it was all right." Because of the mandatory five-minute pit stop, it was hard to keep track of who was leading when. Young David Friedman, the winner in his 1974 Porsche 911 RSR, was pretty quick, but organizer Zak Brown (1986 Porsche 962) was even faster. Bobby Rahal was turning in very quick laps, too, but he did not want to be classified. David did not agree with Bobby regarding the fog: "I've been in a lot of races, pro and club, and that was about as hairy as it can get. The fog was just rolling in, rolling out,



photo by Michael Casey-DiPleco

#27 Ritter/Hinton, Lola Mk3B.

RACE RESULTS

USRRR/CAN-AM/FIA
CHAMPIONSHIP OF MAKES
PL CL DRIVER/CAR

1 Can-Am R. Ryan/McLaren M6-B
2:01.853

2 Can-Am J. Freeman/Matich SR 3

3 Can-Am A. Urciuoli/Lola T-70 Spyder

1 USRRR D. Bundy/Lotus 23B 2:09.774

4 Can-Am J. Woerheide/Lola T-70

5 Can-Am B. Blain/Lola T-163

1 2 Liter J. Richmond/Chevron 23

2:40.223

FORMULA LIBRE

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

1 F/Libre T. Engen/Lola T-97/20

1:51.978

2 F/Libre B. Brown/Ralt RT-4

3 F/Libre J. Frick/March 822

4 F/Libre M. Giroux/Lola T-97/20

5 F/Libre H. Katz/March 732

6 F/Libre P. Morgan/Lola T-97-20

7 F/Libre P. Lasko/Chevron B29

IMSA GT/2 LITER SPORTS CARS/
T & L/GROUP C/GTP

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

1 IMSA GT D. Friedman/Porsche 911

RSR 2:03.466

1 Group C Z. Brown/Porsche 962 1:56.551

2 IMSA GT P. Stoneberg/Porsche RSR

1 T & L R. Hurley/Porsche 911 2:25.812

2 T & L I. Schoen/Ford Capri 2000

3 T & L A. Ashe/Handshy/Datsun 240Z

4 T & L A. Robbins/Datsun 240Z

rolling in, and at the end, the last three laps or so, you couldn't see brake markers; the whole entire 'bus stop' was consumed and, you know, it was just holding on, hold your breath! You couldn't see the flag stand on the front straight until you were at it. The pit lane, nothing--you couldn't see. I've been at the 24 Hours of Daytona at night, in the rain with fog, and it wasn't as bad as this. "We were going as fast as we could and as safe as we could because the problem with fog is you can't see if someone had spun. That's the kind of a thing that sits in the back of your head." Rob Hurley's reaction was in between the others': "The fog got worse as the endurance race progressed. It's interesting to go down the back straight flat out in fifth gear, can't see your brake markers until you're on them.... It was kind of fun.... We kept on going as fast as we could. Then it got a little bit wet at the end: the fog came in and brought some rain, then it got a little bit

slippery...., so I really started backing off." Still, he finished fourth behind newer cars.

As I was waiting to interview Bobby, I asked another chap what he thought of the horrible, thick fog. He replied that he "had raced in much worse fog in rallies." He indicated that in some he couldn't see thirty feet in front of his car. That's what I get for asking Vic Elford one of the really great rally and endurance racers of all time! He also was the Honorary Grand Marshal of the weekend.

So the second of the new HMP Legends of Motorsports Bobby Rahal Signature Events is now complete. The very experienced racing staff coped admirably with the challenge that Mother Nature tested them with. The experiences in creating the targeted lifestyle happenings at one of North America's great tracks located near the town of Watkins Glen where post war II road racing began in the United States should serve

F5000/CLASSIC MONOPOSTO

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

1 F5000 S. Davis/Eagle Mk5 1:56.028

2 F5000 D. Cunningham/Lola T-332

3 F5000 J. Stengel/McRae GM-1

4 F5000 K. Engelmann/Lola T-192

5 F5000 T. Adamowicz/Eagle

6 F5000 S. Coppola/Lola T-192

1 Monoposto D. Handy/Brabham BT-29

1:58.005

2 Monoposto M. Giroux/Brabham BT-29

3 Monoposto T. Engen/Chevron B17b

4 Monoposto W. Thomas/Brabham BT-21

5 Monoposto R. Hornig/Brabham BT-35

7 F5000 E. Haga/Lola T-190

8 F5000 J. Obialero/Lola T-332

6 Monoposto W. Demarest/Titan Mk VI-B

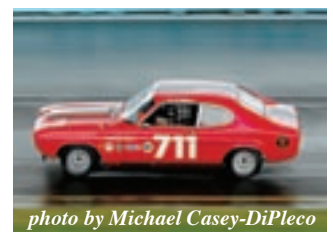


photo by Michael Casey-DiPleco

#711 Ira Schoen, Ford Capri 2000.

9 F5000 C. Parsons/Lola T-332c

10 F5000 M. Knittel/Chinook

DNF F5000 B. Leeson/McLaren M10B



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Vol. 11 No.2 THE VINTAGE TYRE REPORT

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