

Marlboro 12 hour - 1964

IT HAD THE FLAVOR of a Hollywood script. From the start, there was this lurking suspicion that the Team Lotus Cortinas, which were obviously the clean-cut hero types, would triumph before the final fade-out. But, of course, they first had to suffer a little to add to the suspense and keep up audience interest. After all, 12 hours is even longer than "Cleopatra."

And 12 hours in a small sedan is twice as long as 12 hours in a Porsche or Ferrari. Marlboro-ranked as either the world's smallest road course or largest go-kart track-is short on straightaways and up to here in turns. It separates the Drivers from the Also-Rans.

Also, it occasionally separates the cars from some of their more necessary parts. The pits did a booming business. And the bad guys in this epic adventure were the brakes, which bugged our heroes on the course and gave them fits in the pits.

At 10: 10 A.M. Eastern Daylight Saving Time and 10 o'clock Marlboro time (they're an independent bunch there), 28 drivers pattered across the track and plopped into their waiting sedans. The three Cortinas popped quickly to the fore, but the David Hobbs/David Clark car excused itself from the group a few laps later and spent the next 48 minutes in the pits having its gearbox replaced.

The first retiree of the race was Miss Pink, Donna Mae Mims, in a clashing red rental Corvair with automatic transmission. She called it quits after two laps. The idea was just to make up a class and, at 9cents a mile, why go 'til it Hertz?

The battle was three and a half hours old when the Tony Hegbourne /Sir John Whitmore Cortina motored into the pit alley. With Colin Chapman himself directing the show the brake pad problem on the car was finally solved by replacing the entire caliper on the right front brake. The operation took 21, minutes, including a bit of consultation time, after which Hegbourne got back on the gas to make up for the lost laps and eventually rejoin the front-running Jackie Stewart /Mike Beck with Cortina.

The smallest sedan, an NSU, caused something of a stir when it flipped end over end-and abruptly came to rest on its roof. Stewards rapidly righted it and by the time the curious pit people had scurried up the hill for a look, there was nothing to see but the rear view of a battered-but-game NSU disappearing in the direction of Cappy's corner. Driver David Scheff brought the scarred sedan in the next time around and, after a resounding anvil chorus, carried on in the best sporting tradition.

Along about. mid-afternoon; dark clouds hovered into view and nervous pit crews readied rain tires. They were put to use a few hours later when the skies let loose and it was then that B. J. "Snuffy" Smith's big circus-surplus tent was elected the most popular spot in the pits. The Dallas, Tex.,

Renault dealer had sent over an entourage to accompany his Team Tricolour (or Tricolore-the French and Americans couldn't agree on the spelling). The team cars were equipped with two-way radios for consultations with the pit crew. "They'd be great," Texas driver Delmo Johnson allowed, "if the drivers spoke English;"}

The surprise of the group was the stock, R-8 sedan that just plain outran all the other *esp ecia le* Renaults. The car had lost a wheel in Saturday afternoon practice and got itself well clobbered on the rail that rims the bowl part of the course. It looked like one less Renault in the running but the crew rallied to reclaim the car in the late night hours and it proved to be the best of the batch in the final reckonings.

That downpour at dusk brought on the usual serving of slip-ups. The brake-beleaguered Corvair of Marius Valsamis went off at the end of a straight and cut an impressive swath through the woods. It finally halted with its hood protruding through the trees, and course workers hacked down a sturdy sapling to turn Marius loose.

The Clark/Hobbs Cortina-the hard-luck car of the trio-broke a stub axle about that time and driver Dave Hobbs was forced to effect repairs out on the course in the dreary drizzle.

As the race drew to a close, there was a final flurry of last minute hardships. As the witching hour approached, Don Yenke brought in the 4th overall Corvair with a frozen transmission. Efforts to unglue it availing nothing, he went back into circulation with one lone, forlorn gear and dropped down three places to finish 7th.

At 4 minutes to flagfall, the R-8 Renault of Charlie Barns and Lars Giertz choked up out on the course with generator trouble. Barns beat it back to the pits, snatched up a battery and raced back to his stranded car. It refused to be revived and there it sat while the remaining 20 finishers accepted the checkered flag and headed for the champagne.

So the Cortinas posted 1-2, the Jack Stewart/Mike Beckwith car finishing with a 10-lap lead over the Whitmore /Hegbourne machine. Two well-driven Saabs were 3 and 4, with Clyde Billings /Hal Mayforth at the wheel of one and Ed Diehl/Lynn Walker piloting the other. The Kirk Berkeley /Art Johnson/John Edmonds Peugeot 404 followed in 5th and right behind it was a VW sedan that ran faster than VW sedans usually run. Jim McDaniel and John Moore were the drivers.

It had taken 12 long hours, but the story had developed its happy ending-at least for the Cortinas.

FINAL PLACINGS
Marlboro 12-Hours

Drivers	Car	Laps
1 Mike Beckwith, Jack Stewart	Cortina	378
2 Sir John Whitmore, Tony Hegbourne	Cortina	368
3 Clyde Billings, Hal Mayforth	Saab	351
4 Ed Diehl, Lynn Walker	Saab	342
5 Kirk Berkeley, Art Johnson, John Edmonds	Peugeot 404	340
6 Jim McDaniel, John Moore	VW	338
7 Fred Eggers, Dave Tallaksen, Don Yenko	Corvair Spyder	336
8 Al Cosentino, Bud Patterson	Fiat-Abarth	332
9 Dave Clark, David Hobbs	Cortina	328
10 Pat Mernone, Pinkie Rollo	Peugeot 404	327
11 Ron Grable, Warren Matzen	VW	322
12 Jack Rabold, Ray Tessier	VW	320
13 Chris Custer, Ben Fowke	Saab	319
14 Ray Caldwell, Peter Sachs	Renault R-8	317
15 Paul Richards, Bill Haenelt	Renault 1093	300
16 Rick Mandelson, Les Netherton	Imp	294
17 Hal Mayfield, Delmo Johnson	Renault R-8	284
18 Marius Valsamis, Walt Phillips, Dave Roethel	Corvair Spyder	271
19 Bruce Denkert, Dave Scheff	NSU	263
20 Dick Young, Wallen Shamlian	Volvo 444	232