

SUCCESSFUL DEBUT FOR SVO



By Michael White

Photos by Mark Windecker

SVO on grid before start of race

Have you ever considered taking your street car and driving it flat out for 24 hours?

Well, that's exactly what 48 teams did June 25 and 26 in the Longest Day of Nelson '83 at Nelson Ledges, Ohio. Sponsored by Quaker State and sanctioned by the Sports Car Club of America, the Longest Day is fast becoming an increasingly important event as more auto manufacturers become involved. This year the entries included cars officially and unofficially sponsored by Ford, Lincoln-Mercury, Chevrolet, Mazda, Peugeot, Avanti, Pontiac, Porsche-Audi, Saab, Volvo and Mitsubishi.

Besides the major auto manufacturers Goodyear, B.F. Goodrich and Firestone were all on hand as well as many other sponsors, both large and small. Sponsors are necessary, even in Showroom stock, to race competitively.

The fastest qualifier in this impressive field of factory cars, national-

ly and internationally known drivers, was the Ford Mustang SVO prototype entered by RPS Racing.

Ron Smaldone, the team leader, was optimistic about winning. He said "We plan on going 1000 laps."

To assure the best results possible, Smaldone's co-drivers were all well

seasoned. Larry Campbell, Tom Kersey, D.J. Fazekas, and reserve driver Larry Rehagen all current or national and regional champions, got plenty of practice before the race.

When the 2.3 liter turbo won the pole, the Porsche teams were stunned. How could a Ford beat a

