

# Longest Day of Nelson: Porsche

**I**F IT'S BECOMING "old hat" for Fred Baker to win the Quaker State Longest Day of Nelson 24-Hour showroom stock race at the Nelson Ledges Road Course, it isn't because he's ever had it easy doing so.

This time Baker, along with teammates Jim Busby and Rick Knoop — formidable assistance if there ever was any — unveiled a pair of 1985 Porsche 944 Turbo prototypes, chassis Nos. 1 and 2, according to Baker, to win the race for his third time in the five years it has been held, this time by a whopping 84 miles or almost one hour of lapping the 2.0-mile track.

Baker could have been excused for feeling nervous about his chances this year because the Porsche factory strikes caused his pair of cars to hit the United States only Tuesday before the race. "They were broken-in driving from the factory to the airport in Germany and then from New York to Ohio," he said.

Problems started immediately during Wednesday and Thursday testing when an exhaust manifold cracked. Electing not to pilfer a part from the sole parts car, proper calls were placed and within an hour somebody named "Wolfgang" was on a plane from Stuttgart to New York and Cleveland carrying two new manifolds in his luggage.

BFGoodrich also came through with a new 245/45VR16 Comp T/A tire for Baker, one which performed flawlessly, as BFG supported 17 of the 52 entries in the race and provided the services of Busby and Knoop as well. They also debuted a new P255/50VR16 Comp T/A tire for the John Greenwood/Dave Heinz/Steve Millen Corvette prototype which qualified second to the Baker camp, 1:20.02 to 1:22.60.

In fact, BFG tires were on the three fastest qualifiers and the best of the 25 Goodyear-backed entries was the fourth-gridded Camaro from Birchwood Racing for Mike Mavrigian, Dave Weitzenhof, Kip May and Bernie Store, a car which was classified as a prototype because the tires were unique retreads from the Tire Retread Information Bureau.

Even though Camaros and Corvette held four of the top eight qualifying spots (the 944s held the other four), their days would be frustrating. Although the weather on raceday(s) was not early as hot and humid as it was last year, every major Chevrolet entry soon to have fuel feed problems with the symptoms being rough running. Fuel pumps were replaced on a wholesale basis, metering units were swapped, gas lines were back-flushed and tanks were checked for whatever. The result was the best Corvette/Camaro finish was 18th overall, better than four hours behind, by the Dick Guldstrand Racing '85 Camaro prototype which sported a new log-and-ram-tube Bosch injection system that driver Ron Grable said was worth "about 50" horsepower over the best '84 Camaro Z-28 setup.

Getting the "Spunky Award" for the second year in a row is the SSC Bertone X-1/9 driven by builder Kim Baker, and joined in the cockpit by John Dinkel and Innes Ireland. It finished 10th overall, six laps ahead of second in

class and for the second year in a row, well ahead of the best SSB finisher. Its presence in the SSC class created no smiles among the Pinto-Capri-Datsun-Mitsubishi competitors who felt it should have been classed as a prototype as the SCCA does not recognize the existence of the Bertone marque in its showroom stock rules, just the standard Fiat X-1/9, a feeling echoed by Denver's Jerry Adams who was on the premises. Regardless, this race is essentially an SCCA Restricted Regional and the organizers can write the rules however they please, ergo, the mere existence of a class for prototypes of questionable parentage.

The existence of back-up parts cars (is this game getting too serious?) is now rampant.

Behind the pits was a string of Porsches, Audi GTs, Camaros and Fiats on jackstands, many with dealer price stickers still on the windows, ready to give up their hubs or spindles or fuel pumps or batteries to The Cause. As one mechanic surveyed his Audi GT minus its left front hub and brake assembly, he noted with a sickly laugh, "I've gotta drive that home to Tampa, Fla., tomorrow. I hope we have enough parts left."

At the end of 24 hours, the Rick Hurst Racing SSGT Porsche 944 was a solid second to the winners and first in class, but that was up for grabs right to the finish as the manpower and technological inability of timing and scoring to furnish the announcers or crews with up-to-the-



Eventual winners Baker, Busby and Knoop shared the front row with the Corvette of Greenwood, Millen and Heinz.



Jim Busby puts the prototype Porsche 944 turbo through its paces.

Jeff Fisher Photos



minute information had the assembly thinking the Porsche was on the same lap as the American Spirit Mazda RX-7 SE driven by owner Rich Abbate along with Andretti cousins, Jeff and John. They raced wheel to wheel the last part of the race and the Porsche sliced through two backmarkers to take the flag first but results showed the Mazda a full lap down.

Porsche 944s were also fourth and fifth, followed by the new Peugeot 505 Turbo driven by rallyist Jon Woodner with veterans Bob Nagel and Jim Briody. At the start of the race, the Peugeot sported a genuine "taxi" roof light, but Briody noted, "We took it off pretty quick because the Peugeot people are rather staid and don't have much of a sense of humor. We're still pretty happy though, because the car was brand new and since it was driven here from the docks in Baltimore, it got its 1000-mile checkup Saturday at 11 a.m. before the race."

A Mitsubishi Starion Turbo driven by Dave Wolin, Dave Vegher, Ron Coriez, Mike Rutherford and Bob Sweet finished seventh overall and won the SSA class, while the Bertone took SSC and 10th overall, followed in 13th overall by the

SSB winner, the Phoenix Racing Rabbit GTI driven by brothers William and Phil Pate, along with Jack Ryan, Tim Elliott and Peter Schwartzott, all veterans of Rabbit romping in the Bilstein Cup pro series.

What was the general attitude of the weekend? Try this: At 3:15 a.m. the Brumos Porsche 944 driven by Hurley Haywood, Manfred

Jantke, Joe Cogbill III and Bob Snodgrass was in the pits for suspected valve problems. After some feverish under-the-hood time with Jantke sitting patiently in the cockpit, the engine was fired up and a broken valve was pronounced. A tired mechanic unfolded himself to vertical, tossed a socket wrench in the tool box, smiled and said, "It's Miller Time." -Dave Arnold

## Renault Alliance Cup Round 4: Rumba Line

FOLLOWING THREE frustrating races, transplanted Englishman John Norris scored his first Renault Alliance Cup victory. Norris' Uzeta AMC/Jeep/Renault Alliance was, by the narrowest of margins, dominant throughout the weekend as he was able to qualify on the pole and lead all 19 laps around Laguna Seca's nine picturesque corners.

Despite the absence of several front-runners, including Ron Cortez, John Williamson, Ken Fairley and Steve Knab, Saturday's qualifying produced the usual compressed Alliance Cup grid as the top 28 of 40 starters qualified within two seconds. James Schofield surprised several observers, including the ultrathorough Renault police, by qualifying on the front row and escaping the usual post qualifying inspection. One-thousandth of a second back came Scott Gaylord.

At the drop of the green flag, the equality of the Alliance Cup cars became evident as the two rows of 20 cars formed two great rumba lines and danced virtually side by side through steps one-two-three, cha-cha-cha. But on the way to the treacherous fourth step, some overly eager dancers tripped and set off a chain reaction which bumped Schofield completely off the dance floor and necessitated a costly shoe change for Lance Stewart.

Norris and Gaylord utilized cooperative drafting to open a small gap on Bernie Storc and Mitch Wright. Fourth lap incidents eliminated Tom Hughes, Tony Clifford and Didier Torres, who demolished his racer against the earthen bank in Turn Four after a promising start, moving from 22nd to 13th.

At the halfway point, the pace car pulled off and racing resumed. Wright's Cochran and Celli Alliance displaced Storc for third, who was passed by Victor Van Tress (Kirby A/J/R) for fourth. Storc battled the Barber A/J/R Alliance of Herb Adams before getting slightly sideways at the Turn Nine hairpin and being assisted into a 180-degree spin by Adams.

Gaylord, unable to slingshot by Norris in the high-speed sweepers, made several passing attempts under braking for the Corkscrew and Turn Nine. But Norris, who was in command, never left the door open and took the checkered flag first.

Wright finished third to regain sole possession of the series points lead. Van Tress and Adams followed, both recording their best finishes in the Renault Cup, as did seventh-through ninth-place finishers Brad Harward, Gregg Doran and Win Maynard. Parker Johnstone, points co-leader coming into this round,

was puzzled by his lack of competitiveness and could only manage 10th. Renault/Jeep Sport's No. 77 journalist racer, in the hands of San Francisco sportscaster Bill Orwig, completed only four laps before exploding the clutch.

At the post-race impound, Renault's Jim Woodward instructed the top four finishers to remove their cylinder heads. After prodigious poking and prodding (not to mention inspection and measuring), all were determined to be legal.

Four races and four different winners. Who will win in Portland? Non-winners Storc and Gaylord are hungry. Gaylord's last two appearances have netted him third and second. Will his progression continue? John Norris has new-found confidence and is driving extremely well. Wright is seemingly always in the hunt. And what will become of race winners Johnstone and Stewart? Currently, they're second and third in series points. Will they be able to solve their problems and return to winning form? Stay tuned. -Ray Kong

### Renault Alliance Cup Round 4 Laguna Seca (1.9 miles), Monterey, Calif. June 24, 1984 QUALIFYING (All Renault Alliances)

1. John Norris, 1:30.931; 2. James Schofield, 1:31.114; 3. Scott Gaylord, 1:31.115; 4. Mitch Wright, 1:31.219; 5. Bernie Storc, 1:31.282; 6. Herb Adams, 1:31.290; 7. Lance Stewart, 1:31.421; 8. Victor Van Tress, 1:31.634; 9. Bob Holmann, 1:31.706; 10. Gregg Doran, 1:31.783; 11. Harry Karamis, 1:31.858; 12. Tom Hughes, 1:31.850; 13. Parker Johnstone II, 1:31.900; 14. John Fauli, 1:31.957; 15. Brad Harward, 1:32.038; 16. Tony Clifford, 1:32.132; 17. Andy Pilgrim, 1:32.137; 18. John Havranek, 1:32.138; 19. John Hutchinson, 1:32.153; 20. Win Maynard, 1:32.232; 21. Stephanie Morgan, 1:32.247; 22. Didier Torres, 1:32.308; 23. Ron Holliday, 1:32.341; 24. Gilbert Potts, 1:32.531; 25. Jim Linn, 1:32.612; 26. Joe Ruzs, 1:32.640; 27. George Beagle, 1:32.784; 28. Tony Swan, 1:32.930; 29. John Williamson, 1:32.967; 30. Brian Towey, 1:32.991; 31. Alan Ward, 1:33.054; 32. Frank Zucchi, 1:33.339; 33. Jimmy Carpenter, 1:33.452; 34. Bill Burke, 1:33.553; 35. Robert Peters, 1:34.372; 36. Brett Laurin, 1:34.557; 37. Rich Bortemp, 1:34.795; 38. Eddie Frankfurt, 1:35.028; 39. Jody Stevens, 1:35.063; 40. Bill Orwig, 1:35.448; 41. Tom Cleave, 1:36.905.

### RESULTS (19 laps, 36.1 miles)

1. Norris, 31m24.520s, 68.962mph; 2. Gaylord, 31m24.740s; 3. Wright, 19 laps; 4. Van Tress, 19; 5. Adams, 19; 6. Storc, 19; 7. Harward, 19; 8. Doran, 19; 9. Maynard, 19; 10. Johnstone, 19; 11. Pilgrim, 19; 12. Holliday, 19; 13. Potts, 19; 14. Ruzs, 19; 15. Swan, 19; 16. Morgan, 19; 17. Havranek, 19; 18. Bortemp, 19; 19. Zucchi, 19; 20. Linn, 19; 21. Karamis, 19; 22. Carpenter, 19; 23. Hutchinson, 19; 24. Holmann, 19; 25. Peters, 19; 26. Laurin, 19; 27. Fauli, 19; 28. Ward, 19; 29. Beagle, 19; 30. Cleave, 19; 31. Stevens, 19; 32. Burke, 19; 33. Frankfurt, 19; 34. Towey, 19; 35. Stewart, 17; 36. Orwig, 4; running; 37. Hughes, 3; running; 38. Torres, 3; running; 39. Clifford, 3; 40. Schofield, not running. FASTEST RACE LAP: Wright, 1:30.59.

### Quaker State Longest Day of Nelson Nelson Ledges, Ohio, June 30-July 1 QUALIFYING

1. Fred Baker/Jim Busby/Rick Knapp (SSP Porsche 944 Turbo), 1:20.02; 2. John Greenwood/Dave Reinz/Steve Miller (SSP Chevy Corvette), 1:27.60; 3. Rick Hurst/Jamie Hurst/Bob Strangier/Clck Turner (SSGT Porsche 944), 1:25.58; 4. Mike Mavrgan/Dave Wetzendorf/Kid May/Bernie Storc (SSP Chevy Camaro), 1:24.57; 5. Joe Cogbill III/Marfred Jantke/Hurley Haywood/Bob Snodgrass (SSGT Porsche 944), 1:24.58; 6. Jim Mueller/Mike Puskas/Tom Sheehy (SSGT Chevy Camaro), 1:24.59; 7. Gary Mathewson/Kurt Mathewson/Michael Hoppes/Alexis Og (SSGT Porsche 944), 1:24.66; 8. Jim Cook/Don Knowles/Ron Grable (SSP Chevy Camaro), 1:24.71; 9. Jeff Mistein/Jim Brain/E. Paul Dickinson/Bob Nikel (SSGT Porsche 944), 1:25.37; 10. Ken Williams/Marc Puppi/David Heep/Paul Hacker (SSGT Porsche 944), 1:25.66.

ALSO

13. Dave Wolin/Dave Vegher/Ron Coriez/Michael Rutherford/Bob Sweet (SSA Mitsubishi Starion), 1:26.50; 15. Ted Schumacher/John Kelly/Paul Brand (SSA Triumph TR6), 1:26.82; 21. Scott Gaylord/Dan Jones/John Bonavoure/Gordon Perkins/Albert Stone (SSA Mazda RX-7), 1:28.05; 20. Jim Wade/Cat Kizer/Road Kryde/Dan Murray/Joe Goldblat (SSB Dodge Shelby), 1:28.84; 30. Joe Crowell/Shawn Hendricks/Dan Baroddy (SSC Bertone X1/9), 1:29.70; 32. Kim Baker/John Dinkel/Innes Ireland (SSC Bertone X1/9), 1:29.90; 35. Angelo Pizzagalli/Martin Sprang/Mike Barry (SSC Fiat X1/9), 1:30.26; 36. Tom Eslinger/Mike Cook/Pete Porton (SSB Triumph TR7), 2:30.63; etc. 52 qualifiers.

### RESULTS (963 laps, 1927 miles)

1. Baker/Busby/Knapp (1st SSP), 963 laps; 2. Hurst/Hurst/Strangier/Turner/Brackman (1st SSGT), 921 laps; 3. Abate/Andretti/Andretti (2nd SSGT), 920 laps; 4. Mathewson/Mathewson/Hoppes/Cel (3rd SSGT), 907 laps; 5. Mistein/Brain/Dickinson/Nikel (4th SSGT), 903 laps; 6. Briody/Napel/Abotner (2nd SSP), 851; 7. Wolin/Vegher/Cortez/Rutherford/Sweet (3rd SSP), 897 laps; 8. Kjet Skavnes/Jon McKnight/Clark Miller/Garth Ulom (2nd SSA Saab 900 Turbo), 893 laps; 9. Dave DuBois/Bob Silveisen/Frank Rascino (1st SSGT Mazda RX-7), 892 laps; 10. Baker/Dinkel/Ireland (1st SSG), 890 laps.

ALSO

11. Bob Letzinger/Chuck Kurtz/Bob Criss (3rd SSA Nissan 280ZX), 890 laps; 13. William Pate/Philip Pate/Jack Ryan/Tim Elliott/Peter Schwarzman (1st SSB VW Rabbit GTI), 886 laps; 14. Crowell/Hendricks/Baroddy (2nd SSC), 885 laps; 15. Pizzagalli/Sprang/Barry (3rd SSC), 884 laps; 18. Cook/Knowles/Grable (3rd SSP), 875 laps; 19. Michael Cheung/Bill King/John Patrick/Dan Williams (3rd SSB Audi Coupe), 871 laps.