

# ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT

## The SCCA/Escort Endurance Championship: Nights Filled With Stars

BY MAC DEMERE



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What if they let Volvo station wagons and Cadillac Cimmarons run, too? What if Gene Hackman, Robert Hays, Christopher Cross, Kent McCord, Perry King, Hal Needham and Bobby Darin raced, too? What if they drove Porsches, Ferraris, Loti, BMWs and Mercedes against Corvettes, Mustangs and Shelys?

What if they let Volvo station wagons and Cadillac Cimmarons run, too?

This isn't the All-Time All-Star Semi-Tough Flat-Out Racing Championship. Nor is it Battle of the Network Egos. Instead, it's the 1986 SCCA/Escort Endurance Championship...coming soon to a circuit near you.

Though some of the details (like a TV package, associate sponsors and the sixth race) of the showroom stock series weren't final at deadline, here's the scoop.

First: the series has a new name, "SCCA/Escort Endurance Championship." That's OK; the acronym for the old one conjured up images of yellow blazers, gold pith helmets and Jim Nabors singing, anyway. First person to call it "SEEC" has to drive across Ohio, Iowa or another state beginning with a vowel without a Radar Warning Receiver.

### GOLDEN RETRIEVERS

Next: the new Super Sports class. This opens the series up to Ferraris with more

valves than the top three finishers in Showroom Stock B, as well as to four-wheel-drive Audis, turbocharged Loti and Porsches with the engine in the back.

Speaking of classes: Some SSGT cars—Corvettes and 944 Turbos—are now in Super Sports. All of SSC is in SSB and there isn't any SSC.

The Volvo station wagon is in SSB, but it must be raced with a Golden Retriever in the back.

It will be a six-race series, opening with an April 26 six-hour at Sears Point. It will visit Portland (twin four-hour races), Nelson Ledges (24 hours), Road Atlanta (tentative, length TBA), Mosport (12 hours) and Mid-Ohio (24 hours).

But the big news is the gala bevy of all-star drivers.

The man who will be responsible for much of the paparazzi and the Entertainment Tonight crew is Steve Beizer from



GEOFFREY HAWITT

The Corvette and several other big-buck exotics now have their own class—Showroom Stock Super Sports.



Atlanta. You can also blame Audi and Valvoline. Driving the Beizer Racing Audi Quattros will be: Scheckter, Hackman, Carter (Pancho, not Jimmy), Cross, Needham, Gant and Olympic gymnast Bart Connor.

Holbert, Bell and Ickx will team in a turbocharged Porsche. Series Communications Manager Bill King said the model number started with a nine, but he wasn't sure of the other numbers. "Either 44 or 11 or 62 or something like that," said King, a stickler for details.

Bundy will team with Bodine and Tim Richmond in a Corvette—one with the engine in the front.

## "BACK TO THE FUTURE"

Oh yeah, most of the guys who won last year will be back, too. Carradine, Ron Grable, Don Knowles, John Heinrich, Bob McConnell and crew will again lead the '85 champion Morrison-Cook team. Morrison-Cook's Paul Van Valkenburgh has designed a refueling system based on the movie *Back To The Future*. . . lap time is actually faster when you pit.

Team Shelby, the '86 SSA winner, will again be led by Jack Broomall and Neil Hannemann, along with editors of a magazine other than *SportsCar*.<sup>®</sup> SSB cham-

pion Criss Racing, Charles Guest and Bob Criss driving, has stayed with Nissan but switched a 300ZX and SSA. SSC Champion Quantum Engineering, now in SSB with its Honda CRXs, will again have Larry Cress, Bruce Short, five-time National Champion Doug Peterson and Formula Ford sensation Chris Smith behind the wheel. Quantum's Carroll Smith has the car tuned so that it actually produces more gas than it uses.

Rumors that Pope John Paul II, Bill Cosby and Bruce Springsteen would team with Parnelli Jones, Barney Oldfield and Tazio Nuvolari in a Cadillac Cimmaron are totally unfounded and likely April Fools' pranks. □

## Picking A Winner: The Information Is There

Every season of Showroom Stock racing has had its winners and losers. If you are fortunate enough to be driving the dominant choice for that particular class in that particular year, you stand a chance of at least battling for the lead with the others who chose likewise. If not, you're out.

Usually the correct selection is accomplished in the time-honored way of seeing what wins and buying one for yourself—and by then the season is half-way over. It would be much better if you could pick that winner before the season started.

The trick is, how?

What you need is information—and for most people there are two likely sources. First, the manufacturers' specifications. Second, the published tests—usually called road tests, or driving impressions—to be found in the car magazines, such as *Car and Driver*, *Motor Trend*, and *Road & Track*. The point here, then, is to see if it's possible to pick a future winner based on the available information from these sources.

For example, Figure 1 is a typical comparison indicative of the type you could make from specifications alone (this particular one was selected because I already had it in my files for a proposal done last year). Its purpose was to determine which of two Mitsubishi products, the Mirage Turbo or Cordia Turbo, might be best for enduro racing.

Figure 1

	Mirage	Cordia
Weight, lbs.	2145	2596
Wheel size	4 x 5.5"	11 x 5.5"
Maximum allowable tire	605/60-14*	256/50-15
Stroke, in.	102 @ 5000	116 @ 5000
Displacement, cu. in.	127 @ 3000	128 @ 3000
Powerweight, lb./hp.	2.0	21.7*
Displacement, lb./ft. lb.	17.6*	18.6
Approx. frontal area, sq. ft.		
W x H x D	18.2	17.0*
Projected area, height ft.	5.6	6.8*
Brake swept area, sq. in.	228	246
Swept area/weight, sq. in./lb.	22.8*	25.3
Fuel capacity, gal.	11.5	12.1

\*Indicates probable advantage

All the specifications were taken directly from the manufacturer's material. The calculations are mine. There are some terms that might need a little explanation: "Maximum allowable tire" is the largest the rules permitted; this is not necessarily the fastest tire, the finding of which is considerably more important. For lack of hard aerodynamic information, I approximated frontal area with an old, rough rule-of-thumb formula—width x height x 0.6 (make sure you convert width and height dimensions in inches or millimeters to feet, so

When I was done, I noted with the asterisks those areas where one car might have an advantage over the other. As a rough guess, the Mirage might be better in the corners, the Cordia better on the straights. Typically, for the way most of these things go, I never had the opportunity to test any of this. But the chart at least represents the type of preliminary comparison anyone could make.

Hard test results would be better, like those found in the car magazines. Here, we can find information on acceleration,



Team organization helped the Quantum Engineering Honda CRX confound the stats.

you will end up with frontal area in square feet). Following that, I figured the relationship between frontal area and horsepower for an indication of relative higher speed potentials. "Brake swept area" is a measurement of the contact surface area of the disc or drum. Related to vehicle weight, it is one factor in determining braking performance—but only one; it does not include cooling, friction material or construction details. And there are many other specific points you may want to investigate—gear ratios, suspension adjustability, weight distribution, and so forth.

cornering power, braking, perhaps top speed and maybe an indication of handling—which is not the same as cornering power, friends.

### MAGAZINE TESTS

First, though, some background and warnings. Magazine test cars are almost always dead stock and tested on original equipment tires. Don't forget those points. Generally speaking, the people who test cars for the major magazines do it very well. I did it myself for about three years and, while it sounds like fun,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35