



Death On Wheels



He Rides The Bumpers As Racers Whiz Past Our Speed-Happy Fans

By MAX MUEHLEN
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(First of Two Articles)

The fact that auto racing fans exceeded baseball fans by more than 10 million last year in this country is proof positive that the boom for speed sports which began in 1954 is still going strong.

More than a dozen sanctioning organizations from Florida to California gleefully counted over 25 million people swarming through their turnstiles and jamming their grandstands.

They came to watch iron-nerved men and sometimes women hurl every type of machine imaginable over hump-sized dirt tracks and sprawling road courses that would dwarf a small town.

The Fans Court Death

And in their mad press for speed and excitement they sometimes fell victims to an ever-increasing danger—spectator mayhem.

The plague struck mostly on the stock car circuits, although there were scattered reports of fan injuries even at motorcycle events.

Because ninety per cent of the appeal of automobile racing lies in the danger element, people began crowding closer and closer to the tracks, anxious for a close-up view of any violence.

Little wonder that soon the fans themselves began being involved in the violence. Nothing yet to rival the carnage that accompanies the European open road races, where dozens are sometimes cut down in a single day. But the incidents are mounting.

Unlike baseball, the crowd is always involved in a chance of accident springing from the field of action. And when the incident does occur it is swift, violent and deadly.

The impact of a four-topped baseball hardly measures up to that of flying metal or a wildly bouncing wheel.

Policing Is Promoter's Job

Safety regulations are drawn up by the sanctioning bodies, such as NASCAR (National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing), but it is then the promoter's responsibility to act on them.

And some promoters do their best to abide by the book. Others are more nonchalant. Some are flagrantly neglectful.

This off-guard attitude for spectator safety is alarmingly common. The penalties are practically non-existent in many cases, which adds to the laxity.

Strangely enough, however, probably the major danger factor is sheer spectator stupidity—fans marching purposely into off-limit areas after warnings have been sounded.

"It's like trying to herd cattle sometimes," one prominent North Carolina promoter noted. "The fans just want to get the best seat possible, even if it literally



kills them. You have to watch them every minute or they'll be somewhere they're not supposed to be." Often the very design of the track is at fault. Grandstand areas located on turns where the straightaway leads directly toward the crowd, then veers, have proved impossible to make completely safe.

Death Can Strike Anywhere

"Actually," says defending Grand National point champ Buck Baker of Charlotte, "there is nowhere on a track where 100 per cent safety can be certain. I've seen door fly off cars, sail a hundred feet or more into the air, and drop behind safety fences—even crash through roofs."

The big danger point for flying parts, particularly loose wheels, is immediately off the fourth turn, where most grandstands begin.

Exposed pit areas which offer no protection for crew members are common through the South, usually because drivers in the early days preferred the convenience of just pulling to one side of the track for repairs rather than making a complete exit behind protective barriers.

Extreme high speeds which are common on the longer tracks have recently indicated the necessity of warning light or flag systems effective enough to keep cars from speeding blindly into wreckage ahead of them.

The old practice of installing a string of red lights on each straightaway has been outdated with cars hitting speeds of up to 80 miles per hour on half-mile tracks.

Speed Makes Deadly Projectiles

Condition of the track itself can be decisive in the matter of accidents. A badly rutted dirt track or a slick ribbon of asphalt can torture a car to the point of disintegration at high speed.

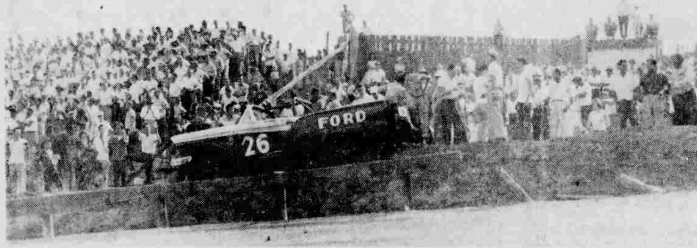
At Martinsville, Va., recently a car burst through a concrete retaining wall and hurtled over the heads of a dozen spectators standing in an off-limits area behind a fence at the end of the main straightaway.

A young boy was critically injured. Yet Martinsville is considered one of the safest tracks in the country. Had the car not vaulted up a bank, several persons would likely have been killed.

"Too few people realize what a car will do at the speeds they now run," says NASCAR President Bill France. "We take every step to protect our crowds, and our officials are instructed not to run a race where safety rules are violated. We always inspect a track for safety before granting a sanction also—but you can't let it go at that. Policing is the thing."

Proof of the lack of realization is an incident which occurred at Clarion, Pa., this season. A wheel flew off a speeding car with such momentum that it shot up the bleachers-type stands, killing two children, sailed over a 16-foot wall, and landed outside the speedway.

The county coroner's report read: "No one had a chance to get out of the way."



MOMENTS BEFORE this picture was made this Ford race car had jumped the track at Asheville and stopped only inches away from the crowd shown here. Hundreds defied fences to get nearer track.

Bandleader Jim Dorsey Dies

NEW YORK (AP)—Bandleader Jimmy Dorsey, 53, died today of cancer.

He was the brother of Tommy Dorsey, also a bandleader, who died last November.

They formed one of the best known brother combinations in the popular music world. Jimmy Dorsey died in Doctors Hospital. He had been operated on in January for a lung growth. Two months later he left his band on the road to enter the hospital.

Funeral arrangements were incomplete.

Dorsey was divorced. He is survived by his mother, Mrs. Teresa Dorsey, and a daughter, Mrs. Julie Hilton, and a sister, Mrs. Anthony Visella.

Jimmy Dorsey, like his more famous brother Tommy, came out of the hard-core regions of Pennsylvania to head one of the most famous bands in America. The two brothers were noted for the music they made separately and together—and won almost as much

prominence for the celebrated leads that kept them apart.

They buried the hatchet in 1943 and in 1953 formed a band together after nearly 20 years on separate bandstands. Tommy choked to death accidentally in his sleep Nov. 26, 1956, and Jimmy carried on their band.

Born Leap Year Day, 1904, in Shenandoah, Pa., Jimmy was an accomplished musician, and a coal-miner worker before he was 16.



JIMMY DORSEY

Sheriff Re-Enacts Sprinkle Shooting

Buckles On Pistol In Pantomime

ASHEVILLE (P)—McDowell County Sheriff Ashby Robinson stepped down from the witness stand today in Bancroft Superior Court and, with empty pistol in hand, crouched before the jury to show how he shot Col. E. H. Sprinkle.

Robinson on trial for first degree murder in the slaying of Sprinkle Jan. 28 at East Marion, has testified he killed in self defense.

After being on the witness stand all day yesterday, he wound up a total of seven hours testimony at 10:30 a. m. He was the first defense witness.

State's attorneys handed Robinson his heavy holster belt and 38-0 caliber pistol and told him to show the jury how he shot Sprinkle.

The sheriff had told the court earlier that Sprinkle, who had returned from Alaska a few weeks before the shooting, had threatened Robinson's life.

BUCKED ON GUN

Bucking the weapon on beneath his coat Robinson got Judge Hugh B. Campbell's permission to leave the witness stand and come in front of the judge's bench. Hand on hips, the sheriff said Sprinkle had threatened to kill him and had reached toward his (Sprinkle's) pocket.

"What did you do?" the prosecution asked.

Robinson threw back his coat, drew the pistol with his left hand, jumped back into a crouch and snipped the trigger at a jury.

"I might have been a little quicker," the sheriff said as he returned to the witness stand.

The prosecution then asked him about the release and subsequent disappearance of John Wilson, who the sheriff said called him to the case in front of which Sprinkle was shot.

IN CUSTODY

"I don't know I was in custody in the Rutherford County jail," the sheriff replied.

Sprinkle had been away from North Carolina four years, after being scheduled as the star witness in a grand jury probe of law enforcement.

He was followed to the stand by Dyrart Martin, clerk of McDowell County Superior Court, whose testimony was also given.

See SHERIFF On Page 2A

Gastonia Man Shoots Wife

GASTONIA (P)—Mrs. Fay Summit, 30-year-old mother of five children, was shot at her home here today.

Her husband, Willard Summit, 32, a textile worker, was being held on an open charge pending the condition of his wife. Her condition was described as serious this morning.

Sheriff Dwight Beam said Mrs. Summit told him she and her husband had been arguing all morning. The sheriff said the victim reported her husband left home, came back with a borrowed rifle and shot her in the stomach.

Sheriff Beam said Summit called an ambulance and then turned himself in.

Kenneth Ray Summit, the couple's five-year-old son, told the sheriff he was a witness to the shooting.

The other four children were away from home attending a vacation Bible school, the sheriff said.

WEATHER

Partly cloudy, warm and humid today and tonight with scattered thunderstorms tonight. Tomorrow, considerable cloudiness and warm with thunderstorms.

High yesterday 87
High expected today 90
High expected tomorrow 93
Low this morning 67
Low expected tonight 67
Sunrise, 5:08 a. m.; sunset, 7:38 p. m.

More Weather Data on Page 2A



Mayflower II is in tow by Coast Guard tug Yankton

Ship Ends Trip Under Tow

PROVINCETOWN, Mass. (P)—The Mayflower II, replica of the original Pilgrim vessel, came down the last few miles into Provincetown harbor today at the end of a tow line, bashing her blunt bow into angry seas whipped up by a sou'wester of 40 knots in the gusts.

Since leaving Plymouth, England, 53 days ago her Australian-born skipper, world-famed sailing master Alan Villiers, had guided her under sail over 5,000 meandering miles.

The Pilgrims in the original bark required 66 days on a far more direct route, logging about 3,000 miles.

However, comparisons have no application in this instance. Vil-

liers, veteran of the last of the windjamming, grain races from "Down Under" to England and no stranger to long voyages, deliberately took his awkward, chubbily ship the long way around to take advantage of wind and currents of which the Pilgrims probably were in total ignorance.

He shaped a course far south of the Pilgrims' track to pick up the Trade Winds, followed them to the West Indies and dropped Mayflower II into the mottledly flowing Gulf Stream. It all paid off handsomely.

Thousands of eager spectators lined the strand and sand dunes as Mayflower II rounded Race

Point, tip of Cape Cod, on a fishhook, shaped approach to the harbor.

Bare of canvas, she rolled, heeled and yawlled in the seas. Sails were furled after the Coast Guard tug Yankton passed her a hawser. Without the steady influence of sail she engaged in preposterous evolutions.

Villiers had indicated he intended to remain in the harbor less than half an hour, stating "I've got to get on to Plymouth today."

To attempt Plymouth today, without a wind shift, would mean pounding along at the end of Yankton's hawser 23 miles across Cape Cod Bay.

General Assembly Ends 1957 Session

(More Legislation on 3A, 1B)

RALEIGH (P)—North Carolina's General Assembly ended its 1957 session today. Final adjournment of the session came at 11:29 a. m.

However, clocks in both Senate and House said 11 a. m. They had been stopped at that time in accordance with a resolution adopted yesterday setting it as the adjournment time for "sine die" adjournment.

Many legislators cleared their desks and headed for home yesterday after the House and Senate had disposed of a host of matters in preparation for adjournment.

As far as the House and Senate were concerned, adjournment could have come yesterday. The delay was caused by work piled up in the enrolling office.

TYPISTS BUSY

Typists and proofreaders in the enrolling office have been busy trying to catch up with a mass of legislation jammed on them Saturday and Monday. Rare said some 120 bills were sent to the office yesterday.

The enrolling office work involves typing into the state's permanent records all bills passed and carefully checking them for errors. The Legislature cannot adjourn until this is done and the bills are formally ratified.

Legislative action was completed on several bills yesterday.

A bill backed by North Carolina banks to change state law on the deposit of the state's surplus funds was enacted into law when the House agreed to Senate amendments.

Under the new law, the government and council of state will be permitted to take the state's surplus funds on deposit in North Carolina banks unless the interest rate on federal securities exceeds the bank interest rate by more than one-half of 1 per cent.

The old law required that the Go First to FIELDS, Sterling FRIENDSHIP RINGS S. (Adv)

More Rescue Workers Sought

SHAMOKIN, Pa.—A call for fresh help was issued today as rescue workers continued digging the search for the 19-year-old miner who disappeared in a cave that trapped a miner 100 feet below the surface yesterday morning.

Hopes of finding Frank Pufnick alive 28 hours after the accident dimmed but rescuers refused to give up.

An official of the Independent Miners Union, which is directing the search for the 19-year-old former Shamokin High School football player, said "anything can happen." He said the union refuses to abandon hope.

"We've got to get him out and we'll keep digging until we do."

The appeal for fresh workers was sent out through area newspapers and radio stations after digging continued through the night. Workers were hampered this morning by heavy rain. They hoped to be able to reach Pufnick by afternoon.

The slide occurred about 40 feet down a shaft of the independent mine operated by Pufnick's father, George, in this central Pennsylvania coal region.

A steady rain last night washed more shale and loose earth into the shaft. Workers reported that often as much washed in as they had taken out.

Pufnick was believed to be trapped beneath 300 tons of shale.

He failed to respond to the cry of a fellow worker. Earl Gist, seconds after the shale let loose, Gist jumped clear, shouting a warning. The two had been loading a coal buggy.

The rescue work was also slowed by the necessity of shoring the walls of the shaft with timbers as the debris was cleared. Workers at the top of the mine cut the ladders and passed them down by afternoon.

About 50 men—many other miners who quit work to help—participated in the effort. Harold Lee, a state mine inspector, was at the scene.

Charlotte Bids For Tournament

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