

"What's my position, Bill?" "Most embarrassing," Pickens megaphoned through his hands.

Now Pickens played to a full house, for there was hardly a person in the stands that did not hear him. On the other hand, George De Witt, author of a retort equally as humorous, had a one-man audience. That one man was I. De Witt came to me before the start of a dirt track meet at Syracuse and complained of the dust. "Unless you wet that track down I won't drive," he declared. I tried to convince him that the track was safe and his criticism was not justified. "I'll run off an amateur race first," I told him, "to show you that there isn't the least danger. You stand here with me and if, at the conclusion of that race, you still think that the track is unsafe I'll have it sprinkled."

As the winner of the amateur race finished I turned to De Witt, slapped him encouragingly on the back and said, "See! All you've got to do is to get away in front and beat it, and when you cross the line, think of the glory!" He looked at me for a second and then snapped: "No glory for me. I've got only one ambition. I want to be the oldest man in Georgia."

Speaking of superlatives, there are enough to make a circus press agent die from envy. There was Caley Bragg, the Chesterfield of the speed-circuit and most unostentatious of all drivers. In 1911, when Bragg, a tyro, defeated Oldfield, the veteran, at the Los Angeles speedway and shattered several of Barney's records, he was the most downhearted kid I ever saw. "On the level, Wag," he said, "I'm sorry I beat Barney. He makes a living out of this game and I don't need the money or the prestige."

Spencer Wishart was the most indifferent driver. The author of the phrase "He doesn't care whether

school keeps or not" must have had Wishart in mind when he penned it. A stop at the pits for fuel or a tire change at a critical stage of a race, a delay that causes other drivers to swear and sweat, made no impression on Wishart. While his helpers were slaving to save precious seconds, Wishart drank water leisurely, examined his car calmly and carefully pulled on his gloves and adjusted his goggles before getting into the machine. He would as soon think of leaping into a drawing room as vaulting to his seat as De Palma did. I must admit that his indifference got on my nerves. He wasted so much time making tire changes that I asked him why he didn't sleep nights.

Erwin Bergdoll was the game's sphinx, the most noncommittal driver of them all. As far as I know, his vocabulary was limited to two words, "yes" and "no." Because of his bashfulness, it was impossible to get him to attend a drivers' meeting. He was always represented by proxy.

Harry Grant was the most phlegmatic driver. Once he had decided on a certain plan of action, no one could make him change it. If he thought a 60-mile-an-hour pace would win, Harry maintained that rate of speed from starting bomb to finishing flag, although the other cars would be hitting around 70 miles an hour and drawing farther away from him on every lap turned. Oldfield had absolute faith in himself; Grant had absolute faith in his car. He was always enthusiastically confident of his machine's prowess. He seemed to go on the theory that because his car was perfect, the pace he decided to follow would win for him eventually even though competing machines made faster laps at the start of a race.

When it comes to awarding the tenacity laurels,