

THE SAGA OF THE ROARING ROAD

ested in the cars, the drivers stand stretched across the track while the camera and movie men hurry to make their picture records.

Aerial bombs begin to sound at 9:45 and at ten minutes before the starting hour (10 o'clock), one of the aerial signals sends the drivers and mechanics scurrying back to their cars.

At the five minute signal, the motors are turned over and there follows a deafening roar not unlike that of a machine-gun battery.

Clouds of smoke from the exhausts arise, and some of the racers are almost obscured from the stands. The men scramble into their seats and the pushing crews lean their shoulders to each car in the steel motorcade when the starting signal is given.

The first lap of the race, as usual, is not counted in the 200 laps necessary to negotiate the 500 miles. There is a pace car, in which is seated various officials, and this car leads the procession, keeping some fifty or more feet ahead of the first row, setting a pace of more than fifty miles an hour for one lap. The drivers make an effort to keep in alignment of the rows, although there are some stragglers even in this slow lap.

As the pace car approaches the wire on this lap the speed is increased and the field of roaring machines take a flying start at around sixty miles an hour. The pace car draws close to the inside of the track to permit the racers to pass, and after making another lap it drops out at the pit gate while the drivers press on, each striving to increase speed as quickly as possible.

The crowds cheer lustily at the nerve-tingling exhibition. They have seen the start of another big race, and they settle down into their seats to watch the racers take their chances in a death-defying spectacle.

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At least half a dozen of those boys who are blazing over those bricks vowed a year before that they wouldn't be within a thousand miles of Indianapolis on Race Day.

There are hundreds in the stands who told the whole wide world a year ago that they were through with Speedway races for good.

However, the next year rolls around and they are there, and so are those boys who are looking old man danger in the face and laughing at him. One little word tells the whole story of why they came back—just plain "thrill."

Babe Stapp, a grand little driver, and Bill Spence were the greatest pals. In the 1929 race, Bill was off to a good start. So was Babe. They were staying right up there with the pacemakers.

On his tenth lap, Bill's car skidded on the southwest turn and caromed into the retaining wall, hurling Bill out onto the track, and he died before he could be taken to the field hospital.

Babe's car broke down on the forty-fourth lap. They broke the news to him and he cried like a child. "I'm through," he said, "I'm never going to race again." But when next Maytime rolled around, Babe felt the call of the "thrill." Bill would have wanted him to carry on, anyway.

There's Cliff Durant. He had everything a person could want—airplanes, speedboats, fast motor cars and his hunting dogs. But Cliff would do anything in the world to be at the wheel of a race car. The "thrill" got him every year.

Take Tommy Milton, a two-time winner of the classic Five Hundred. He doesn't race any more, but