

as we came over the line. Before we got to the start I ran out of rags for cleaning our goggles. It was a murky, muddy mess of cars. Four of them tangled wheels right in front of the grandstand as the race began. The course was like that all the way around, though not quite as bad as in front of the grandstand where the soil was some kind of a sticky gumbo.

"The Count was a great driver. He bit his fingers, swore, tore off his goggles, swore again and stepped on the gas. Well, all I have to do to tell what kind of a driver this guy was is to say that the first turn was two miles away and when we hit it we had raged through all those leading cars and were in second place as we took the turn.

"The man out ahead was Felix Nazzarro, Italy's oldest driver, who eventually won this race. Just as we made the first turn, a hairpin, the Fiat purred away beautifully, but as the Count gunned it the Ballot spat back, proving that the carburation was off. Again he bit the fingers of one hand and started cursing Ballot again.

"So I said, 'Hey, I thought you said we were going to sing.' I told him it was all because the motor was cold and everything would be okay after it warmed up. So on we went, I doing all the singing and he the cussing, with Felix always in sight.

"The race was half over and Nazzarro was well in hand. We thought we could pass him at any time. But the impetuous Count held the throttle down a little too long going into a right angle curve and we went in to a terrific slide. We slid through the sandbags and hit the corner of a house in such a manner that the rear wheel was on one side of the house and the left front wheel on the other side. Just as we hit, I stood up to

avoid having my ribs jammed in. The body of the car was bent as though somebody had hit it with a big hammer and the exhaust pipe was bent into a V-shape.

"Mazzetti thought we were all through. I jumped out, saw that we couldn't go backward or forward and told the Count, a big six foot two fellow, to lift the back of the car over away from the house. This he did, then took the wheel. I gave him a push backward and the motor started up. So on we went.

But in his anxiety to get on and catch the Fiats again Mazzetti forgot the car had more than two gears and he left it in second gear for more than a mile and a half. Then the crankshaft broke and threw out a couple of connecting rods.

"'It's a rear axle,' said the Count.

"'No, it's the engine,' I thought. He examined the rear axle, I looked under the hood, I called to him and he took one look.

"'Yes, De Paolo,' he said, 'the engine is sick.'

"We walked three miles to the pits, Count Mazzetti constantly cursing Ballot, whom he said had assured him faithfully nothing could happen to that Ballot car. At the pits he and Ballot went at it in Italian and French all mixed up, and after an hour of fireworks Mazzetti bought champagne for all the Ballot pit crew and everything was forgotten."

Peter's first recognized driving was done over the Los Angeles Speedway in February, 1922.

But before De Paolo realized his most cherished dream, he played the rôle of a good and dutiful son, having saved most of his earnings while in Ralph's employ that he might lift the mortgage on his parent's homestead back in New Jersey. Then he turned his splendid sacrifice into a joke.