PITMEN BATTLE AT WHITE HEAT

Loyal Supporters of Drivers
Struggle Against Burst Tires
and Other Mishaps.

LIGHTNING CHANGES MADE

Skilled Work Saves Racers Many Minutes at Crucial Moments in Contest.

BY BRUCE DANIELS.

Brilliant as was the victory of the plucky French pilot driving the Frenchmade Peugeot, furnishing thrills for 90,000 persons, at the Speedway yesterday, there was deep interest in the cross current of drama and tragedy played in the pits. For it was in the pits that the skill and ingenuity of man against man waged its sweltering warfare of wits, a merciless, heated battle of brains against tires and all other enemies of speed.

The story of the pits is the story of the race. It was in the pits that the fate of many of the monsters of steel was known before the first signs of distress became apparent to the crowd.

The intense heat made the pit work almost unendurable. The oppressive odor of burning rubber constantly pervaded the Speedway atmosphere. At times hardly a breath of air reached the limited area in which was confined the activities of the small army of helpers.

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STUTZ MEN APPLAUDED.

Marvelous team work was exhibited in the Stutz pits. The stands arose time and again to applaud the gallant work of the men—who worked feverishly—under—Harry Stutz. With the Peugeot and Stutz No. 3 battling to a standstill in the last 100 miles, the marvelous efficiency of the Stutz pitmen made it possible for Merz, Cooper and Anderson to cut down the big lead of the French car and keep on an even footing until the shadow of ill fortune dimmed the brilliant possibilities of the local mainstay.

The Stutz pits would have compared most favorably with the average stock room in an automobile factory. Tires, tools, fuel and food were systematically arranged so that a minimum of time was lost at the pits during the entire race. Time and again tire changes were made in 30 seconds, and invariably gasoline, oil and water was furnished while the new shoe was being put in place. The quickest change of the day was made by Stutz in the remarkable time of 25 seconds.

AITKEN GIVES AID.

The nerviest driving ever seen on the local Speedway was witnessed when Merz drove No. 2 around the track on his last lap with the entire power plant a blazing torch. Merz took the checkered flag with his car racing down the home stretch like a runaway meteor. At the finish his mechanician climbed on top of the hood with the car running forty miles an hour and unfastened the strap to enable the pitmen to do effective work with the fire extinguisher. Thousands of dollars were about to change hands on the ability of the Stutz to complete the lap, and interest all the way around the Speedway circuit was intense.

The Peugeot plts proved to be a modern Babel for the first half of the race when much time was lost because of the inability of the American pitmen to understand the directions of the excited Frenchmen. Suitable choice verbal explosives were hurled at Yankee helpers when a screw driver was handed out instead of a monkey wrench. When Johnny Aitken assumed command of the operations in the foreign pit in the crucial part of the race there was a marked improvement, and changes were made with lightning rapidity, everything being in readiness for the winning pilot and his stocky mechanician when the Peugeot rolled up for repairs.

JINX IS PRESENT.

Despite the fact that Spencer Wishart drove his car home in such spectacular fashion to a well-earned second position, the jinx lurked within the Mercer pits most of the day and successfully upset



AUTO ENGINEI EUROPE FE

Dinner at Universi cludes First Day's

ment—Plans for

An informal dinner a Club last night, at whi mon was the host, close entertainment of the me stitute of Automobile E Society of Motor Ma Traders, the two leading izations in their respe arrived in Indianapolis members of the Indian Society of Automobile also guests.

After the dinner the foturned to their special morning will be again to local members of the Schille Engineers for a second at 9 o'clock for a vistable to the Prest-Oplant at Speedway City.

Luncheon at the Can o'clock is the next even and at 3 o'clock the par club for a drive about women in the party wi the day at the Country

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Despite the fact that Spencer Wishart drove his car-home in such spectacular fashion to a well-earned second position, the jinx lurked within the Mercer pits most of the day and successfully upset the best laid plans of R. DePalma and Company. The unrewarded hero of the 1912 race was put out early because of cylinder trouble and for the rest of the day DePalma acted as relief for his teammates, Wishart and Bragg. When Bragg sheared a magneto coupling and was laid up at the pits for half an hour, Ralph worked like a demon to get the car-No. 19-back in shape to resume the grind. Not until Bragg drove off the course at the upper end of the home stretch with a broken transmission, did DePalma give up hope of having at least two Mercers high in the running and making them principle factors in the the Speedway where colliting of the prize money. DePalma been erected for relieved both of his teammates at various Judges' pagoda and t times during the race and assisted Wishart materially in landing the Mercer in second place.

Good humor marked the efforts of the pitmen in the Mercedes pit. An immense! blackboard sconveyed messages in code to the speeding Mulford and mechanician entertainment comin be that very little time was lost. "They are George A. We need jollying. said one of the helpers Carl G. Fisher, Howard, he flashed an encouraging report to Crawford, W. O. Ke the flying rater, "and they need it bad. Briggs.

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GRANT IS DRAFTED.

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Another case of cleventh hour relief was that of Hughie Hughes, who took the wheel of the Keeton when Burman was forced to give up the wheel after breaking a gasoline line at 250 miles. The Englishman displayed his usual form by grinding off lap after lap in fast time. while "Wild Bob" took a rest. Lord Hughie was wearing his street clothes and when called on jumped into a khaki suit and donned a pair of goggles without a moment's hesitation.

The most inactive pit on the course was that of the Sunbeam, which made very few stops for tires and fuel. The consistent running of the English car was one of the features of the race, resembling the one-man ride of the 1911 Marmon, which set a record for consistency and smooth running. The Sunbeam was very easy on tires, and, when drawn to the pits because of one wornout shoe, the pitmen changed both rears in order to have time, a move which might have been copied by the Peugeot on several occasions to good advantage, as the Peugeot frequently had to change tires in quick succession, with a big loss of time.

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