

# DRIVERS FORM CLASSES

## COMPOSE TWO MAIN FIELDS

HEROES OF TRACK RACES MAY NOT SHINE IN ROAD EVENTS, BUT BOTH CREATE PUBLIC INTEREST.

The modern profession of piloting automobile cars in races, to which many aspire, but few reach, is an interesting one, not only to those who have already cut their motor teeth, but to the general public as well.

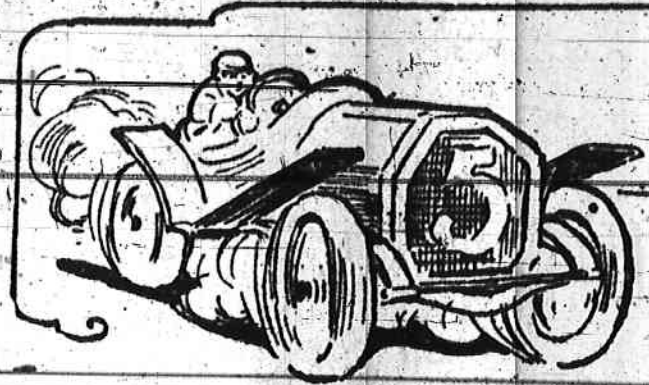
The racing driver, with his goggles and gauntlets, and face smeared with grease and dust, is a picturesque fellow. He is a hero in the eyes of man and child—also woman. Ordinarily people pay little attention to a motorist on the street, except to leap from his path at the sound of the "honk," but the driver behind the low lithe form of a racer, attracts the notice and sympathy as well as admiration of every one. The prospect of sensation, and even death, arouses the interest. Throngs press around the car to get a close view, not that there is anything so very new about it, but because the driver and machine will soon leap into a contest where daring skill and cast iron nerve are going to count.

### Pilots Form Two Classes.

Racing pilots may generally be classed in one of two main divisions—road and track racers. The man's personal abilities determine his classification, and sometimes one driver is good for both, but this is rare. Track work is considered harder and more hazardous.

Ralph De Palma, who is recognized by many experts as the coming driver, was talking with some friends a few days ago regarding the difference in the two styles of driving from a driver's standpoint. De Palma, who has been driving racing automobiles only a year, has had one of the most meteoric careers in the history of the sport. After making his debut at Briarcliff, where he made a good showing, he soon followed by breaking the world's circular mile record at St. Paul, Minn., when he made a lap with the Flat Cyclone in :51 flat. Then came the grand prize at Savannah, in which this driver dis-

*Expert Who Will Wave*



he soon followed by breaking the world's circular mile record at St. Paul, Minn., when he made a lap with the Fiat Cyclone in :51 flat. Then came the grand prize at Savannah, in which this driver distinguished himself by scoring the two fastest laps of the contest. Some of De Palma's more recent victories were with the Cyclone at the New Orleans Mardi Gras meet, where he entered seven events and won every one of them, incidentally shattering the former world's ten-mile record, when he whirled ten laps in 9:11 2-5. At Daytona he won the Minneapolis trophy for the Fiat Company and also made a new world's 120-mile record of 93:44 3-5, all of which is some performance. On Decoration day at the Wilkesbarre hill climb his driving was most sensational.

"Track racing differs principally from road contests so far as the driver is concerned, in the matter of taking the turns," said De Palma. He did not know that his opinions were to appear in print, for he is one of the few drivers who are really modest, and has neither a swollen head nor the popular itch for publicity. "On an oval mile or mile and a half saucer it is necessary when trying for records to take turns at a speed of at least seventy miles an hour, and inasmuch as there are so many turns on a track and the course being more or less a constant curve with but slight straightaway opportunities means that a driver must be more careful with his wheel on a track than on the road.

#### Roads Present Angles.

"Roads courses have their turns, as a rule, in sharp angles and the method of taking them is entirely different from turning on a track. In a road contest, as one approaches a curve, it is necessary to slow down and usually throw out the clutch in rounding it, but this would not do on a saucer. In road buzzing a driver expects to lose time on the turns and makes his speed in straight-away stretches, but on a circular course, it is necessary to keep going at high speed at all times. With the latter style, there is not the manipulation of change-speed levers necessitated that there is in a contest on a long course, where hills and grades are encountered. In the latter case brakes are continually used to big advantage, while track whirling does not call for it to a very large extent.

"The Fiat 'Cyclone' frequently shows about the same tendency to run away on a track that a high-spirited horse does, and it is sometimes necessary to apply the brakes lightly at a turn. Handling a car of the Grand Prize type on the road means that the application and release of brakes at just the right instant will have much to do with the winning of the contest. One of the reasons for Wagner's decisive victory at Savannah was his skill in manipulating and knowing just when and where to apply his brakes at turns.

#### Tires Need Attention.



One of the most important factors in a successful automobile race is the starter. Fred J. Wagner of New York city is an expert, and for this reason the Motor Speedway managers have procured his services for the events this week. Wagner has flagged all the big motor contests in this and other countries and has the art of handling the drivers down to

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When asked which style of racing he preferred, De Palma replied: "I like track driving the best. Probably the majority of drivers would rather do road work, because it is less dangerous, but with a good car I am more at home on a circular course. This style is much dustier than driving over an oiled macadam highway, but then, dust makes one fat."

In contrasting the work of foreign and American drivers, De Palma, who is a Brooklyn (N. Y.) boy of Italian descent, held that as a class the European car pilots are better drivers than Americans in road races, but that in track work the Americans excel. This is due to the fact that in Europe there are more big road contests and less track races than on this side of the water.

## Motor Calendar Tells of Activity

#### AUGUST.

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- Aug. 22 to 29—Aeroplane races at Rheims; Aero Club of France.
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### Tires Need Attention.

"A driver in track contests at distances of ten miles or more has to take the item of tires into consideration. With constant turning, centrifugal force puts a great strain on tubes. Tires in a road race will wear right down through friction, but they will not be subjected to the continuous strain that tends to wrench them from their rims, which is the case when driving fast upon an oval. The avoidance of skidding is another element that enters into the game. There is a constant tendency to skid on a track, especially one that is not well banked, or one that is improperly oiled.

"An element that enters into track work which is not so noticeable in a round race is the formation of ruts. The latter are formed to a certain degree in macadam or sandy highways, but these are always sufficiently wide to enable the man at the wheel to avoid them. But in a track contest of 100 miles, a twenty-four-hour race or a three or four days' meet, the track surface becomes greatly plowed up and furrowed with ruts. Then a driver has to do just the opposite from what he is at liberty to do on the road. He must follow these ruts, 'fit into them,' and use them more or less as trolley car tracks.

### Drivers Fear Rains.

"If he goes outside the 'pole,' i. e., the inside course, close to the rail, he will, of course, be obliged to cover a greater distance and make a poorer time showing, to say nothing of the dust thrown up by other competitors who stick to the pole and pass him. In fact, one of the fine points is to 'get the jump' on the other fellows and hold that pole—if you can—so that the others have to eat your dust, instead of your swallowing theirs. This

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- Aug. 27—Speed trials; Automobile Club of Frankfort-am-Main.
- Aug. 29—Gorden-Bennett Aviation Cup.
- Aug. 29 to Sept. 3—Small car competition; Automobile Club of Germany.

## SEPTEMBER.

- Sept. 4 and 5—Mt. Ventoux hill climbing contest; Vanclusion Automobile Club.
- Sept. 6 to 11—Six days' motor carnival and road race; Automobile Club, Lowell, Mass.
- Sept. 11 to 19—Florio Cup races; Automobile Club of Boulogne, Italy.
- Sept. 15—Start of endurance contest from Denver to Mexico City.
- Sept. 19—Semmering Hill climb.
- Sept. 21 to 23—Second annual good roads convention of the American Automobile Association, Cleveland.
- Sept. 22 to 29—Munsey reliability contest, Washington to Boston and return.

## OCTOBER.

- Oct. 2 to 7—Aeronautical salon in the Grand Palais, Paris, France.
- Oct. 7—Second annual stock chassis race; Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, Quaker City Motor Club.

## OTHER DATES.

- Nov. 27 to Dec. 4—Automobile Show, Atlanta, Ga.
- Dec. 29 and 30—Fourth annual midwinter endurance contest; Quaker City Motor Club.
- Dec. 31 to Jan. 7—Decennial International Automobile Show; Grand Central Palace, New York city; American Motor Manufacturers' Association. Alfred Reeves, general manager, 29 West Forty-second street, New York.
- Jan. 8 to 15—Tenth Annual National Automobile Show in Madison Square Garden, New York; Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers, M. S. Downs, secretary, 7 East Forty-second street, New York.
- Feb. 5 to 12—Chicago Show; National Association of Automobile Manufacturers.



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