

# DRIVERS DRAW SMALL SALARY

## Compared With Ball Players and Other Athletics.

A woman who saw the recent Crownpoint automobile races asked after the gruelling run was over, "What do those men do that for?"

These automobile race drivers, the best of whom will drive here this week, run more risks in a single hour than the average man does in his entire lifetime. They enter the race arena with no more display than the farmer does a hayfield. Do they get what the ordinary human being averages, \$800 a year for his labor? Do these flirts with death get what ever a day laborer would want for his services in the same occupation? Hardly. The public, judging the auto driver by the chances he takes, is given over to the belief that he obtains fabulous sums for his work. But how different it really is. Several of the big stars get good salaries, but it is given on good authority that there is not a single driver in the business whose contract calls for anything like the amount of money Hans Wagner gets for gamboling about the diamond, or indeed as much as Frank Chance draws for leading the Chicago Cubs.

Chance and Wagner have absolutely nothing to fear in the daily execution of their two hours' work. A fast ball may break a finger or a bad slide may crook a toe, causing a rest for a few days.

Even successful jockies have been known to pull down \$50,000 for one year's work. There is danger in this business, to be sure, but nothing as compared to that of the auto driver.

### Draw Small Salaries.

Consequently, it is almost unbelievable that some of the best auto racers of the day are getting only \$50 a week, while many others get even less. In rare instances some get more.

There is one star, Art Greiner, driving the Renault, who is a more absolute amateur than any high school boy who leaves his own town to take part in an A. A. U. competition, for Greiner pays his own expenses in their entirety and is happy at the chance to get into the race. Indeed he left the hospital recently against the doctor's orders to get ready for the Crownpoint races.

George Robertson and Lewis Strang are the two drivers who get more money than any of the others. Of course the exact figures were not given out, but there are billiard players who make almost as much money in a year as do the men who are the stars in the most dangerous of professions.

Chevrolet, the Frenchman; Dewitt, Florida, Dennison, Knipper, Matson, Poole, Seymour and others draw good salaries but none of them anything like the money popularly supposed.

Several of these men are connected with their factories, in the way of being managers of branches in different cities. Again, some of them hold responsible positions in the mechanical departments of the concerns for which they drive, and the majority of them look upon a big race meet almost as a holiday.

Of course, they get good, big bonuses for winning big races, but as only one at a time can win a race the driver has to be a consistent winner to make his total earnings for the season total up to anything like the first-class baseball players get. One of the men who employs these daredevils, in speaking of salaries the other day, gave an interesting sidelight on the matter.

"One of the reasons," said he, "that these salaries are held so low is the fact that there are so many first-class men, really great drivers, who are simply crazy to get the chance to race and who do not require pay for their services. It seems the more danger there is in the business the more people there are who want to take a hand at it."

Consequently the drivers on salary are not the men who are making the most money out of the racing business. Barney Oldfield is still king of money-makers.

### 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.

"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 road race is the formation of ruts. The latter are formed to a certain degree in macadam or sandy highways, but there 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 Rain.

"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 is one of the hardest things for an amateur or a novice on a track to learn. Recent rain also makes slewing bad, for track mud is always slippery."

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.