

# BATHURST

JAMES  
HARDIE



1000  
20 YEARS AT BATHURST Reg. TM

1987/88

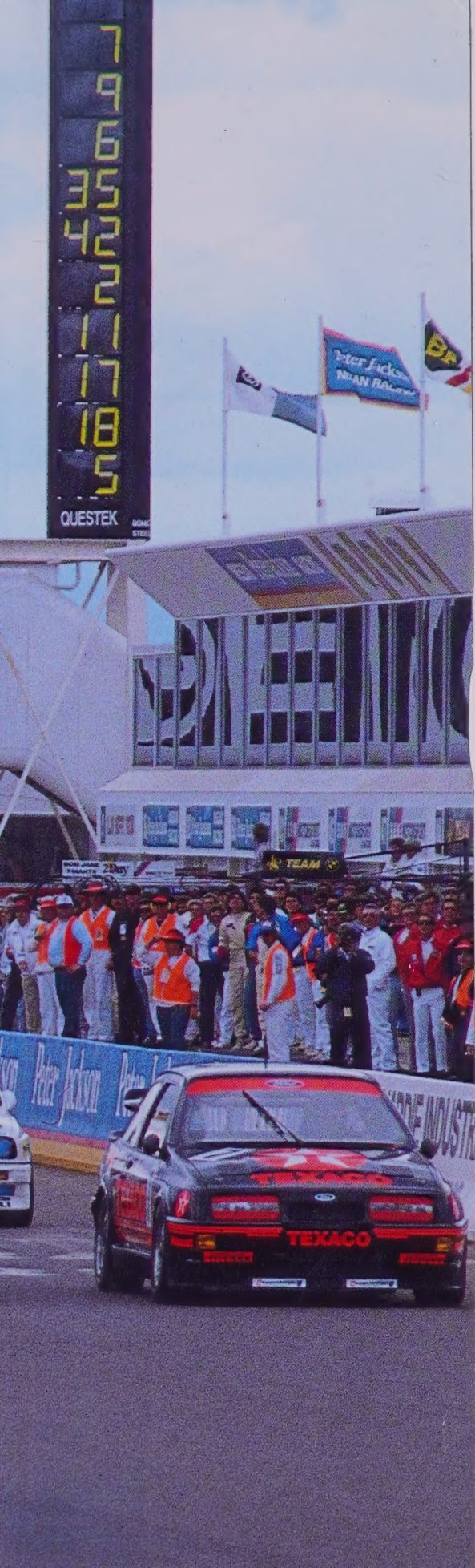
# JAMES HARDIE




New Zealand • Europe • Australia

6





Kenneth Rowell.



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# BATHURST

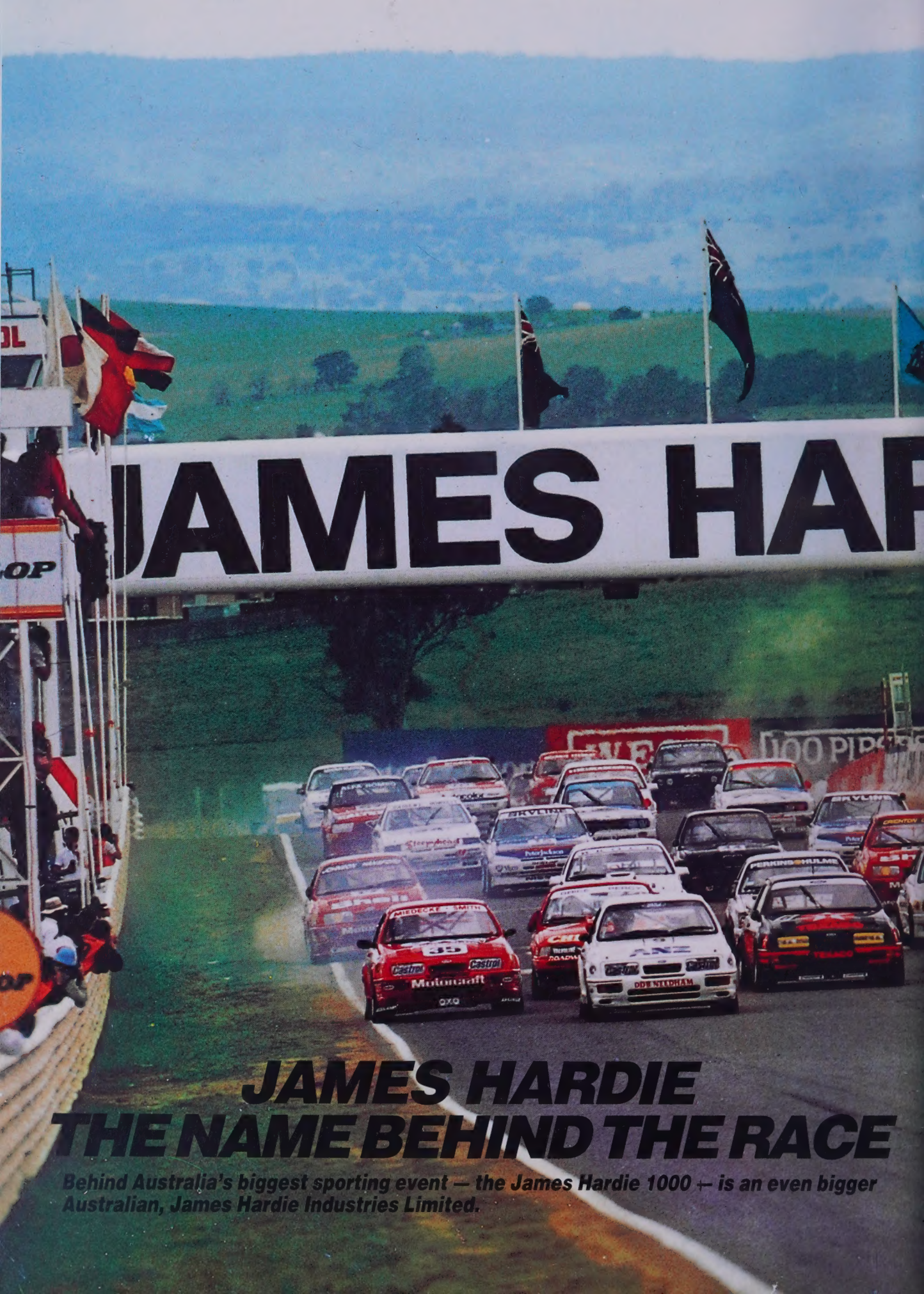
Barry Naismith



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# JAMES HARDIE

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# STORMY TIMES AT THE MOUNTAIN

## Introduction:

**LONG BEFORE THE STORM CLOUDS ROLLED IN OVER THE MOUNTAIN TO INFLUENCE THE RESULT, THERE WERE DARK CLOUDS HANGING OVER A RACE THAT WAS LOSING SOME OF ITS UNIQUE APPEAL.**

**T**here was a time when the car that was first across the line at Bathurst was the winner and there was no question about it. There was no such thing as racing under protest and there had been never been a winner deposed long after the race had ended.

That was a time before the World Touring Car Championship and before multi-million dollar pits and drastic surgery to the scenery of Mount Panorama to appease the gods of international racing. It was also a time when Bathurst had some semblance of innocence and purity. When it was a happy place despite the seriousness of the competition. When it was run by people who had some feeling for the place.

The fact that the Ford Texaco Racing Team, the grand, high-tech visitors from Switzerland, were allowed to race before the protest against its cars by the Australian teams was heard, coloured the interpretations of all those watching the race. The Ford Europe-backed Sierras ran clear after beating off the challenges from their Sierra shadows in Andy Rouse and Andrew Miedecke, but one eye always had to be kept on the next car in line. It could be the winner if the protest was upheld.

When the next car in the queue became Peter Brock — Peter Brock, of all people and at this most poignant time in his career — emotions just had to run high in that dramatic rain-lashed final stage of the event. Brock, The Mountain's favourite, played his part by reacting to it all, stirring those emotions further with an exuberant drive that he knew could win him no ground but plenty of admiration. He was not the absolute quickest on the track — until right at the end, when it didn't matter anymore — yet he was driving like he owned the place, driving like victory was there for the taking.

He was the moral winner, whether the protest was upheld or not. And the crowd, ignoring the high probability of catching pneumonia, made that known at the presentation. They expressed themselves with so much passion that it became unsportsmanlike, ugly. But who could blame them under the circumstances? They saw Bathurst at its basic level, had no time for the politics and felt the result flew in the face of fairplay.

The target of the public disapproval was the Eggenberger Motorsport drivers — winners Steve Soper and Pierre Dieudonne and runners-up Klaus Ludwig and Klaus Niedzwiedz. These professionals didn't really deserve their cool reception. They had just done what they were told and as the public face of the team, were the victims of the controversy that raged around them before, during and immediately after the race. They had no great comprehension of the race's depth of tradition but

**Left: Caltex Chase was a scar on the familiar face of Bathurst, a symptom of the changing scenery as the race pursued an uncertain international course.**

***"I'm not a vindictive person."***

**PETER BROCK**

***"I've never heard of Peter Brock!"***

**STEVE SOPER**





1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

1: Peter Brock and sidekick David Parsons at the pre-race parade. It was great to have the internationals, but the crowd really wanted to see Brockie.

2: The Swiss team won everything. The best presented car was however less than squeaky clean, as far as several Australian teams were concerned.

3: The black knights with their wily team boss, Ruedi Eggenberger. Amid the allegations after the race, the smiles quickly disappeared. We do not cheat, they said.

4: The rain pelted down for the first time since 1974, taking out most of the small class and ending the argument for the all-important third place.

5: It was the small hours at Bathurst and all the drivers were fast asleep. There was no rest for the TAFE apprentices though with an unprecedented number of accidents in the practice days.

6: Former winner turned spendthrift, Bob Jane, bobbed up again to part sponsor the BMW Motorsport fleet. Roberto Ravaglia, left, and Emanuele Pirro, were grateful for wealthy Bob's patronage.





GARRY SPARK



NEIL HAMMOND



GRAEME NEINZER

**"That was Brock!"**

**PETER McLEOD**

**"If you don't have any moments,  
there is no fun in life."**

**GLENN SETON**

winning it had some meaning to them and they were stung by the odd boos from below.

"We can understand that you are very patriotic. You don't often have overseas drivers and this is the first time the race has been won by an overseas team and overseas drivers, so it challenges tradition," co-winner Dieudonne commented the week after the race and before the protest was heard.

"It means so much to us. It is the first time we have been here and we have heard so much about it for so many years and it was the ambition to come here and it is an achievement that we are proud of. It means more to win Bathurst than to win any other race in the world championship for both Steve and for me."

And that was the problem with Bathurst 1987: the world championship. The Bathurst organisers, the Australian Racing Drivers Club, had fallen over themselves to include the race in the potentially successful, but initially troubled, championship. By doing that, control of the race was given to FISA; that group of cold-hearted European race bureaucrats who were insensitive to the sacred nature of the big event and were arrogantly dismissive about how things are administered outside Europe.

With the championship came the strange ways FISA had of interpreting its own apparently clear cut rules. A situation had been allowed to evolve in European Group A where cars were built with less than full adherence to the regulations as spelt out. With the sudden elevation of the European Touring Car Championship to world championship status and the adding of events outside Europe, FISA had indicated it would be very strict in enforcing the rules for the good of this new championship. Indeed they were, as the Eggenberger team found at round one at Monza. However it didn't take long for a lax attitude to creep back, as the visiting Australians discovered at Spa.

Meanwhile CAMS in Australia, taking FISA's early lead, hadn't weakened in policing the rules and had warned all competitors, internationals included, that they would be just as strict at Bathurst when the Europeans arrived. But Bathurst was now a world championship event. While scrutineering was carried out by CAMS, the control of it rested with FISA. And the FISA technical delegate did exercise his absolute authority.

There was frustration within the ranks of CAMS — they had no capacity to countermand rulings by the FISA delegate. Of course the dispute centred around the wheel arches of the Ford Texaco Racing Team Sierras. The allegation was that they had been illegally modified to accommodate larger diameter wheels.

It was left to the manufacturer supported Australian teams to take the matter into their own hands on the Thursday by making a unified protest against the cars. The protest was heard by the FISA stewards promptly enough, but was adjourned on the basis of there being no standard Ford Sierra RS500 available for comparison with the Eggenberger cars. The comparison would be made in Europe at a later point.

The laughter from those reading the statement released by the stewards was of the bitter, sarcastic kind. Why should it be so hard? All you needed was a list of measurements and a tape measure. This was 1987, after all, the age of instant communication. This was also the venue for a round of a world championship.

The truth was that nobody was greatly surprised by all this, including three of the protesting Australian team managers, who withdrew their protests in a fit of cynicism after the race, believing that they had made a point and also believing that FISA wouldn't carry the matter through. Fred Gibson of Peter Jackson Nissan Racing: "We protested on the weekend to have something done about it there and then. It wasn't a protest against the Eggenberger cars as such, it was a protest against the chief scrutineer for not doing his job properly. Anybody who read the protest would have seen that. After the weekend it was a waste of time anyway."

**"We came here like little children."**

**PIERRE DIEUDONNE**

**"We love you all."**

**KLAUS LUDWIG**





# THE ONLY CAR TO START WITH A GREAT FINISH

THE DULUX AUTOCOLOR MITSUBISHI STARION



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REGD





GARY MCILANDER



GARRY SPARKS



GARRY SPARKS

**Top:** Race director, Ivan Stibbard, issues the orders. Fortunately the wrangling in the pits and scrutineering bays didn't detract from the organisation of the race, just put a question mark over its international role in the future.

**Centre:** It might have been a world championship race but it still relied on the volunteers to put the race on.

**Above:** There was a lot of this at Bathurst 1987. The track was very dirty and slippery in places following the multi-million dollar renovations.

**"I feel like a real wally."**

**WIN PERCY**

**". . . a less enjoyable Bathurst."**

**FRANK GARDNER**

**"It was worse than last year."**

**GREG SIDDLE**

So the black Sierras raced, under protest and won comfortably, as predicted. The irony was that had the protest been heard and upheld at Bathurst, the modifications required to 'standardise' the cars would have had little influence on the outcome.

Now the threat of exclusion hung over them, if the Australians resolved to see the protest through. The withdrawal of the protest by three teams left Frank Gardner all alone. The JPS Team manager was angrier than the other three. So angry that he disbanded his long-standing team after Bathurst, totally disillusioned with what had happened there and what he perceived as unhealthy trends within the scene.

Gardner was fortunate that he had an ally in his final action. There was still acute embarrassment at CAMS over the scrutineering fiasco. CAMS had been forced into an intolerable situation by losing the power struggle in the scrutineering bay against the delegate from its governing body and as a result broke its assurance to the local teams. To make amends, CAMS stuck with Gardner's protest, nudged it through the channels to a conclusion. FISA was trapped in its own red tape.

The measurements of a standard Ford Sierra Cosworth RS500 with an Eggenberger car had to be done and the evidence had to be heard promptly by a panel of FISA stewards. The panel met on Friday, November 13, in Japan, prior to the running of the final round of the world championship. The black Sierras were booted off The Mountain and Peter Brock was declared the winner of Bathurst 1987. But the result was still provisional, until the appeal process was exhausted.

It was somehow fitting that the appeal was heard at the venue for the final round of the world championship. A week after Bathurst, FISA killed off the championship in favour of a more exotic, and apparently more promotable silhouette touring car formula. The new formula wasn't to replace Group A, as was initially feared, but instead relegated the existing touring car category to a junior status and an uncertain future. This was a purely parochial decision to suit the European scene and made no allowance for the investment Australia had made in Group A.

Bathurst had also been spurned by the decision. After the race had been debated by the world championship in the first place.

This was always the danger for Bathurst. By being part of some FISA sanctioned series, in which Australian teams would not be regularly involved, the international competitors came to Bathurst thinking in terms of winning a series. The championship preyed on the minds of both the Ford and BMW contingent so heavily at Bathurst 1987 that it was two races in one: the important one for the championship-registered cars and the other one for the local competitors, none of whom were registered for the world title.

Bathurst's appeal had always been its uniqueness, its Australian flavour and the great race's growing international reputation was based on that. Delivering it into the hands of those who did not have its best interests at heart was tantamount to selling The Mountain's soul. On the other hand the race had reached a stage in its development where a transfusion of blueblood from overseas was necessary for the race to maintain its growth.

The enormous investment that was poured into circuit development for 1987 was on the basis of Bathurst having a greater global future. But how tragic it would be if in pursuing that goal, those who ran the competition side could no longer ensure the validity of the result immediately after the event had concluded.

**"It had to happen here . . ."**

**ALLAN MOFFAT**

**"I'm quite capable of having my own accident . . ."**

**LARRY PERKINS**

**"They're beatable."**

**ANDREW MIEDECKE**







# CONTINUING THE MOMENTUM

## New Zealand:

**THERE WAS STILL NO DURABLE SUBSTITUTE FOR BULK AND MUSCLE, BE IT IN THE STREETS OR IN THE OPEN SPACES, DURING THE HECTIC WARM-UP TO THE SEASON PROPER.**



**Left:** Larry Perkins came on strong in New Zealand to rush to the front of the field. His win at Pukekohe was his first in his own car.

**Above:** Perkins, getting used to the limelight. His pragmatic approach was producing results.

**I**t looked as though it was going to be a very good year for Commodores. In two weeks of New Zealand summer sunshine, the Nissan threat was seen off again and those throwbacks to 1985, the British Jaguars, no longer had the goods.

The momentum of Bathurst 1986 was working well and Holden V8 power allowed the new familiar firm of Peter Brock and Allan Moffat to repeat their Wellington 500 victory of the season before. Better than that, the first race in the two-race New Zealand series of late January, early February, was a one-two for the Mobil Holden Dealer Team, the team's first one-two since Bathurst 1984.

But the HDT revival wasn't to extend to the next race at Pukekohe, third was the best Brock and Moffat could do. This proved to be the breakthrough for the new Holden force of Larry Perkins, who had warned of a win about to happen since his privateer Commodore, with all-New Zealand backing, appeared for the Australian endurance races of the previous season.

Nissan's George Fury, in his first New Zealand series, tried to keep the Holdens honest and actually grabbed pole at the Wellington street scene, but when it mattered, on the two race days, the Australian Nissan had off-days and it was the V8s which rumbled through.

At Pukekohe, Perkins, who paired up with veteran Denny Hulme, shut out the highly favoured Nissan to take the first touring car pole of his career. The Anzac combination's determination at Pukekohe was complete, the pair leading virtually all the way, apart from the two pitstops where the Fury-Glenn Seton car got briefly in front. Perkins went home claiming with some justification he had the fastest Commodore in the world. But his win at Pukekohe was helped by the fact that he was the only one of the 12 leading contenders to be able to run the race exactly the way he wanted and without pressure.



The annual two-race series was being run for the third time and local promoter, Strathmore Sports Promotions, put together a stronger field than for the previous two years, the main drawcard being two Jaguar XJS's which Tom Walkinshaw had brought out of hibernation. Strictly speaking the little raced Big Cats were not eligible for the races as their Group A homologation had run out at the end of 1986, but the promoters had written a rule into the regulations allowing any Group A car to start, irrespective of when its international recognition expired.

The Walkinshaw team had run the green coupes at Mt Fuji before sending them onto New Zealand. Tom had his regular English co-driver Win Percy, while the other car was crewed by Armin Hahne and Denny Hulme.

Apart from the HDT and Perkins Commodores, there were also two other competitive Holdens. Allan Grice was driving an ex-Roadways car which had been bought by Aucklanders Graeme Cameron. Then there was Graeme Crosby, campaigning his elderly car with regular backstop Wayne Wilkinson.

Nissan's representation was confined to two main teams. Although Nissan NZ was supporting the efforts of local business mates Kent Baigent and Graeme Bowkett, it was not putting all its eggs in one basket and got a single Peter Jackson team car across the Tasman with Fury and Seton driving. Baigent and Bowkett had two cars, although they only raced one.

At BMW everything was on hold waiting for M3 homologation in March. Jim Richards therefore joined Trevor Crowe in an ex-JPS team 635CSi in what was the strongest driver line-up for the German marque. Queensland's Charlie O'Brien had a couple of his old cars on hand, one for himself and Wellington's Glenn McIntyre, and the other for lease which resulted in a surprise at Wellington.

The Ford factor was a combination of Mustangs and Sierras. The best Mustang was an ex-Dick Johnson car in which Dick was sharing the driving with its new owner, Wellington's Robbie Kerr. The reigning Australian Touring Car Champion, Robbie Francevic, was sharing Bruce Anderson's car.

Neville Crichton had brought an ex-Eggenberger Sierra and imported works driver Steve Soper to steer it. This was a pre-Cosworth car. The much maligned former Andy Rouse car which had been used on both sides of the Tasman in 1986 by just about everybody was leased by Australians Andrew Miedecke and Michael Hall, but nobody gave much for their chances.

Wellington has quickly developed a reputation for being hard on cars and drivers, with no room to make a mistake. The third time around was no different, with an even higher attrition rate. There were plenty of incidents in practice and the four hour race saw just 14 of the 42 starters make the finish.

That BMW was marking time became apparent at Wellington. Jim Richards managed to qualify for the top ten, but nobody expected the 635 with its tall first gear to get near the sharp end of the grid, as there are three or four first gear corners every lap at Wellington.

Richards had other ideas in the Hardies Heroes style flying lap contest and did not put a foot wrong in getting everything out of the Bee Em to qualify sixth. By contrast O'Brien was only 11th on the grid.

In the early stages of the race, Richards only ran in sixth and seventh places, but as the thirstier V8s and V12s pitted, he moved up the leader board. After 110 minutes the former North Islander took the lead and went past the two hour, half way mark before handing over to Crowe, who rejoined in fourth. He was soon second with only the Moffat-Brock Commodore in front, which needed at least another pit stop.

Hopes of a win, based on reliability and economy, were dashed when the clutch gave

out — too much slipping out of the first gear corners!

O'Brien in the other 635 had run tenth early in the race. By halfway he was up to fifth. By the time he stopped and gave the car to McIntyre, he was second behind Moffat. While the lead Commodores and the remaining Jaguar kept pitting, McIntyre seesawed between second and third places. Late in the race John Harvey took second off him, although the Kiwi nearly upset the HDT 1-2 form finish at the end.

On the faster Pukekohe track, the BMWs were well and truly outgunned, Richards and O'Brien qualifying 12th and 13th. In the race's early stages they ran ninth and tenth. Jim got as high as sixth before a puncture meant an early stop and Crowe then had the gearbox linkage break while he was in neutral, between gear-changes!

O'Brien and McIntyre had another one stop race, but had to be content with seventh place.

Even though the series was the virtual swansong for the 635 as a top competitive car, both teams proved that in a long hard race like Wellington it was still competitive. Christchurch drivers Avon Hyde and Allan Milligan underlined that theory piloting the car they leased from

gap over Richards, who had moved up to second. Everything was looking so easy for a one stop race. Then the Skyline began to overheat and George was forced to stop just before the halfway mark. The damage had been done, a fan belt had broken and the motor was cooked.

The other Nissan men Baigent and Bowkett preferred to forget Wellington. They qualified 12th, but on the third lap Bowkett had nowhere to go when Garry Croft spun the Volvo 240 Turbo of Per Gunnar Andersson in front of him. The Skyline was too badly damaged on the barriers to continue.

At Pukekohe, Fury was just shaded by Perkins in the battle for pole position. For the first 70 laps, Fury was never more than 100 metres behind Perkins and often was a lot closer. The Nissan took the lead for five laps after Perkins pitted, until a puncture forced an early pit stop.

That left Seton just behind Hulme who had taken over from Perkins, the pair still first and second. Seton had one lap in the lead after Hulme had stopped before he too pitted to give the car to Fury, who did one slow lap before retiring, a sealing ring in the headgasket having blown.



O'Brien, by finishing sixth. And it was their first touring car race. Hyde had only raced sports sedans, while Milligan was just a Mini Seven driver. But the pair stayed out of trouble to turn in a good performance.

Richards and Crowe could have finished first or second around the streets, while O'Brien with the relatively inexperienced McIntyre did well to come third and nearly get second. Jim's results might night have been that impressive, but he was still in top form as events were to prove!

George Fury came to Wellington having had by far the better of the second half of the 1986 Australian season. Turbo cars had gone well around the streets before, Robbie Francevic winning in the Volvo in 1985 and then being a strong runner in 1986. The Peter Jackson team did not disappoint. In the first session Fury was second fastest behind Walkinshaw's Jaguar. He was fastest in the next session and then claimed pole position during the flying lap contest.

Fury led from the start, drawing away quickly from the pursuing Jaguars and Commodores. After one hour he was 35 seconds in front of Perkins. Fifty minutes later he had doubled the







**Far left:** Brock led home a form finish at Wellington, a race of attrition. It was the first HDT 1-2 since Bathurst 1984.

**Below left:** Brock — while problems were brewing at home, it was all go for the New Zealand series.

**Left:** Richards, Soper, Walkinshaw and Grice queue behind Harvey at Wellington, with Fury, Hahne, Crosby, Perkins and Brock already up the road. All the big names turned out for third series.



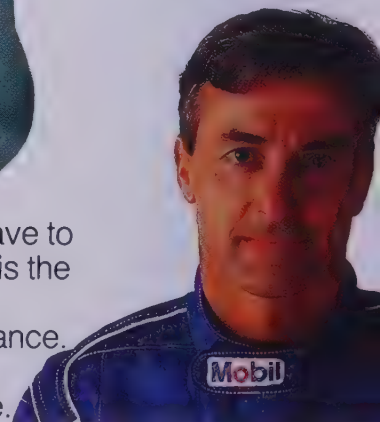
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It is easy to be wise afterwards, but the Peter Jackson team perhaps should have done some endurance testing with the New Zealand avgas. They were told it was to the same standard as the Australian fuel, but then found it was slightly different.

Neville Crichton found out the hard way before the series started. His Sierra had arrived tuned to run on what is available in Europe. By the time it had been recalibrated for the local juice, the team had destroyed one engine.

Graeme Bowkett qualified the NZ Nissan-supported Skyline sixth at Pukekohe, with the car demonstrating the same straight line performance as the Australian example, although not being quite as competent in the suspension.

In the early stages team-mate Baigent, who started the car, dropped to eighth, but then battled with Harvey for sixth spot until they touched at the hairpin. A quick stop to assess the damage dropped the Nissan a couple of places, but it was all over a short while later when the driveshaft flange tore away from the gearbox and the drive shaft came up through the floor! The two Aucklanders had made the car competitive after only six races, so they left Pukekohe looking for some reliability.

Half the Ford challenge for the series was effectively eliminated before the races got under way. In the second practice session at Wellington Dick Johnson came up behind the local BMW 325i of the other JPS Team BMW driver on the loose, Tony Longhurst, who was pressuring the similar car of Ed Lamont. The Queenslander pushed the Aucklander into the armco and then Johnson ploughed into the mess when Lamont's machine bounced back into the middle of the track. The Mustang from the windscreen forward was written off.

Also in the wars was Soper in the Crichton Sierra who nudged a wall, the car requiring some suspension surgery. Later in practice he



**Left:** Good buddies Armin Hahne, Tom Walkinshaw and Win Percy. The Jaguar firm was back in business.

**Below:** The New Zealand series was the emotional swansong for the Jaguar XJS. It was out of homologation but allowed to run by the promoters to attract the teary-eyed.



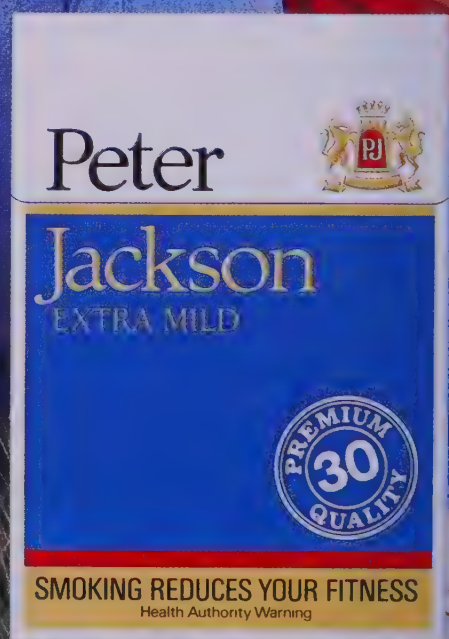


# Peter Jackson 30's

*You're laughing!*



Australia's best value cigarette.



Memo WOPHJ 538 APB 5845 C



looked to be heading for fourth on the grid until he slid wide on one corner during the flying lap contest. The error left the Englishman ninth.

That was where he ran in the early stages, but like the BMs and the Skylines, the Sierra team was looking to make only one pit stop. By halfway Soper was second behind Richards before he stopped to give the car to Crichton. He was called back in soon after, a brake pad retaining clip having fallen out in the original pit stop. Then the ageing car lost a front wheel and more time was lost in refilling the stub axle thread so a new wheel could be fitted.

Crichton rejoined seventh, but then Richards and both the Jaguars retired, elevating the car to a lucky fourth-place. A trouble free run could have seen the car second, although it was obvious the single overhead camshaft engine was not producing great power.

Miedecke and Hall had all sorts of trouble during practice and the race and their Sierra was never a factor. A week later 'Mad Andy' outqualified Soper at Pukekohe, the Eggenberger car not getting its tyres up to a good working temperature. Soper had an early puncture in the race when an attempt to run a softer compound back-fired. The team were thus forced to use hard rubber for the majority of the race which led to uncompetitive times.

After the first two stops Crichton was left running in ninth. A third stop was made and Soper eventually brought the car home sixth, three laps behind Perkins.

Miedecke and Hall were another two laps back in ninth place, Hall losing ground in the middle stages, while Miedecke had turned on a good performance in the older car.

After a dismal endurance series in Australia late in 1986, the HDT was out to move back into winning form. From the outside at least, the team was functioning like a well oiled machine. Both cars were kept out of trouble in qualifying at Wellington and that allowed Brock to later put his car on the front row of the grid alongside Fury. Harvey was a little slower due to a slight misfire and had to be content with eighth on the grid.

Initially Brock lost places to Hahne's Jaguar and the Crosby and Perkins Commodores and ran fifth with Harvey behind him. With the Jaguar stopping early and Crosby's engine overheating, the two HDT cars were third and fourth. Then they pitted on the same lap, which meant Harvey's co-driver Neal Lowe got away late as the crew finished despatching Moffat before turning to work on the second car.

Initially Moffat was fourth behind David Parsons, who had taken over from Perkins, while Lowe was sixth. Then Moffat got by Parsons and leader Richards and Soper both stopped so that just after the half way mark the HDT car was in front for the first time.

Parsons crashed the Enzed car trying to stay with Moffat and when Crowe retired the BMW, Moffat had no real challengers. He handed the car back to Brock who reeled off the laps to the chequered flag. Lowe had got the other car up to second but dropped a place when handing it back to Harvey, who overtook McIntyre to make up the 1-2. For the last lap and a half the pair circulated slowly, nearly allowing the BMW to catch Harvey and spoil the perfect finish.

After qualifying fourth, Crosby ran strongly for the first 50 laps, holding third in the early stages behind Fury and Hahne, although when the engine started overheating he slipped behind Perkins and Brock.

Parsons' mid-race mistake, after Perkins qualified fifth, was enough to throw away a win as at that stage he was right on Moffat's tail.

Bathurst winner, Grice started the series off badly, but it wasn't his fault. On the Wednesday before Wellington his co-driver Cameron had rolled the Commodore at Manfeild in testing. Then in the final practice session Longhurst's co-driver Bill Bryce forced 'Gricey' into the barriers. The Commodore looked secondhand when it eventually started from 13th place.



**Above:** Red-faced Wayne Wilkinson after creasing the armco with the Graeme Crosby Commodore in practice in Wellington.



**Above left:** Brakes locked in desperation after losing it, Wilkinson heads for the ever present barriers of the street circuit.

**Left:** Crunch! The left corner gets a comprehensive re-modelling.

**Below:** Wilkinson bounces back. The car was quickly repaired and finished a strong fourth on the race day.





# May the force



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Grice was up to ninth after five laps and lining up Walkinshaw's Jaguar when the driveshaft broke.

With the Jaguar team down to one car, Perkins snapped up Hulme for the Pukekohe race, diplomatically pointing out the 50-year-old Kiwi had far more experience than Parsons, who had shunted the Commodore at Wellington.

Although the car took all week to fix, Perkins did not really miss any testing time, as he had done that all before going to Wellington. So when the car arrived at Pukekohe for official practice, it was quick straight away. Due to a slight misfire, he was only seventh fastest in the morning, but with some qualifying rubber, Perkins made no mistake in the final session and snatched pole position, there being no flying lap contest.

The HDT had an almost arrogant attitude to practice there not bothering to try and improve on their first session times which eventually left the cars seventh (Brock) and 14th (Harvey) on the grid, the team saying it was content with a good race set up.

Crosby had the second fastest Commodore on the track, qualifying fourth, while Grice was fifth, 0.002 of a second slower than the time he did in 1986 to get pole position. Now it was only good enough for fifth place.

The former bike champ started with hard compound tyres in the hot conditions, yet it turned out to be the wrong decision. He went backwards and soon found himself in seventh place, behind Grice, Brock and Harvey who were running fourth through to sixth. Grice and

Brock were the entertainers in this event, the duel going the first hour until Grice pitted.

With early pitstops Crosby came back to fourth behind Perkins, Fury and Brock, but was shunted down the order by Hahne who had taken over from Percy.

When Wilkinson got in the Crosby car, he was sixth, while Harvey was delayed after a coming together with Baigent's Skyline. Brock had taken over the lead after Perkins and Fury had stopped, with Hahne second and Hulme and Seton third and fourth. Graeme Cameron was fifth in the Grice Commodore followed by Wilkinson. Cameron disappeared with low oil pressure and when Brock stopped to hand over to Moffat, Wilkinson found himself third behind Hulme and Seton as Hahne had also stopped.

Moffat was fourth and the Jaguar fifth, with Lowe sixth, but the lead HDT car was going off song and Hahne raced past, also going by Wilkinson. The Aucklanders was back in third when the Jaguar stopped, while Moffat got out after a short stint at the wheel and gave the car back to Brock.

When Wilkinson did stop, the car was finally put on soft rubber but Percy and Brock had gone by. Harvey was back in the other HDT car by this time. Crosby closed up on Brock in the final stages, but was still just behind at the flag fall, in fourth place, while Harvey finished fifth.

With Commodores finishing 1, 3, 4 and 5 there appeared to be nothing wrong with the car's prospects heading towards the Australian season. Only the Skyline and the Jaguar, in its

swansong had been able to stay with the Holdens.

The Jaguar was the sentimental favourite, yet tyres were to deny the car a win. As usual the TWR outfit came well prepared, although Armin Hahne did his best to upset the equilibrium at Pukekohe testing before the Wellington race. He went off on a fourth gear corner and bent the car quite badly which meant some chassis realignment was needed before Wellington.

That the V12's would be still strong contenders was made obvious when Walkinshaw was fastest in the first practice session. However first gear selection trouble in the old warhorse slowed him in the next period and also caused him to abort the flying lap — and drop to tenth.

Hahne had things under control though and took third place on the grid. In the early stages of the race, he ably held second place behind Fury, while Walkinshaw got up to seventh.

After just 50 minutes the Scot stopped for new tyres and gave the car to Percy, who restarted in tenth. Hahne's tyres went off a few minutes later and he gave the car to Hulme, so at the end of the first hour, both Jaguars were at the bottom of the top ten.

The two co-drivers managed to make the second set of rubber last a little longer and got back to sixth and seventh before pitting again for a third set. Both cars lost a place in the stop, but kept pounding around in an effort to make up the lost ground. After three hours both Walkinshaw and Hahne wanted to come in on the same lap for the final stops having got back up in fourth and fifth places. The German was told to stay out for an extra lap while the boss was attended to.

It was a costly decision as the fifth placed car promptly blew a tyre and plunged into the barriers. Percy was left to charge on for the British team and was closing on third placed McIntyre when the differential blew.

With Walkinshaw going home to England, the team decided not to repair the Hulme-Hahne car and just run one car for Percy and Hahne at Pukekohe.

Hulme had the last laugh with Perkins while the tyre trouble reared its head again for the Jaguar. Percy did qualify third fastest at Pukekohe and ran in that position for the first hour until he gave the car to Hahne.

The big Jaguar was later up to second place behind Brock, who still had to stop, when Hahne came up to lap the Cameron-Grice Commodore, which promptly dumped a load of oil in the braking area for the hairpin. Hahne flat-spotted the tyres in his efforts to stop, and a couple of corners later, one of the front ones blew out.

He was not giving up easily and got back to the pits for new rubber. Now in fifth, Hahne overtook Moffat and then Crosby's co-driver Wayne Wilkinson to get back to third place and still stay on the same lap as the leading Commodore and Skyline, despite the extra pit stop.

With 55 laps to go Percy was given the car, except he had to start his stint on unscrubbed rubber because the extra earlier stop had used up the stock of scrubbed tyres. Winston gave it everything, slipping and sliding, yet taking an average of half a second a lap off Perkins in the last hour. Time ran out though and he finished 35 seconds behind in second place.

Ultimately it was the 1984 tyres which let the car down. Since it had won the European series that year, the car had had little tyre development and by January 1987 that had become all too apparent. Percy, for his part, had great confidence in the car, believing re-homologation and some tyre development would still make the XJS competitive, especially on fast tracks.

It was not to be. The Jaguar's international touring car racing career had come to an end. So everybody left Pukekohe convinced 1987 would be a straight battle between the Commodores and Skylines. And what about the M3's when they appeared next month?







ROSS HYDE



ROSS HYDE

**Above:** The Baigent-Bowkett Nissan NZ-backed Skyline continued to improve. Bowkett qualified the car in impressive sixth at Pukekohe.

**Left:** The ex-Eggenberger Sierra was a little disappointing. It ran badly on local fuel and didn't deliver its full performance in the hands of new owner Crichton and import Steve Soper.

**Far left:** Andrew Bagnall imported the British Corolla of Chris Hodgetts to contest the small car class.





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To forge this technological lead, BMW ensures there are no dividing lines between the engineers who work on cars for the roadway and engineers who work on cars for the raceway.

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# THE NEXT GENERATION

ATCC: The first five rounds

**IT WAS STATUS QUO FOR THE OPENING ROUNDS, THEN SUDDENLY THE NEXT GENERATION OF EUROPEAN RACERS HAD WINS ON THE BOARD.**



STAN ALEXANDER

**T**he black and gold entry seemed a shadow of its former self. A toy compared with the contender of a season before which at least had presence through bulk. Certainly this new offering's garb hinted at belligerence of the heel-snapping, waspish variety, but toy cars had those sort of cosmetics too. And when it was parked near a ground shaking, bellowing Holden Commodore in an Australian pit for the first time, this German-bred newcomer looked a real pushover.

Nobody in the know, including those who built this pint-sized pretender expected a lot. A class car and a worry on the tighter tracks certainly, but it was too early to be sure. After all, the car was only approved for racing on Thursday before the first round of the Australian Touring Car Championship at Calder on March 1 and would have its world racing debut there.

So JPS BMW's lead driver Jim Richards and team manager Frank Gardner were pleasantly surprised, and the opposition a little shaken, when the car was on pole position for its world debut, all but won the second round at a track that was not supposed to suit the littlest BMW, and won next up to take the championship lead. Only the sandhills of Wanneroo near Perth sapped black and gold momentum. However, a fortnight later Richards was back on pole and soon grabbed the championship lead again with another giant-killing performance. Suddenly the former Kiwi was odds on to win his second title in three years in a car he had not driven until official Calder practice.

The speedy success of the car indicated that Group A had entered a new phase in its development and for that reason, the success of the BMW M3 in the dependable hands of phlegmatic, 39-year-old Richards, shouldn't have come as such a revelation. Before 1987 dawned there were simply production cars that had been race equipped through manufacture homologation. With the arrival of the BMW M3, came the specially designed, unabashed circuit racer built right on the weight limit.

**Above:** JPS teammates Richards and Longhurst confer over the results at Calder after they gave the BMW M3 its world debut. Richards had been on pole but could only manage fifth on Sunday.

**Left:** Glenn Seton comes of age, heading for his first ATCC race win. But first he had to deal with the pressure being applied by the fastest man on the track, Larry Perkins, who charged back after overcooking it on the first corner of the new season.



Not that there was anything radical about the race-hungry Bavarian machine, although it was the epitome of what the regulations were on about — efficient engine in a light vehicle. More than that under its skirts and winged Three Series skin was the distillation of many years of European touring car racing and open wheeler racing, and not forgetting, Formula One engine experience, which directly or indirectly related to this new BMW package. Match that data to the right components and you had an instrument capable of mechanical harmony when given to a maestro like Jim Richards.

This point about 'cars specially designed for motor sport' was made strongly by Peter Jackson Nissan team manager, Fred Gibson, after the halfway mark of the championship. "Everyone should remember our cars are a compromise — they're production models modified for racing," Gibson stressed. By that time, the wins by his team drivers Glenn Seton and George Fury in the first two rounds had been quickly forgotten and the Japanese model Skyline, essentially unchanged from 1986 due to the end of its production run in Japan and therefore the end of homologation, were no longer the firm favourites of pre-season, its last season.

In fact Fury, after two retirements that reeked of pure bad luck, if not black magic, was effectively eliminated from the championship by then. At Lakeside, round three, on April 5, it had been a leaking gasket in the lefthand drybrake assembly which allowed fuel to run down the sill, into the cabin, and fill the car with fumes. An explosion and small fire resulted which buckled the boot and singed the paintwork in the 'back seat' area and also made a mess of George's Akubra. Fury fortunately had the presence of mind to pull it off and put out the flames with the cabin extinguisher. At Wanneroo next up on April 26, an unexpected snapped axle on the line was put down to a lot of strain imposed by a few practice starts Fury had tried, and muffed, earlier in the weekend. Thus the championship was quickly down to the Group A establishment figure Richards and the ever quicker Seton who was almost half the BMW driver's age.

Seton signalled what looked like being a championship season for the Nissan team with an all the way win in the Calder opener. The 21-year-old son of the team's engine builder, Barry, drove with great maturity, considering the amount of talent chasing him, to take his first touring car championship victory. Two races later he recorded another first — his first pole in such illustrious company.

The victory confirmed his arrival at the top and vindicated Gibson's decision to put the youngster in the driving seat for the full championship for the first time. Gibson had taken Seton to New Zealand earlier in the year and on his performance there justified the promotion to level-pegging Fury. "I think he is going to be a real surprise to some people," Gibson predicted. "At Pukekohe and Wellington he was as fast as George and at Pukekohe in the early untimed practice session he went two seconds faster than what George qualified at. I think he has a long way to go with experience, he is only 21, but I think people will see a big difference in him this year. He has matured a lot and he drives the car very well."

The Nissan was probably the hardest working team in the off-season, taking its car to three very different tracks over the summer to sort out its only real 1986 weakness, Handling. During that time the team also tamed Fury's No. 30 Bathurst car which had previously resisted all attempts at suspension setting after its building with a stiffer roll cage and related suspension revisions. That new thinking in construction was also transferred to Seton's car — the No. 15 car of Bathurst 1986 — and that car re-built from body shell up to give him a vehicle that was essentially as fresh as Fury's.

It wasn't until the third race where the Nissan team, worried that they were about to be caught up by the new challenger, presented the first

major change to their 1986 spec cars. The only possible area left, apart from dyno testing and suspension tuning, where the team could make any progress was in the high tech area of engine management, which was free under the rules.

Gibson was concerned about the scheduled change over from higher octane avgas to pump grade commercial petrol in August and felt a more sophisticated computerised engine management system would immediately protect against the reduction in octane rating and the much feared dropping off in power that would result.

After a bit of casting around Gibson decided to send engine man Barry Seton and mechanic Trevor Jones to Electromotive in the U.S., an electronics company which also runs a race team in IMSA using a highly competitive March equipped with Nissan's advanced, computer-controlled V8. The company had also built engines for the Japanese team, which was using the Nissan engine in Japanese Group C, and for the cars which the fledgling British Nissan team used at Le Mans 1986.

It was a very expensive technical exercise but yielded a basic system and the knowledge to operate it. The team wasted no time replacing the existing engine electronics and ignition system, which only provided fixed engine and turbo settings, with the American developed system.



The reason for alacrity was that with the old system the twin cam, four valve Skyline engine produced full engine power at a really low 6200 rpm. Rev it harder, to its limit of 8000 — as is a racing driver's natural habit — and the performance fell away. The new system allowed for the spreading of peak performance from around 5000 to 8000 and that stopped the car's tendency to spin the wheel and as consequence made the car more driveable. It also allowed the team to change the engine power characteristics to suit different circuits by merely dropping in a specially pre-programmed memory chip or re-programming the system on the spot. But first the team had to master the programming procedure and that struggle to 'fine tune' the system continued well past mid-year.

There was no corresponding power gain with the fitting of this superior system though, and following the trouble-free debut of the system at Lakeside, round three, where Dick Johnson dashed away in his new Ford Sierra, and Richards won, more power was top of the list of priorities. The efficiency of the computer system came into play here. In the three week break between Lakeside and Wanneroo, round four, this feature allowed Seton Sr, helped by Seton

Jr, to fiddle some more with the bench engine. The variable settings produced 15 more horses with the prospect of a few more to come with more work. With that extra power Glenn was able to keep an improving Johnson at bay at the Perth circuit and win.

The five rounds to pass the championship's halfway point produced four winners — Seton, senior team-mate Fury, Richards, and Dick Johnson. Johnson's powerful victory in his new blood red Ford Sierra Cosworth was a celebrated return to the winner's list. It was his first win since the Australian Grand Prix support race of 1985 in the Mustang and his first championship win since 1984, in the final year for his Group C Falcon. A final first was it first win anywhere in the world. It was also more worry for Gibson because his bulbous European car, as much as the BMW M3, was what Gibson was alluding to in his lament about the coming of the proper racers.

Johnson, after a feeble start to the championship with his two Shell-backed cars, had the third round at his home track of Lakeside all shot to pieces. Boost up, confidence skyhigh and morale bursting with the deafening cheers of a track full of fans, this was Johnson driving at his very best, passing his fellow superstars like they were standing still. The swift dispatching of duelists Peter Brock and Jim Richards within a

lap was particularly worthy of permanent record — crisp, clean and cold-hearted, the Sierra stamping its footprint in the grass as the folk hero whistled through a gap that wasn't there.

This was a fit of aggression and arrogance aimed at telling the world who was back at the top and showing the world the potential of Ford's new prospect. Johnson had the lead by lap 15 and was running clear by lap 34 when the turbocharger shaft snapped — where the shaft is welded to the turbine wheel. Clearly the 41 year-old's heart had been singing for much of that time before he limped the car back to the pits, leaving that telltale cloud of white smoke. He was still grinning soon after because he had made his point. "I thought we'd made a bit of a race of it this weekend being our home track and all. We turned up the wick — it was giving us 1.8 bar of boost and it was great stuff because we can blow off the Commodores in a straight line which they have been doing to us all the time. Unfortunately the little turbo that we have got can't hack the pace but we know how we can fix that."

Two weeks later he was grinning no more, but for a different reason — he had been suspended from racing for a week after being found guilty



by a CAMS tribunal for presenting an ineligible vehicle at Lakeside.

CAMS pre-warned competitors that the Group A regulations would be enforced strongly for the championship. This followed problems in Europe where the widest possible interpretation had seen the fostering of an environment of nudge, nudge, wink, wink. FISA in Europe had already cracked down for the start of the inaugural world championship, snaring the works Sierra for fitting a new, unapproved fuel injection system and the M3s over using Kelvar panels which were apparently meant to be on the car but hadn't appeared on the homologation papers.

Given that international scenario, it was obvious that CAMS scrutineers would take more than a passing interest in the Johnson Sierras when they arrived at Lakeside with modifications to turbo and engine. Those changes produced a startling improvement in speed. It also provoked much dark muttering in the pits, as to his opponents, Johnson isn't regarded as angelic when it comes to liberal reading of the rulebook. Scrutineers zeroed in on the Johnson car's turbocharger, finding that the impeller — the fan-like part which compresses the fuel charge — didn't in their view match with the item on the homologation papers. They immediately charged Johnson with the alleged offence.

Johnson felt there was nothing amiss. He was having a lot of difficulty sourcing official parts in Europe because of the popularity of the car there and the solution was to fabricate a lot of their own gear from what they could get from various overseas suppliers. The component that was the subject of the dispute was a standard component that the team had slightly machined to meet the measurements on the homologation papers. It was even the same brand as the homologated item, so theoretically it produced no magic.

Filled with indignation, Johnson certainly made his case strongly at the hearing conducted on the Sunday meeting. The hearing concluded that there was "lack of decisive information in the homologation papers for this vehicle and the wording of the original of the series production part clause Appendix C, that the intent of these regulations are unclear to competitors." Because of that, the matter of interpretation of the rules regarding the modification, was referred to the CAMS eligibility committee before the convening of a CAMS tribunal to determine guilt. If found guilty, Johnson, and also team-mate Hansford, faced six months suspension, which would have put them out of action until after Bathurst. The implications of that for the sport — banning one of its biggest crowd-pullers — were just too horrible to contemplate.

The eligibility committee didn't see it Johnson's way, but the tribunal, sitting a week before Wanneroo, did. Sort of. "Whilst bound by the eligibility committee's findings in relation to the technical issues, we consider that having regard to the evidence we have heard, in particular the conduct of the entrants at the meeting, the entrants believed that the vehicle was in accordance with the modifications allowed."

After all that, the mandatory six months penalty was set aside and a token, unprecedented one week suspension imposed. Coincidentally, the sentence was up before the running of the next round at Wanneroo, when there was more dark muttering from the opposition pits, this time about the leniency of the penalty. There was no more argument about the car's eligibility however, the car wearing its official, if the same, impeller. Everybody was certain of this because Johnson, after securing a batch of new 'homologated' turbos, had shrewdly requested scrutineers to check the car beforehand.

In the sandhills north of Perth, the squat little red terror stayed in one piece for its first placing and a week later the expected happened and the championship had its fourth winner as it headed into the concluding races.

From Lakeside on, this had been a remark-



**Far left:** Whoa there cowboy. Perkins heads for the grass at Calder, rather than flat spot his tyres in a desperate bid to snatch the lead through some late braking.

**Left:** Richards heads for victory at Lakeside, the first for the JPS M3. He was now coming into title calculations.



**Above:** After a lowly grid position at Calder, Brock moved up the field, no longer flying the Holden flag. Victims of his forward movement are Murray Carter's Skyline and the new Alfa 5 of Colin Bond.

**Left:** Youthful vigour wins out against old-fashioned aggression as Seton and Grice argue about race leadership at Calder.





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Frank Gardner



Jim Richards



Tony Longhurst



**Frank Gardner** (*Manager of JPS Team BMW*). Over a spectacular career, he's driven for Porsche, Lola, General Motors, Ford, Brabham and Lotus as well as private teams. Twice British Champion Racing Driver, three times British Saloon Car Champion and European Champion in Formula 5000, Formula 2, Touring Car and Saloon Car. The first driver in the world to score 100 wins in Saloon Car Races. **Jim Richards** (*The Rainmaster*). A unique driver who's handled everything on wheels, Australian & New Zealand Touring Car Champion and a winner at Bathurst on three occasions. **Tony Longhurst**. A comparative new-comer to big-time motor-racing, this young driver is showing he has what it takes to get to the top and stay there.

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able turnaround from the Johnson Sierra's performance in the first two rounds — ninth at Calder and the same result at Symmons Plains the week after on March 8. Johnson's teammate, Gregg Hansford, in an identical new team car, didn't fare much better, retiring at Calder with an expired turbo and sixth at Symmons. This embarrassment for Johnson in his first outings at the head of a fully sponsored big buck, two-car outfit was heightened by the fact that touring car newcomer Andrew Miedecke in the rival, low budget rival Sierra of Don Smith, finished ahead of the folk hero on both occasions.

The Calder and Symmons result for Johnson seemed inexplicable, especially after Johnson had put his new car on the front row for Calder alongside the other new wave car — the M3 of Richards. What everyone quickly forgot was that Johnson, and indeed Richards, were higher up the grid than they ought to have been because their light, nimble new charges, without power to waste, coped better with the damp conditions of qualifying.

Power was the operative word. Both the Sierra and the BMW were relatively underpowered for their race debut — the turbo-charged Sierra at around 300 hp and the BMW at 285 — and used it all up to get to the front on the grid. The BMW was stuck at that power level for the meantime until the next range of engine components came due in April but that was not so much of a problem as the black machine only weighed in at 960 kg, which was 75 less than the Ford and Nissan and a whopping 385 less than the 430 hp Commodore.

The Johnson Sierra should have had more power to match the claimed 340 of the Skylines at Calder. The Oxo team did, team owner Don Smith putting his faith in the engines of English racer, and engineer Andy Rouse who was engineering and supplying race components for the newly homologated Sierra Cosworth RS in an arrangement with Ford Britain.

The fiercely independent Johnson decided to go his own way, in the manner of Frank Gardner, but without the direct factory backing that Gardner had, his task was made much tougher, and of course, unlike the BMW team, which had been fiddling with a Three Series car of their own for two seasons, Dick had cleaned out his workshop completely of V8 iron and started from scratch. There were those then who predicted the dour Dick would be floundering for quite a while. "Once you are out of the country," Gardner observed, "it is a lot more difficult as people like Dicky will find out. Fortunately we have been working out of the country for a few years now so we have got ourselves conditioned to the way it is."

Dick however knew he had the car to win and had proved with his lone development exercise on the Mustang, unwanted by anybody else around the world as a Group A contender, that he had the will and expertise to do the job. He had done it with a thinly funded private team consisting of himself and just three devoted helpers, including his brother Dave. Suddenly in 1987 he had a major sponsor for the first time and a budget that enabled him to triple the size of the staff to include a much needed a full-time manager, from Shell, and a chief engineer, Neal Lowe, the New Zealander who was lured away from the Holden Dealer Team by the exciting prospect of Johnson's new super team. He therefore had the resources to match anybody.

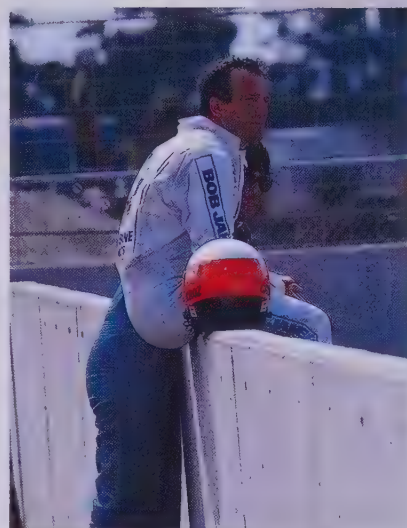
In the beginning, building the cars for himself and team-mate Hansford for a two-car assault was a straightforward enough exercise for Dick. The cars started out as Belgium-sourced shells and, with money to fully support Johnson's philosophy of meticulous preparation, they were nothing short of masterpieces. "You wait until you see these cars," Johnson gushed, "They are the best two cars you have ever seen. They are by far the best two cars we have built and just as far as workmanship goes, they are far superior to anything else I have seen."

The engine side was a different matter. While

Johnson applauded the quality of the Rouse components, time largely beat them and the result was not much better than standard performance. "All we have done is give the engine a head job and screw up the boost." Only enough English bits could be secured in time for one engine — that in Johnson's car. The bits for the other car were fabricated in-house.

"Sufficient," was how Johnson summed up the car's performance in the countdown to Calder. With just 40 laps of Surfers testing under his belt prior to going south, Johnson had every reason to feel happy after the result of qualifying, but he knew that there was a threat of being swamped at the rolling start on the fine, warm Sunday. He was swamped alright and ninth in the end could have been a lot worse if all the cars that got past, including the V8s of Peter Brock, Garry Scott and Graeme Crosby, hadn't retired.

Apart from lack of zip, the Shell cars began to overheat and with the increasing temperature, performance dropped off. The engine management system, still a mystery to a team used to carbies, was the culprit — it wasn't set to



GARRY SAINES

**Above:** Graham Lusty and Graeme Crosby sit out the rest of the Calder opener, their cars bogged in the sandtrap at the end of the back straight. The Kiwi later ran out of funds and abandoned the series.



**Left:** Sad end for the famous 05 at Lakeside underlined the troubled times for the HDT. The car was throwaway after new team driver Gary Scott crashed it during testing.

**Below:** Shades of the future, the rival Sierras of Miedecke and Hansford continue to find their level at round two in Tasmania.

RACEPRESS



RAY SIMPSON





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compensate for the different conditions of race day. Early times in the 1m 62s (five secs faster than in damp qualifying) dropped rapidly to 64s, allowing the competition to overhaul the Ford hero on the warmish day. Hansford was in worse shape; the boost eventually disappeared, then the turbo completely packed it in.

Since Symmons Plains, round two, was the following weekend, the dispirited team knew there was nothing they could do until they headed home to the workshop to do some solid thinking and development work prior to Lakeside. Neal Lowe, ginger hair well at home in the all-red of the team's enclosure after Calder, was reflective. "I'm not surprised. We have to do a lot of development very quickly and we are into the learning curve right now."

They worked and worked and within three more races won to stop the early championship march of Nissan. So what had started out as looking like a Nissan benefit, because nobody else really had a tried and true product able to go the distance of the championship, turned into the most intense contest in touring car history.

And the timing couldn't have been better. After a shaky start in 1985, Group A blossomed in 1986 and was set to take off for 1987. For the first time there was a rich bank of prizemoney, some \$250,000 from series sponsor Shell. The Dutch-based petrol company, which is the Australian market leader, jumped right into the championship boots and all, to help promote its Ultra unleaded brand. This was additional to the small fortune the company was pouring into the new-look Johnson team as the first year of a three-year association.

Such financial incentive was what the touring car championship had always lacked and in fact essential for the 1987 season to come together. The 'prestige' of getting a tin cup for winning the national title finally wore off in 1986 and there was a lot of understandable bleating about the high costs incurred during the extended, yet unsponsored 1986 nine-race series. That was followed at season end by talk of cutting back the series, until Shell came along. The nine race format was retained to bring the series to its

maximum audience and the races lengthened to 150 km to make each round a real test.

The initial response to the revamped series was an unprecedented flurry of activity at the bases of the major teams during the lead up to the kick-off. There were some heavy pre-season testing programmes being conducted, especially by Nissan and the Team Enzed Perkins operation of Larry Perkins and new cars were popping up everywhere. It was like Bathurst had been rescheduled to the beginning of the year.

Enticed out of the garages for the Calder opener, was a cast of thousands. The star bill included Fury and Seton (Peter Jackson Nissan Skylines); Richards and young sidekick Tony Longhurst (JPS Team BMW M3s); Johnson and Hansford (Shell Ford Sierra Cosworths); Brock and John Harvey (Mobil Holden Dealer Team Commodores); Grice and Crosby (Roadways Racing Commodores); Colin Bond (Network Alfa 75 turbo) and Larry Perkins (Enzed Commodore).



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**Above:** Johnson saddles up for the new season with a brand new car and a big budget, two-car team.

**Left:** Blown turbos in the Johnson Sierras became a familiar sight in the championship. The little Fords were fast but fragile.



**Below:** After collecting a few famous scalps, Johnson continues to fly at record pace at Lakeside. He now has his sights set on race leader Seton.

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RAY SIMPSON



Most of those teams had pencilled themselves in for the whole series, although the HDT and Roadways had some conflicting schedules. In the HDT's case, team manager John Harvey was talking about doing the inaugural world championship with two new VL models. Backing was proving hard to find, but Harvey was still working on a deal as Calder rapidly approached. It would mean splitting of team resources during the parallel running of the local and world series and if the championship programme came together, it was likely that only Brock would contest part of the local series in first an existing VK, then later a new VL.

But when Calder came around, Harvey had left the HDT, so had Allan Moffat, so had newly appointed team manager Mick Webb and sundry other staff. This followed the sensational announcement by Holden Motor Company on February 22 that it had ceased its business arrangement with Brock. The announcement was greeted with shock: surely the General can't do this to their favourite son after an 18-year association on the track and the raging success of the seven-year-old HDT Special Vehicles.

But it did, over a dispute that had been festering for many months. The car company had watched with concern the growing independence of HDT Special Vehicles due to the increasing influence of an associate company called Peri Integration.

Holden's firmly requested Brock remove it from the cars.

Flashpoint came a few weeks later before Calder when Brock launched his new car, the maxi-macho Director which Brock hoped to sell to the U.S. Holden hadn't approved the car for public launch, nor been involved in usual development, testing and design rules compliance procedure. The company refused to have anything to do with it and the day after the launch came the announcement: "Peter Brock-HDT and Holden's worked well together when the relationship was a true partnership. In recent months Holden's have not been given the opportunity to work closely with Brock-HDT on their programmes. The situation has become inoperable." Brock apparently didn't believe Holden wouldn't cut the umbilical cord, but this was not the same soft-hearted company of the golden years. In December, Holden's, after suffering heavy losses for several years was re-born as the deadly serious Holden Motor Company with a brief from its U.S. parent to be viable, or else.

Brock saw it as a move aimed at "crushing an innovative Aussie company" and stories about the Polariser etc. were just a smokescreen to mask the real reasons for the dispute. He claimed these were Holden's desire to set up its own special vehicles operation and also secure a market for its own Holden Motor Sport Group, independent of the HDT. He was allowed a wry

sold to a wealthy buyer who later turned out to be acting on behalf of former team member Allan Moffat, primarily to protect Brock from any short term embarrassment while he was in temporary hot water. The car went to Europe where Moffat was joined by Harvey to contest the world championship.

Sticking with Brock through thick and thin were his loyal fans, who gathered several deep about the trestle tables of the 'garage sale' of Brock paraphernalia in the Calder pits. Brock was proud and defiant as ever and rested on the new HDT slogan word 'integrity' through the tense weekend.

But this was racing after all, where Brock thrived, and all other problems were forgotten for the moment. Unfortunately for him the time taken up in the office defending against the Holden attack kept him away from the track where he should be out there sorting rubber which was going to have a big influence on the championship and the ability of the heavy, powerful Holdens to see out the longer duration races against a proliferation of light, nimble opponents.

An embattled Brock found himself languishing in an uncharacteristic 11th grid spot. In the race, it was Peter Brock in fine form steering the VK he used in New Zealand to great effect. He blasted his way into fourth at the rolling start and within six laps was third after outdragging the little BMW of Richards. Thereafter, only a hard-charging Perkins, and Fury, successfully challenged the Mobil car until lap 35 when clouds of white smoke indicated big trouble.

For the title opener, the car had a brand new engine fitted. It was so new that there was some poor casting in one of the bores. Sand and other debris broke away to make a mess of the cooling system and cause overheating. The team even found traces of sand in the radiator later on. Meanwhile his Holden rivals — Grice and Perkins — were splitting the Skylines in front.

On his way back to the paddock, past the main grandstand, Brock was far from crushed by it all. There were cheers and jeers from the biggish crowd, reflecting their feelings for the man and their personal stand on the Holden-Brock struggle away from the track. To many therefore, he was far from the fallen idol.

In the second Brock car, replacing John Harvey was Gary Scott, the former Peter Jackson Nissan team driver whose differences of opinion with Fred Gibson over his status in the team during 1986 led to no invitation to resume with the team in 1987.

There was some irony there as Scott had driven with the HDT in 1983 soon after his return from a successful, if financially crippling tilt at Formula Three in Britain. Wanting to race more regularly in touring cars, the ambitious, straight-talking Scott jumped ship to Nissan's new racing operation, which preceded the Gibson-run Nissan operation.

Scott, tied up developing his automotive service businesses in Brisbane in the new year and resigned to be without a drive for the foreseeable future, got quite a surprise when Brock tracked him down and made the offer. Scott had to be top of the list anyway, he was the hot driver after taking pole at Bathurst 1986.

Brand new to the car, he nevertheless displayed his obvious class at Calder, lifting from 14th on the grid to as high as eighth, sitting just behind Johnson's overheating Sierra. That was until a tyre failure on the back straight sent the spirited Queenslander heading, all locked up, into the sandtrap and into the panelwork of the already bunkered Graham Lusty Commodore.

On the face of it that disastrous day for Brock's men seemed to prove that the off-track dispute with Holden had fundamentally weakened the team. More evidence for this view came during the next race at Symmons when Scott was a casualty again, this time with a tailshaft failure. Brock did do well on paper to come home third after holding second early, but was shamed by a flying Grice on a track made



The new company was formed by Brock and others to independently pursue various projects, some of which were related to HDT Special Vehicles. A key figure in this company was the mysterious Dr Eric Dowker, a chiropractor and new Brock confidante with unconventional notions about health, the universe and everything. His presence in the pits and his curious antics provoked quite a bit of amusement within the sport through 1985 and 1986. There was also much speculation that Brock was being overly swayed by Dowker's advice in matters that were best left to specialist staff, and this was being reflected in the team's dry spell on the track.

Holden's anxiety centred on the results this new thinking was having on the development of the road specials it was obliged to support through its dealer network. The first big dispute was over the fitting of a Peri Integration device called an 'Energy Polariser' to some of the HDT cars. The controversial accessory was a small box containing some crystals and foil wrapped magnets which were encased in a resinous material. When fitted properly, the Polariser was supposed to realign the molecules of the car and make it run quieter and more efficiently. There were a lot of sceptics, including Holden, who claimed after testing it that there was no technical merit in the device. General Motors-

smile later in the month when Holden announced the formation of the Holden Motor Sports Group. An off shoot of the engineering department, with a company engineer John Lindell in charge, its role was to work with a select band of teams on homologation and evolution of the Commodore for racing purposes and then provide components and information — at a price — for any team which chose to use the car. It would not, stressed Holden, directly support any one team in any type of factory operation.

So when Calder came around, the factory backed HDT was no more and Peter Brock was competing in the unique guise of a privateer for the first time since his character building sabbatical away from the HDT between 1975 and 1978. Any reference to 'Holden' had been scrubbed off the two 'ex-works' cars and the outfit re-named Mobil Dealer Team.

The dispute between Brock and Holden had deteriorated into a bitter war of words in the days prior to Calder and had exploded into the public arena with much general media attention being focused on the 'Polariser' and the role of Erick Dowker. Cut off from his primary source of revenue — cars ordered through the Holden dealer network — the HDT plunged into a cash flow crisis. One of the VLs which had been built for the shelved world championship assault was



for V8 power. Further evidence came the next outing at Lakeside when .05 was no more.

Scott, at the wheel of the famous numbered racer during unofficial practice on the Friday was doing some bedding in. He simply made a mistake at the dogleg and was still struggling to regain control of the sliding car when it ran out of room. The car, new for the 1986 Castrol 500, smacked the bank a mighty blow to bring its race career to an end.

When the news was phoned through by the car's 'nanny' George Smith, Brock took the sad news well. Scott admitted to his error and the boss, still plugging integrity in his fight with Holden, complimented Scott for his honesty.

With a new VL still unfinished, Brock was forced to do the next three races alone in the remaining No. 6. Fifth, seventh and fourth were the results, all the time overshadowed by the Roadways and Perkins Commodores in outright performance.

The truth about the Brock outfit was that it was far from crumbling. Although the team had lost some staff, several key workshop staff remained loyal to the cause — in particular Smith who continued to act as personal mechanic on Brock's own car and long time HDT mechanic Marty Watt, who was promoted to chief mechanic. There was no diminution of mechanical expertise, Brock maintained, but he did concede they had fallen behind in the development race.

"We have gone through a period of time without development," Brock said, "and the thing about Group A is that things change daily. We had an uncompetitive car last year and I have only stayed competitive by driving on the ragged edge and that's what I'm doing even now, driving on the ragged edge."

The team was unbowed by the trying times and the on-track drought and was looking for a fresh new start with the VL, around Surfers time (round six) which would coincide with a major engine development programme.

The other surprising fact was Brock's continually chipper attitude in the early stages of the championship and the high morale of the team, despite all. Brock commented: "What was uplifting for them was when Mobil came along and said, 'We don't want to know about the business side, we want you to be our man and our presenter.'"

The stark reminder of how far the HDT had fallen behind in the unceasing, exhausting development war was the speed Larry Perkins and Allan Grice showed from the championship outset. Perkins made no bones about the speed of his car. "You see we have got the quickest Holden in the world," he said before Calder and repeated matter of factly after taking a close second to Seton.

Fresh from his victory at Pukekohe the month previous, Perkins had literally worn out Calder in endless chassis testing from November to January with a freshly reworked engine. The car had reached a peak and it is likely he would have won at Calder, if he hadn't been a victim of the first corner squeeze which left him down in 10th at the conclusion of the first lap. His fight up to second behind Seton by half distance, setting fastest lap in the process, was the highlight of the race, apart from Seton's skill in staying just ahead of the Commodore for the rest of the event.

"Congratulations to Glenn," Perkins said. "I put a lot of pressure on him but I couldn't make him crack — I almost cracked myself actually, especially on the first lap. I made such a good start that I was a bit surprised because everyone else was cautious at the start. I left my braking too late and didn't want to flat spot my tyres, so I ran wide."

The expectation was that it was just a matter of a race or two before Larry, in his first full touring car campaign on his own, would win. But it never happened. Lacking an exclusive supply tyre deal, he had to make do with whatever was available on the open market and



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**Far left:** Fire! A fuel leak and brief fire was the first of two consecutive retirements for championship favourite, George Fury. It ended any title hopes for the Nissan man.

**Left:** Grice was the first to have the new VL Commodore, but had teething troubles with it from the first moment.



**Left:** The demise of Brock put the Holden focus on Larry Perkins in his first ATCC campaign. The former HDT man claimed he had the fastest Group A Commodore in the world.

**Below:** The end of 05 resulted in Brock taking over the team's second car for Lakeside. He managed to keep the JPS M3s at bay until his tyres went off.

ROB MOORE



RACE PRESS





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it was rubber which let down the otherwise fine handling, powerful Enzed-funded machine.

Perkins remained in the pace in qualifying and a big influence in the early stages of most of the early rounds. He led briefly in Perth and hung on doggedly to the lead for some time at Adelaide, but each time the car ran out of grip and slipped down the field. Third at Wanneroo was his only top placing in the early stages of the championship.

It was at this Adelaide round that the growing rivalry between Holden competitors Perkins and Grice turned physical as the two jostled on the track to become Holden's new No. 1 man. Similarly press-on in style and never-give-an-inch in attitude, the two Holden high-fliers first banged panels at Wanneroo, then Grice bull-dozed Perkins off at Adelaide, fortunately without hurt or great delay in either, after swapping a few dents in a preliminary bout early in the race. Of the Adelaide incident the fiery Grice pointed out that both cars were sliding around and when the Enzed Commodore swung back on line with correction, the corner of the close-following Roadways VL was in the gap. Perkins had a simple explanation: Grice pushed him off.

It could be reasonably assumed that the form driver of the era — Allan Grice — would have carried on his late 1986 winning streak which included absolute mastery at Bathurst. It was not to be — despite his Yokohama contract — and he, like Perkins, had just one third placing to his credit after five rounds.

Grice's lack of success could be sheeted back to the unravelling of his Roadways team manager, Les Small's plans to contest the world championship with a Skyline. Small explained before the championship: "We haven't done any development since before Bathurst because we were going in that direction and we just stopped development on VK completely."

The team had to do some rethinking about its priorities for the year. Following the securing of some respectable, rather than lucrative backing from Bob Jane T-Marts, Small and Grice decided to stay home for a while — to the travel weary crew's great relief — and hope to do the full championship. This was to be a two-car operation — Commodores for Bathurst champ Grice and new team member, Graeme Crosby, the so-called rookie of the year in 1986. The only conflict would be Grice and Crosby's involvement in Bob Jane's incredibly ambitious NASCAR assault in May.

For a start the team had to find two Commodores — they had sold their late 1986 VK and Crosby had left his tired old example in New Zealand to sell after the Nissan-Mobil series. Eventually Small leased the Bathurst-winning car from Graeme Bailey for Grice and Kiwi Graeme Cameron's car for Crosby. Just for the first two races, though, until brand new VLs could be built.

Fortunately the team hadn't abandoned Commodore development completely — they had been involved in some heavy pre-season dyno work on the VL V8 for Tom Walkinshaw Racing, who had tentatively and curiously swapped from Rover to Holden for the impending world championship. That gave Roadways a flying start when Grice debuted the first VL at Lakeside — by himself. The Jane deal, renegotiated after the first two outings, sadly did not stretch to a second car for Crosby and 'Croz' didn't have the extra dough to make up the shortfall.

The VL, an evolution of the VK and sporting a menacing droop snoot and audacious bonnet scoop, was approved for racing on January 1, but since the main changes to the car centred around stronger engine components, the Commodore users stuck with the VK for the early part of the season. The practical Perkins, for his part, had too much investment in his super competitive VK to throw it away after just six months in favour of fashion. The man who built Brock's most successful Commodores, put all thoughts of VL aside until the longer races later

in the year when the stronger engine would be of more benefit.

It was a feather in the cap for Grice then at Lakeside when he did appear in the new VL. By doing so he had become Holden's new flag waver, although it was not the world debut of the car, Moffat and Harvey took that honour at Monza in March.

The Roadways team quickly found that while the VL was OK on power, the chassis was a real handful for some reason. The car slipped and slid and bounced around when the power was applied for its first appearances, dropping Grice out of championship contention.

He had been quicker in his old Bathurst-winning VK. Only a faulty brake adjuster, blamed on the driver's inability to master the dial rather than a mechanical fault, stopped him vying for the lead at Calder with Seton. The following race at Symmons, he was going gangbusters in the lead after starting from pole, only to retire with a failing alternator. Cynics suggested that without the big budget and the stabilising influence of Graeme Bailey, now retired from driving, the Roadways team had fallen back into their bad old ways of silly little things going wrong. And there was some truth in that, the team reminding everyone that the budget was not that healthy, despite Jane backing.

Both times Grice's difficulties left the way clear for the Nissans, the team with its act together. Then along came the next generation of Group A cars, to shape the outcome of the remaining races. And to shape the future.



RAY SIMPSON



STAN ALEXANDER



RAY SIMPSON

**Top:** Richards turned the little BMW into a winner by the third race. There was nowhere he wasn't a threat and as a result he took over the title leadership from Seton.

**Above:** Three wins in the early part of the championship by Seton were not enough to prevent Richards build up a healthy points tally and challenge for the title.

**Left:** Some adjustments to the Sierra when the Johnson team returned to Brisbane after the Symmons Plains round, turned the Ford into front runner.

## Australian Touring Car Championship 1987:

### Round one, Calder Park (Vic.), March

**1:** 1 — Glenn Seton (Nissan Skyline), 2 — Larry Perkins (Holden Commodore), 3 — George Fury (Nissan Skyline), 4 — Allan Grice (Holden Commodore), 5 — Jim Richards (BMW M3). **Pole:** Jim Richards (M3). **Fastest lap:** Larry Perkins (Commodore). **Retired:** Peter Brock (Commodore) — engine; Gary Scott (Commodore) — flat tyre/accident; Gregg Hansford (Ford Sierra) — turbo.

### Round two, Symmons Plains (Tas), March 8:

1 — George Fury (Skyline), 2 — Jim Richards (M3), 3 — Peter Brock (Commodore), 4 — Glenn Seton (Skyline), 5 — Tony Longhurst (M3). **Pole:** Allan Grice (Commodore). **Fastest lap:** Allan Grice (record). **Retired:** Allan Grice (Commodore) — alternator; Gary Scott (Commodore) — tailshaft.

### Round three Lakeside (Qld), April 5:

1 — Jim Richards (M3), 2 — Glenn Seton (Skyline), 3 — Tony Longhurst (M3), 4 — Larry Perkins (Commodore), 5 — Peter Brock (Commodore).

**Pole:** Glenn Seton (Skyline). **Fastest lap:** Dick Johnson (record). **Retired:** Dick Johnson (Sierra) — turbo; Gregg Hansford (Sierra) — turbo; George Fury (Skyline) — fire.

### Round four, Wanneroo (WA), April 26:

Glenn Seton (Skyline), 2 — Dick Johnson (Sierra), 3 — Larry Perkins (Commodore), 4 — Jim Richards (M3), 5 — Gregg Hansford (Sierra). **Pole:** George Fury (Skyline). **Fastest lap:** George Fury (record). **Retired:** George Fury (Skyline) — engine.

### Round five, Adelaide (SA), May 3:

1 — Dick Johnson (Sierra), 2 — George Fury (Skyline), 3 — Allan Grice (Commodore), 4 — Peter Brock (Commodore), 5 — Jim Richards (M3). **Pole:** Jim Richards (M3). **Fastest lap:** Glenn Seton (record). **Retired:** Glenn Seton (Skyline) — engine; Gregg Hansford (Sierra) — electrics.

**Championship points after five rounds** (four to go): Jim Richards (Vic) **106**, Glenn Seton (Vic) **96**, Larry Perkins (Vic) **67**, George Fury (NSW) **66**, Tony Longhurst (Qld) **60**.







# THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE

ATCC: The concluding rounds

**DOWN TO THE FINAL ACT WENT THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE BETWEEN YOUTH AND EXPERIENCE, WITH FATE PLAYING A HELPING HAND ALONG THE WAY.**



**T**he new BMW M3 of Jim Richards lined up on the grid at Surfers Paradise, the fastest track in the country. It looked no different to the car that had faded in the open spaces of Adelaide, three weeks before. So there was every prospect that the little black machine would be blown off by large servings of boost and cubic inches, once again, and the championship opened right up for the final four rounds.

Less than an hour later the victor's green wreath stood out against the bright yellow Jim's driving suit. This had been an easy win, his second of the championship, and would set up his second Australian title. At Adelaide he had finished fifth when his only championship opponent, Glenn Seton, had not, to move into a slender points lead. His unexpected win and the failure of the Nissan Skyline to respond to Seton's right foot at Surfers, meant a clear arithmetical ascendancy with just three races to go.

The reason for the BMW slipping out of reach at Surfers was fundamental. It was a brand new car and the first time Frank Gardner's JPS Team BMW had actually fronted a M3 in full specification. Before then, in the first five rounds of the championship, Richards had been throwing around a nice new M3 shell without suspension to speak of and with an engine that was short of full power. All who watched were forgiven for not picking it up because Jim had done his usual thing of driving around the problem and obliterating it from view. No excuses was Jim's motto, as usual.

The new car was quietly introduced for a shakedown run at the Amaroo AMSCAR meeting two weeks before Surfers, but even then it was still not the full thing. The suspension wasn't ready and while the car had an extra 10 odd horsepower from new, improved production manifold, approved for racing on May 1, there had been a few teething troubles with the engine

**Above:** Thanks George. Seton takes over the lead in the Oran Park final when team-mate Fury deliberately slows down to let him through. To be champion the boy wonder had to win.

**Left:** Richards christens his new, identical looking M3 at Surfers. A little more refined than his first car, it carried him to three wins out of four races.



that Sunday in Sydney. George Fury in the sole Skyline had no difficulty keeping the little black car at bay.

For Surfers then, where No. 3 would have to have everything going for it, all was how it was supposed to be, how it had been in Europe from earlier in the year where the M3's were running amok. This European success was both source for pleasure and pain for Gardner and his crew. The pleasure came from the fact that he had been lobbying hard for the M3 in preference to a warmed over 635 during his pre-season trip to BMW Motorsport in Germany. "We were a voice in the wilderness," Gardner lamented, "Schnitzer didn't want to know, nobody wanted to know about the car. But we had enough experience with the little 325 to know the power-to-weight ratio permeations, to understand that suspension and to understand what that suspension required. So we budgeted on a well educated guess."

The pain came as the Sydney team went about building its two new M3's. Getting shells wasn't too much of a problem, neither was acquiring the all-new racy, more rakish sheet metal. But since Gardner's trip, the Europeans had seen the light. Either through Gardner's urging or a late conclusion of their own, the factory team, the semi-works teams and a horde of European privateers had raided the M3 spare parts bin in Munich. There was nothing left of the new adjustable suspension components that were an integral part of the whole package.

Until Surfers therefore Richards and exuberant young sidekick Tony Longhurst drove their M3s with the previous year's 325 suspension. That raised the car's centre of gravity for a start and the team, so meticulous and proud about its chassis tuning programme, were unable to adjust the suspension to match the latest, super low profile, super sticky tyres meant for the M3. The car had to run on hard old 16 inch 325 rubber and as a consequence was short of balance and grip, even by the standards of the 325 of 1986.

This was reflected in the results of Wanneroo and Adelaide, and especially at Adelaide where the car alarmingly gobbled up its rubber to leave Jim helpless in fifth place. Adelaide with its bowl had never been kind on the relatively narrow feet of Group A cars, but Surfers was simply evil.

Round five under the Gold Coast sunshine was scheduled for three weeks after Adelaide which would give the teams a bit of a break to freshen up their acts. A torrential downpour which flooded part of the circuit turned the break into four weeks and that helped the BMW team. They were ready.

When the teams arrived at the notoriously abrasive track, the surface's thousands of little knives had been washed clean and ready to do their tyre-shredding routine on those cars less nimble on their wheels. Even Richards was a little apprehensive first time on his new rubber.

Having two brand new cars in the space of a few months was a touch of luxury for Richards who was used to soldiering on with long-serving 635s. You couldn't tell the difference when you sat behind the wheel, Jim mused, but each new car went that little bit faster. There was nothing radical about No. 3 'Mark II' except that the team had already learned a bit more about the car and had done a bit of tidying up in its construction. Such attention to detail was vital with Group A cars so close in qualifying.

The benefits were seen on Saturday afternoon when the M3 was just two tenths away from the qualifying time of Larry Perkins' Commodore and Perkins was only kept off pole by Dick Johnson. Back on home ground, there was no stopping Johnson, the man pumped up to his irreverent best and the Sierra boosted to within an inch of its life; Johnson even proudly admitted to welding the wastegate shut and that meant not one neddy was going to slip the reins. So 'bang', the turbo went that afternoon, not so unexpectedly, but by then pole was well within his keeping.

The turbo that did the job for the folk hero was in fact the same trusty one that had brought him victory at Adelaide. It was overdue for a pension and a fresh one from a new, untried batch, was fixed on, fingers crossed on Saturday morning. What followed was less than one lap at 1.8 bar on Sunday afternoon, and not much more distance for team-mate Gregg Hansford, before that familiar cloud of smoke issued graphically to tell that the latest batch of turbine wheels were still not going to stay on their shafts.

Now all the Brisbane team could do was hope for the best in the next three rounds and wait for the bigger evolution turbo to be approved in August. Then they could stop losing sleep over turbo failures and divert some attention to the suspension which hadn't been touched in these expensive, smoky turbo times. It was more of the same for Johnson's car in the next two rounds at Sandown and Amaroo Park, which thoroughly demoralised the team. Luck, the reward for dogged persistence, went Dick's way in the finale at Oran Park where away from the central action, he took a relatively quiet third, his first finish since his ebullient Adelaide victory.

The embarrassingly speedy demise of Johnson at Surfers left Richards a clean run at Perkins and it was quite a sight, the little M3 dancing around the tail-lights of the Enzed Commodore. Larry had by this time entrenched himself as Holden's best bet in the post-HDT age, although this was but his second taste of leading the ATCC pack. It was brief glory however, as Richards was cleanly by the second time around and running clear with those extra few horses in such a light chassis carrying the car better out of the slower corners and producing a higher terminal speed.

This was the perfect scenario for the BMW. Richards had hoped to be up there from the start and then be in a position to concentrate on taking care of the tyres. Although the M3 was on its proper rubber, this was the first time and no durability testing had been done on them. Then there was the unkind track surface to add into the wear equation.

The official timing showed however that Jim's lap times hardly slid away, and in fact his quickest lap, a new record, was half a second better than the next fastest man — Andrew Miedecke.

It was only a matter of time before Miedecke, the hard-charging open wheeler star would make his impact in touring cars. He had dabbled for more than a year, now he was settled for the season in one of the two OXO team Sierras. Based in the lazy NSW resort of Port Macquarie, the bespectacled Miedecke was resigned to driving touring cars and there was no doubt that somebody of his level of skill and aggression would succeed in such hurly burly.

Anxious to secure his future in touring cars, the astute car dealer leased the ex-Petch Motorsport Sierra for the New Zealand Nissan-Mobil series and on his return, looking to continue the momentum, caught the frantic wave of Sydney veteran Don Smith. Smith, one of the many old Group C stagers intoxicated by the new challenge of Group A, had long had a dream of running a competitive touring car team. But did nothing serious about it until he found that another old Group C punter, John Craft, had the same dream.

Both Ford men, they forged a partnership in 1986 around the concept of campaigning two Ford Sierras, if they could find the money. So Smith, a truck spares man and Craft, a mechanic, dusted off and neatly packaged up their dream and went about finding someone with around \$250,000. "I went to dozens of companies," Smith recalled.

The pounding of shoe leather brought him to Seakist, the big British multi-national food product group. The company was looking for a different way of pushing a key line, OXO Supercubes, and Don couldn't have knocked on the door at a better hour. "Basically it was a dream come true," he grinned.

Smith and Craft went into the project knowing that it was technologically daunting. Smith prepared as well as he could locally with nuts and bolts by shipping out four shells from England, but brought in all the technology from the British Sierra expert Andy Rouse. "No-one in Australia has the knowledge," Smith declared flatly in a thinly disguised reference to the Johnson team.

Two cars and a spare were prepared at Smith and Craft's Smithcraft, their auto engineering shop near Amaroo, Sydney, for the championship, but this was the extent of the local work. The rest, including the engines were part of the bolt-on Rouse kit. From the beginning therefore the team's cars had good power — 350 hp for their best engine — and since Rouse had access to the best quality turbocharger components, Miedecke and Smith were unlikely to do a Johnson-type smoke trick.

All this cost money however, and even more than Smith counted on due to the fall in the value of the \$A. To compensate for this Smith came up with the idea of selling the cars, but at the same time keeping the team together under the same guise to honour his sponsorship commitment. This was quite a well organised operation so it was in the interests of any new owners to stay within the team structure and get the best result from their new investment.

Miedecke had put a deposit down on his No. 35 by Calder, and no doubt encouraged by the result there, bought the car soon after. John Giddings bought the second car, Smith's own mount, in time for Surfers, bailing out of the Nissan Gazelle under two-litre project he had been involved in with Fred Gibson's Nismo operation. With the not-so-inconsiderable funds from those two sales, Smith poured the money back into preparation and spares.

"We are a whole new team and we have a lot to learn," Smith admitted, and they were learning





at a good rate by listening intently to what Rouse told them. By Surfers the car was fitted with a new engine management system which allowed engines to deliver their full power. Miedecke, who had given a glimpse of the car's improvement by pestering Richards and Fury at the Amaroo non-championship meeting a few weeks before, made best use of it in Queensland to end up fifth fastest in qualifying, comfortably quicker than the Peter Jackson Nissans. Ahead of him were just Johnson, Perkins, Richards and Peter Brock in his new VL Commodore.

As Miedecke moved up into second behind Richards in the race it posed questions about why his car had succeeded here where Johnson had failed. And worse, this was Dick's territory and the OXO car was painted red too! Miedecke had of course got the measure of the Johnson car at Calder despite running out of brakes early due to inadequate brake ducting, and now the car had recorded its first placing.

The stewards of the meeting were puzzled too. They took a look at the Sierra after the race and in an incident not so different to that which got Johnson in hot water at Lakeside, they charged that the car was fitted with an illegal type of turbo-charger impeller. The impeller was the 'hi-flow' version, which apparently afforded no great performance advantage but was not the standard item noted in the homologation papers.

The unusually sanguine Smith was livid because he claimed the car had previously been raced with the 'hi-flow' impeller and had been given a clean bill of health at Lakeside. Concerned by the grey areas in the car's homologation papers and the literal interpretation of CAMS and the heat generated by the Johnson controversy, Smith had asked the scrutineers to check that all was legal with his cars at Lakeside. They found nothing, but what Smith didn't know was that the scrutineers hadn't



RACEPRESS

**Above:** Former single-seater ace, Andrew Miedecke, quickly made himself at home in touring cars. His second at Surfers was well-earned, then CAMS took it off him.

**Left:** Surfers was an off-meeting for the Skyline, the cars down-tuned to try to make them driveable. Seton struggled and was chewed up by Tony Longhurst in the second JPS BMW.



GARREN BOLD



gone to the extent of checking out the exhaust impeller.

None the wiser, the 'cubists' stuck with what they had right up to Surfers. So Andy was out and the team never really recovered from that setback, Miedecke not getting to the finish again. They, like the Johnson men, scowled in frustration and looked longingly towards the evolution components and all the lovely BMW-beating power and reliability it promised for the long distance races.

The Miedecke hearing took some time to be convened and Amaroo, round eight, had been run before the guilty verdict was handed down. There was more than the usual amount of interest in the outcome because the rubbing out of Miedecke shifted one Glenn Seton from fourth place to third in the Surfers results and that had a bearing on the championship points. The points system was revised for 1987 with points going for under and over 2.5 litre cars. Outright points were a bonus. As the BMW was in the little class virtually by itself and the Nissan turbo in the big class with the balance of the field, a win by Richards produced an avalanche of points.

Seton needed every point he could get. When Miedecke was excluded from the Surfers results, the Nissan man was elevated to third place and awarded a further five points from that race after Amaroo had been run, to put him back into the championship lead — just — for the Oran Park finale. It meant that Jim couldn't rely on points harvesting in that final race, he had to win to take the title.

At Surfers the Skylines had looked like beaten cars before the race started. While the BMWs played tag with the Commodores and Sierras during qualifying, the Nissan's performed lethargically. Fury recovered to take sixth spot on the grid but championship contender Seton was in eighth.

The problem was in the new fangled engine management system which the team still hadn't mastered. The engines had been detuned slightly to smooth out the neck-snapping acceleration of the Skyline on this super-fast track. The thinking was that the measure would stop the cars being chucked around on their less than pin-sharp suspension when the boost came on. The unanticipated side effect was that the cars had no power, the drivers pedal-to-the-metal through the corners in the race waiting for something to happen.

In any case, team boss Fred Gibson was not expecting too much at Surfers. The lack of exotic air dams and raised spoilers meant the Aussie-grown product could not match the stability of the M3's and Sierras through this circuit's superfast, European standard sweepers.

Fury, with his sensational car control, coped a little better with the handicaps than his young team-mate and circulated, out of trouble, in fourth for much of the race. And it would have been fourth across the line except that loyal George bowed to team orders and waved fifth-placed Seton through on the last lap. It was worth four points to Glenn.

Fury had long since lost any chance of taking the title and would play team tactics for the rest of the championship. There was some irony here because in each of the remaining three rounds farmer George had the upper hand. He was on pole for Sandown and Amaroo and at the Oran Park grand final where Seton was dramatically pushed aside by Richards, Fury charged to the flag to set the fastest lap of the race. On top of that, Fury became the master of the fast start, leading from the flag at each round, only to move over for his team-mate.

At Sandown it was all George Fury. Although Seton was right on his bumper all the way until the last lap when Fury moved aside, the younger man conceded it was Fury's race. "I can't win the championship," Fury reminded all after Sandown. "I'm sure Glenn would do the same for me."

The difference between the Nissans at Surfers and at Sandown, round nine, was remarkable

and this crushing one-two on their home track allowed the team to maintain its unbeaten record there. The Sandown layout certainly better suited the Skyline's engine/chassis characteristics — you need a lot of acceleration out of the slow corners and not much else. But why the sudden turnaround? "We are just starting to learn how to programme the computer," Fury said. "At Surfers we detuned the cars to make them more driveable. It didn't work so we went back to what we know and it worked."

Fury's late change in the series served to show 'what if' and that there was certainly life in the former rally ace despite his team-mate making the running for the championship and therefore getting the celebrity treatment which had previously been reserved for George. From the team viewpoint also, being in front allowed Fury to be in the best position to help Seton maximise the points situation. At Sandown Fury's No. 30 towed along No. 15 and at Amaroo next up, stormed off at the start and then blatantly, yet quite legitimately, shut the door on top of the hill to stall those behind him after letting Seton through.

At Oran Park, back on open spaces, the duo blasted off again, Fury and Seton forming a high speed train in an effort to pull out as much distance as possible on a clear track. When they looked to have a handy break of around three seconds on the pack hemming in Richards, Fury let Seton into the lead and settled down to play shotgun. Richards would be coming along soon, as sure as the sun rises, and there were those menacing rain clouds swirling above.

Fury declared himself a team man, so playing this supporting role to a young upstart half his age, didn't hurt that much, but George, introspective at most times, wasn't his usual chirpy self. At Surfers he was even distressed at the end of the race. He had fallen from his tractor at his country property near the Murray River only days before, then the out-of-control machine fell on him! Nothing had been broken but the slightly built Fury was still suffering from severe bruising. Being belted securely into a race car was not what you would call good treatment and by the end of the race George was fighting for breath. He was still sore and a bit sullen at Sandown, but in-built condition through hard yakka down on the farm, had him recovering quickly for the all important Oran Park round where he set a new lap record in a determined last minute scramble to salvage some self-respect for Nissan.

The postponed Surfers Paradise round brought the championship almost to June, a time when some of the teams not committed to the full championship, but needing some shake-down runs to prepare for the long distance, made their appearances. Added to the fray was the Mitsubishi Starion for Brad Jones and, from New Zealand, returned the two Nissan NZ-supported Skylines of the Kent Baigent-Graeme Bowkett axis.

For Mitsubishi, it was the end of their customary early season hibernation. The team still retained its Mitsubishi support, via Ralliart competition arm in Japan, but there was a major change in team structure. Doug Stewart, the former Mitsubishi competition kingpin in Australia during the heyday of Australian rallying in the late 1960s and early 1970s, moved in to take up the reins. He brought with him key sponsorship from Dulux, the paint company which wanted to push its new line of automotive finishes. Dulux incidentally is owned by ICI, the British multi-national chemical group which sponsors no less than the Williams F1 team.

The extra bickies allowed Stewart to top up the existing personnel by the appointment of George Shephard as team manager. This was certainly a challenge for the toothy, towering Shephard, a veteran management figure of the HDT rallying division, Dick Johnson Racing, Bob Morris team and Alf Grant team in Queensland.

He had charge of an ageing Group A contender

that should have been, but never was through lack of local support from Mitsubishi in Australia during 1986. Thankfully for Stewart's men, development, particularly in the area of the car's strongpoint — its engine — had been continuing in Japan to allow the team to dust off the equipment, update and plug into what line of development Ralliart in Japan and engine builders, HKS, also in Japan, were following. Blowing out the cobwebs at Surfers, where the car was best suited apart from Bathurst, was what the outing was all about. It was too early to expect anything and teething troubles with the engine management system abounded, Jones failing to finish after qualifying 14th. The car was then put into the transporter and not seen again until the endurance events. A waste of the youthful, popular Brad's abilities.

The Kiwis saw the importance of doing the remaining Australian races just as much to attune the drivers as to fine tune the cars. Their fledgling team had also gone through some changes with Ross Stone from Graeme Crosby's team taking on the team manager's role at the team's Calder base. With assistance from Nissan in their homeland and a lot of information supplied by Fred Gibson, the team was now getting on top of the car. Heaps of progress had been made on engine management — the old system, through — and of great significance was that they had hired the fabled engineer Murray Bunn to build the motors. Bunn was the Kiwi who played a key role in the rise of Jim Richards.

The team became the dark horse. At Surfers, Baigent matched the quickest times of Seton and Longhurst, and was just one tenth off Fury's best. In the race the duo quietly occupied the top ten to come home seventh and eighth. At Sandown the Auckland business partners improved further. Their Australian counterparts left them behind in qualifying but in the race they improved two spots on the Surfers result to only have just Seton, Fury, Perkins and Allan Grice finish in front of them.

Amaroo Park was a setback, but the team fought back for Oran Park with Baigent taking eighth, after again getting within a tenth of Fury in qualifying for a more than worthy seventh on the grid.

Also new at Surfers was a fresh car for Peter Brock. This was a VL, only the second to appear on the Australian tracks at that point, and built for the team's Spa assault. The debut of the new car with a re-designed Mobil colour scheme, was portrayed as a fresh start for the beleaguered HDT after the damage done to its image by the split with Holden's. And indeed it appeared to be a fresh start, for Brock claimed fourth on the grid. As well team-mate Gary Scott was on the pace, amongst the Peter Jackson cars.

For Scott this was his first race with his new team since he crashed the boss's 05 in the lead-up to Lakeside, round three. That had left the team with one car, which Brock commandeered up to Adelaide, so the Queenslander had to wait for the team to get around to building the new VL.

It was interesting to see how the older and the new model would compare, especially as Grice had complained about the difficulty in getting his VL to work and Perkins had decided to stick with the VK.

Pleased to be back in the driving seat and on homeground too, Scott made the best opportunity at the start of the Surfers round to be right with Perkins and Richards in the early stages, but he, like all the Commodore drivers, including Brock, fell back with grip rapidly going away. Brock found the situation particularly bad, later attributing it to the changing conditions, a comment echoed by several teams who found their cars sliding around on tyres and suspension setups that had been fine in the morning warm-up.

In the end most Commodore drivers, including Perkins, headed to the pits for fresh rubber and this novelty of Commodores making mid-race pit stops became a quite common sight in the



remaining rounds of the championship. As ever the main tyre companies were struggling to come up with the right sort of tyre to allow the heavy, powerful and relatively under-tyred Commodore to survive on the more demanding, tighter Australian tracks. Yokohama had managed to get a crossply to work for Grice's VK, but Grice had moved on to the VL, a different proposition, and the trend was to radials now. Grice's car was in fact the only car left running on old hat crossplies, they being a design that was largely unchanged from Bathurst 1986 and being pushed harder than had been for the new season. Yokohama were producing some radials for Grice, but it was to be a long, anxious wait.

The Bathurst winner was spared the embarrassment of Surfers because he was in the States playing NASCARs for Bob Jane. He was back for Sandown, the previously white VL turning up in its proper Bob Jane Sebring orange. "Bob finally got his way," Roadways team manager Les Small smiled.

It was Grice — and Richards — who supplied the action at Sandown in the final stages in the race when the Nissans had run loose from the front of the grid. Richards was one of those along with much of the rest of the field who was hampered by what had become the new tradition at Sandown — the first corner pile-up.

Getting involved in a bumping duel in the notorious left, right, left combination, after a long burst of acceleration, was something the Nissan team had to consider. Being on the front row and making a good start would be vital to keep clear of any carnage. Richards, on the second row, couldn't afford to let Fury and Seton get the better of him or worse get boxed in, so was not going to take it easy from the start.

Now making a good start in an M3 was tricky indeed. So far the M3 had shown that it was a complete race car, with no great weakness or any hangovers from a road car to hold it back from living up to its potential on the racetrack. But as with the 635, the M3 had been designed for endurance races and rolling starts, not the sprint races and standing starts of Australia, so the basic specification included a lightweight clutch. Couple that with a little engine that had to be buzzed hard to produce the power to shift the car and the best of drivers can find himself with a slipping, overheating clutch and no go.

"We took it off the line reasonably quickly at Sandown," Gardner recalled. "They both got bogged down and there were a lot of cars in front of them when they tried to haul back." Fortunately the little clutches are pretty durable and by letting them cool down they recover quite quickly.

It was a problem Gardner preferred to live with, his decades of experience making him wary of fiddling with a new package that was a winner in every other respect. "Clutches are free and we can do something about it, but you always like to ride along with what they are doing overseas, because if we start doing something and pick up a frequency and start tossing dampers and things like that, we get into the development department."

Richards and Longhurst were swamped off the line at Sandown. When it was time to turn in, the field was all over them, squeezing them out. The high kerbing of Sandown beckoned to both cars, ripping the sump right out of Longhurst's No. 4 for instant retirement. Richards was forced to go the same route to avoid a major accident but with an element of good luck avoided the worst of the kerbing and escaped with the sump intact. It still sported a dent however, the little M3s being set up lower to the ground than most cars.

Richards quickly put this moment out of his mind and re-asserted himself. Darting through a gap left by duellists Miedecke and Bowkett, Richards lifted to sixth and with the clutch coming back to prime operating temperature, upped the pace and was quickly with fifth-placed Johnson. Richards was now the quickest

man on the track. He was past Johnson in the hairpin and reeling Grice in at a great rate of knots. Getting around the Commodore proved a different matter, though.

Since Grice was dumped from the Gardner-BMW team at the end of 1981 and Richards took his place, these two hadn't had many full-blooded dices on the track so this was intriguing. The battle seemed like it would go the full distance as Richards could easily outbrake the Commodore to pass either side, but lost out on lack of torque exiting the slow corners. Sheer power kept the BMW at bay on the straights.

The two swapped places countless times as cleanly and fairly as you like through the in-field and were often heading towards the next corner side-by-side. It was clear however that the trimmer BMW, with capacity to go around the outside of the Commodore at will, would eventually come out on top. And after six laps of it, the Commodore paid the penalty with fading brakes, and Richards was free to chase third-



DARRIN BOULD

**Above:** Another turbo, this time at Sandown. Johnson could jodel about it, but it was demoralising the team by this time.

**Left:** The VL begins to come good for Joke at Sandown, but still the leading Holden man, Larry Perkins, had the edge in the older VK.

**Below:** The Nissan NZ duo of Baigent and Bowkett landed late in the championship to get some miles under their belts. They were a surprise packet and regularly finished well.

**Bottom:** Richards in determined frame of mind at Sandown.

After a poor start, the BMW man was a blur and had caught second placed Perkins when an oil starved engine let go for his only retirement of the series.



GARRY SPARKE



GARRY SPARKE

placed Perkins, a white speck in the distance, to collect a few more championship points.

Perkins had fallen some 11 secs behind the Nissan duo who by now were stroking it along, taking care of the tyres. Perkins found the Commodore much gentler on tyres here, the best since Calder and was quite happy to cruise home third. Any hope of fighting it out with Nissans ended during the opening moments of the race when a sticking throttle caused him to lock-up in the first corner and nearly take out Seton. "You can't win these races unless you get things technically correct," the pragmatic Larry explained.

Larry's next surprise came when he saw Richards in the mirrors. "He must have pulled some real quick laps!" Perkins was right, Richards had reeled off a series of record breakers to be a threat with just two laps to go. But the next time Larry looked, Richards had disappeared.



GARRY SPARKE



After a near perfect reliability record, the engine's insides broke apart with a shudder and a rattle. "It heard the rattle," Richards told engine builder Ludwig 'Goofy' Finauer later. "I reached down and was about an inch from turning it off when it went. What was it?"

The engine builder, turned development driver, turned race driver, grinned tightly in resignation, holding a broken conrod retaining bolt in his hand. "Here's the bolt, but I'm not sure where the conrod is!"

Through the duration of the event the BMW was running with dangerously low oil pressure, the legacy of the first corner incident. The impact on the kerbing had deformed the sump and the car had been leaking oil all the way. That wouldn't have been so much of a problem for this relatively short race except that the glancing blow also moved the oil pick-up and was causing oil starvation at high revs.

This diagnosis on the engine which had been new for Surfers, was a bit of relief for the BMW men who had heard reports of oil consumption and resulting conrod failures on the M3 in the world championship. JPS Team BMW had not until then experienced such a failure, despite extending the running times of their locally built engines as they become more confident about durability. Gardner merely dismissed the European problem as hotshot drivers trying to protect their backsides in the only way they know how.

The last lap halt of Richards produced what could only be described as an aberration in the result for Sandown. Out of the top ten, five were Skylines and five Commodores. The five Commodores were Perkins, Grice, David Parsons (making his return to the HDT in the older car), Brock in the VL and speedway identity Tony Noske in the old Perkins VK.

Was this a belated comeback for the Holdens? Hardly. Grice was scathing about the car after the race and Brock showed what he thought of his two-race old car by heading for the pits for fresh rubber and then seeing out the rest of the event elbow resting on the door in a sign of disgust.

But Brock was committed to racing the marque, although no longer out of love or moral obligation. His ninth place at Sandown was one of the worst results of his career and showed how much the team had fallen off the pace in comparison to Team Enzed Perkins and Roadways Racing and how much needed to be done to produce some handling and power.

It was worse for the new team with a new model and a whole new set of suspension and engine variables to figure out. At least with the VK they had a proven, if not fully developed, race package. Evidence for that was Scott coming home ahead of Brock at Surfers and Parsons doing the same at Sandown.

The frowns at the Roadways pit after Sandown was further proof of problems for those running Holdens. Here was a team which had clawed its way to the top through 1986, suddenly finding itself scratching around in the unknown with a new car. "It is the most finicky car I have ever driven," Gricey volunteered as he drowned his sorrows with a rum and coke after Sandown.

The crew had taken the VL out to Calder prior to Sandown to try and sort out the handling. They thought they had worked it out, but no. According to Small the re-styling of the front of the car, in particular the dropping of the nose, had changed the airflow at the front to the detriment of the handling. Air was getting under the car, lifting it and causing a major chassis imbalance. As well the car refused to put its power down out of the corner. "The back of the car just goes, 'boom, boom, boom,'" the Bathurst titleholder lamented.

It made the team that was a world-beater a season before look ineffective and that irritated the team members. "Everybody else was on radials and had them working," Small said later, "We were losing that much time out of the corner, it looked like we were down 100 hp on

everybody. It sat there wheelspinning and they all just marched off into the distance."

However the team wasn't that far behind the Perkins VK on the road, and that older car had been developed to its peak. The galling fact was that the VL was theoretically an improvement on the breed. Grice believed that they were heading in the right direction and with Yokohama about to deliver their new radials anytime, the problem would be confronted.

The only people who had experience of the problem before were in other teams — Allan Moffat and John Harvey racing the first HDT VL in Europe and Neal Lowe now with Dick Johnson. Before he left HDT in February, Lowe had spent six months testing the VL and hurdling the problem. He took the secret with him. "It is only a matter of time, they will twig onto it," he teased.

As it turned out, Grice was right about the effect radials would have on the VL. On his return from the U.S., the Yokohama crossplies were gone and the first radials in their place in plenty of time for Oran Park.

"We had changed the car and changed the car and changed the car," Small groaned. "Finally for Oran Park we were able to modify the suspension to suit the tyres and it became a different car all of a sudden."

Unfortunately the Bob Jane-backed Roadways Commodore didn't get a chance to show its new found surefootedness. The team had spent so much time fiddling with the suspension that they had neglected the rest of that car. Small recalls: "The engine had been left in for a ridiculous amount of miles. Saturday night we had a fresh engine to put in and I said to Allan, 'What are the oil temperature and pressures running at?' He said, 'Not a problem. Perfect.' And on the third lap of the race off it goes!"

The car blew a head gasket. Grice struggled for another 12 laps, then an oil leak developed at the rear end and that was that. It was an uncomplimentary end to the season, but then the team had made the decision to use the final races as a test session. So had a few others.

There were just two rounds after the Nissan whitewash at Sandown and the Nissans were heading into BMW's territory — Amaroo Park. "I'm worried a bit," Seton admitted after Sandown, "because BMW do all their testing there." But team Nissan boss Gibson believed he had planned well for this with the information they had gained during the non-championship day Fury alone contested there, defeating a trio of black BMW's and the 150 laps of testing they had done at the tyre-eating, pocket-sized circuit the week before.

As it turned out Seton was justified to be concerned because the BMWs bounced back from the Sandown wipe-out to turn the tables and record the team's first one-two. But they had to come from behind to do it and before the race, and after qualifying, Gibson was allowed to snigger: Fury was on pole and Seton beside him for an all Nissan front row, so vital at this cramped track. And Richards, where was Richards? An incomprehensible ninth for fifth row of the grid next to the troubled, but improving Alfa Romeo 75 of Colin Bond. Then came Longhurst.

But there was a black BMW on second row, this being the third JPS car for Finauer, making his championship debut. It was all guns blazing for the JPS Team BMW in their local debut, but a real mystery why the lead drivers were so slow and the rookie so quick. The conclusion was that Ludwig's car had the best engine. How was it, the confused asked, that the bloke who built all the engines managed to get the best of the crop fitted to his car? It was just one of those quirks of fate, came the official answer and in the race, quirky enough to allow Goofy to keep the opposition occupied until first Jim, then Tony, arrived in his rear vision mirror to take up the BMW cause.

With so much at stake, a grid somewhat out of logical order and track where passing was a euphemism for suicide, it was indeed a scramble

at the start. Fury made it worse by protecting Glenn's rear and then after a few laps falling right off the pace due to a big handling problem. The No. 30 Skyline had been equipped with a harder compound tyre than the sister car, and this appeared to be the cause of no grip at the front. Much later it was discovered that the suspension had been set-up wrongly for the race and was not allowing the tyres to heat up. The effect was a traffic jam on the Nissan's rear and in the following few laps the white and blue paintwork was decorated with the colours of the opposition as they literally panel-beat their way through.

The cool head of Richards prevailed in these heated circumstances. He waited in the queue for the limited opportunities and made full use of them. Thus within four laps he was sitting in fifth but blocked ahead by the linked Commodores of former buddies Brock and Perkins. Further ahead was Johnson who won his piece of road by barging through Fury. Then there was Seton out on his own.

Richards was confident that on overall race time the M3 was more than a match for the Skyline, but he could not afford to be held up by the Commodores which would certainly be slowed dramatically once their tyres went off. To move forward, Richards put the BMW's startling braking power to the test. He despatched the Commodores quickly, was delayed for a lap trying to get by an unhelpful Johnson and by 40 laps of the 70 lap event had taken the front spot by conclusively outbraking the Nissan. Glenn however was not going to argue, the Skyline's power plant having lost boost — down from 1.4 to 1.1 — and therefore about 30 horses. That was diagnosed to the metal of the wastegate valve warping with the heat. For all important Oran Park, the problem was solved by fixing on a heavy metal version.

There was still plenty of Amaroo to go, and soon Longhurst was on the march to the front. To get up to Seton, Longhurst had driven in his usual devilish, daring manner. The difference this time was that he had channelled much of his aggression into attacking the track instead of his opponents. The wavy-haired Queenslander was really charging, collecting the lap record as he went, then the scalp of Seton by bamboozling his fellow young lion under brakes. Seton briefly locked up and went into the grass to help Tony make a not too subtle point about his personal view of the pecking order in Australian touring car racing in the light of Seton's sudden elevation to superstardom.

Longhurst ended up only half a second behind his senior team-mate to make the one-two visual and irritating for the Nissan pit. Then came the dispirited Peter Jackson Nissan twins, Perkins, and a then a surprise — Finauer — who had performed his back-up role admirably.

The win by Richards, his third, set the scene for the play-off. So to the finale at Oran Park where the BMW and Nissan camps faced each other across the plains of Camden, west of Sydney, like two opposing armies.

Gibson took a leaf out of Gardner's book by calling for reinforcements. The team's display car — the original late 1985 prototype was pulled out of the shopping centre somewhere in deepest suburbia, quickly re-built and then handed over to newly-appointed endurance teamster John Bowe. At the same time Glenn's machine was given a fresh engine, gearbox, everything. It was to be three cars all, in an unprecedented shoot-out that made the supporting cast incidental to the main event.

All eyes now focused on the protagonists. The pair were simply too mild mannered and neighbourly to fit the modern day image of the belligerent, fist thumping sports star. In many ways the baby-faced Seton was a junior version of Jim: quiet, self-controlled with the competitive spirit drawn from within when the flag dropped.

It was hardly a confrontation of the sort that promoters dream about because the two were full of respect and admiration for one another. Young Seton reckoned Jim was one of the best



two drivers in the country —the other being Brock — and a gentleman to boot, while Richards couldn't recall ever seeing Glenn make an error and for one so young he seemed able to handle a lot of pressure.

Richards had an opportunity to see just how much pressure the 'kid' could handle at around the 28 lap mark when for the first time in the race, since the first corner, there was just clear air between he and the white and blue No. 15. And the gap was quickly narrowing.

The problem for Glenn was that fate was against him, because rain, the stuff that Jim Richards doesn't mind at all, had started to sprinkle down. With car control to the fore, Richards ate big portions out of the Nissan driver's lead.

At this point of the race Richards' imposing reputation in the wet didn't even cross Seton's mind, he was too busy trying to stay on the road. "I believe he is as good in the wet but I don't believe he is unbeatable," Glenn said later. "I knew that when he caught me, he had to get around me!"

It was probable that the BMW would be there at the start, Jim really wanting to win this race to put the result beyond question. He had been third, right on Seton's boot at the start, but with a hot clutch and cold brakes and tyres he was unable to ward off the tough guy acts of Perkins and Johnson. Meanwhile, the Nissans were drawing out the gap.

Richards could consider himself lucky that he had not fallen further down the field where things were really physical, everyone psyched-up for the final act. By the 10 lap point there were already cars retired with accident damage or running with battle scars. The most unfortunate was Formula Two champ, Jon Crooke, making his debut for the Brock outfit. He came off second best in a tangle with Gregg Hansford.

The reason Richards was catching Seton so quickly, though, was not just because of Jim's wet weather mastery. Seton was having a worse time of it in the bigger Nissan and Richards made a mental note of it when he got close enough to see the Skyline slithering precariously at the end of the main straight.

"I could see him catching me in the rear vision mirror," Seton remembered, "and there was nothing I could do about it really. I was driving as hard as I could. I had a fairly bad lock-up problem."

The problem Seton referred to had been dogging the Skyline since it was first raced in 1986 and again stemmed from the fact that the car was basically a modified production car, not a race car like the M3. The Skyline is both long and narrow and when heavy braking is required, the less than sophisticated chassis set-up allowed an inordinate amount of weight transference to the front. The result? Rear brake lock-up. And in the rain? "It is a fairly hard car to pull up any time, let alone when it rains!" Glenn said.

The Nissan duo had been careful with brake application all through the series to minimise this, but a degree of caution had to be abandoned when they came under attack from a superbly stopping machine like the M3. It caught out Glenn at Amaroo when he almost spun, it caught out Fury when he tried to take back third from Richards at Oran Park, and it caught out Glenn when Richards closed right up on the Nissan at Pepsi corner on lap 35.

As Seton slid off line, frantically trying to regain control, Richards lunged into the hole. Richards was almost alongside and about to power through the corner when Seton gathered it all up and turned the car back on line. But Richards already had the BMW's nose planted; he was committed and couldn't avoid giving the side of the Skyline a solid thump. The impact sent Seton twirling the wheel once again to get the car straight. By the time he had regained his composure, Richards had made use of the clear road and dashed away.

The championship appeared all over, although Seton did take up the chase urged on by Gibson on the radio and the crowd. Even the rain had



**Left:** The finale begins at Oran Park. Seton and Richards had to win the race to take the title.

**Below:** The 'apprentice' is given his ticket. It was the first time Longhurst has been given the same machinery as his senior team-mate. He lacked the polish and aplomb of Richards but still performed well.

**Bottom:** There were no recriminations following the incident that lost Seton the championship. Each applauded the other for playing it hard, yet fair.

stopped to help him inject more drama into the gripping finale. A few minutes later however, the Skyline faltered, coughed, and was pointed towards pit road to peels of knowing applause.

It was clear the turbo had given up and instantly raised speculation as to the amount of boost the Nissan team had been running for this crucial event. Frank Gardner for one had no doubt that they had "turned up the hair dryer".

The word from the Nissan team, from Glenn Seton, was that the car was running the same boost from the first race. Then why the failure in this of all races? Seton: "We don't really know why. That is the only race we have had a turbo problem all year. George's went all day and it was just mine. All we can put it down to is a crook wheel."

The fault had a familiar ring about it: exhaust turbine shearing off the shaft and it could well have been a manufacturing fault. "It is a bit of a problem because the turbos are that small for the job and they are doing so many thousands of revs more than they are supposed to be doing!"

When it was all over, it was hard to tell who was the victor and who was the vanquished. There were no hard feelings and no blame apportioned to either for the incident that resolved the championship. The contact hadn't been deliberate, Richards said, and everybody believed that, although he was willing to concede that it was probably his fault.

For his part, Seton believed Richards deserved the championship. And that incident? Well, that's motor racing, said the young man who could have been the youngest Australian touring car champion. "Next year," he warned cheekily, "Those famous words, next year." He had arrived on the touring scene with an almighty rush, and now there was no more need to hurry, for 'next year' and the future, was his.



## Australian Touring Car Championship 1987:

**Round six, Surfers Paradise (Qld), May 31:** 1 — Jim Richards (M3), 2 — Andrew Miedecke (Sierra)\*, 3 — Tony Longhurst (M3), 4 — Glenn Seton (Skyline), 5 — George Fury (Skyline). *Pole:* Dick Johnson (Sierra). *Fastest lap:* Jim Richards (M3) — record. *Retired:* Dick Johnson (Sierra) — turbo, Gregg Hansford (Sierra) — turbo. \* Excluded due to mechanical infringement.

**Round seven, Sandown (Vic), June 7:** 1 — Glenn Seton (Skyline), 2 — George Fury (Skyline), 3 — Larry Perkins (Commodore), 4 — Allan Grice (Commodore), 5 — Kent Baigent (Skyline). *Pole:* George Fury (Skyline). *Fastest lap:* Jim Richards (M3), record. *Retired:* Jim Richards (M3) — engine, Dick Johnson (Sierra) — turbo, Gregg Hansford (Sierra) — accident, Andrew Miedecke (Sierra) — turbo.

**Round eight, Amaroo Park (NSW), June 21:** 1 — Jim Richards (M3), 2 — Tony Longhurst (M3), 3 — Glenn Seton (Skyline), 4 — George Fury (Skyline), 5 — Larry Perkins (Commodore).

*Pole:* George Fury (Skyline). *Fastest lap:* Tony Longhurst (M3) — record. *Retired:* Dick Johnson (Sierra) — turbo, Andrew Miedecke (Sierra) — diff.

**Round nine, Oran Park (NSW), July 5:** 1 — Jim Richards (M3), 2 — George Fury (Skyline), 3 — Dick Johnson (Sierra), 4 — Larry Perkins (Commodore), 5 — Tony Longhurst (M3). *Pole:* Jim Richards (M3). *Fastest lap:* George Fury (Skyline) — record. *Retired:* Glenn Seton (Skyline) — turbo, Allan Grice (Commodore) — overheating, Gregg Hansford (Sierra) — accident damage, Andrew Miedecke (Sierra) — electrical, John Bowe (Skyline) — air flow meter.

**Final points:** Jim Richards (Vic) **193**, Glenn Seton (Vic) **167**, George Fury (NSW) **143**, Tony Longhurst (Qld) **116**, Larry Perkins (Vic) **115**, Dick Johnson (Qld) **72**, Peter Brock (Vic) **65**, Allan Grice (Vic) **62**, Colin Bond (NSW) **36**. **Final points — manufacturers:** BMW **160**, Nissan **160**, Holden **105**, Alfa Romeo **77**, Ford **76**.







# BEGINNING OF THE END

In Europe:

**WHILE THE POLITICS OFF THE TRACK DECIDED THE DESTINY OF THE FLEDGLING CHAMPIONSHIP, BMW AND FORD WARMED UP IN EUROPE TO CONQUER THE WORLD.**



GRAHAM SMITH RACETRACE

**T**he much-lauded World Touring Car Championship began with bitter behind-the-scenes wrangling that spilt onto the track from the very first race at Monza, Italy in March. That event was won by a horde of screaming BMW M3s then, late the same night, was awarded to Mobil Holden Dealer Team refugees Allan Moffat and John Harvey in their Rothmans sponsored ex-HDT Holden Commodore VL, which with no disrespect, had been off the pace throughout that first traumatic weekend at Monza.

The meeting began with the works Eggenberger Texaco Ford Sierras pulling out after a dispute over engine management systems. Scot Tom Walkinshaw had withdrawn his Holden Commodores a few days before the meeting when it became known that to enter a car in the world championship a team would have to come up with \$US50,000 per car.

The race turned out to be a procession of M3s, fighting it out, amongst themselves — and really fighting too, for this was no staged battle. When they were thrown out by the scrutineers over body panel material, it was left for the Australian car to pick up the pieces.

Reality was suspended somewhat at Monza... what actually happened on the track was the first sign of what was to become a regular occurrence in the European races — a victory for a CiBiEmme BMW M3, on this occasion piloted by new duo Johnny Cecotto and Brabham F1 driver Riccardo Patrese. They pipped all four of the full BMW works M3s to the flag. For the small Italian team, which in years passed had been merely a collection of gentlemen racers, this was a step into the big time.

The real story of Monza, however, was the arrival of a totally new breed of touring cars, led by the BMW M3, which, lest we forget, was only a middle class car. The Holden Commodore, which was eventually awarded the race, but not the points due

**Above:** Multi-national Texaco Sierra crew, minus team leader, Klaus Ludwig, take a breather during the inaugural world championship. From left, somnolent Klaus Niedzwiedz, smug Steve Soper and sandy-haired Pierre Dieudonne.

**Left:** One month after leaving the chaos of the HDT, Allan Moffat was at Monza flying the flag for Australia. Seventh turned into a win.



BOB WILLIAMS



to non-payment of the controversial entry fee, belonged to a different generation of touring cars. The BMW M3 and the Ford Sierra Cosworth had been designed as racing cars and had then been put into production as road cars. A totally new approach to Group A racing.

For the early months of the year, it was the M3 which ruled the tracks of Europe, winning everywhere, whether in the world championship, the poor quality European series, or the national championships around the continent. Ford struggled to keep up.

Emanuele Pirro and Roberto Ravaglia won the second round of the world series in dominant fashion at Jarama in Spain in April, although this race marked the competition debut of the Swiss-based Eggenberger Texaco Sierra Cosworths. The Fords qualified well, the two black and dayglo orange machines monopolising the front row of the grid, but were outpaced in the race.

The same thing happened in round three at the Dijon-Prenois circuit in France in May where, once again, the CiBiEmme BMW M3, piloted on this occasion by Cecotto and Gianfranco Brancatelli, looked set for victory

when a cloudburst brought the race to a soggy, confused and premature end, with several teams claiming that their cars had actually taken the victory. The published result was just, in the circumstances, as the CiBiEmme team had looked dominant before the rains came.

With a two month break until the next round of the world championship, the BMW tide began to turn in midsummer. There were a couple of European and non-championship events where the Fords really showed what they were capable of.

The first major victory came in a curious 24 Hours saloon event at the old Nurburgring in the Eifel Mountains of West Germany. This was open to all manner of machinery from full blown works Group A machines to such exotic machines as a Caterham Super 7! One hundred and eighty different cars took the start with the battle at the front developing between the works Ford driven by Klaus Ludwig, Klaus Niedzwiedz and Steve Soper and the works Schnitzer BMW of Emanuele Pirro, Roberto Ravaglia and Harald Grohs. For eight hours the battle was incredibly tight and then the BMW faltered and the Ford sailed away to a dominant

victory, completing a full 24 hours without a major problem. It was a sign of things to come.

The world championship runners met in mid-July once more at the new Nurburgring and now the Fords came on song in the WTCC, with Ludwig and Niedzwiedz leading from flag to flag on their way to recording a truly crushing victory. And, as the Ford men were quick to point out, the victory was with the 'old' Sierra Cosworth. The new, all-singing, all-dancing Sierra RS500 evolution model was still to come.

The 'Ring also marked the reappearance of Tom Walkinshaw and his crew fielding one of his Holden Commodores for himself and Jeff Allam. The car looked quick on the track, but a terminal brake problem meant that it was off the pace throughout the weekend. It did not appear again.

Traditionally, the Nurburgring event in July is the precursor of the Spa 24 Hours, for the Europeans the most important event of the year. As usual a massive field collected at the famous Belgian circuit, including some of Australia's best.

Allan Grice, leaving his Commodore at home, had been contracted for the one event to the







**Left:** After a year in development, BMW put all its eggs in one basket with the four-cylinder M3. It was an all out attack with the Schnitzer works team fielding four cars.

BRYN WILLIAMS



**Far left:** With the tossing out of the Eggenberger Sierras at pre-race scrutineering, Andy Rouse took pole for the new Sierra Cosworth only to be eventually swamped by the pack of BMWs in relentless pursuit.

CHRISTOPHER YOUNG



**Left:** Moffat prepares to give the VL Commodore its world debut at Monza. He was back in the role of a privateer and unsure as to how long funds would hold out for the European programme.

CHRISTOPHER YOUNG





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BMW works Schnitzer M3s, teamed with F3000 star Roberto Moreno and Schnitzer's test driver Austrian Willi Siller.

Moffat was back after a lay off due to lack of finance to compete in all the world events, and was joined by John Harvey and Tony Mulvihill, although the latter failed to qualify, leaving 'Moff' and Harvey to drive the entire 24 hours by themselves.

Peter Brock, too, was in action, with a Mobil Holden Commodore for himself, David Parsons and one-off guest driver Neville Crichton. In practice Brock gave everyone a shock as he wheeled out his car on dual tyres — two tyres per rim. The theory of this was valid, with such a set-up proving extremely good in wet conditions, clearing the water from the tread more efficiently than a normally set-up car. Sadly, Brock was never able to prove his point as the car broke

down during the night, before the rains began to fall heavily in the early morning. For the remaining 11 hours of race, the rain continued to fall steadily.

At the front, the race had been a story of the works Fords, which left the field behind and had pulled out an appreciable advantage in the night before. After 17 hours, suddenly both were out of action. The works BMWs, too, had fallen by the wayside. As the race drew to a close it was the CiBiEmme M3 of Didier Theys, Jean-Michel Martin and Eric Van de Poelle which emerged ahead, to give the Italian team its third WTCC victory in the five championship rounds to that point.

Spa was the end of BMW's domination, as the RS500 was homologated in time for the next world championship event at the brand new Brno circuit in Czechoslovakia a fortnight after



JOHN M. SMITH / RACET PRESS



JOHN M. SMITH / RACET PRESS



**Top:** Historic debut victory for the M3 went to the little Italian CiBiEmme team, in an upset. On the dias from left, Schnitzer's Pirro and Ratzenberger, CiBiEmme's Patrese and Cecotto, and Schnitzer's Oestreich and Heger.

**Above:** The Eggenberger Fords started to find their feet at Dijon, round three, but the BMWs still maintained control.

**Left:** The world championship lured an illustrious name in Maserati. The Italian car had the speed but not the handling in the early stages of its development.



the Belgian classic. The Fords qualified dramatically quicker than the rest of the field and led from flag to flag, with Steve Soper and Pierre Dieudonne way ahead until the closing laps when a 'Slow' sign appeared in the Eggenberger pit. Dieudonne cut his pace and Klaus Ludwig rapidly caught up, setting a lap quicker than his pole position time. With two laps to go, Ludwig passed Dieudonne to take victory. A victory for team orders, as the two Klaus were in a stronger championship position than Soper and Dieudonne. In Czechoslovakia, no-one even looked able to challenge the Fordsters.

A new challenge, from Alfa Romeo was now beginning to take shape and at Brno, for the first time, one of the Italian cars led all the BMW M3s, with former grand prix star Jacques Laffite hugely spectacular as he strove to keep the Bimmers behind. From the start of the season the Alfa team had struggled, until at Jarama, former Lancia rally engineer Georgio Pianta joined the team.

From then on, it was progress with every event, and by the early autumn the Alfas looked set to topple the BMWs from the middle class domination they had enjoyed all series.

But as the European section of the series came to a close, so too did the Alfa programme, as a new boss, another former Lancia rally man — Cesare Fiorio — decided to withdraw his cars from the world series and look to a new competition programme.

The last of the seven European events, proved to be the most unusual. The Silverstone Tourist Trophy, the world's oldest motor race, saw the Fords once again to the fore in qualifying. The conditions were terrible with rain falling throughout the event. The Fords took off at the front, as expected, with Soper once again showing that he could outrun the two Klaus. It was not to last as soon Soper had to pit with drivetrain problems. As the soggy race drew to a close it was BMW which seemed to have a lock on the event. Leading the field was Spaniard Luis Sala in the Bigazzi semi-works BMW, from Italy, which he had shared throughout the year with fellow F3000 driver, Frenchman Olivier Grouillard. With just two laps to go, Sala made a grievous error, spun and stalled.

The scale of the disaster for BMW was not immediately obvious, but had Sala won, his M3 would have moved within four points of the leading Ford in the manufacturers points standings. As it was the car did not score and Ford moved further ahead.

Victory finally went to the CiBiEmme team, once again, this time their second car driven by Swiss Enzo Calderari and Italian Fabio Mancini. As the car crossed the line, the leading works BMW entry, with Roberto Ravaglia at the wheel was right behind. "The CiBiEmme car was not registered for championship points," he explained later, "so there was no need to overtake."

Such was the way of the strange and overly-political series. Both Ford and BMW had decided to concentrate their efforts on individual drivers, and if a non-registered car crossed the line ahead, it did not matter. The little Italian Ravaglia collected maximum points.

There was more to the world championship than merely a Ford-BMW battle, although this tended to dominate the scene. Most excitingly there were new cars from a couple of manufacturers, cars which had the potential to challenge the Sierras for overall placings.

Maserati had a Biturbo, which showed startling speed in a straightline, but proved horribly unstable in the corners. A clear-cut case of more development needed. The same was true of the Toyota Supra Turbos run by the Belgian RAS team.

At the end of the European round of races for the World Touring Car Championship, the championship, which had begun so weakly, was up and running with Ford and BMW finely balanced in the title hunt. Then it was time to look to the other side of the world.







3.



4.

1: Encouraged by the Monza victory, Moffat had the funds to keep going for some selected rounds but increasingly found the Holden lacked outright speed.

2: Peter Brock joined Allan Moffat at Spa to make it a three Commodore event. They were both in the top ten in the early stages.

3: Allan Grice in an M3 at Spa. He dumped his Commodore temporarily to join the Schnitzer crew. Engine failure stopped his charge.



5.



6.

4: Nightfall and the new Mobil VL, specially built for Spa, is still going strongly.

5: The Schnitzer cars fell away one by one to leave a CibiEmme team M3 to take victory at Spa. It was crewed by three Belgians.

6: The Bigazzi and Garage du Bac team M3s make it look interesting at Spa. But there were four laps between the second and third placed cars.







# ALMOST A COMEBACK

The preliminaries:

**THE BIG AUSTRALIAN BELLOWED AGAIN IN THE CLEAR AIR OF RACE LEADERSHIP. YET EACH TIME THE PATTERN OF THE SEASON WAS MAINTAINED.**



RUSSELL MARTIN

**J**ust wait for the long distance races. That was the message from the Commodore drivers. Never mind that a Commodore hadn't won a race in the Australian Touring Car Championship for the first time in seven years and for the first time since the beginning of Group A in Australia.

The car that had been designed to endure the rigours of Bathurst, and not much else, had been soundly overshadowed in the rapid technological scramble that had suddenly come to international Group A. Compared with the European machinery, it was rapidly ageing, but, said the Holden teams, the durable V8 would run like a train in the endurance events scheduled for Amaroo Park, Calder and Oran Park during a busy August.

To put the point to the test, however, all had to wait until the second local race at Calder on a wintry Melbourne day on August 10. Because none of the Commodore runners of note — the Team Enzed Perkins VK model of Larry Perkins, the Roadways VL of Allan Grice and Peter Brock's Mobil-backed VL — were at Amaroo Park. Neither was the Peter Jackson Nissan team nor Dick Johnson's Shell Sierras, leaving Jim Richards to continue his Australian Touring Car Championship-winning form almost unopposed, with a little from co-driver Tony Longhurst.

Amaroo Park's cramped, snaky layout had never been Commodore territory and over 300 km it was a nightmare for such a heavy car. Fortunately there was no guilt about not turning up again — the manufacturers championship had been run concurrently with the touring car championship, the endurance championship had died and more importantly, the track's Hardie Irrigation 300 ran on the same weekend as the Spa 24 Hours in Belgium.

While Richards cruised along at Amaroo, with just the improved and persistent Ralliert Stalion of Brad Jones, co-

#### Above:

The opening of Thunderdome at Calder attracted many intrigued onlookers. Built for the local version of NASCAR, the bowl was combined with the existing circuit for the first endurance race of the year.

**Left:** New experience for Peter Brock. He holds the lead at Oran Park in a brand new car, pursued all the way by the Richards M3. Only a stubborn seat belt adjuster stopped a Holden returning to the winner's list.

RAY SIMPSON



driven by veteran John French, keeping him from dozing off, Brock had his brand new VL at Spa. That car, which featured desperately needed changes to engine and chassis at the right end of the season, joined the VL of his former HDT team-mates Allan Moffat and John Harvey on the grid among a horde of BMW M3's. One of the BMW's had Allan Grice in the driving seat in a most ironic switch of allegiance.

This was for Spa-only though, the Roadways team deciding that the costs were not right to get its man Grice to Belgium in a Commodore. At the last minute, Grice, a man of formidable reputation in Europe after his eye-opening 1986 tour, was invited to pilot one of the Schnitzer factory cars and this returned him to the wheel of the German marque for the first time since those unhappy days in the JPS Team BMW at the end of 1981.

Grice took some pleasure out of leaving the Australian Commodores in his wake until the engine gave out. Of course the Moffat/Harvey car, carrying a Larry Perkins engine, came home in a triumphant fourth behind three M3's to prove that long distance racing was still Commodore fare.

And at Calder a week later for the 300 km Super Series on the new combined grand prix circuit, there was Allan Grice, leading in his Bob Jane T-Marts Roadways Commodore and glad to be Holden-equipped with Bathurst rapidly approaching.

under his helmet at that fact and the result for the Moffat/Harvey Commodore at Spa. The difference was he was not in his usual white VK but a new VL.

Larry, who had been the first driver to be welcomed into the Holden Motor Sport Group a few weeks before, had signalled his intention to move into a fresher VL for the key endurance races, but as the familiar light blue livery and red signwriting showed, the car was the new mount for Canberra driver, Bill O'Brien.

The former Ford driver-turned Nissan driver-turned Holden driver had sold out of the Nissan he co-ran with Melbourne's Murray Carter. "The car had no homologation potential, it is virtually a throwaway model," O'Brien explained. "I decided to look around and the Commodore seemed to be the best value for the amount of money for the speed."

The Perkins team was approached to build a customer VL. "There is nobody around any better and Larry is a very cluey person in himself," O'Brien concluded. This was a welcomed new role for the 12 month old Melbourne team as previously it had only built two VK's for Larry's own use, the original Bathurst 1986 VK having been sold to speedway identity Tony Noske, who underlined the ascendancy of Perkins power by bringing that car home in third at Calder.

But while the project topped up Larry's far from full coffers, the time it took to assemble the

apologetic about pinching the limelight from the owner. "I have hogged the seat over the last few days to get the car in the shape it is," Perkins beamed sheepishly. "We had three mechanics and three of Bill's mechanics working to get the car here."

Perkins has always held firm to the principle that if you built it right in the workshop it should be immediately competitive. Qualifying vindicated that approach with only Grice and Richards ahead, but Grice's pole-sitting VL was more than a second clear so Larry had a bit more to do in the race, especially as the quality of the small field fell away after the second row.

Perkins snuck through from his second row slot during the novel — for Australia — rolling start to take charge for the first few laps, pursued closely by Richards and Grice. Grice was impatient to take the front-running and both Richards and Perkins had no argument about that. "I was quite content to follow him, it was a very long race," Larry explained later.

Their patience was rewarded less than 20 laps later in the 70 lap event when the orange Commodore, with brakes locked up frantically, slewed off into the mud coming back on the circuit proper with steering arm adrift. An arm pin had broken, a most unexpected failure, according to the team. For Grice's sake he was fortunate that it hadn't failed a few seconds before when he had been flatchat on the banking.

It was possible that the breakage could have been caused by the extra strain imposed on the suspension and steering on the banking, but there was no clear evidence of that. Roadways just made sure that next time the pins were stronger.

The possibility of such an accident never really entered the minds of the real racers amongst the pack, they were instead seduced by the return of fast and exciting corners to a race track. Perkins echoed the feeling of his fellows: "Most promoters want to build corners that require you to drive at parking speed," he quipped as he complimented Bob Jane on his additions to the multi-purpose Calder complex.

It put a bit of skill back into it, Larry added. And bravely, too, because the men who dominated the open stages of the event — Grice, Perkins and Richards — are as fearless as they come. Of course Grice had picked up the art during his short-lived race in the States while Richards had a sniff of it driving one of Calder's Australian NASCAR in the opening of Thunderdome five days before. For Larry it was back to the basics of racing fast, how he had learned it on the way to Formula One and he just lapped it up.

In fact the Calder meeting was characteristic for the lack of contact with the imposing concrete walls of the oval. To get onto the oval the tourers had to hook hard left off the main straight, then funnel through a hole in the wall. After a run most of the way around the oval in the opposite direction, the cars slingshot off the bowl into a sweeping left that returned them to the circuit proper at the end of the main straight. Very few drivers had difficulty coming to grips with that, it was really just a matter of getting used to the increasing load on the steering as the speed mounted around the bowl.

Those spectators who went there expecting a lot of high speed metal on concrete walls went home disappointed. There was just one incident to keep them entertained but no panel meeting concrete. This was the series of spectacular smoky spins into retirement by Graeme Bowkett in one of the two New Zealand Nissan Skylines.

These inoffensive looking white cars failed to finish but were a revelation while they ran. In their first race since re-tuning for the CAMS-enforced switch from 100 octane aviation fuel to 97 octane pump grade super, the cars sat right behind the lone, vulnerable Peter Jackson Nissan on the grid at Calder. In the race they neatly enveloped the factory car, like a long white cloud.

Both cars lapped comfortably quicker than



"They will go like they have been shot with a gun," Grice said a few weeks later of BMW prospects at climbing the The Mountain. "That's an exaggeration, they will be good for a place but it will be like Moffat was with the Mazda," the Commodore devotee qualified, pointing out that The Cutting would hold up the little car.

As if to emphasise the point about the Commodore's tyranny over distance, the victor at Amaroo the week before, the JPS M3 of Jim Richards, buzzed along in third place at Calder, some distance back. This was hardly Bathurst however.

At this first race on the combined circuit and much vaunted 'Thunderdome' oval with its banked, high speed corners, where the cars were galloping through at more than 240 kmh, the little black and gold BMW was far from out of it. Good aerodynamics and running high up in the rev band made it a continuing threat on that layout.

For the first stage of the event though, the Commodores appeared back in the hunt at last, a pair of them making the running at the front, often glued together. The other Commodore had Larry Perkins at the wheel and grinning

car from shell up left little time to build a VL of their own for Bathurst. Larry spoke of sticking to the VK which he continually reminded all was still the quickest Group A Commodore in the world, despite the advent of the later model. That is, unless the link with Holden Motor Sport Group came forth with some support to switch to a VL. By that he meant dollars.

In any case, all the beefier engine components homologated for the VL were now in use in the VK, since the original pre-unleaded parts were now out of production along with the body. All that remained to entice one to a VL, in Perkins' view, was that car's superior aerodynamics.

There was no doubting that the customer VL would be built well. After all, it was constructed by most of the same people who built the HDT's last Group C cars and first Group A cars, but Larry saw it as part of his obligation to deliver his first customer car with indisputable evidence of that. What better evidence than a win at its debut?

With the new owner playing very much a bit part in it all and looking bewildered as a result, Larry took control of the weekend. When it was all over he was bursting with pride, if a little



the Peter Jackson car, in fact Baigent, who acted as tail-gater to Bowkett's hare act, set the fastest lap of the race. Bowkett's time was only bettered by that of his team-mate and those who he ably chased off the grid: Grice, Perkins and Richards.

Baigent, whose own car succumbed to that luck of the draw — turbo failure — later commented on the speed of his team-mate's No. 25 car in the event. "Graham's had a grouse engine in it. I know, I had a drive of it yesterday and couldn't believe it. He was well ahead of the Peter Jackson car when it went."

Bowkett had the car entrenched in third when this grenade of an engine, built by the mastery Kiwi Murray Bunn, sheared a gudgeon pin at close to full bore — about 6900 rpm or 225 kmh — coming around the banking. The engine destroyed itself and laid a carpet of oil under the rear wheels. It was exciting, Bowkett commented later.

The performance of those cars illustrated that the Peter Jackson car was not itself, even allowing for the fact that it was the recently signed relief drivers at the wheel, not the usual Nissan hotshots Glenn Seton and George Fury, who were sitting cosily in the pits. It was also the showcar, not the usual No. 30.

Nissan chief Fred Gibson was far from worried. This was the first race for the team using super grade fuel. It was an exercise to see what worked and to give the relief drivers a run. We wanted to do 300 km on super and have left the engine in all weekend," he commented later.

With John Bowe and Terry Shiel at the wheel, the car ran conservatively for the full race. Bowe, who took the wheel for the start and then handed over to Shiel for the last 30 laps, could do nothing else than plug on, the car feeble after the revisions. "It hasn't got the grunt it had before," he remarked. As well, the car, with its rather heavy steering, required real muscle to point on the banking. It was the heaviest steering car he had driven, Bowe admitted.

That conservative race paid off. The end of Bowkett, a deflating tyre on the Richards BMW and a late pit stop due to the Nissan's good fuel consumption, helped put Bowe in front by around half distance, if only briefly. When Shiel took over the controls at the stop they were back to third.

It was Perkins still at the wheel after the pit stop where most teams, hoping to just one stop, had the co-driver in. The regulations for the race had demanded a driver change, so Perkins had to stop again before the end to install O'Brien.

Perkins had every intention to put O'Brien in the car when he stopped as scheduled on lap 41, but decided against it because the car had a problem. While lapping the M3 of New Zealander Graham Lorimer, on the road circuit, the two became entangled. The Commodore literally drove over the top of the smaller car and when the drama was over, Larry discovered the steering was bent. "It knocked off a couple of secs and that was when Jim pulled away."

For the rest of the race, the Commodore had the steering wheel askew. Most offputting, especially on the banking. "With the steering like that I didn't want Bill to get in if something went wrong."

It was quite a sight early in the event, the little BMW reeling in the big blue Commodore around the bowl. With rear wing helping downforce through that second high speed turn and then off the bowl, the BMW had an edge. That's where Richards closed, got in the draft and slipped through under brakes and into the lead, a lead which he consolidated over the now wonky Commodore for 12 laps.

Then past the pits Richards pointed to the right rear. He got most of the way around before it blew out in the esses, sending him spinning. A lot of time was lost as he limped into for what now had to be a scheduled stop and seat swap to Longhurst. A relieved Perkins was back in front, but not for long as he had his scheduled stop coming up in two laps.



**Far left:** Back in his Commodore after a fling at Spa in an M3, Grice hikes it off the old circuit and into the bowl.

**Left:** Just like the good old days with Holden dominating, Perkins, driving the VL he built for Bill O'Brien, lets Grice make the running after the opening laps.



**Left:** The Nissan team's endurance co-drivers Shiel and Bowe were united in the team's spare. A conservative approach paid dividends.

**Below:** The Skyline of Graeme Bowkett stunned with its speed, then the engine expired sending the Kiwi gyrating down the bowl.

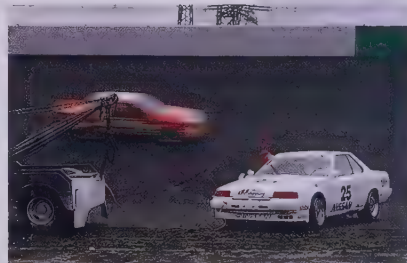
**Bottom:** Tony Longhurst had the race won. He paid the penalty for unnecessary opportunism when he went for the lead.

The time the BMW lost three-wheeling to the pits, gave Perkins the breather he needed to concentrate on minimising the difficulties he was having and staying ahead to the end. He could then pick his time to dash into the pits for the compulsory driver change. But how late could he leave it? Until the final lap it appeared, which made a mockery of the regulations.

When Bowe pitted to restore the race balance, Longhurst tasted race leadership from Perkins, but Tony's tyres were not hot enough to give him full traction. Richards had a similar difficulty early in the event, the lighter car taking quite some time to get the tyres up to operating temperature on the cold day, as much as 20 laps before Jim could do the time he wanted.

It was still nippy when Longhurst moved out of the pits and Perkins exploited the situation to close the gap. The Commodore driver actually pinched the lead with 26 laps to go. Longhurst used the M3 brakes to good effect to get his nose back in front as they headed back to the old circuit, but the Commodore had the grunt on the return journey up the banking to continue to duel.

The upcoming driver change for the Com-





modore would require at least 30 secs, so Longhurst could stay back and play safe if he wished. It was not in the nature of Longhurst to do that. The racer played the tactical game for four laps, tyre temperatures building all the time, but that was it. "I knew he had to pit soon," Tony admitted later, but there was no way he was going to release the pressure, especially if an opportunity appeared to put the issue beyond doubt.

Then exiting the bowl Perkins was confronted with a lapped car. Longhurst prevailed on the brakes and going for the inside just as Perkins slowed. The gap on the inside closed quicker than Tony anticipated and the BMW gave the Commodore a hefty thump in the rear. "He allowed himself the inside line," Perkins recalled after the race. "It was all I could do to prevent having a crash."

Both cars went off the track, Perkins avoiding further drama and recovering quickly to resume the lead. Longhurst however climbed out to see the front right wheel at an acute angle due to a broken ball joint. A second win in a row had gone begging and the Commodore did indeed look set for a return to the winner's circle for the first time of the season.

Shiel, the 36-year-old outer Sydney tyre dealer, had been elevated to second without having to do anything and this was just as well as he was in no shape to play hero. A week prior at Amaroo, he had been peeled out of the wreck of the Peter Jackson Nissan Gazelle he shared with Nissan's new young mechanic-driver, Mark Skaife.

The ex-John Giddings car had been re-built by the Nissan men to successfully take the Under Two-litre Touring Car Championship from Toyota Team Australia's Corolla twins. A third of the way into the race, at the wheel of the Gazelle for his first run for the Nissan team of the year, Shiel had race leader Jim Richards about to lap him around the back of the circuit.

Moments before, local Commodore driver Trevor Ashby had slammed into the earthback just up the road and around the corner in such a way that the car bounced back to take up half the track. Several cars snuck through — just — but Shiel, on a wide lane, ran out of space to take avoiding action when he belatedly spied the stricken, abandoned Holden. He hit the back of the Commodore at high speed, and spun to a halt, dazed by the incident.

Richards was right behind him and had to spin the BMW to avoid joining the pile-up. He got back into motion quickly, without losing his lead, but there had been just inches in it, he said later.

There was uncertainty about Shiel's fitness to take the wheel at Calder, especially as his neck had been in a temporary brace. Yet the former Mazda privateer and old racing opponent of Gibson's declared himself in good enough shape and reported for duty in Melbourne.

In the final two laps of Calder, Shiel was more than a minute adrift, set on second place and blissfully unaware of the drama that was unfolding in the pits. "I thought he was a fair way ahead and that I couldn't catch him. I had a new helmet on today and I didn't have the radio in it."

Perkins had chosen the least possible distance to expose O'Brien to the bent steering: one lap. The Everlast car flew down the pit road and Larry leapt out of the seat. The last thing to come out of the car was Larry's hands which literally had a death grip on the wheel after all the time fighting with the steering. When he pried them loose, they immediately cramped and it proved almost impossible for him to help O'Brien do his harness up. That's a job that usually takes two to do it properly, especially if an adjustment has to be made for different physiques.

More time was lost when a left front tyre, which had worn badly due to the out-of-whack steering, had to be changed. For all that heart-fluttering delay, O'Brien was into the fray, still in the lead and about to turn onto the bowl, just as Shiel hit the front straight.



It wasn't until Shiel himself entered the Thunderdome arena and turned onto the banking that he saw the blue Commodore but two secs ahead. With a cold tyre on the front and bent steering O'Brien had no intention of having a rush of blood to the head, he was just hanging on, a sitting duck. He wanted the car intact for his first full race in it at Oran Park.

Shiel loomed large around the banking and slipped under as easily as you like onto the main circuit to cruise around for a near 4.5 sec victory. It was his first in two seasons with the team and also his first win since his days as a struggling, yet quick, Mazda privateer in the Group C days. And for John Bowe, who put the car briefly in the lead in the first part of the race, it was his first finish for the team and significantly, his first touring car win.

The exhilaration of the achievement was lost on both. "I'm buggered," Bowe said soon after the event, still hurting from the effort and thinking he better do some weight training. And Shiel, who sported strapping on a wrist jarred at Amaroo had the look of death: "Pretty tired and pretty sore."

Their job had been done, the car had survived the super test, and they and the rest of the team could retire to the workshop until the Castrol 500. And just when the Commodores were looking good, Perkins and Grice went that way too, not to be seen again until September. O'Brien was one who soldiered on to Sydney in his Perkins-built car, and spun into the mud at the notorious dogleg. "I have had the flue," was O'Brien's explanation. "I've had it for five or six weeks. I had a memory fade and was going too fast."

So Oran Park on August 30 was another weakened field. The attractions being the return of Peter Brock to the scene, after a brave showing at Spa, and JPS Team BMW back to full strength.

With rain threatening to sweep the plains at anytime, Brock conclusively made the point that he was back as a force. With the long-awaited Bridgestone radials transforming the handling and allowing the V8 to use all its power for the first time in the year, Brock brushed aside the black M3's on the front row in front of him and intimidated the fast-starting Alfa 75 of the almost forgotten Colin Bond.

It looked as though Bond was going to upset the calculations. Only beaten by the JPS BMW in qualifying speed, the veteran was driving the same car that had disappointed all season. It took all this time to get it producing its potential.

First the team had to completely re-build the

car which had been constructed for the local Alfa-backed team by the Luigi outfit in Belgium. All the problems with the car stemmed from the fact that this customer car had not been built properly and the engine just a cooking version that was lucky to pump out 200 hp, let alone the 320 written on the spec sheet.

With an odd day grabbed between the Australian Touring Car Championship races, the car was gradually re-built and modified locally. The biggest single change in the workshop was the switch to right hand drive which uncorralled 27 horses immediately by enabling a proper exhaust system to be dropped under the floor without having to thread it around the steering rack.

Then came the hiring of Melbourne Alfa service specialist, Beninca's, to develop the engine. They found the rest of the power that went missing and jolly Colin had the Caltex Alfa on the second row at Amaroo and flying in front of Richards for seven laps. Then the turbo let him down telling the team that they had not got the 1.8 litre turbo engine running well enough on super fuel.

Bondie tried again in the Pepsi 250 at Oran Park, wedging himself between the JPS BMWs and Brock on the grid and then giving his old team-mate Peter Brock a run for his money on the first lap. Sadly the improvements hadn't been matched by reliability, and this time the wastegate failed.

Before the first lap was completed, Brock was by Bond and in front. There he stayed lap after lap, seeming to have a vicelike grip on the event. Richards and Longhurst pursued relentlessly but vainly and by third distance were two of only three cars not to be lapped by the Mobil Commodore, the other being the Nissan of Murray Carter.

Brock remained clear until lap 60 of the 100 lap race when he pitted as scheduled. All went to schedule until it came time to adjust the harness for Brock's jockey-sized co-driver David Parsons. The seat was pushed forward for David's shorter legs and then the adjusters at the side of the seat were pulled to let out the harness straps to compensate. They refused to budge despite the most violent persuasion and the team had no choice but to push the seat back again and send out Parsons as is.

The problem with the adjusters was attributed to an old harness which had been fitted to an otherwise brand new car. The building of the car in time to debut at Oran Park meant three weeks of frantic activity at the team's Port Melbourne base. The aim was to field VLs in a





sort of fresh start for the team, which meant the remaining ex-John Harvey VK — to be driven by the new pairing of Channel Seven commentator Neil Crompton and Formula Two champion, Jon Crooke — had to be re-freshed and up-dated at the same time. The only hiccup was the shortage of new belts. There was no option but to use an old set which had proved recalcitrant before.

For the rest of the race Parsons kept up the pace despite being hardly able to reach the pedals. He had left the pits in fourth, Richards having snatched the lead and looking to have the race in his keeping as he had more than enough time up his sleeve to get in and out of the pits still ahead. That he did.

It was made worse for Parsons by the rain showers which intermittently dampened the scene down for the rest of the day making conditions treacherous on such a fast track. The little Tasmanian, tiptoeing on the pedals as well as on his slicks tyres, still managed to peg back Carter and then finally surged past the second JPS M3, with Ludwig Finauer at the wheel after its pit stop.

The prospect of catching wet weather ace Richards in these conditions was impossible and while Richards, who drove solo, eased down at the end, Parsons was left almost half a minute in arrears. Brock was buoyed at the result nevertheless and also by the performance of the inexperienced, but obviously level-headed, Crompton, who slipped and slid the second Mobil VL to ninth on slicks.

Although a lap down, Finauer's third was another fine drive, full of maturity in what was only his second endurance race in the M3. He had been fifth, backing up Longhurst in the second car at Amaroo and that was another good drive, but largely unnoticed, as Longhurst, beside his senior team-mate on the front of the grid for that meeting, had the gearshift shear off in his hand as he changed up off the line.

Such a failure mystified the team, who religiously fitted fresh levers for the race. It turned out that one of the older type, hollow shifters, which had been known to snap on the 635, had been mistakenly attached for the race. The car eventually returned to the track for Longhurst and the engine man to get some miles under the belt.

Fourth at Oran Park was the enduring Murray Carter repeating his Calder finish in the Netcomm Nissan Skyline, the only Skyline to take on the Commodores and BMW's that day. Carter drove the race solo, on the one set of tyres, and had to survive a slither and a spin late



in the event to get there. Carter had in fact been one of the few drivers to do all three races, sharing the first two with former Capri driver Denis Horley. Carter virtually did the Calder race solo as well, only handing over to the co-driver at the last possible moment, due to a clutch problem that his younger team-mate may not have handled early on.

Two out of three wins by the JPS M3 and the other to Peter Jackson Nissan thus maintained the pattern of the year. But the Holdens were back into contention as the distance lengthened. Nearly there at the two races where they had competitive representation, they had confidence for the business end of the season when durability counted most.

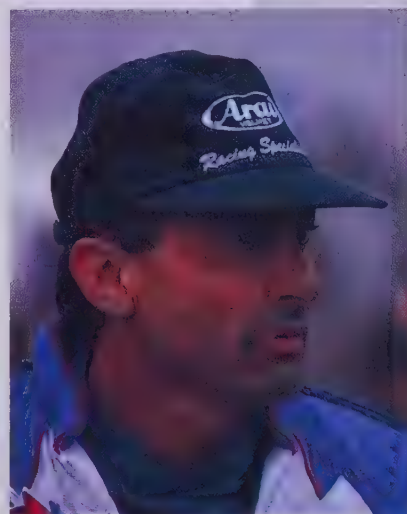
The only factor not included in the equation from those three races was the Ford Sierra. Not one appeared, they being evolved into the most powerful Group A car in the world, even outstripping the Holden V8 in outright performance. If they were not durable as the distance of the races extended further, there was still hope for a Holden.

**1:** The Holden horde begin to gather in the wake of the winning M3s as the endurance races get underway. There were five VLs at Oran Park.

**2:** Colin Bond in the improving Alfa and Graham Callaghan in his VK catch Brock and Richards napping off the line at Oran Park. They were quickly put back in their place to make it a two-horse race.

**3:** The transformation of the famous 05 was due to the arrival of new Bridgestone tyres and the benefits from the Spa development programme.

**4:** Brock — back as a force with Bathurst approaching.









# THE MATCH RACE

CASTROL 500:

**HE WAS ON THE WAY TO VICTORY, THE FIRST IN MANY MONTHS, IF HE COULD COUNTER THE WEATHER AND THE MAN WITH WEBBED FEET.**



GARRY SPAIN

**T**hrough the rain spattered windscreen of the Nissan Skyline, George Fury could see the shiny black rear of the BMW M3 loom larger. This was all that stood in the way of taking the race lead for the third and final time, and, with more than three parts of the Castrol 500 run, all that stood in the way of a win.

The rest of the competition had been dispatched or delayed. Or had been disoriented by the veil of misty rain that turned the race into a battle against the changing track conditions as much as an endurance event. So Fury, the former rally ace with the car control skills sharpened by years in the dirt and mud, splashed by the car that had won five out of the last seven races, to set course for victory.

If all went to plan, this would be Fury's first win for more than six months and one that was long overdue. The driver who started the season as the hot prospect was let down by his machinery earlier in the season and at a time when his younger team-mate, Glenn Seton, was coming of age and turning into a winner. To the end of the sprint season, when Fury was often back in the ascendancy, he had to pull aside, let Seton through in the interests of the team, let Glenn take the glory.

There were no points to think about here in this shakedown to Bathurst, this first race for Fury since the championship had been decided, and in fact, no Seton left to defer to. The young man had gone the way of the others who had the speed but not the reliable machinery: Allan Grice and Dick Johnson. For the first 39 of the 129 laps Glenn had been central to the action, at least outlasting showstealers Grice and Johnson. Meanwhile Fury had sat there behind, playing it cool.

Following the retirement of the sprinters, and after the first Nissan pit stop, that just left a familiar black and gold prey to hunt. This was the car that had taken the Australian Touring

**Above:** Get this into ya. Larry Perkins is waited on after an immaculate drive into second place in the Enzed Commodore.

**Left:** Jim Richards climbs all over the back of George Fury's Nissan in the dramatic closing stages. The dogged defence worked.

GARRY SPAIN





Car Championship from Seton, had stalked the No. 15 Peter Jackson Nissan Skyline mercilessly in the wet at Oran Park. Now the tables had been turned and Fury, the titleholder in this illustrious race, and in a car that had been unbeaten at Sandown, the Melbourne team's home track, had the taste of victory spiced with the condiment of revenge.

It had been the masterful Jim Richards who had given Seton a little lesson in wet weather driving that day on the outskirts of Sydney, but it wasn't Richards at the wheel at this point of the Sandown event, but his blossoming co-driver and understudy Tony Longhurst.

Richards had put the JPS Team BMW M3 into the lead when Fury had pitted on lap 41 to hand ownership of the 30 to new co-driver Terry Shiel. It appeared the former Kiwi had done his work for the day. The fuel miserly, little black car would do just one stop, compared with the two for the turbo-charged Nissan and just about everybody else, so when Longhurst took charge of No. 1 at lap 74, he would presumably go to the end and be hard to catch.

Richards, on the front row, next to where the pole winning Johnson should have been, made his almost obligatory slow start in the M3, to be eighth by the end of the first lap. As usual, he fought up the field, picking off the Nissan of Graeme Bowkett, and then the Commodores of Larry Perkins and Peter Brock, to park in the clear air behind third-placed Fury by lap four. It was typical Richards diligence, the car's lightweight clutch of no great help off the line and the tyres so cold and skatey in the wintry conditions that he understeered gently into the side of the Bowkett Nissan when everyone was jockeying for positions.

As the leaders — Johnson flying in the flame-throwing Sierra, Seton chasing desperately, Fury in no hurry and Richards waiting — hurtled down to Dandenong Road after 20 laps, they spied spots of rain on the windshield. The spots quickly dried up and were not seen again until 30 laps later, in greater numbers. Then they turned into a fine spray for a few laps only to disappear rapidly again and leave team managers scratching their heads. Six laps further on, just before

Richards was due to pit, the rain finally became a persistent blanket.

It was now a wet race in light, clinging rain which conspired with oil and peeled rubber and other track grime to drag down lap times. Longhurst therefore was sent out on an intermediate tyre, the team not having a soft enough wet weather cover to work on the featherweight BMW. This type of compromise tyre was ideal for damp conditions, especially as the patchwork quilt of black and grey clouds gave no guarantee that the conditions would stabilise.

At this stage of the event, with the rain starting to settle in for a short period to produce a proper wet surface, Shiel was still at the wheel of the slick-shod Nissan, sliding around, but staying on the track. The runner-up in the previous season's event with Gary Scott, he was called in as scheduled, having done 35 laps, and Fury was sent out on full wets for the chase.

The Nissan's second stop gave Longhurst a 35 sec buffer, but there was no way he could be considered safe unless the shower eased into drizzle and some heat was put into the intermediates. Richards, the wet weather master, was watching intently and staying in his driving suit at the behest of wily team manager, Frank Gardner, just in case the conditions changed markedly and the falling lap times made it worth the risk of a second stop to change to more suitable, quicker rubber. Richards had done two hours, 45 minutes in the car and only needed an hour break. He was entitled to return to the wheel anytime.

With Longhurst's lap times going right away in the persisting wet, the race was suddenly delicately balanced. In 12 laps, Fury was within six secs and closing fast, due to the greater efficiency of his proper wet weather rubber. There was no argument from Longhurst when the NSW farmer went under at the end of the main straight and began pulling away quite easily and building the lead up to a second lap. Then the rain eased and back came Longhurst! "He was a lot faster than us at that stage with the track drying out," Fury recalled.

It was decision time in the pits as a dry line had appeared. Tenacious Tony, looking for a way

past but avoiding the temptation in such risky circumstances, stuck to the back of a wary Fury. Then, as if to underline the closeness of the friendly rivalry between these two thoroughly professional teams, Fury and his pursuer took the dispute over race leadership up pit lane by pitting in unison to change to faster rubber.

Gardner, realising that Fury's wet weather rubber was not affording the Nissan enough grip, was watching the Nissan pit like a hawk, looking for any indication that Gibson's men were coiled for action. With Longhurst right on his hammer, Fury, hand out of the window, gave the BMW driver plenty of notice as they headed out of the in-field. Longhurst figured what he had to do, but just to be certain there was the black clad, white-hatted authoritative figure of Gardner, away from his place in front of the garage, now on trackside, signalling clearly and firmly: IN! "I just stood there myself to make sure we didn't have any hiccups," Gardner commented.

It was no endurance race anymore, but a match race to the flag. Gardner: "Everyone else was out of contention at that stage and what ever move Nissan made, we had to cover it."

They were both a lap clear of third-placed Brock so there was no danger of them forfeiting their places in the pits. As the JPS pit is right at the end of pit row, Fury peeled off first, technically handing the lead to Longhurst.

For just a split second, the checking tactic by Gardner caught the Nissan man off guard, but that was all. Gibson: "I didn't expect Frank to bring Tony straight in, I thought, I assumed, that he would have kept going and come in a few laps later. He (Gardner) saw us getting ready for a pit stop and knew I was going to bring George in, so he brought Tony in straight behind."

When it came down to it the nimble Peter Jackson crew was the little quicker at this duel with air guns, helped along by a jammed front wheel on the BMW. So Fury whistled down the exit first, equipped with slicks. Then came the black and gold BMW with . . . Richards at the wheel. Yes, Richards. "We needed slicks on and I was quicker than Tony," Richards said flatly. Even if it rained again it was still a good move to





**Left:** Grice blasts into the first corner clear of Seton, Fury, Perkins, Brock and Bowkett.

**Below:** Commodores to the fore again, with Grice already starting to clear out and the Peter Jackson Skyline the meat in the sandwich ahead of Perkins and Brock.

STANLEY DANCER

return Richards to the wheel because just 28 laps remained. He had the car control and experience to counter Fury in those conditions and would amazingly set his fastest times of the race in the desperate laps that would follow.

After falling back about six seconds, Richards began to make up ground. He could now see Fury drag the rear of the Skyline back into shape on several occasions. "It took a while for our tyres to heat up and even if I dropped back a little bit with the traffic, I could catch up again," Richards recalled.

"It was just a matter of time really but he was doing a good job of driving in the right place. I was reasonably confident I could pass eventually, it was just a matter of working and working and working and getting close enough to him coming out of the corners. I was really waiting until I could make one good pounce rather than showing my hand, knowing that I wouldn't be able to get past."

On several occasions, the nimbler BMW ranged up alongside the Nissan into the corners, then had to be pulled back in behind the Nissan. And out of the corners Richards used all the room on the exits, including more of the kerbs than usual, to latch on for a tow. Several times the car was sliding gracefully, the engine buzzing merrily. And it was during this pursuit that Richards made the rarest of rare errors: he missed a gear. There was nothing awful about that, except unknown to the team, the engine was getting low on oil and this would compound into a serious mechanical problem in a few laps time. In those few laps that followed Jim noticed the oil pressure start to fluctuate dangerously.

Since water lay on the track at the edges of the dry line, the track was artificially narrowed and wouldn't dry out in time to help Richards. The only clear area was entering and exiting the main straight where cars, two and three wide in passing moves, had swept the track dry. Fury was quite confident he could hold Jim out, was well aware of the one dry line and drove accordingly. "That helped a lot," Fury explained. "That car brakes a lot better than ours and he couldn't pull out in a number of places to pass."

On the 18th lap of the duel, Fury glanced into



NEIL HAMMOND



**Left:** New recruits to the M3 cause: a slow starting Robbie Francevic makes his debut with his new team, with an eager Jim Keogh right on his tail.

GARRY SPANKE



the mirrors to see an empty track. The BMW had lost oil pressure — suddenly — and Richards, his race all but run, nursed a very sick car back to the pits. A quick look at indicators of life showed that the M3 had consumed or leaked out all its oil and done terminal damage to its internals. The crew replenished the supply in the hope that the car might survive the last nine laps to the finish. "The motor was sounding a bit rough, so I decided to put it away," Richards said.

One of the endearing features of that enigmatic character, Jim Richards, is that he is brutally honest if he makes a mistake. When he first pitted, he blurted out his fluffed gearchange between low and second. Immediately the team knew what to look for. "He was getting mucked around," Gardner summed up later, inferring that Fury was holding up his man. "He sort of got out on the wet line coming out of the corner and gave it a bit of a buzz, got it off balance and missed a gear. It flew up to about 10,000 and it is only supposed to have 8500 on it and it didn't like that."

The mechanical problem that preceded the

From the beginning however, as soon as the Commodore hit the track on Friday, it was clear that the car was not going to be able to run on its merits. The Melbourne weather had turned wickedly cold and damp in what was supposed to be spring, and lacking an exclusive tyre contract, the talented little Melbourne team had to run on generally available Dunlops. The Commodore is a heavy car, of course, meaning that the softer compounds are out of the question for such a long race.

The cold snap brought the track temperature several degrees below the minimum range of the tyres to operate, between three and four degrees, Perkins estimated after qualifying the spotless VK in ninth. That was a respectable position nevertheless, but it had to be remembered the Commodores of Brock, with his tyre store full of new Bridgestones and Grice, on his new Yokohama radials, were always quicker. Grice, who was only beaten for fastest time in the official sessions by the Sierra of Andrew Miedecke, was almost a second quicker than Perkins, to put it into focus.

In those sessions, Larry at least had the

ground gained before the first corner, was as good as Grice's. Coming onto the back straight for the first time, Grice and Perkins gunned the big V8s for the climb, being separated only by the Nissan duo, Seton and Fury.

But as the temperature built up in the tyres of the competition, and not so much in Larry's, he was reeled in. First by was Johnson. No shame in that as Dick was moving at the speed of light and scorching the bitumen as the appreciably bigger turbo spat flaming fuel out of the exhaust. Next by was Brock in vintage form, then Richards, then the impressive Graeme Bowkett. The Commodore had now squandered almost all the ground it won off the line.

Consistency was now the theme for Perkins, and with the experienced, veteran Denny Hulme to take the wheel at the first stop, that seemed assured. That was as long as the car was not caught up in any on-track incidents. Good fortune was with them in that respect because the car came through absolutely unscathed.

That consistency, helped by attrition at the front and a few early pit stops by the opposition, contributed to Perkins having the Commodore into third place, although the car had lost a half a lap on the leader. During Hulme's stint, continuing on slicks despite the onset of intermittent showers, the car, with a permanent grip on fourth place then, was lapped by Richards. Perkins returned to the wheel with 49 laps to go, still in fourth, hoping to go the final 51 laps to the end. There was no certainty of this though, because Perkins had calculated the car was surprisingly marginal on fuel on this circuit — 44 laps compared with the 50 odd of the less powerful Brock Commodore. Any less and the team was looking at an unpalatable late, third stop for a top-up.

In the final analysis, being off the pace worked in Larry's favour. "We had to call on all of the fuel consumption at the end because we did 51 laps in the last stint and normally it was supposed to run out on lap 44. Once we saw that Peter (Brock) had his problem I buttoned it right off and by going slowly we used less petrol and that was why we could stretch it out."

Perkins had lowered his colours to Brock all day and had little prospect of reeling in the third-placed 05 with only 16 laps for the leader to complete. As Perkins braked at the end of the main straight the next lap around, he saw his rival oval to the right bogged in the sandtrap.

It was a sight that required at least a double-take: Brock off the track. It couldn't be. It was! And Brock, trudging through the wet sand was just as startled by it. It was a case of sudden, metal to metal contact at the front brakes, which caught him out when he went for the anchors. "The rear wheel just locked up and lucky it happened on that corner where it didn't do any damage," Brock said, thankful the problem of excessive pad wear had reared its head before Bathurst.

"According to our calculations we should have finished with about a third of pad intact. It probably gets back to lack of miles at this circuit with that sort of brake set-up. You don't get many hours here and we know how many hours we can run at most circuits, but here it just caught us out. It was quite unexpected."

With a light fuel load and the heavy slick-shod Commodore compressing the film of water away, Brock was charging to the end and one of the fastest movers on the track. He was giving no quarter coming down the straight for the 113th time. When the Commodore's rears locked-up, Brock became a passenger on a wild ride, there being no vestige of traction once the slicks left the dry line. The car water-skied over the waterlogged surfaces, spun around on the wet grass like a skater on ice and headed for the sand. It hit the trap broadside and at such a speed that the wheels dug in at the edge, almost tipping the car over.

The car was undamaged, however, and after a tractor on duty pulled the car clear, Brock was



GARRY SPARKE

1. overrev was put down to a set of oil rings that didn't have enough tension in them for that distance race. The car began to use oil and it was getting marginal on level near the end. In itself that wouldn't have stopped Richards breasting the chequer. When the engine was buzzed, however, the oil pump ran dry for an overly long time, overheated and eventually the pump gears seized.

This was the team's first race over that distance with the M3, Gardner stressed, so it was part of the painful learning process.

It left Fury with 12 laps to reel off. Elation mounted at his return to the winner's circle but there was also a little disappointment that the challenge hadn't gone the full distance. Defence had won the day, and George, so solemn through the year, allowed himself a grin.

In those lonely final laps, there was no pressure now as the second-placed Larry Perkins Commodore was a full lap in arrears and the third-placed Nissan Skyline, with Kent Baigent aboard and finding it hard going in the slippery conditions, had fallen almost a lap behind the pragmatic Perkins.

The Enzed-sponsored VK Commodore of Perkins, in its last race before Larry planned to move over to a VL, had been the plugger of the race, and the last of the competitive Holdens left to make the finish. It had been a quiet, incident-free event for the former Holden Dealer Team member and his ultra-reliable co-driver Denny Hulme.

opportunity of the full day to find the track at its warmest and set an appropriate time. When it came time for the 'Dulux runoff', for the top ten plus two, it was late afternoon and bitterly cold. As a consequence, the qualifiers were like granite in the one lap bid for pole and Perkins had the car skating around through lack of grip. He failed to improve his position with a time that was half a second off his quickest lap of the second session: he was well into the 51's when Grice and Brock had comfortably dipped below 1m 49s during their flying lap. It was demoralising when compared with Johnson's pole-winning lap of 1:47.59. "We were slower than last year," Perkins grizzled.

It was not encouraging especially as the quicker qualifiers such as Grice were talking of running the race at 50s, or 49s perhaps. If they were right, even if the Enzed Commodore matched its best qualifying time in the race, it risked being off the pace by several tenths a lap.

If the race conditions were to be cold, as they were, all Perkins and his men could do was follow the fundamentals of getting the race set-up pinsharp to ensure the car was capable of reproducing something like its qualifying times, lap after lap, in the race. There was never any doubt on reliability, the car engineered like a tank. It was also one of the better balanced of the Commodores and had ample power to do the job.

From that lower than normal position on the grid, Perkins made a start that in terms of



able to return it, brakeless, to the pits where it stayed.

Peter was far from deflated by it all, pointing out that he would have had second spot wrapped up had he kept going. "When gauged up against the other Holdens this thing is bloody quick," the former Sandown king confided pointing to a grit-splattered 05. "And despite the fact that we didn't get a result, we said to the boys that they can be pretty happy with things: we got fourth and our car should have finished well up and it is not as if we had dramas all weekend. It was the only thing that went wrong and it was a calculation that quite honestly surprised us."

The retirement of the boss opened the way for the second-string Mobil car of Neil Crompton and Jon Croke to get fourth. In their second race together, this odd couple had worked away industriously to have the car 11th on the starting grid, about where a car of that calibre should be if driven ably.

The baby-faced, velvety-voiced Crompton continued to be the target of much muttering, largely because of his high profile as a TV commentator. There were many, including some in his own profession who felt they were better qualified to pilot the second Mobil car. The team had no such misgivings, citing the 27-year-old's impeccable record in motor cycle racing, and the skill and intelligence he had displayed in the handful of car races between television commitments.

In the lead up to the race, he assumed the mantle of lead driver in the car over Formula Two ace Croke, which thickened the air of controversy about the signing. The TV man was down as having set the qualifying time and a pretty respectable one too for somebody in his second Group A drive, and with just six motor races to his credit. It was quick enough to get him a run in the late Saturday afternoon 'Dulux Dozen' runoff, thanks to the scratching of the wrecked Andrew Miedecke Sierra and broken suspension on the second Johnson Sierra.

Easy does it was the approach in the race with Crompton, at the wheel first, holding ninth in the early stages ahead of Warren Cullen in his elderly, unsponsored VK, brought out of moth-balls for Sandown and Bathurst. With Croke doing a manful job on slicks in the wet during the middle stint, all was set-up for Crichton to lift the car up the field later in the race through attrition. The only difficulty they faced was in the pits. At the first scheduled stop, the car had



1: Murray Carter, Tony Kavich and Gerald Kay mix it in the mid-field. Veteran Carter soon let them far behind in his drive to sixth in the Skyline shared with Denis Horley.

2: His own car minus an engine, Dick Johnson provided the thrills in the early stages. He took the wheel of the second team car and left everybody gasping as he caught the front runners and dashed past Seton for the lead.

3: Brock at his best had the new Mobil VL really moving. He was the fastest on the track when the rain settled in to make conditions treacherous.

4: Seton flings the Skyline through the infield. It was necessary to firstly keep Grice in sight and then to hang on to Johnson's Sierra.





to wait until Brock, out of fuel and driving on reserve up the back straight was attended. Then, in the final stop, the seat belt drill failed to work. It was a tangle of belts as Crooke struggled to secure the stockier Crompton frame.

The message from the Brock pit after the race was: he and the team are back! Brock's special vehicles business had survived the debilitating split with Holden's and now the race team, which had withered during the period, was now reinvigorated. The announcement by Mobil of a two-year extension of sponsorship, with the option of a further year, was a great morale booster, and finally those Bridgestone radials, ordered in November, had arrived. As well, new team driver Crichton's performance had vindicated Brock's choice.

The new radials had proved their worth in the shakedown run at Oran Park, in similar track conditions. And it was the tyres, more than anything else, that had embarrassed the team during the early part of the year. At the risk of offending Bridgestone, the team couldn't be too critical. They had to be patient, be brave-faced until their tyre supplier completed the long process of designing a new radial suitable for the Commodore. It took time because the Commodore is an automotive orphan in Group A — large, heavy and powerful and with relatively narrow wheels in proportion to its bulk.

The new rubber allowed the car to put its power to the ground and there was more power to use on the Mobil Commodores following a development programme for Spa. Not at the top end, which stayed much the same at around 420 hp, but it was down lower where the drivers could use it driving out of the corners.

Progress had also been made in handling by the team, mostly at the back. Brock's new VL utilised the latest adjustable rear end fabricated locally by Ron Harrop. This was a Brock innovation developed in 1986 and homologated for use in 1987.

An adaptor on the suspension enabled the dialling in of suspension angles that are usually only possible with a fully adjustable independent rear end, like on the M3. Such adjustment is vital for radial tyres. Because of the 'bag' effect through lack of sidewall strength, radials need to be set up with negative camber, or 'toe-out', to work at their best through the corners.

The end result was that 05's rear tyres squatted at the back several degrees. It was not an exclusive advancement — several other serious Commodores had it fitted and the Grice Commodore had Les Small's own version which produced the same effect — but exclusive in combination with the highly regarded new Bridgestone radials.

"It seems to work OK," Brock noted. "The tyre temperatures were good and while the car wasn't as well set-up here as it was at Oran Park, it was pretty close to it."

For all the improvement at 'Brock Racing', as the team had begun calling itself, the Roadways men still led the Holden charge, with their man Allan Grice, in a chipper frame of mind. "The car is the best it has been this year," Grice enthused at the assembled media after qualifying. "You have seen us this year: springs, shockers and sway bars, everywhere! We made some change yesterday and today, nothing!"

At an ease 'Gricey' had just ripped off 1:49.63, almost a second under the lap record of Jim Richards and while this was two seconds off Johnson's pole time, it had Grice a creditable fourth on the grid behind Johnson, Richards and beside Fury. He was confident of copying that time in the race which was blistering stuff. His confidence sprung from two eight lap dashes in official qualifying on race rubber, recording high 49s and low 50s. If that was the case, why not quicker on qualifiers? It appeared that while Yokohama had built Gricey some good radials for the race, there had been little corresponding improvement for the super sticky variety.

More reason for Grice's confidence was his

new co-driver, Win Percy, who finished third at Bathurst 1985, co-driving a Jaguar with Tom Walkinshaw's factory team. What a formidable driving combination that was, perhaps the strongest there had been in international Group A.

Percy, the tall, gentle Englishman had been turned loose in 1987 following Walkinshaw's decision not to campaign Holden Commodores in the World Touring Car Championship, due to a disagreement with the governing body about how the series was being run. Small and Grice wasted no time in securing his services because if Percy wasn't the most accomplished touring car driver in the world, he was certainly the best co-driver in the world.

As soon as Percy stepped off the plane and into the car for a few laps of acclimatisation on the Wednesday preview, he was putting in competitive times. Having tested Roadways-engined Commodores for Walkinshaw earlier in the year, he was right at home, although Percy observed that the Roadways car had been more highly developed.

The first thing he noticed was the Bob Jane-sponsored car's "grunt" and the luxury of power steering. He had never driven a race car with that feature, a feature which Walkinshaw apparently dislikes. He went on: "I have driven a few turbos and I am inclined towards normally aspirated cars." He was also comfortable in the exalted company of the Bathurst winner. "Allan is in the similar vein to Tom — aggressive and he wants to win motor races."

The sight of Percy in full flight was a tantalising prospect and there was much disappointment when the yellow-suited Percy, and indeed Grice, were hardly seen on Sunday.

After a blinding start from row two, Grice actually opened a gap of almost two seconds on the Nissans by the conclusion of the first lap, and figured he still had two laps to go before the tyres were fully warmed! It all came to nought less than two minutes later. Coming down the main straight the second time, the engine dropped onto seven cylinders as he pulled fourth. Grice was instantly on the radio to team boss Les Small, suspecting it was something electrical and hoping it was something minor.

The Roadways Commodore is fitted with a few "toys" as Small calls them. One of them is a computer that controls and allows speedy re-programming of the parameters in the electronic ignition. That has a readout on the dash. "I told him to push a few buttons and see what it was doing," Small recalled.

It was a good guess because the readout revealed there was a fault in the system. In the pits the team set about changing the computer. When it was completed, the engine was fired up but it was still running rough. The team was bamboozled and only much later did they come to the conclusion that there was two faults — one in the computer readout and one somewhere in the engine itself.

Off came the rocker covers to reveal a rocker stud snapped off, the first such failure the team had experienced in the VL engine. The engine, which had been fitted with brand new heads during the week, had been bolted into the car for Saturday, so had done very little work.

The broken stud was immediately consigned to the lab where tests revealed that the \$2 shaft had a slight bend in it at manufacture. "You can't check everything," Small reflected.

At the discovery of the broken component, the car was back in working order and returned briefly to the track after 62 laps had been run, as much as to give the in-car TV camera a work-out as the driver. The purposeful Percy did half a dozen laps, leaving the clocks gasping on a 50.5.

The next to be struck down was Seton, the exhaust turbine wheel having had enough for the day, just when Glenn was settling down rather comfortably in the lead with a five second plus gap to team-mate Fury and another gap to Richards.

It was the same failure that had stopped Seton, in his last race — the championship finale at Oran Park — and there was no accounting for it. "It's just the luck of the draw," Gibson sighed after the race. "You never know with turbos."

Certainly Glenn had been giving the Skyline a real caning. He had the whip out to wedge himself into second off the fourth row, and he wasn't going to let Gricey take charge of the race. On that second lap, when the Orange Commodore spluttered across the line, Seton flashed by to record the second fastest lap of the race. There was no letting up because that red blur — the Johnson Sierra — was moving forward and by the fourth lap, entered the scene, right on Seton's boot.

The performance of the No. 15 Skyline in these early stages of the race contrasted sharply with qualifying when Glenn complained about an oversteer problem. In the Saturday morning session, the car was a second off Fury's newer but apparently identical sister car, and the situation didn't improve as the day went on and Glenn was knocked off by the Nissan of the trim little Kiwi Bowkett. It was alright on the day, however, the Nissan boys chucking away a dud rear shocker.

The problem caused a bit of anguish in the Nissan camp because considerable chassis



changes had been rendered on the Skyline in the period between the Calder endurance race and Sandown. The lack of racing in the period allowed the Nissan men to try and find the 25 odd hp they had lost in the detuning to run on lower octane fuel. Engine man Barry Seton and son Glenn spent long hours slaving over a hot dyno and in conjunction with some re-programming of the Electromotive engine management system, overseen by an Electromotive engineer brought out especially from the U.S., grabbed back all the top end power they had lost.

The only deficiency left was in the mid range where 15 hp disappeared along with a corresponding amount of torque. This regretfully undid the work the team had done earlier in the year building up the mid range to make the viciously accelerating Skylines more controllable out of the corners and easier on the drivers. During that time they had also softened the suspension for the sprint races to enable the car to put all its power down out of the corners.

The return of jet-like acceleration changed the whole characteristic of the car. In particular it tossed the Skyline around on its suspension and on top of that there was that long standing brake lock-up problem that contributed to Seton losing the touring car championship.



After plenty of laps by Seton at Calder during the break, the Skyline was tamed once again by harder springs and lower ride height at the back. This also had the effect of reducing the excessive weight transfer at the front which had been the cause of the brake lock-up. As it turned out, it made the car more controllable in the wet because there was no surge of power until the wheels were pointed in the right direction.

At Seton's retirement, another crowd-pleaser, John Bowe, failed to influence the outcome of the race. Bowe was down to co-drive with Seton as part of new driver pairings for the big races. Gibson felt that Seton's inspiring performances in the sprint races earned him the right to have his own car for the rest of the year. The usual Fury/Seton pairing of 1986 was split and new man Bowe united with Glenn to produce cars with two distinct personalities. Car 15 was "team desperado", as Gibson referred to them, while the No. 30 machine would be piloted by the more laid-back Fury and Shiel.

Changing a turbo was a relatively straightforward process, so when Seton parked after his short, but brilliant effort, there was plenty of time to repair the car and get Bowe into it. He was sent out on lap 83 to go to the end on the drying track and there was some irony there: "They put on this old shitty turbo that they had used this week," Bowe laughed. "And it went



1: The performance of the Bowkett/Baigent Skyline was the surprise packet of the event, their car secure in second for most of the time.

2: Two approaches for similar results. A measured Bill O'Brien brought his VL home ninth, while the more exuberant Kiwi Kieran Wills picked up an extra lap and two more places in the Skyline.

3: The persistence of Jim Richards had the BMW into the lead when the last remaining front runner — George Fury — pitted for the first time.

4: Four new RS500 Sierras arrived for the meeting, just two started the race. In the end there were none, although Gregg Hansford, taking the controls over from Crichton and John Giddings in the second OXO car, continued to circulate well past halfway.



really well!" That was maddening for Gibson because the turbo was out of the same batch as the blown one and it did more laps in the race!

Unfortunately the car could only get in 86 laps before flagfall, not enough to classify as a finisher. It joined the Johnson Sierra, also with 86 laps, on the non-finisher list.

The car that set the race alight for the first 20 laps was in the hands of Johnson's co-driver Gregg Hansford when the engine, not so unexpectedly, gave out. It happened when the hot and cold Hansford was running hot on the cold track, and moving dutifully back up the field. "It just ran out of oil, it was a tired old motor," team manager Neal Lowe said after the race. And there was some pride in that because it had been the dyno motor that had done all the work in the workshop in Brisbane and in testing during the process of turning the team's existing Sierras into the super-powerful RS500s.

"He was giving it a bit of stick wasn't he?" Neal went on referring to the boss's swash-buckling in those early laps which delivered the folk hero a new lap record. And of course, in the circumstances, Johnson had no choice but to go for broke. Right? "Exactly," Lowe responded. "But it nearly lasted, it bloody near did!"

How Johnson happened to be using a tired old reserve motor, driving the second team car





and not starting from pole position was a long and involved tale which had its beginnings in the team's workshop.

The Castrol 500 was the Australian debut of the RS500 evolution of the Sierra Cosworth. This potent update of the car put all the Johnson team's turbo problems behind them since the turbo-charger grew from the size of an apple to that of a melon and had an array of related engine ancillaries to make the package work.

And work it did, lifting the car's output from the 340 hp at the start of the year, to a hard to believe 500! That was about 50 horses up on a Holden Commodore to make the Ford the most powerful Group A machine you could get. So with an already competitive package suddenly getting an injection of 150 hp, you would have expected Dick Johnson to be leaping with joy.

Not so. Ford had created an economy-sized monster and both Sierra teams — Johnson's Shell Ultra High Tech Racing and Don Smith's OXO Supercube Motorsport — treated their cars like a zoologist treats a redback spider. With respect. Or should that read: fear.

The question everyone asked was how can you put all that power into such a small package without beefing up the rest of the car — the drivetrain in particular? It was a valid question because apart from the introduction of fully adjustable suspension on the rear, the car had to make do with its original 'RS' running gear.

Johnson had as many questions as everybody else, it was all so new. His major concern was to rein the car in enough to make it driveable and that meant the conservative

approach, keeping boost at 1.3 initially for 420 hp, which was right on the lower limit. "No use turning it up," Dick declared on Friday. "We are aiming at conservation. We have to look after the rear end or risk doing some damage." And handling? "The car won't steer at all with all the aerodynamics!" Dick said referring to the increased downforce from the extended top deck spoiler.

By Friday afternoon the team seemed even further from solving the mystery of the Sierra when the second car, to be driven by the new pairing of Neville Crichton and Neal Lowe, inexplicably blew a headgasket and Dick's own car had a fuel fire after only a handful of circuits. The headgasket failure was blamed on too high boost while the fire was attributed to faulty wiring which sent the engine management system haywire: it pumped in too much fuel.

Later the engine problem in No. 18 was traced to it being specified with too much compression when it was originally being bolted together in the workshop. Out it came and in went the old dyno mule, the only spare the team had. "It has done 50 hours on the dyno," Lowe revealed, "and I'm hard on engines on the dyno. If it can survive that, it can survive anything!"

In the morning, the car ran well enough for Crichton, the wealthy trans-Tasman businessman, to rip in seventh quickest time of the morning. Only the Peter Jackson boys, Grice, Brock, Richards and the fastest man of the morning, Andrew Miedecke, bettered that. The time held up for the rest of the day and earned Crichton a spot in the Dulux Dozen runoff, late on Saturday afternoon.

Unfortunately the car didn't appear for the rest of the day, a broken front strut keeping it motionless while late in the afternoon Johnson and Lowe grappled and banged away at the offending part in the garage for all to see. This was not the sort of image a big buck team is supposed to convey.

The team blamed their dramas on the late arrival of the crucial evolution component, rather than admit to any fundamental organisational problem in the face of such an enormous technological and engineering task. "It appears we have got some minor problems," Johnson admitted late on Saturday. "It is not just a few bits you bolt on, it is a completely different car. Five hundred hp changes things!"

The Sydney based OXO team, which was a fully signed up customer of Andy Rouse, was entirely dependent on the Englishman for the supply of the new bits and for means of controlling the super Sierra. He hadn't let them down, except that Don Smith was still in civvies on Friday having begged airport customs to urgently release his engine management control units, which had to be sent to England to be re-programmed to match evolution performance to super grade fuel.

Rouse was confident enough to suggest the OXO team run full boost but Smith preferred to be cautious. A hundred extra horses was enough at around 1.7 on the boost gauge. "The brakes seem to be able to handle it and the traction is not too bad if you feed it in."

Smith noted that the car had such an excess of power that you could spin the wheels at will in the low gears. "As long as we drive smoothly and cleanly and keep off the ripple strips, we will be OK. The crown wheel and pinion is the weakest part." He went on: "It depends on the rest of the car keeping up with the engine because it's not a touring car anymore but a real racing car."

With Johnson struggling to get his act together on Saturday morning, the circumstances were now right for open wheeler ace, Andrew Miedecke, to explode onto the touring car scene. His own mixture of precision and abandon came into play and it was the Port Macquarie man who was the hero of the morning, beating off Fury by more than three-tenths and Grice by half a second. This had been the plan all along, Smith admitted later, to get 'Mad Andy' dialled in and ready to pinch pole and set the sponsor jumping with glee.

In the early afternoon, with the car already entrenched in the Dulux Dozen, there was no pressure on. Miedecke set about fine-tuning the suspension before handing over to team owner and co-driver, Smith. A few minutes later there was dramatic activity at the end of pit straight: Don had gone off in a big way. He was OK, but the car, owned by Miedecke, was a \$150,000 throwaway.

In his cold, empty pit, Miedecke stood heartbroken, waiting for the team boss to return and confirm the worst. "I did five and ten laps to try out some new dampers," Miedecke moaned. "There was a problem under brakes a little but the car was OK. I wouldn't have handed it over if there was anything wrong with it."

Soon after, the portly, laconic Smith trotted self-consciously down pitlane to his pit. "The poor car. Andrew will cry," he said. None the worse for wear, apart from a bump on the head where his helmet hit the roll bar on the last of three rolls, he recalled missing a gearchange. "I started to brake a bit harder and it locked up. I tried to get it back but it hit the ripple strip."

Just before the Dulux Dozen, with bruising starting to show out on the side of his face, Smith told how it should have been. "We were saving it up for now and we were going to turn up the boost and now I have blown it all. 'Take it easy,' I said to Andrew and he behaved himself. I knew he could go one to one and a half seconds faster when we turned up the wick."

A few minutes later Dick Johnson, with the red No. 17 tweaked up to 1.7 boost, let the



GAIRY SPANNE



RACE PRESS



Sierra loose on the straights. The only Sierra in the Dozen — made up of the Peter Jackson Skylines of Fury and Seton, the supporting Skylines of Bowkett and Murray Carter, the Holden Motor Sport Group Commodores of Grice and Perkins, the Mobil Commodores of Brock and Crompton, the unsponsored Commodore of Warren Cullen and the JPS M3s of Richards and Ludwig Finauer — it chopped almost two and a half seconds off Miedecke's morning benchmark and was almost a second clear of the next fastest, Richards. Perhaps Johnson could have gone even quicker as most complained about tyres not getting warm enough in the chilly conditions.

For Bowkett and Finauer, the one lap screamer was a new experience and they handled themselves well. They had outqualified some big names and made a good job of the one lap dash in the less than ideal track conditions, to start right behind Brock the following afternoon.

The Nissan NZ-supported Skyline wanted for nothing, compared with the Australian works cars and interestingly was producing similar performance by going down the different path of less boost but higher compression. They had planned to do two stops, but when the rain began and times dropped, the car developed a happy disdain for fuel. It made Bowkett unstoppable. He ran amok, in front of the local hotshots, getting the car in second before handing over to his Auckland businessman colleague Kent Baigent.

Baigent got the rough end of the Castrol 500 deal: out on slicks in the rain which sent him gyrating on the odd occasion, and, early on in his stint, the embarrassment of the car stopping for no apparent reason out of Castrol corner. "I didn't have any fuel pressure for some reason or another, but the fuel pressure came up again and as soon as I started it up, it fired back into life and ran like that for the rest of the time. It keeps the boys alive in the pits," Baigent grinned under his moustache.

The car only pitted once due to the considerably reduced fuel consumption in that slower, damp half of the race. Later, team-mate Bowkett cursed at not following the lead of the Peter Jackson team and opting for softer and much faster tyres in the cooler conditions. It may have got them second place.

Gibson had toyed with the idea of going for one stop, a la Castrol 500 1986, to play the BMW's at the fuel consumption game, but, surveying the weather during Saturday, and considering the data at hand from qualifying, decided there was a better approach. "I thought we would be more competitive doing two," Gibson figured. "I looked at it this way: we make one stop, we would have to lap a second a lap slower on harder compound tyres to go half way and a second in 120 laps is 120 seconds. We could do two stops and still be ahead by 50 secs."

Finauer's flying lap in the Dozen was even a little bit quicker than his qualifying time and that was quite a feat for someone in his first season. The dapper JPS Team BMW engine builder salvaged a massive setback for his 'half' of the team when the car was found to have water in its fuel tank on Saturday morning.

The car had been left in the team's garage overnight, the track being watched by a security firm. The car as usual had the minimum three litres of fuel in the tank. That was still there when the car was fired up to get ready for the first session, but it also had four litres of water with it, causing the engine to quickly stop. Sabotage was the only explanation and while the car was not damaged, it served the purpose of throwing the team off its rhythm.

For all that session, the car Tony Longhurst campaigned in the Australian Touring Car Championship sat silently with its innards hanging out to dry. The whole fuel system was thoroughly cleaned and inspected before any thought was given to taking it out. Finally in the afternoon, while a toey Robbie Francevic

watched, Finauer took a fuel sample and held it up to the light. It was go!

For the rest of that afternoon, the car was almost exclusively assigned to Finauer to be absolutely certain that the car was running perfectly. That was OK, Robbie said. The senior man in the 'B team', he would start the race with just three laps in a car, in fact, a marque, he had never driven before. No problem. It was more important that the car was OK.

Robbie Francevic, the 1986 Australian Touring Car Champion, had returned to the scene again, somewhat quietly, for his first race since Bathurst 1986. He wanted badly to race in Australia again, to clear the air of any lingering bitterness from the Volvo Dealer Team debacle of the previous season's Castrol 500 and to say thank you in the best possible way — by racing — to all those Australians who had supported him.

The exuberant Kiwi had no hesitation in taking up Gardner's invitation and Gardner had no hesitation about extending it. There had never been any criticism of the man's ability to drive a car well. And it was a bit like old home week because it meant that after racing against Jim Richards in New Zealand for two decades and racing against him in Australia for two seasons, he was in the same team as his old foe for the first time.

Francevic was quite content to play the role of team man, believing he was in the best team there was. The way the team tackled the water problem was evidence of that, he stated. Then it was up to him to do the right thing and come to grips with a strange car, without playing hero.



1: A dust-up with the lone Mercedes put the second-string JPS M3 of new combination Francevic and Finauer into the pits early. The car returned to the track minus most of its front.



2: Just out of mothballs, the Warren Cullen VK, showed some speed, but not reliability.



3: Guess who's back? His job done in his first drive for JPS Team BMW, Robbie Francevic focusses on the progress of his car, now in the hands of Ludwig Finauer.

4: Roadside services for the Mercedes Benz as preparer/driver Phil Ward nuts out a fuel feed problem.

5: When the rain came down, car control came to the fore. George Fury fights to point the Skyline.

6: The race leading Nissan is just up the road. Tony Longhurst starts to close in with better grip from his intermediates.



"It is so different," Francevic boomed about the M3. "Frank sets them up so good — no oversteer or no understeer. It can handle so beautifully that you don't know the limit. Our yardstick is the best driver in Australia. When he goes and sets a better time, next time out you give it some more. It is an easy car to drive but difficult to get that good lap time."

The drive by this curious combination of Francevic and Finauer was one of the highlights of the race, both drivers having to recover from being elbowed off the road by competitors they were attempting to pass.

The day began badly when Francevic, following instructions about being gentle with the BMW lightweight clutch, and not having had a practice start, bogged down on the line. He found himself engulfed by the midfield and came around the first time in 20th. A few laps later he came off second best as he went under the ex-AMG Mercedes Benz 190E of Sydney's never-give-an-inch Phil Ward.

In the incident the M3's spoiler was torn off and was caught under the car. For three laps

Robbie sat stewing in the pits while the crew fished out the fibreglass that had fouled the running gear and also made rudimentary repairs to the radiator.

From then on the car, hardly at its aerodynamic best, gradually climbed its way up the field, the only other setback being Finauer's late race altercation with the ex-JPS M3 of Jim Keogh, which had both cars off the road for a short time.

The car only did two stops, the second only needed to put Finauer on slicks. Add three laps and a bit and the car could have easily ended up in second place instead of fifth. Unfortunately for them their good work on the weekend was largely unseen, most besotted with the twists and turns of the Sierra soap opera and thrilling dual involving their team-mates at the end.

Johnson's performance in the Dulux Dozen underlined the potential of the Ford to totally dominate raceday. The question now was: would they last? "If they last," a spectating Miedecke observed, "they will win."

By early Sunday, nobody was game to back a Sierra in, even Dick Johnson. Three laps into the serious morning warm-up, a growing tradition in Group A, the pole-winning car coughed and died. "Just popped out all its oil," was the explanation from Neal Lowe. "There was a helluva oil leak, so we just called it quits."

As time was tight and the spare engine was already in No. 18, No. 17 was rudely pushed aside. The second-string car had been cross-entered with the team drivers enabling Johnson to step in for the start, but it meant forfeiting his pole position and coming off the seventh row,

beside where the Miedecke/ Smith Sierra should have been.

Johnson didn't really see that starting position as a great handicap, half-joking on Saturday that he would probably be last into the first corner because the power didn't come in until 6000 rpm.

Winning had in fact been a secondary consideration for the team at this event and with the engine failure in the lead car, Johnson's intention was to put on a show for as long as he could to see just what the Sierra could do. "Tyres are the big problem," he revealed earlier in the weekend. "We might be through to steel after five laps!"

In the effort to pick off his fellow superstars, to snare Seton, and to hold the lead for 12 crowd-pleasing laps, the tyres were actually good for 22 laps. Seton, on a stickier, softer compound rubber to fully exploit the three-part race Gibson planned to run, began to claw back some ground on the Sierra. That's when Dick decided to pit, check out the tyre wear, give Crichton a run and then Hansford. Neal would have to miss out.

Johnson made it look easy as he left his opposition standing on the climb up the back straight. It was visually exciting stuff for four laps until he was stalled by Seton. The No. 18 Sierra, despite being inferior to the team's lead car, still had the grunt to get by down the straights and did so across the line for the eighth time. Seton made an issue of it through the in-field which said something about what the injection of power was doing to the Sierra's handling. He had to work that Skyline steering wheel hard, though, to make a race of it. "It was good fun," Seton said. "But he had a bit more speed up the straights. Like about ten car lengths!"

After the race the Johnson team blamed the failure of the engine in the No. 17 car on the type of fuel they had been using. This, it had to be noted, was the team's first race on super grade fuel.

Unlike 100 octane aviation fuel, which had been preferred for racing for eons, the blending and octane rating of pump grade 97 leaded commercial grade differs all over the country to suit regional requirements. And from refinery to refinery and company to company it also differs. It gets back to the peculiar geography of this diverse island continent and our heavy pockets of urban sprawl separated by vast distances. In Melbourne, for instance, which is a city fighting against a photo-chemical smog problem, super grade has a very low 'anti-pollution' lead content, while Sydney has a little more lead in its petrol and Brisbane and country fuels, i.e. at Bathurst, apparently have double the lead content of Melbourne. But you could never be sure, the chemistry is so inconsistent.

The more lead the less the incidence of 'pinking' in an engine — fuel mixture exploding in the combustion chamber at the inappropriate point in the cycle. It is not really important for production engines, which have wide tolerances and run at low rpm and load, but for finely-tuned racing engines, especially forced induction engines and little high revvers, it is a death sentence.

This situation made the Sierra teams paranoid about the fuel they were using. The OXO team had their engine management system set up in England to run on fuel that was the same blend as that to be used at Bathurst, so were cautious about having to run on Melbourne fuel. The Johnson team, which makes and programmes its own computer chips, had done similar.

The Shell-sponsored men did all their testing on Brisbane leaded super which they understood to be similar to Bathurst fuel. To avoid the possible consequences of using an uncertain fuel blend, the glaring red Shell Ultra Hi-tech Racing Team transporter carried 340 litres of Brisbane fuel down to Melbourne to be used in the cars during practice.

For the race, arrangements were made to freight the balance to get the two cars through





the 500 km. It never arrived due to an organisational cock-up. The team had no choice but to use Victorian fuel for Sunday and that was the reason for the engine going down in No. 17 and probably what got the other car in the end. "For sure it was," Lowe lamented as the team packed up to limp back to Brisbane, "because we were here all Friday and all day Saturday running that engine on fuel we brought down from Brisbane and we drained that out last night to go through scrutineering and put Victorian fuel in that morning."

The primarily Melbourne-based Nissan teams had no such problems, using Melbourne fuel without a care, four of them finishing in the top seven spots. The Commodores too, drank it up, carburettors simplifying the adjustment process. So did the M3's, with their Bosch Motronic engine management systems, two of them finishing in the top eight.

Such a fundamental problem was not something you wanted with just three weeks to solve it, especially in the face of assured reliability from the opposition. If the local Sierra men overcame it, as was likely, that just left the big question mark about general reliability in such a powerful package.

The diversion of that fuel problem wasted the opportunity of plying the unknown in time for the biggest test of all. They would have to start all over again in an environment that is the most hostile and contemptible of those who arrive unprepared. Bathurst.



**1:** Gripping stuff. With one eye on their man Jim, and the other eye on the activity in the Nissan pit, JPS Team BMW boss Frank Gardner and co-driver Tony Longhurst wait out the final laps.

**2:** Commodore crush as Perkins puts the lapped Graeme Cameron and Neil Crompton between himself and a threatening Brock.

**3:** Introducing new Nissan face Grant Jarrett. He had just co-driven the Peter Jackson Gazelle into a class win and tenth outright.

**4:** This man defeated rainmaster Jim Richards in the wet. George Fury soaks up the congrats for his first victory in many months.

**5:** Fury notches up his second straight Castrol 500 victory. It was a long way back to second place.

## Castrol 500 grid

## RESULTS

### CASTROL 500, Sandown, September 13, 1987:

<b>*1 — Dick Johnson</b> (Sierra) 1:47.59	<b>2 — Jim Richards</b> (BMW) 1:48.43
<b>3 — George Fury</b> (Skyline) 1:49.43	<b>4 — Allan Grice</b> (Commodore) 1:49.63
<b>5 — Peter Brock</b> (Commodore) 1:49.81	<b>6 — Graeme Bowkett</b> (Skyline) 1:50.01
<b>7 — Ludwig Finauer</b> (BMW) 1:51.14	<b>8 — Glenn Seton</b> (Skyline) 1:51.18
<b>9 — Larry Perkins</b> (Commodore) 1:51.31	<b>10 — Murray Carter</b> (Skyline) 1:53.92
<b>11 — Neil Crompton</b> (Commodore) 1:54.37	<b>12 — Warren Cullen</b> (Commodore) 1:57.24
<b>*13 — Andrew Miedecke</b> (Sierra) 1:49.45	<b>14 — Neville Crichton</b> (Sierra) 1:51.19
<b>15 — John Giddings</b> (Sierra) 1:51.8	<b>16 — Graeme Crosby</b> (Commodore) 1:53.2
<b>17 — Graeme Cameron</b> (Commodore) 1:53.7	<b>18 — Bill O'Brien</b> (Commodore) 1:53.8
<b>19 — Keiran Wills</b> (Skyline) 1:54.00	<b>20 — Peter McLeod</b> (Commodore) 1:54.1
<b>21 — Jim Keogh</b> (BMW) 1:54.2	<b>22 — Tony Kavich</b> (Commodore) 1:54.9
<b>23 — Graham Lorimer</b> (BMW) 1:55.1	<b>24 — Wayne Cliff</b> (Commodore) 1:55.3
<b>25 — Ray Ellis</b> (Commodore) 1:55.5	<b>26 — Graham Lusty</b> (Commodore) 1:55.6
<b>27 — Tony Mulvihill</b> (Commodore) 1:55.8	<b>28 — Gerald Kay</b> (Commodore) 1:56.5
<b>29 — Lester Smerdon</b> (Commodore) 1:56.59	<b>30 — Phil Ward</b> (Mercedes Benz) 1:57.00
<b>31 — Chris Castle</b> (Commodore) 1:57.3	<b>32 — Mark Skaife</b> (Gazelle) 1:57.6
<b>33 — John Smith</b> (Corolla) 1:58.1	<b>34 — Lawrie Nelson</b> (Mustang) 1:58.49
<b>35 — Des Wall</b> (BMW 635CSi) 1:59.02	<b>36 — John Faulkner</b> (Corolla) 1:59.34
<b>37 — Bob Holden</b> (Sprinter) 1:59.6	<b>38 — David Ratcliff</b> (Levin) 2:01.3
<b>39 — Brian Bolwell</b> (BMW 323i) 2:03.2	<b>40 — Daryl Hendrick</b> (Gemini) 2:05.00
<b>41 — Bill Bryce</b> (BMW 325) 2:06.18	<b>42 — David Sala</b> (Gemini) 2:08.15

PLACE	DRIVERS	CAR	LAPS	FASTEST LAP
1	George Fury/Terry Shiel	Nissan Skyline	129	1:50.58
2	Larry Perkins/Denny Hulme	Holden Commodore VK	128	1:51.89
3	Kent Baigent/Graeme Bowkett	Nissan Skyline	127	1:51.90
4	Jon Croke/Neil Crompton	Holden Commodore VL	126	1:53.50
5	Robbie Francevic/Ludwig Finauer	BMW M3	125	1:52.98
6	Murray Carter/Denis Horley	Nissan Skyline	125	1:52.65
7	Keiran Wills/Philip Henley	Nissan Skyline	124	1:53.56
8	Graham Lorrimer/John Sax	BMW M3	123	1:55.84
9	Bill O'Brien/Brian Sampson	Holden Commodore VL	123	1:54.57
10	Mark Skaife/Grant Jarrett	Nissan Gazelle	121	1:57.58
11	Wayne Cliff/Bernie Stack	Holden Commodore VK	121	1:52.63
12	Ray Ellis/John Lusty	Holden Commodore VL	120	1:54.67
13	John Faulkner/Mike Quinn	Toyota Corolla	119	2:01.32
14	Tony Mulvihill/Ken Matthews	Holden Commodore	119	1:54.84
15	Brian Bolwell/Rod Smith	BMW 323i	117	1:59.89
16	Bill Bryce/Leo Geoghegan	BMW 325i	116	1:59.05
17	Des Wall/John Virgo	BMW 635CSi	116	1:59.35
18	Graham Lusty/Ken Lusty	Holden Commodore VK	115	1:56.13
19	Bob Holden/Garry Willmington	Toyota Sprinter	115	2:01.79
20	Chris Castle/John Billington	Holden Commodore VK	114	1:57.83
21	Tony Kavich/Kerry Baily	Holden Commodore VK	113	1:54.92
22	David Sala/Dale Smart	Holden Gemini	111	2:07.42
23	Daryl Hendrick/John White	Holden Gemini	106	2:05.42

#### Retirements:

Glenn Seton/John Bowe	Nissan Skyline (insufficient laps)	86	1:50.53
Lawrie Nelson/Bryan Thomson	Ford Mustang (insufficient laps)	78	1:58.11
Phil Ward/Chris Clearihan	Mercedes Benz 190E (insufficient laps)	55	1:57.01
Jim Richards/Tony Longhurst	BMW M3 (oil pump)	118	1:50.99
Graham Cameron/Wayne Wilkinson	Holden Commodore VL (timing gear)	116	1:55.35
Peter Brock/David Parsons	Holden Commodore VL (brakes)	113	1:51.28
Warren Cullen/Garry Sprague	Holden Commodore VK (diff)	99	1:53.91
Trevor Crowe/Jim Keogh	BMW M3 (accident damage)	93	1:54.96
John Smith/Drew Price	Toyota Corolla (alternator)	91	2:01.17
Dick Johnson/Neville Crichton	Ford Sierra (engine)	86	1:50.28*
Gregg Hansford		86	1:50.28*
John Giddings/Bruce Stewart	Ford Sierra (diff)	82	1:51.99
Graeme Crosby/Graham McCrae	Holden Commodore VK (wheel stud)	74	1:53.73
Gerald Kay/Alf Grant	Holden Commodore VK (alternator)	73	1:56.93
David Ratcliff/Mark Gibbs	Toyota Levin (engine)	64	2:02.34
Lester Smerdon/Bruce Williams	Holden Commodore VK (gearbox)	43	1:57.72
Peter McLeod/Peter Fitzgerald	Holden Commodore VK (clutch)	17	1:55.65
Allan Grice/Win Percy	Holden Commodore VL (rocker stud)	10	1:50.59
Tony Hunter/Warren McKeller	Holden Commodore VK (headgasket)	1	2:34.39

Racetime: 4hr. 10.28.06

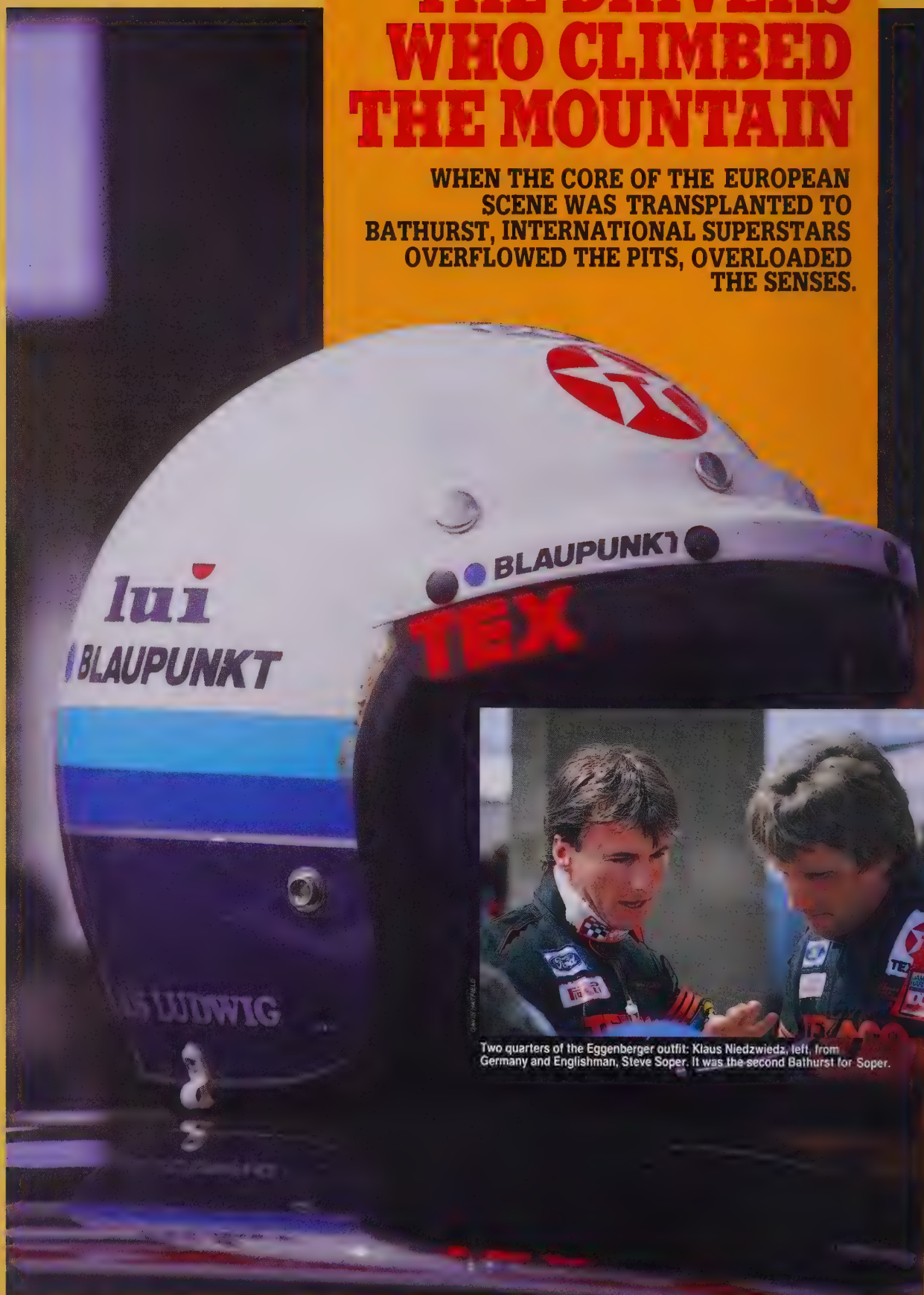
\* New lap record

\* Did not start



# THE DRIVERS WHO CLIMBED THE MOUNTAIN

WHEN THE CORE OF THE EUROPEAN SCENE WAS TRANSPLANTED TO BATHURST, INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTARS OVERFLOWED THE PITS, OVERLOADED THE SENSES.



Two quarters of the Eggenberger outfit: Klaus Niedzwiedz, left, from Germany and Englishman, Steve Soper. It was the second Bathurst for Soper.



**T**here had never been such quality in the driving ranks at Bathurst. That was the gift of the world touring car championship: 18 of the top 30 contenders for the championship made their way from the centre of it all, Europe. The Australians and New Zealanders responded to this most difficult defence of The Mountain by fighting fire with fire and several, formidable new driver pairings were welded together.

Heading the list of imports were joint world championship leaders, Klaus Ludwig and Klaus Niedzwiedz, and their team-mates in the Ford Texaco Racing Team, Steve Soper and Pierre Dieudonne. These black-suited, black-mounted, modern-day black knights with their thick accents, oozed talent.

The fact that three of the team run by the shrewd, gnome-like Swiss, Reudi Eggenberger, had never been to Bathurst before, underscored the changing nature of the race and how important it had become on the international calendar, still sharply focussed on Europe and Britain.

Soper, the lithe Englishman whose baby-face belied his 35 years, had made the trip once before, in 1984 with Tom Walkinshaw's Group A Rover team. A Ford devotee and stalwart in the early stages of his career, the sharp-as-they-come Soper returned to the Ford camp in 1986 when the Ford Sierra turbo was being groomed for a Group A takeover by Eggenberger's Swiss-based operation on behalf of Ford Europe. Soper had always had an enviable reputation for what he could do with a touring car but it wasn't until touring cars reached an elevated status through Group A that his skills were fully recognised, firstly by Walkinshaw.

The Englishman's 1984 experience, when Bathurst exacted its toll on his Rover, did nothing to explode the imposing myth of The Mountain, so his German team-mates Ludwig and Niedzwiedz and his co-driver, Belgian journalist Dieudonne, arrived respectfully, filled with the true and the false about Bathurst. They had to sort it out for themselves.

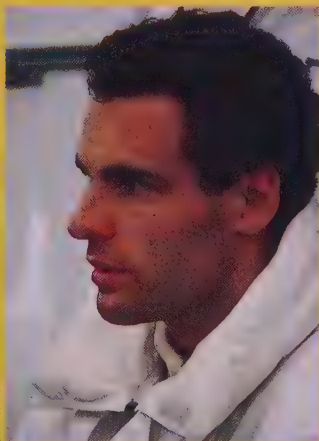
The 42-year-old endurance specialist Ludwig was about as big a name as you could get short of a proper grand prix ace. A regal figure with long black wavy locks, he had made the switch to Group A touring cars at the behest of Eggenberger for the world championship after a decade in sports cars which had brought him three Le Mans victories, the last two consecutively in 1984-85. Although a Bathurst first timer, he had driven in Australia once before — at Sandown in late 1984 at the wheel of his Le Mans-winning Joest Team Porsche 956 during that largely unwatched first world championship-status race for Australia.



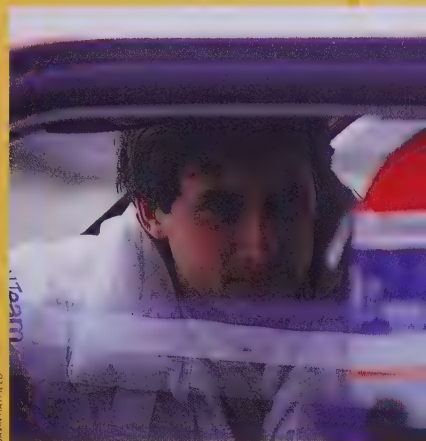
The media focus goes on Belgian Pierre Dieudonne, Soper's able co-driver.



Johnny Cecotto: a front-runner with CiBiEmme.



Dashing Austrian, Roland Ratzenberger, part of the Schnitzer crowd.



Bathurst regular, Roberto Ravaglia, consults Emanuele Pirro about their M3.

the multi-lingual motoring journalist/racing driver has mixed and matched sports cars with touring cars, and while not considered as quick as co-driver Soper, had it altogether under his mop of blond hair and behind his penetrating green eyes.

Those four had been outnumbered, and early in the European season also outrun by the army of top notch drivers in the factory-sanctioned BMW teams. The men from BMW pitched camp at Bathurst, just as they had at the circuits around Europe, in the massive logistical operation aimed at stampeding over the Ford opposition. Images with exalted names like Pirro, Ravaglia, Ratzenberger, Oestreich, Cecotto and Vogt leaped out of magazines and TV sports reports into real life. But of them all, only Ravaglia and Cecotto had witnessed Bathurst before.

The German marque's main chances in the world title, fun-loving Italians Roberto Ravaglia, 29, and Emanuele Pirro, 25, were in one of the two M3s for the German Schnitzer team. In the other were handsome Austrian Roland Ratzenberger and the tall, gawky young German, Markus Oestreich.

Good pals Ravaglia and Pirro represented the old guard of the Schnitzer operation from the previous 635 era while Ratzenberger and Oestreich were ushered in at this heady level of touring cars as part of BMW Motorsport's policy to blood some 'junior' driving talent. For Pirro and Ratzenberger this was additional to their own objectives of racing open wheelers. Pirro, with the compelling dark appearance, remained teetering on the brink of Formula One while Ratzenberger, 26, remained a few steps behind in European Formula Three.

Of them, only Ravaglia had been to Bathurst before. The quiet, yet hard-driving Italian had become a Bathurst regular, part of the race's folk lore. A second in his debut in 1985 and a nasty early race crash in 1986 reminded him of the love-hate relationship The Mountain can have with the most gifted of drivers such as he.

The BMWs all came under the factory BMW Motorsport banner, so joining forces with them was the semi-works Italian teams of CiBiEmme and Bigazzi. This arrangement gave BMW the option of cross entering the drivers between the teams to maximise championship points. It made the driver combinations complicated and fluid as up to three could be nominated for each car under the championship rules and drivers could be entered in more than one car.

CiBiEmme brought out its regular duo of Italy-based Venezuelan Johnny Cecotto and Roman Gianfranco Brancatelli. A new pairing for 1987, they quickly established themselves as one of the quickest

in the less intense atmosphere at CiBiEmme, despite a little bit of needling between the two. This was an interesting and curious team-up. Cecotto, 31, was one of the few to succeed in world championship motorcycle racing and then get into Formula One. He only switched to touring cars when his F1 career was foreshortened by a bad accident which damaged his legs. At Schnitzer in 1985 he was overshadowed somewhat and then at the RAS Volvo team in 1986 he was not quite there. In the same way the wild-eyed, wild-haired, Brancatelli, 37, settled in well enough in the short-lived Eggenberger Volvo operation after abandoning his Formula One ambitions but seemed out of place in Walkinshaw's Rover outfit in 1986 despite his rapid reputation.

With the Bigazzi equipe came Germans Winni Vogt and Altfried Heger, who had been spending much of their time contesting the

Niedzwiedz, his more youthful co-driver since the early rounds of the inaugural world title, had no such distinguished record, having concentrated on German national championship races in touring cars. He has become a Group A specialist however and one who is highly regarded for his ability and determination. The appointment to the works drive has been the highpoint of a career which threatened to be cut short in 1985 when he badly broke a leg in a terrible motorcycle accident on the old Nurburgring. The leg healed though as Klaus was happy to show, rolling up his suit leg in the Bathurst pit to display the scars around his knee.

Dieudonne, like Soper and Niedzwiedz, was an early appointee when the Eggenberger-Ford relationship began at the start of 1986, so had experienced the three phases of the Sierra's transformation into a world-beater. Two years younger than senior driver, Ludwig,



lesser European championship with the Linder BMW team. Twenty-nine-year-old Heger, a versatile driver, was part of the Schnitzer crew which dominated the 1985 Spa 24 Hour and for 1987 co-drove with Vogt. Little Winni had the Linder BMW 325 flying during 1986 to place himself in the limelight for when that Three Series BMW would be transformed into the potent M3, but did not shine as much when given the opportunity to mix it for outright contention.

They shared the Bigazzi M3 with one of its regular WTTC drivers, Frenchman Olivier Grouillard for Bathurst.

Especially for Bathurst there were two other BMW Motorsport-run crews: the stunningly attractive Annette Meeuvissen and Mercedes Stermitz in one car, the first female duo to contend the race, and the famous names of Brabham and Fangio in another.

Meeuvissen, a blonde 24-year-old German and the former Miss Austria Stermitz, 29, were united for the basest of reasons — to attract the attention of the popular media. 'Blondie and Benz' proved to be an exercise that more than paid its way in publicity and the women didn't seem to mind that side of it all. They had chosen to be professional racing drivers and had been given the best machinery available to prove their worth, as long as they didn't mind being followed around in the pits by an entourage of newspaper photographers and TV cameramen.

The Brabham in the other extra works M3 was Gary, who by his exploits in British Formula Three was showing that of all the Brabham brothers he had the most raw ability and therefore the best chance to emulate his great father. The Fangio he co-drove with was Juan Manuel II, the nephew of the one and only who was making a career for himself racing in the U.S. Driving a Group A BMW was new to them and this was another pairing made for publicity, more than success.

To counter the Europeans, defending champ Allan Grice looked at fighting fire with fire. He imported the much revered Englishman, Win Percy, who had made a profession for himself co-driving for Tom Walkinshaw. With Walkinshaw's early season decision not to contend the world championship with Holdens, Percy, 42, was left at a loose end for the rest of the season and became a racing journeyman in various sports cars and touring cars, even driving with Andy Rouse in the Spa 24 Hours.

Tagged by some as the most accomplished touring car pilot there is and by all as the best co-driver there is, the tall, gentle Briton, was free to take up Grice's offer. Percy had tested a Commodore for Walkinshaw earlier in the year, so driving one at Bathurst was not so out of character, especially as the car he tested was virtually built for



Anglo-Australian alliance of Win Percy, left and Allan Grice. Perhaps the strongest combo in Bathurst history.



New faces in the Mobil HDT. David Parsons, left, returned to drive with Peter Brock, while Peter McLeod, centre, was a surprise new recruit.



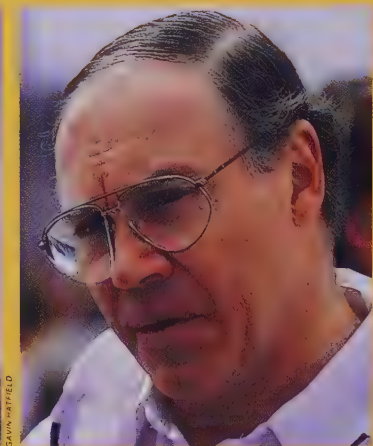
Dick Johnson: a big weight on his shoulders with all-new car and expanded team.



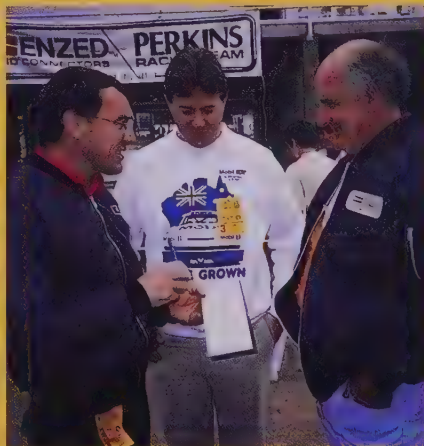
The race's first female crew: Mercedes Stermitz, left and Annette Meeuvissen.



Briton Andy Rouse: Bathurst appearance overdue.



Allan Moffat: flying the Ford flag again in league with Rouse.



Trans-Tasman team-up: Larry Perkins, left, had veteran Denny Hulme with him to share the autographing.



Glenn Seton: rewarded with his own car.

Walkinshaw by Roadways Racing Services, for which Grice drives. Then it had to be considered that Grice had been signed up by Holden Motor Sport, and that Walkinshaw's TWR operation had been contracted to set up Holden Motor Company's new special vehicles offshoot, replacing the excommunicated Brock operation.

Grice and Percy was a really strong, fast combination, possibly the strongest in the race's history and one that the Europeans couldn't match for sheer speed and touring car expertise.

The other main Commodore contenders — Brock's Mobil-HDT Racing and Larry Perkins' Team Enzed Perkins — had new combinations for the defence of Australian honour too. Brock in the rebuilding of the team's fortunes after the Holden split, re-appointed the prodigal 29-year-old Tasmanian dairy farmer, David Parsons. He had left the HDT at the end of Bathurst 1985 to join the new team of



Graeme Bowkett: under-rated Kiwi.



George Fury: new co-driver for 1987.



Larry Perkins, but had then been discarded after crashing Larry's car at Wellington early in the year. Perkins decided to go for experience, rather than youth and stuck with the 51-year-old former world champion, Denny Hulme and the points that won him in the eyes of his New Zealand car owner and sponsor.

The second Brock Commodore had a new combination too, just for this race, with Peter McLeod getting recognition for two brave Bathursts as a Commodore privateer, he shared with the cheerful Formula Two ace, Jon Croke. That left McLeod's own entry and car to be hired out to Melbourne's inimitable socialite Peter Janson and Group E star, Peter Fitzgerald in their first Bathurst together.

Two former Bathurst winners — Allan Moffat and Kevin Bartlett — took a different approach to defeating the Europeans. Their motto was, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

In Moffat's case he salvaged the Andy Rouse Sierra entry by securing sufficient local sponsorship, thereby returning to the marque which helped him make his name. He moved into the team as the third driver along with British touring car champion Rouse and Rouse's regular 1987 co-driver, Belgian Thierry Tassin. Rouse, the talented English engineer who had championed the Sierra at home, was making a long overdue visit to Bathurst after being the supplier of components to some Australian teams.

The tassle-haired Tassin, was still in the process of re-building his driving career after breaking a leg in a Formula 3000 accident. He returned to the scene triumphantly at the Spa 24 Hours in 1986 when he had the privilege of driving the winning Schnitzer car across the line-up cheered on by co-drivers Alfried Heger and veteran Dieter Quester.

Kevin Bartlett had his eye on a Maserati Biturbo for some time and linked up with the factory-supported Italian team for the Australian world championship rounds. Of like mind at the start of the year were 1985 Bathurst winner Armin Hahne, 32, another Walkinshaw castaway, and the former Formula One ace, Bruno Giacomelli, at his first Bathurst, to make this a much decorated driver line-up.

The all-Australian answer was the balancing of the driver pairings to ensure a steady and fast race pace over the distance. At Peter Jackson Nissan Racing, 22-year-old Glenn Seton went to his second Bathurst with the team as lead driver in his own car. It meant the splitting of the George Fury/Seton combo of 1986 and new co-drivers for both. Farmer George, 42, had the well-liked Sydney tyre dealer, little Terry Shiel, 36, as his new back-up while Seton was united with the new team member, John Bowe, after the 32-year-old

Supercube Motorsport Sierras. This was the twilight of veteran Smith's driving career and really put the pressure on him to reach Miedecke's standard and the standard of the 38-year-old Port Macquarie car dealer and businessman was of the highest order after such a distinguished career in open wheelers.

Frank Gardner's JPS Team BMW stuck with Jim Richards and Tony Longhurst, one of the scene's enduring driver combinations. The big change was for the second car where the loud but likeable Kiwi car dealer and former Volvo exponent, Robbie Francevic, 46, was back in business. To co-drive was Ludwig Finauer, the team's prized ex-BMW Motorsport engine builder and test driver in his first Bathurst at the ripe old age of 30.

The former Peter Jackson Nissan strongman and Bathurst 1986 pole winner, Gary Scott, bobbed up in the latest version of the little Japanese-supported Mitsubishi Ralliart team, which was being run for 1987 from his home town of Brisbane where he has several businesses in the automotive serving and repair area. Scott, 34 and outspoken, came to the team at his choice after not feeling at ease at Nissan and a stop-gap run with Peter Brock early in the year while awaiting the Ralliart deal to be consummated.

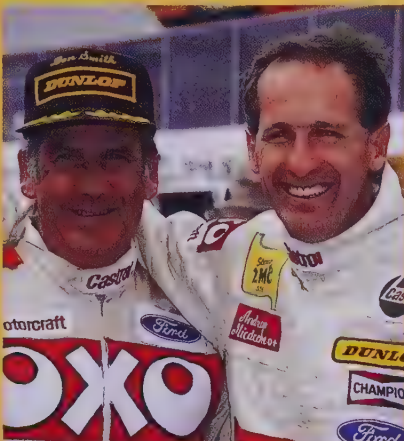
The arrangement pushed regular local Mitsubishi driver, Brad Jones, sideways into the Mitsubishi Ralliart production racing programme overseas. The co-driver role for Bathurst thus remained with the 28-year-old Japanese journalist, Akihiko Nakaya, who was leading the Japanese Group A series for the Japanese sister team. He was the only Asian representative at Bathurst.

Flying the flag for New Zealand, a country that took to Group A just as quickly as Australia, were four all-Kiwi teams. Auckland business partners Graeme Bowkett and Kent Baigent returned for a second try with the Nissan NZ-endorsed Skyline. Another New Zealander not short of a dollar, 36-year-old financier, John Billington, made the trip for the first time with his elderly Commodore and drafted the super-quick but financially threadbare Graeme Crosby into the co-driving role for his second Bathurst after ending his international motorcycle racing career. Then there was South Island car dealer Trevor Crowe in the Archibald Motorsport BMW M3 for a second try, driving at the last minute with rally ace Ian 'Inky' Tulloch, another rookie. And finally there was the Wellington property developer, Graeme Cameron, who invited the highly regarded Auckland insurance broker, Wayne Wilkinshaw to share the driving chores in his self-sponsored Commodore.

Another Kiwi pair appeared in the small car class. New Zealand businessman Andrew Bagnall nominated fellow countryman Mark



The most enduring Bathurst pairing remained Tony Longhurst, left and Jim Richards.



The advent of the Sierra fused Don Smith and the much overlooked Andrew Miedecke in a new team.



The great names of Fangio and Brabham together. Juan Manuel joined Gary in a BMW.

Tasmanian devil had spent two Bathursts behind the wheel of a Volvo without result.

The local Sierra men introduced new pairings. Dick Johnson in his first Bathurst for many years with a full two-car team, installed the wealthy New Zealand businessman Neville Crichton in the second car. The toothy Crichton, with growing business interests in the Australian automotive scene, was in the third marque in as many Bathursts. He shared the car with quick but seldom seen 33-year-old Queenslander, Charlie O'Brien. O'Brien, who runs a family transport business on the Gold Coast, had been a Holden Dealer Team member in his formative years as a touring car driver and joined the Ford ranks after two years dabbling with BMWs.

The rising new touring car star, Andrew Miedecke, had his team owner, Don Smith, relieving him in the first of the two OXO

Jennings as co-driver and also had British Toyota ace Chris Hodgetts on hand as reserve driver for their Hodgetts-built Corolla.

The class also featured another distinguished guest, listed for the factory backed Alfa Romeo 33. This was the factory's development driver Giorgio Francia. The Italian had regularly rubbed shoulders with the likes of Jacques Laffite, Alessandro Nannini and Paolo Barilla as part of the factory's Alfa 75 assault on the world championship which sadly ceased just before Bathurst as part of Alfa Romeo's competition review for 1987. Helping with the driving chores in the battle with the Toyotas was the car's regular driver Daniele Toppoli.



# THE CARS THAT CLIMBED THE MOUNTAIN

A FLEET OF 12 CARS FROM EUROPE AND SIX FROM NEW ZEALAND MIXED WITH 37 AUSTRALIAN MACHINES TO MAKE UP THE MOST POTENT FIELD IN THE HISTORY OF THE RACE.







## CLASS A Over 2500cc

**T**he 37 entries in the most favoured big car class spanned seven marques, although as usual the sole locally manufactured contender, Holden Commodore, dominated the entry list and outnumbered the representation of all the other marques.

There were 20 Commodores, made up of 12 of the three-year-old, superseded VK model which had been tarted up for Group A at the category's Australian beginning in 1985 and eight of the existing VL model, the first proper Group A 'evolution' racer from Holden.

For the first time since the Commodore inherited the right to fly the Holden flag at Bathurst from the Torana in 1980, under the previous, freer local Group C rules, the campaigners of the marque went to the event knowing the big, normally aspirated V8 was no longer a winner on paper. Changes for 1987 meant nothing as the heating up of the European scene for the inaugural World Touring Car Championship had produced a new generation of cars built from the ground-up as racers. The age of the tinkered production cars had gone.

The hot new contender was the Ford Sierra, returning the famous marque to the front of the pack at Bathurst for the first time since Group C rules were discarded in favour of international rules for 1985. The Ford Europe-bred machine, debuted in a warmed-up, two-valve form in 1985, then turned into a much warmer Cosworth-headed form at the start of the season. It finally grew horns when the 'evolution' version was approved on August 1.

Eight of them appeared at Bathurst, four coming from Europe with factory backing to join the four local Sierras, making the Ford the next most favoured marque.

The other indigenous car in the class, in the sense of homologation and development, was the Nissan Skyline. In its second Bathurst appearance, this out-of-production Japanese model, was bumped up into the big class. International regulations reduce the class cut-off from 3000 to 2500cc to ensnare all the turbo-charged cars that had cropped up and regularly pinched outright honours from larger-engined, normally aspirated vehicles.

Five Nissans were entered for Bathurst, two being the usual Nissan Australia-supported duo and another two being their counterparts from New Zealand.

The final four marques in the class were single, almost novelty entries for a BMW 635 CSI, Mitsubishi Starion, Maserati Biturbo and Toyota Supra. Of them the local-run Starion had official sanctioning from Mitsubishi's competition arm in Japan, while the intriguing, exotic, Maserati was a world championship regular, run on behalf of the famous Italian supercar maker.

### BMW 635 CSI

**T**he original racing flagship for BMW since the beginning of international Group A, long before Australia took to the rules, the big and elderly 635 cruiser was pushed aside to make way for its trimmer, more youthful successor, the M3. Homologation for the 635 therefore ended in 1986 to clear the way for the wholesale switch to the M3 by all the major teams.

The bulky, 1180 kg German, powered by a long-serving, durable fuel-injected, straight six of 3.5 litres was still eligible to race for a few more seasons in its static form, until the time limit ran out. The sole entry for Bathurst 1987, No. 27, was thus racing in 1986 specification with power output on the two-valve, SOHC powerplant stalled at about 300 hp.

The car was the ex-JPS Team BMW machine,



driven at Bathurst 1986 by Jim Richards and Tony Longhurst. It was bought from the team not long afterwards by Canberra's Ray Gulson, who until then had been loyal to the Alfa Romeo marque. The car was purchased primarily as a 'trainer' for his 17-year-old son, Graham, to make his competition debut and was driven quietly, yet ably by the teenager from the beginning of the season, taking time off from his studies.

Ray, a veteran of many Bathursts and the owner of a speed shop and exhaust fitting centre, cared for the famous car at his Canberra base, with the assistance of Graham and two mechanically expert local helpers. There was little work to be done however for a team used to building and developing its own race car, Ray pointing out that he couldn't improve on a car that was built and tuned with excellence by JPS Team BMW. In fact the only work centred on maintaining the car as it was, with JPS team boss Frank Gardner jumping in for a test session mid-year just to see that all the main settings had remained as they should be.

In the lead-up all Ray had to do was install a fresh engine built by JPS Team BMW, bolt in a new gearbox and clutch and head for Bathurst wondering what he would do with all the free time. It had never been so easy. Even if the car was damaged there were no worries as the family-oriented team had inherited the BMW teams full stock of 635 parts, enough to build another 635!

## Ford Sierra

The new force in international touring car racing, the RS500 version of the Sierra Cosworth, was only homologated for racing internationally on August 1, so came to Bathurst with just a few races under its belt.

When it arrived on the world championship scene at Brno, Czechoslovakia, in September, it was immediately apparent that a new level of performance had been introduced to Group A. It was also apparent that a well-driven Sierra couldn't be beaten, barring mechanical breakdown or accident.

This little racing car, and that's what it was really, could exceed 250 kmh in its production form right out of the door of the Ford plant in Britain. In full racing specification, the 224 hp of the two-litre turbo-charged powerplant, with its four-valve, twin-cam Cosworth-developed head, immediately turned into 460 hp on the advised 1.6 bar of turbo boost. Much more power was available however, as much as 500, depending on how high one was prepared to set the boost, knowing that there was a corresponding reduction in turbocharger durability. Most teams risked 1.7 or 1.8 for qualifying only.

The RS500 was conceived to win the first World Touring Car Championship but took a while to appear, Ford Europe taking its time in developing the package and then to produce the

required number of cars to comply with homologation.

In the interim, the official Ford of Europe racing team, Eggenberger Motorsport, bided its time early in the European season with the Cosworth version which was still good for 340 hp, but notorious for trashing turbos.

The reason for that was the Sierra Cosworth, introduced to the scene in January, 1987, used the same little T3 Garrett turbocharger bolted to the new 16-valve head especially developed for the car by Cosworth Engineering in Britain. The Cosworth head replaced the standard Ford two-valve head which proved restrictive and brittle when the Sierra first appeared on the tracks in the 1986 European Touring Car Championship. The new cylinder head for 1987 lifted power from around 300 to 340. It cured the reliability problem for the two-litre four but the turbo wasn't strong enough to keep generating the extra power for long, even in a car that at 1035 kg in minimum racing trim, was a relative lightweight.

The RS500 'evolution' package included an armoury of refinements such as twin injectors for the electronic fuel injection, improved oil supply and cooling, revised front bodywork for additional engine and brake cooling, extended rear spoiler for extra downforce and inclusion of fully adjustable rear suspension. The most significant addition to the package was the considerably bigger, sturdier 'T4' turbo.

Of significance for another reason was the lack of a bigger differential in the 'evolution'. It had been homologated in a larger, beefier assembly to take the extra power, but at that point only with a ratio suitable for rallying. For the racetrack it meant careful preparation of the driveline. Then it was up to the driver to feed in that excess of power with care and keep the lines all neat and tidy, lest snap an axle or tear a tooth or two off the crown wheel or even bust a usually indestructible Getrag gearbox.

Eggenberger Motorsport chief, Reudi Eggenberger, brought his complete Ford Texaco Racing Team crew to Bathurst, complete with equipment and spares specially fitted into air freight modules bearing the team's distinctive logos.

This was a touring car team the excellence of which had never been seen before. Eggenberger, a slightly bowed Swiss, with a po-face and a firm policy of playing things very close to the chest, had developed a reputation in Group A for being demanding and meticulous. His team, based in Lyss, Switzerland, was one of the early ones in Group A, running BMW 635s, picking up the pace in the turbo era with factory-backed Volvos in 1985, and finally clinching the Sierra deal with Ford.

With the mega-bucks flowing, the shrewd, German-speaking Swiss created a team that applied the precision engineering skills of the legendary Swiss watchmakers to building touring cars. The three lustrous black and dayglo red cars brought from Europe were nothing short of masterpieces of fine engineering and more than equal to the best Australian cars which had hitherto shown the Europeans a thing or two about preparation.

Two of the three cars — Nos. 6 and 7 — were the regular world championship machines built for the start of the season. The team had not been as extravagant as to build fresh cars for the RS500, instead updated the existing cars and these were the ones which recorded the one-two victory at debut of the RS500 in Czechoslovakia. No. 12 was a new car built in June and not raced. Its role was to help the team's four drivers get the set-up right for the unique Bathurst and act as a spare, the team being a long way from home and having several races to do this part of the world before returning to Europe.

Being the official Ford team, the Texaco-sponsored cars (Texaco-Chevron being the multi-national parent company of Caltex) bristled with features that were not on other Sierras.





One feature of particular importance was a highly sophisticated electronic engine management system. A development of the Bosch Motronic, it was similar to that used on the Ford turbo Formula One engine and into the realm of futuristic computer wizardry. When adjusted properly it allowed the black Sierras to run to their optimum under all conditions and that was useful at Bathurst with its elevation and suspect fuel quality.

The other Sierra from across the seas, the entry from Britain's Andy Rouse Engineering, but taken over and funded by Allan Moffat Racing, did not have that level of sophistication. For example, it used the less complex British Zytech engine management system. However, Andy Rouse, the acclaimed English engineer/driver and four-time British touring car champion, had matched the speed of the Swiss-built rivals. What he lacked was reliability.

Rouse's Sierra represented Ford Britain in the championship but had no relationship with the Eggenberger operation. That didn't stop him becoming an expert on the Sierra from the beginning, setting up an agency with the blessing of Ford Britain to supply all the necessary components to anybody who wished to race a Sierra.

His customers included Don Smith's OXO Supercube Motorsport team and in the early part of the year, Dick Johnson's Shell Ultra Hi-tech Racing Team for engine components.

Rouse's No. 9 car was the fresher of the two he had campaigned in the championship all season and the one that finished at Spa. For Australia, its grey and blue gave way to the white and blue of the local sponsorship deal set-up in the two weeks prior to Bathurst by Allan Moffat, the former Holden Dealer Team driver having abandoned his ex-HDT Commodore in Europe and putting it up for sale to go with the strength. Helping Rouse's usual crew in the pits and contributing the local knowledge was loyal Moffat crew chief, Mick Webb.

The only common factor with Moffat's European programme was the on-going association with the ANZ bank, out to plug its new blue and white corporate logo in Australia as part of a revved up image. And yes, amongst the others who contributed to this short term deal was Ford Australia, but not in any high profile manner.

This Ford involvement was interesting as the Johnson team is financially assisted by Ford through its Motorcraft parts and accessories division.

Johnson's RS500 Sierras — No. 17 and 18 — were updated vehicles from earlier in the year. They began as shells shipped out from Europe and built at the Johnson HQ in Brisbane to contest the Australian Touring Car Championship.

The big injection of funds by Shell turned the folk hero's little team into a major enterprise with the access to resources that was a match for any other Australian team. It was a big change for Dick and the increase of team personnel from four to 10 and the programme of running two cars, brought with it problems of adjustment. On top of that was the prospect of taking on a new car, and a foreign car at that, and the rapid learning process required to master the high tech associated with turbocharging and engine management systems.

It was made all the more difficult for the team, managed by another HDT escapee, Kiwi Neal Lowe, by the policy of developing the car in-house, independent of what was going on in Europe. The team's reasoning was that it was too far from the centre of things to utilise the technology pioneered by the Europeans and rely on handouts and components from them. And anyway, the Europeans were not going to give away any secrets and there was the on-going nightmare of competing with European teams in the ordering of parts.

The objective of establishing self-sufficiency

and the task of trying to find a competitive edge fell to Johnson himself, a master of the Ford V8 and righthand man Lowe, who had helped build engines at the HDT and before that, BMW 635 engines for Kent Baigent's team. Their work involved fabricating and developing components and even making and programming their own computer chips for the Bosch Motronic engine management system.

Time was always a killer and coming to Bathurst the team had only just got to grips with the evolution engine on the dyno. The rest of the car, chassis and the like had been largely untouched. Still, in outright performance they lacked nothing.

Don Smith's team couldn't afford to do it that way. The OXO cars — Nos. 34 and 35 — were virtually Andy Rouse kit cars. Although the shells had been sourced in Europe and the cars built at the team's dedicated base in Sydney's outer west, the vital gear was purchased through Rouse and assembled and tuned as per the Englishman's advice. That advice included setting boost at 1.9 bar to produce 485 hp. Budget dictated that Smith be a little bit more conservative than that.

The budget was perhaps as little as a quarter of Dick Johnson's and there were just two fulltime mechanics to prepare the two cars. The financial situation was eased for Smith early in the year when the team's lead driver and key figure, Andrew Miedecke, purchased the car he was driving, No. 35, and John Giddings coming

into the team before the endurance races, buying No. 34.

When Smith, a proprietor of a Sydney truck spares business, wrote off No. 35 in the lead-up to Castrol 500, the team's spare shell was pressed into service for Bathurst and turned out to be a better car.

Importing Rouse's expertise allowed this new, ambitious team to get up and running early in the season. The team, sponsored by the multinational food products company, Seakist, was the first all-new front-running private team to be founded since Group A began in Australia. It grew out of a 'what if' conversation by veteran Smith and former Group C competitor, John Craft, during 1986. Both wished to run Sierras, so pooled their resources for 1987 to set down the guidelines and search for sponsorship.

When Craft departed from the project once it was up and running, the approachable Smith became the pivot and Miedecke contributed more than just his speed with fresh ideas about suspension settings from his illustrious open wheeler days. It gave the red and white cars a surefootedness the other Sierras didn't have.

**Left:**  
**BMW 635 CSI**

**Below:**  
**Ford Sierra RS500**





## Holden Commodore

The split between Holden's Motor Company, nee GMH, and Peter Brock's HDT Special Vehicles in February, 1987, meant the end of the HDT. That further meant there was no official factory team at Bathurst for the first time in 17 years. Instead the company's Holden Motor Sport division, formed in March to take over the HDT's development and homologation role, gave a verbal endorsement, and not much else, to Larry Perkins' Team Enzed Perkins and Allan Grice via Roadways Racing as the favoured teams.

On the surface Brock's Mobil HDT Racing looked much the same, it being the only two-car Commodore team at Bathurst 1987. The team had withered competitively earlier in the season as personnel left what they perceived a sinking ship and all attention and remaining resources of the organisation were diverted into the struggle for survival. By mid-season Brock had put his Special Vehicles organisation back on its feet and it was time to nurse the racing team back into health.

The team's main problems to that point seemed to be that it had fallen off the development pace in both of power and handling. The

fiddling gave the red, white and blue cars some useful power in the top end. Those raw figures sounded good enough but not when it was remembered that the Holden weighs in at a hefty 1325 kg, the heaviest car in the field.

A major innovation in the team was the utilisation of a new type of rear end which featured universal joints that allowed adjustment for negative camber to get the best out of radials. This was a design Brock had presented for homologation some time ago. Several teams switched over to this rather expensive, complex set-up, hoping it would be a big improvement on the old beam axle. The Brock team, watching its pennies, interestingly used it on 05 only.

Grice's VL was the first of the new model to appear on the tracks and was nothing but trouble from its first outing, the car refusing to handle despite all sorts of adjustments dreamed up by Grice and Roadways team boss, Les Small. To that point the car had been running on Yokohama crossplies which had been largely unchanged since Bathurst 1986, when they were the covers to have. Times change and the old tyres were not bringing out the best in the new car. When the new Yokohama radials arrived just before the endurance races began, the exhausting work the Melbourne-based team had done, combined with the radials, transformed the car, to Grice's great relief.

which the former HDT man claimed was the fastest Group A Commodore in the world. The claim took a bit of a battering when Grice got the newer, theoretically more slippery and therefore quicker, VL motoring properly.

Perkins lamented the fact that he didn't have an exclusive tyre contract like Brock and Grice and stuck with his VK from the beginning of the season. He conceded the VL was a quicker proposition but with the VK running so well there was no point throwing away a good car for races where durability counted for as much as outright lap speed.

The compact Melbourne team — based at Perkins Engineering, where racing activities on the team's own car and for customers dominated the day's work — numbered Neil Burns among its staff. The former long time HDT engine builder worked closely with Perkins on the development side and quickly established the team's reputation for building super-strong engines.

The team's No. 11 was the second VK built since Perkins entered Group A in late 1986 with his own team. It, like the first, was owned by the New Zealand businessman and racing enthusiast, Colin Giltrap, who had helped Perkins during the latter stages of his open wheeler career, making the backing for the car an all-New Zealand affair.

But the Perkins team had built two VLs by Bathurst. One was Larry's new car for after Bathurst the other was the team's first customer car for Canberra veteran Bill O'Brien. Perkins took a lot of personal interest in the car to make sure it was right and even had it in his garage at Sandown to keep an eye on its progress before cutting the ties for Bathurst. Chief mechanic on the car for O'Brien was ex-John Goss spanner, Grant O'Neill.

Joining O'Brien for Bathurst was Brian Sampson, the former Bathurst winner who runs Motor Improvements, the engine component modification people and Speco Thomas, the aftermarket people in Melbourne. Sampson had dabbled with a Mitsubishi Starion in the early days of Group A and was now re-united in a Holden with O'Brien, the operator of several aftermarket and wrecking outlets in NSW.

There were only three other VLs at Bathurst 1987. No. 19 for New Zealand property developer, Graeme Cameron, No. 20 for Terry Finnigan, No. 22 for the Lusty Engineering Team and No. 30 for Steve Reed and Trevor Ashby, proprietors of the big Sydney smash repairer, Lansvale Smash Repairs. Of those, Nos. 20, 22 and 30 were new cars while Cameron's was an updated VK.

Holden devotee, Terry Finnigan, had the second VL running during the season after the Roadways car, thanks to a new shell secured through his sponsor, Suttons of Homebush, the Sydney Holden Dealer. The beaming, jut-jawed Finnigan, always amongst the quickest of the Commodore privateers, built the car at his Guildford, Sydney service business. He did the engine work as well, but would have been left behind on power had it not been for Les Small who assisted Finnigan in securing a suitable profile camshaft.

Returning to co-drove with him after a stint in a Rover, was Geoff Leeds, the general manager of Suttons of Homebush.

The Lusty Racing Team's No. 22 was a brand new racing shell out of Perkins Engineering. It had been partly prepared by Perkins, a roll cage already fitted, but the rest of the work was completed at the Lusty racing workshop base in Swan Hill, near the family team's growing semi-trailer manufacturing operation. It was a mix and match job with the fuel system coming from Roadways Racing Services and the engine and gearbox from Perkins.

It was far the most advanced, most competitive Commodore the Lustys had taken to Bathurst. And for the first time they had a major sponsor in Steelmark, the ANI company from which the Lusty manufacturing company bought steel.



Above:  
**Holden Commodore VK**  
Right:  
**Holden Commodore VL**

official version was that it looked worse than it did because the drivers had been fighting with tyres that provided no grip. It masked both performance and handling. When the long-awaited new Bridgestone radials arrived in time for the endurance races, the Mobil cars were again within reach of Grice and Perkins.

This was a fresh start for the team and offered new hope for the supporters who had suffered with them through the first black half of the season. The team which had soldiered on with one old VK during the middle stages of the Australian Touring Car Championship, was up to full strength again. No. 05 was a new VL, the third the team had built in 1987. Its first race was in the Oran Park endurance race. The second car, No. 10, was the second VL which appeared during the latter stages of the championship and was used at Spa.

No great advance had been made in engine development work during that period, power staying around the 420 hp mark and about 40 down on the best engines, but some camshaft

Roadways, along with the Perkins team, were the ones doing all the Holden development from early in the season. Small had been building VL engines for Tom Walkinshaw and was getting enormous power from the five-litre motors which featured stronger key components, such as conrods, to increase durability and allow drivers to rev them much harder without fear of damage. Ace engine builder Small even claimed he had found more power in the re-tuning to run on less potent super grade fuel for August by employing a new type of head gasket design.

Elsewhere on car No. 2 the team devised an ignition computer to replace the distributor and at the rear designed its own, apparently lighter version of the complex negative camber rear end.

All that meant the team was very busy during the months before Bathurst developing all those new additions to the orange Bob Jane-backed car. It had to be done while the team did a full local race programme for the first time and on a budget that was less generous than in 1986. As a result little gremlins popped up to take the gloss off the team's hard-earned invincible image Bathurst 1987.

No-one doubted the speed of the Grice Commodore. With some 460 hp of raw grunt it had a tad more power than the Perkins VK,



In their second Bathurst, ex-sports racers Reed and Ashby went there knowing what it was all about and what they needed to do. A pair that showed great potential, their new VL was a race car from the beginning, unlike the converted road car of their first Bathurst. The team's first try at building a car from scratch since their sports sedan days, it was constructed at their premises and equipped with a Perkins engine and gearbox.

Being a new car, the little team had something that responded to chassis tuning. Getting the car to handle and brake well was the responsibility of team manager/test driver Wally Storey who did a lot of machining work for the car at the famous Mawer Engineering in Sydney.

An interesting fact about this car is that it carried a small amount of sponsorship from a Sydney Ford dealer, Westline, in the guise of Westline Motorcraft Spares. That had to be approved by Ford Australia.

Cameron's VK was updated to VL specification by Roadways for the property developer's first Bathurst. It was the new car Allan Grice used at the 1986 AGP support race. Cameron had driven a Roadways Commodore with Allan Grice in New Zealand before so continued the link with the Melbourne team. Auckland-based Cameron was not short of racing experience having spent several years based in Canada where he raced regularly before returning to New Zealand to establish his property development business, CanAm Constructions.

One of only two all-New Zealand Commodore teams with him in No. 20 was the more than useful co-driver, Wayne Wilkison, an Auckland insurance broker who Graeme got to know when Wilkison was co-driving Graeme Bowkett's Roadways-built Commodore two seasons before.

One of the leading small teams running a Commodore remained Warren Cullen's. Melbourne car wrecker, Cullen, dusted, off the VK of Bathurst 1986 and following some engine dyno work at the team's own race workshop by long serving chief mechanic, Tom Coad, the No. 32 car boasted power that was up with the best. The car also featured the latest negative camber rear end, despite the fact that Cullen was one of the few who stuck with the stability of cross-ply. The innovation even helped with the older style tyres, Cullen felt, by reducing understeer.

The main problem the team faced was lack of sponsorship due to the uncertainty of getting an entry for Bathurst with so many internationals crowding the list for the world championship. At the last minute Cullen secured backing from Duo-gold condoms, following on from an idea to try and tie in the high public profile of the race with the national 'safe sex' campaign. The car was quickly tagged 'The Condomodore'.

Another fast little team was Graham Moore's Formula 1 Investments with his No. 4 hailing from Sydney. This VK from the previous Bathurst was re-built and prepared from front to back again for the fit, dapper Moore by Bob Stevens at his Sydney engineering workshop. It was a tight budget job and while the engine, updated with the latest VL internals, produced respectable power, the emphasis was more on reliability.

Another competitive Commodore used to be that of Peter McLeod. The dream had ended for McLeod when the car was a dramatic casualty of The Mountain during a gutsy drive in 1986. The car was repaired, but out of money, the Wollongong car dealer let go of the desire to try match the big teams. The car thus fell off the development pace very quickly but was entered for Bathurst for old time's sake. When he was invited to join the Brock team, he let his No. 3 entry remain. As it was complete with Roadways engine and fully crewed, he sold the drives to Melbourne's Peter Janson and Peter Fitzgerald.

The No. 23 VK was the first combined effort from Commodore privateers Gerald Kay, a Melbourne businessman involved in automotive

replacement parts and industrial pumps and Brisbane's Alf Grant, a property developer. In a bid to get a start at Bathurst they thought about reducing the number of Commodores around by joining forces. Kay's car of 1986, one of the 1985 crop of HDT customer Commodores, became the race car, while Grant's, a sister ex-HDT rolling chassis, became a back-up.

The race car was prepared full-time by Don Green at his own outer Melbourne workshop and this was a return to the fold for Green who used to prepare Kay's Triumph Dolomite in the Group C days. Don collaborated with the Wilson brothers of Campbellfield, Melbourne, on engine development, which was a departure for proprietor Terry Wilson who had concentrated on building boat engines. Power for the engine was claimed to be around 430 hp.

Two of the Commodores in the field were from the speedway fraternity. There was the Sydney-based Brian Callaghan/Barry Graham No. 37 Commodore and the Tony Noske/Garry Rush No. 26 VK based at Portland, in Victoria's wealthy, picturesque Western District. The burly Callaghan prepared his all-red VK at his property near Liverpool with the help of Graham, Graham's two apprentices from his speedway car building business and a band of friends. This was potentially a fast machine and a step up for the team in level of competitiveness, although

travel industry, was one of those who had been seduced by Bathurst and wanted to set up his own team.

The same sort of grass roots enthusiasm flowed through the team of Queensland policeman, Lester Smerdon. His No. 31 VK, which first appeared at Bathurst in 1985, benefitted from a collection of little sponsors and that help updated the car, which as usual was again prepared by Lester and mates in the Queensland government garage and equipped with power from Brisbane's Bill Mann. New co-driver was Bruce Williams, the go-karter and Auto Action advertising rep. who was looking out for a seat wherever he could find one.

No. 29 was the VK for second time Bathurst partners, Tony Mulvihill and Ken Matthews. The black Mulvihill Racing Commodore for Mulvihill, a strapping ex-policeman-turned Sydney security company operator and Matthews, a diminutive Sydney car dealer was under the care of respected Sydney engineer, Barry Jones who also took on the role of team manager and reserve driver.

The Bathurst 1986 car rekindled, it used Perkins power and had been developed through the season with considerable input from Perkins. Jones came onto the scene in the latter stages to take over preparation and conduct the testing.

The world championship race also lured



the same car as Bathurst 1986. It had an engine built by speedway motor ace, Ivan Walker, and had as much power as any Commodore except Grice's, Callaghan claimed.

Noske bought his VK from Larry Perkins, it being the first Commodore raced by that team. It was still a competitive prospect, although the objective was to learn about this touring car stuff on the way to the new team's first Bathurst. The link with Perkins came via the Lusty Brothers, Noske running an expanding regional trucking business and buying trailers from the Lustys on a regular basis. The car was all Perkins, from the engine to the gearbox and suspension. All Noske's team did was maintain it between 'services' at the Perkins base, which was just as well as the part-time Noske crew didn't have one racing mechanic in it. Rush, like Noske, had always wanted to race at Bathurst, so threw in his lot with his sprint car colleague.

The No. 28 car was probably one of the older cars at Bathurst 1987. An ex-HDT Group C car, it had been converted and built in Brisbane by a team of helpers at the home of Colin Clift, the brother of leader driver and team chief, Wayne Clift, on the smallest of budgets. Many Group C bits remained including the engine block. Clift, based in Melbourne where he works in the

panel shop owner Tony Kavich back to Bathurst, after declaring that Bathurst 1986 might be his last due to tightening finances. The same old VK, which began life as a Roadways Group C Commodore, was pressed into service and sent down to the Roadways base in Melbourne for a pre-Bathurst spring clean and new motor, which was a good move as the car was to be used as a back-up for Grice, with the Bathurst 1986 winner cross-entered into it. Sharing the driving chores in the distinctive Yellow Pages-sponsored No. 36 was Tasmanian Kerry Bailly, suggested to Kavich as a co-driver by Les Small.

The lone New Zealand VK, No. 21, was an ex-Roadways car built in 1985 for Graeme Bowkett and fitted with a Perkins motor for the first foray across the Tasman by financier Chris Castle and barrister John Billington after five years racing in their homeland, mostly at the club level. Their car was prepared by former New Zealand speedway and hillclimb champion, Ian Taylor.

The car, sponsored by a New Zealand finance company with growing local interest in corporate finance, was to be driven by the pair, but at the last minute Castle pulled out due to business commitments and the talented Graeme Crosby moved into the breach when his own entry fell through due to lack of funds.



## Maserati Biturbo

The interest in the single Maserati entry from Italy outweighed its raceworthiness many times over. Little had advanced from standard performance and with disorganisation and disharmony the theme of the factory-backed Pro Team Italia. The car was far from being prepared at its best to exploit the car's exotic, powerplant, although the team emphasised that 1987 was a testing and development season in what was a three-year project. The team therefore had no choice but to air its dirty line in public and get blown off by Fords, Holdens and BMWs in the bid to re-live the great marque's former glories.

The return of the famous marque to motor racing was the brainchild of Tony Palma, the Rome Maserati dealer and part-time racer. He set up Pro Team with encouragement from Maserati. The Imberti preparation outfit was originally contracted to run the team's two red cars, but this was not working out. The Modena-based William Sala crew moved in at Pro Team's request just prior to Bathurst and appeared to be still figuring out what to do next despite their experience with de Tomaso Panteras in the 1970s.

It wasn't easy for a small manufacturer like Maserati to get into Group A which requires a minimum build number of 5000 for eligibility and 500 for a competition evolution of the basic model. Fortunately, the Biturbo model, popular on the American market, fitted the bill.

Certainly the basic specifications were there: 400 hp from the twin turbo-charged, 2.5 litre V6 and just 1185 kg to haul around. The engine design is unique with twin inlet tracks used to develop the torque of a big engine. In effect the engine operates like two three-cylinder engines which are made to chorus by a complex engine management system.

With the team for Bathurst 1987 was former winner Armin Hahne, former grand prix driver Bruno Giacomelli and for some Australian content, Sydney's irrepressible Kevin Bartlett. That quality driver line-up attracted to the car showed how much potential there was.

Bartlett had seen that potential a long time before Pro Team was formed and had been talking to the local Maserati agent for three years. A driving invitation from the team for Bathurst 1987 seemed some small reward for his foresight and dedication to the marque.

The team bought new cars to Bathurst. The race car — No. 1 — was the original car that debuted at Monza and a newer spare car.

## Mitsubishi Starion

A new Group A contender was coming from Mitsubishi so not a lot could be expected from a car that was three years old. The newest thing about the single entry for the Starion was the team that was running it.

This new team, with a direct link to the Ralliart competition arm of Mitsubishi in Japan, was built from the fraying old local Ralliart team by veteran rallyman Doug Stewart. Stewart, an astute businessman, had been the local liaison figure for Mitsubishi Japan during the golden days of Australian rallying in the 1970s before Ford and Nissan dominated. Lately he had been involved in Ralliart's heavy commitment to the Wynn's safari as part of its international off-road programme.

The local race team had survived with much the same structure as it had at the end of the 1985 when Mitsubishi Motors pulled the plug. It needed a re-build, like a tired race car, and Stewart moved in at Ralliart's encouragement to put it on firmer foundations.

With sponsorship from Dulux swelling the budget, the experienced George Shephard was hired to manage the team from his base in Brisbane, and another Brisbane resident, Gary Scott, ended his stopgap drive with the Brock



team to replace previous lead driver, Brad Jones, who was assigned overseas to fulfill his existing Ralliart contract at the wheel of a less exciting and less demanding Group E Starion.

The preparation side of the team remained basically the same with the existing two 1985 spec. cars being prepared by the Murphy Bros. at the old team's Adelaide workshop. The race car, No. 16, was the team's first dedicated Group A car which was re-built from the shell up for Bathurst 1987.

The team's main objective was to get the 1035 kg car sharp in the handling department — a strongpoint in the Starion — and a lot of testing had been done to that end. In concert with that was testing of the Yokohama tyres in an international programme of co-development with the Schnitzer team in Germany.

Top: **Maserati Biturbo**  
Centre left: **Toyota Supra**  
Centre right: **Mitsubishi Starion**  
Above: **Nissan Skyline**

The team also moved into the engine development region where engines had previously been sourced through HKS in Japan. The conventional SOHC two-litre had never been highly developed and a bit of local engine tuning, centred on camshaft timing and gas flow in the cylinder head, produced 310 hp on super. That opened a few eyes in Japan and the technical information about that began to flow back to a grateful Ralliart which was battling out the Japanese Group A championship with their sister Starion driven by Akihiko Nakaya.



## Nissan Skyline

It was incredible to think that one of Australia's major race teams, Fred Gibson Nissan Australia-supported Nismo, was going to Bathurst 1987 with a car that was two years out of production.

International Group A was growing up so quickly in that time that the Nissan Skyline turbo that hung onto the front of the field until two weeks before the event, was suddenly up against it. So this happy-go-lucky, but still hard working young team had to rely on durability where its trump card in Australia had always been its turbo-power.

Lack of advancement through homologation didn't stop the team continuing development on a chassis and engine that was limited in scope by being in a converted production car. Having the same basic specifications as the Sierra, meant little. Fast talking, fast moving team manager, Fred Gibson never stopped looking for new ways of finding something extra and engine man Barry 'Bo' Seton never stopped pulling the string on the dyno.

The biggest change in the car for 1987 was the replacement of the static electronic engine management system with an expensive, fully re-programmable computerised system adapted by the Electromotive team in the U.S. The American team had been using such a system on their IMSA March-Nissan.

It took a while for the local team to learn how to utilise it and get the most out of the two Peter Jackson-sponsored Skylines by slotting in a computer chip specially programmed for the conditions at each track.

From the beginning of the season the twin-cam, two-litre, turbo-charged Skyline went quicker despite power staying at around 340 hp. The dyno work was to move the power into the mid range to make the 1035 kg Skyline put its power down out of the corners and make it more driveable. There was some success there but when 25 hp went missing in the switch to super, the further dyno work to get it back kicked the guts out of the mid-range and put the power delivery back up top.

It made the cars exciting devices again as the turbo came in but did nothing for the chassis, or for the brakes which locked regularly at the back. The originally hard sprung No. 15 and No. 30 cars of Bathurst 1986 had been softened up to stop them jumping around during the 1987 Australian Touring Car Championship. Now they had to be firmed up again, and the ride height lowered.

The chassis had always been the Skyline biggest deficiency, and by its basic specification could never be made to work as well as the engine package. The characteristics of the suspension and the car's rocket-like acceleration made the car both heavy to steer and nervous on its wheels at high speed. Then, when the car was on long straights and fast corners, its lack of aerodynamic aids made it downright delinquent.

The Team Nissan Racing NZ sister cars of Aucklanders Kent Baigent and Graeme Bowkett were similar in specification but the team not well-heelled enough to afford the Australian team's American engine management system. The Kiwi team came on with a rush in their second season, thanks to a lot of technical advice from Gibson's Nismo and a bit of in-house brainstorming of their own on the engine side.

For 1987 the Auckland-based semi-works team had Jim Richards' old mate Murray Bunn developing and building the turbo engine. The team's approach to engine specification was different to the Australians, with the emphasis on higher compression and less boost (1.1 bar compared with the 1.3 of the Australians), and the result was often a powerplant in No. 24 and 25 — the cars built for Bathurst 1986 — that pulled stronger, yet developed no more power than the Peter Jackson cars.

Melbourne veteran Murray Carter remained the only Australian privateer game enough to go with the Skyline. His 1986 car, home bred at his cramped little service station and panel beating shop, relied heavily on Nismo for second hand information and was always several steps behind the factory operation. The reliable car ran less boost and produced just 300 hp as a consequence.

While the preparation of the car was on the conservative side, there was nothing conservative about the array of computer gear in the No. 14 Nissan's pit. A world first was a computer information system between car and pit. Sensors in the engine and key areas around the car collected data about what was happening, sent signals to a transmitter in the back of the car which in turn sent the signals to the pitside computer terminal via a modem system.

This was an initiative of veteran Carter's co-driver, Denis Horley. He devised the system with Netcomm Modems. That computer accessory company had sponsored Horley, an engineer, in his Capri days and he brought them with him to the Carter operation. The system was a world's first and gave the team warning about a problem developing in the car before the driver could detect anything. Then there was all that log of information that could be stored during testing and called up for time-saving analysis and comparison.

## Toyota Supra

The stretching of the big car class under international rules to snare the turbos, also netted a small fish in Peter Williamson's No. 33 Toyota Supra, the six cylinder, normally aspirated car with an uncommon capacity of 2.7

Below:  
**Alfa Romeo 75**



litres. That made it hard to stay in the field under the cut-off rule. In its finest fettle the Sydney car dealer's Supra was struggling to pump out 260 hp on super.

This car was new, following the destruction of the previous, identical car on the Wednesday before Bathurst 1986. 'Willo', the popular Sydney car dealer was re-built too, a lot of plastic surgery fixing a mouth messed about by a flying fire extinguisher.

This was to be the Supra's last Bathurst. Williamson reasoned that too much time and investment had gone into local development to discard the car before the end of the season and switch to another, more competitive prospect. For Bathurst 1987 it featured lightweight suspension, new engine management system from England and upgraded camshafts.

## CLASS B 1601-2500cc

The middle class was for that school of little automotive piranhas, the BMW M3s. This trim new racing look for the German marque made up the substance of the class with nine entries. Only three of those entries were not a part of the massive BMW Motorsport championship contingent and just one didn't have some direct funding from BMW.

Such massive factory involvement for the good of the fatherland's favourite sporty car made the other cars in the class almost incidental to the proceedings. The overwhelmed ones were a Mercedes Benz 190E, an Alfa Romeo 75 and a Nissan Gazelle.

## Alfa Romeo 75

Just when the slow starter in the world championship, the Alfa Romeo 75, was just getting started, the now Fiat-owned Alfa Romeo pulled out of Group A to re-organise its racing division in Italy and look to other projects. That left the Alfa Romeo Australia-housed Network Alfa team of Colin Bond as the marque's only flag waver in outright calculations.

The boxy Caltex-coloured Alfa had been a disappointment from the start of the season when it arrived, fully built-up and race ready from the Luigi team in Belgium. Bond's little Sydney team struggled for months with a car that by their standards had not been built very well. Bugs were inherent and a long programme began to put the car right and develop it locally when the hope had been that a lot of development would be passed onto them from Europe.

The work on the 1.7 litre turbo engine was subbed to Beninca's in Melbourne, the Alfa road and race tuning experts and eventually they

found 120 hp to reproduce the 320 hp at 1.7 bar as told off on the spec. sheet.

Meanwhile in Sydney, Bond and his main men of two attend to the detail of the body and chassis and fundamentals like turning the car into righthand drive to allow a more powerful exhaust system to be fitted and getting rid of the 40 extra kg not supposed to be there to get the car near its 960 kg limit. That all took time, and that was the biggest threat to No. 57.

The only turbo-car in the class, it was theoretically an outright contender. It stayed in the class because of the smaller capacity of its four cylinder twin-cam engine, even taking the 1.4 times turbo multiplication factor on engine capacity, into account. It allowed the 75 to run at a lower weight and make fuller use of its power.



## BMW M3

The M3 project came at a time when BMW Motorsport was distancing itself from Formula One at a breakneck pace. Through 1986 therefore all the division's attention was diverted to designing the M3 from the basic outline of the Three Series and fully testing it before the car was homologated and production versions built with all the racing bits.

No half measures meant that the 2.3 litre, normally aspirated four cylinder contenders had to be successful first time up and that's the way it was from the beginning of the world championship with a horde of German and Italian works-sponsored BMWs blowing away the mostly unprepared competition.

It wasn't until the RS500 Sierra came on strong that the BMW was ascribed to the role of a class car, albeit a durable and therefore threatening one for outright honours over long distances.

The inheritor of the 635's competition mantle, the M3 retained BMW durability and that was not so surprising as under the bonnet was a BMW stock-in-trade — twin cam, four-valve arrangement on top of the engine. The same basic specification had been used in Formula Two and all sorts of sports car racing and was utilised as the starting point of the previous Brabham Formula One project which had a direct bearing on the technology applied to the M3 powerplant, especially in the application of the Bosch Motronic engine management system.

This was a racecar with no waste and plenty of fine engineering and mechanical sophistication. Built right on the 960 weight for its capacity, it made full use of its 300 hp, quite an output for a little engine when compared with the power figures of some of the turbo-charged opposition. Being light and having big brakes, big wheels, fully adjustable suspension and having a full aerodynamic kit, it topped, handled

and pointed exceptionally well on both small and fast tracks.

Yet it was not easy car drive. All the power was developed at the top of the rev range, meaning it had to be revved hard and the revs kept up all the time, and since it was a small wheelbase car, it could be nervous if not driven with precision.

For Bathurst 1987, BMW Motorsport assembled a fleet of cars, the size of which was probably unprecedented for any international touring car race. Six cars were freighted out, under the Motorsport banner, for the battle with Ford.

It appeared to be a logistical nightmare and certainly took some organisation in Munich to make it work, but it was actually three teams in one. There was the official works team Schnitzer, from Germany, and the two Italian semi-works teams, CiBiEmme and Bigazzi. Normally at each others throats on the tracks of Europe, they were pressed together in a Motorsport deal to maximum the BMW effort so far from home, although the three teams brought their own personnel and cars and in the racing sense still operated in competition.

Co-ordinating the whole show was the expatriate Australian racing identity, Greg Siddle, standing out in the pits due to his height and glistening grey hair. The man who brought Schnitzer to the previous two Bathursts was in the beginning of his new role of co-ordinating all racing for BMW Motorsport outside Europe. Keeping a watchful eye as well was BMW Motorsport's authoritative, blond-haired, sharp-eyed manager, Peter Flohr, on his first visit to Australia.

The Schnitzer part of the army, with team manager Charly Lamm out to call the shots, was the usual world championship cars No. 40 and No. 46 cars, bearing their BMW Motorsport corporate livery of bold red and blue splashes over brilliant ice white. As well they ran two extra, similar looking cars — Nos. 41 and 47 — for Motorsport, which had the female duo and the one-off Fangio/Brabham crew assigned to them for the race. These two cars had been literally commandeered from the semi-works

Linder and Zakspeed teams (Nos. 41 and 47 respectively) in Germany for Bathurst. Previously those cars had been used by those teams to contest the lesser European Touring Car Championship and German championship.

The ushering in of the M3 saw BMW Motorsport take a more up front, fatherly role in Europe with the various teams wishing to run BMWs. This was done to maximise the impact of the new car on the world championship and also the second string titles. The new challenge of racing the M3 also resulted in some efforts to knock Schnitzer off its perch.

The star of the BMW show from the beginning was the little two-car Italian BMW team CiBiEmme, run by the distinguished looking Umberto Grano out of its base at Finale, near Genoa. With a new BMW and new lead driver pairing in Johnny Cecotto and Gianfranco Brancatelli, the No. 42 M3, with its dark blue stripes setting it apart from the Schnitzer cars, became the pace-setter. This inferred that the team was developing a fair degree of independence and this was so, the team doing a lot of its own tuning on its M3 despite a small budget.

The arrangement with Motorsport for Bathurst was for just one car for it and Bigazzi so the team took a brand new spare No. 42, which had only been raced at the Nurburgring WTCC round prior to coming to Australia. In the lead up to the race it was purchased by New Zealander Mark Petch, and as a result had some of the genial Kiwi businessman's crew giving the Italian team a helping hand in the pits.

The Bigazzi team from San Gimignano, near Florence, was in its first season with a BMW and its No. 43 brand new to replace the previous team car rolled by Olivier Grouillard in practice for the sodden Silverstone TT round of the WTCC.

This successful team was more heavily funded than CiBiEmme and was able to hedge its bets by running an Alfa 75 in Europe as well. Being fresh to the marque the team was often able to find an edge on its competition by doing things differently with suspension settings with its talented drivers, Frenchman Grouillard and Spaniard Louis Sala. For Bathurst however the team was without the impressive Sala, who was unable to leave Europe because of other commitments. As a replacement, Bigazzi snapped up Linder team member and one of the BMW Junior Team drivers, Winni Vogt, to fill the gap.

Team owner and manager Rafanelli Gabriele was on his second visit to Australia in a year. The manufacturer of masts for 12 metre racing yachts, with factories in England, France and the U.S., he was in Perth for the America's Cup in early 1987.

The only Australian M3s continued to be the two black and gold cars of Frank Gardner's JPS Team BMW in Sydney. For the first time at Bathurst, the BMW Australia-supported team had brand new cars especially for the race. This car became the Bathurst spare. The other new car was the second-string car, No. 45, for Robbie Francevic/Ludwig Finauer.

Gardner had been doing a lot of pioneering with the Three Series and was a loud voice in Germany at the end of 1986 pushing for the M3 as a complete replacement for the 635 when others, like Schnitzer, had been doubters. Apart from shells sourced through Motorsport and a few engineering drawings, the local M3s were a completely local product. Engines were built in the team workshop by Finauer and many of the factory bits were copied and fabricated locally, Gardner not wanting to get caught with queues of European teams ordering bits from Munich. Then there was the budget to consider and this was after all a tight ship run by the cluey, laconic Gardner, whose reputation is still legend in Europe after spending the 1960s there as a racer and tester.

The building of so many M3s by the team helped generate some cash flow by selling them,

Below:  
**BMW M3**  
Bottom:  
**Mercedes Benz 190E**





but it also served the function of the team learning how to improve on the detail in the car, and Gardner is a firm believer in taking care of the details to get the complete package working in harmony.

The end result was a car that was an equal of the European M3s in all areas.

One of the team's early cars went into the hands of its regular customer, Archibald Motorsport. The team run by Auckland prestige car dealer, John Fairhall, put this No. 53 M3 into the hands of his usual driver, Trevor Crowe, a used car dealer and garage owner from the South Island. The first M3 Richards raced early in the season, and therefore not having all the latest fully adjustable suspension, it was prepared for its new owner at the JPS workshop, where Archibald team mechanic, Ross Hore, based himself prior to Bathurst.

## Mercedes Benz 190E

The little Mercedes had been overshadowed by the emergence of the BMW M3. On paper, the car that made quite an impact in 1986, was not so different in format to the BMW. It had a 16-valve head designed especially by Cosworth and the same capacity four cylinder engine in a body that could weigh as little as 960 kg. Where the two departed was in the method of getting to that — the Benz a modified production car, the BMW a purpose-built racer.

The only Benz at Bathurst 1987, No. 50, was badly overweight even after a careful re-build and diet at the start of the season by its Sydney preparer/driver Phil Ward. The other worry for Ward and the car's owner and co-driver, Sydney businessman, Lyndon Riethmuller, was the restriction of a standard inlet manifold, which had been left on the Cosworth evolution to make the car tractable on the road. There was no way of getting rid of that as homologation on the car had ceased.

With proper breathing the beautifully engineered Benz was easily able to rev to 9500 and produce 320 hp, more than an M3. Instead it ran out of puff at 8000 and was lucky to deliver 260 horses.

The No. 50 car was one of the Helmut Marko/AMG team cars brought out from Germany for Bathurst 1986 by Bob Jane.

## Nissan Gazelle

Under two-litre car in Australian racing, the Gazelle was dragged out of the small car class by the different class borders of the world championship. This followed the No. 60 Gazelle beating its Toyota rivals to win the Australian Two-litre Touring Car Championship early in the season.

For 1987 the car was bought from its previous campaigner, Sydney Nissan dealer, John Giddings, when Giddings took a financial stake in the OXO Motorsport team to drive a Sierra.

The car had been built and always prepared at Nismo in Melbourne and the Nissan team took over the ownership of the car and ran it alongside the Skylines mainly to give the team's talented driver/mechanic, Mark Skaife, a full season at the wheel, learning the craft.

The full factory effort worked wonders on a car that was overweight compared with the Corollas. It should have weighed 880 kg, but was closer to 980. The car used the normally aspirated version of the Skyline's fuel-injected two-litre engine so benefitted from all of the development work on that car, although power stayed at about 190 hp. The car also had similar suspension to the Skyline and a lot of information from the big cars flowed into the Gazelle's largely undeveloped front suspension.

Co-driver in the car was new team member Grant Jarrett, who had been racing one of the old Nissan team's Group C Bluebirds in sports sedans. It was Nissan all the way for Grant as he has a family-operated Nissan dealership in the Adelaide Hills.



## CLASS C Up to 1600cc

The little car class, minus the 'promoted' Gazelle, ended up being virtually all Toyota Corolla. The only addition to the local representation of four Corollas was the British Corolla and, for a change of scenery, the lonely Alfa Romeo from Italy.

## Alfa Romeo

The slowest car in the field was the tatty little world championship entrant numbered 100. The 33 model's slowness was not a reflection on the drivers or the team but the fact that the car was just about bog standard and was too low geared for Bathurst.

The interesting fact was that this was actually an Alfa Romeo works car, hence the Alfa test driver Giorgio Francia driving it at Bathurst in the absence of the factory 75s. The car was run for Alfa Corsa by the small Autolodi team from Lodi, near Milan.

The FWD 33 had not been homologated with any performance equipment so the 150 hp from the four cylinder boxer engine mostly came from tuning on the carburettor.

## Toyota Corolla

For a class that was not much more than an afterthought to most spectators, there was intense rivalry. This was between the factory operation, Toyota Team Australia, from Melbourne, and the two private entries from Sydney.

TTA, based in its own little corner of the AMI-Toyota plant in Port Melbourne, had the speed and the driver skill so the private teams had to depend on outlasting it.

It was an interesting battle because the rear drive, 1985-model Corollas were all prepared to 1985 specifications and had nothing new for the teams to play with and find a big advantage. Power therefore remained pinned down at 150 hp.

Top: **Nissan Gazelle**  
Above left: **Toyota Corolla**  
Above right: **Alfa Romeo 33**

TTA with three full-time mechanics and a full-time manager in former racer Tony Niovanni, trotted out Nos. 90 and 91 for another Bathurst, virtually unchanged, while all waited for a new Group A car from Toyota in Japan. If any improvement had been made it was mostly through some fine-tuning on suspension and that was the story for the rival teams too.

The standstill on the specification sheet didn't stop veteran Bob Holden trying out a few ideas at his garage, Bob Holden Motors Manly Vale. He picked up a few clues on the engine management system when he went to the Spa 24 Hours and they helped him combat the loss of power in the re-tuning of the four-valve engine to run on super. So the old No. 93, the first Group A in Australia to fill up a log book, was going quicker than before.

Assisting with the car was former Jaguar competitor, Gary Willmington, who was without a car and therefore out of a drive. Holden invited the mechanic to co-drive and a combined effort in the workshop saw Holden concentrate on the engine preparation for Bathurst 1987 while the team newcomer prepared the rest of the car.

Sydney's David Ratcliff brought all the preparation on his No. 92 in-house at his truck spares business. Ex-Bob Holden mechanic Brett Walters was put on full-time for 1987 to attend to the race car, and between race meetings, the business's fleet of company vehicles. The team had spent some time reducing the car's weight and was battling with a loss of power in the conversion to super fuel.

The No. 94 Corolla featured a brand new shell prepared by 1986 British small car champ, Chris Hodgetts, and hadn't even been tested before coming to Bathurst 1987. Hodgetts, through his Chris Hodgetts Motorsport in England, runs his Corolla under the auspices of Toyota GB. He, his car and crew were brought out by London-based, New Zealand tour operator, Andrew Bagnall, following the pair's successfully contesting several WTCC races in Europe during the season.



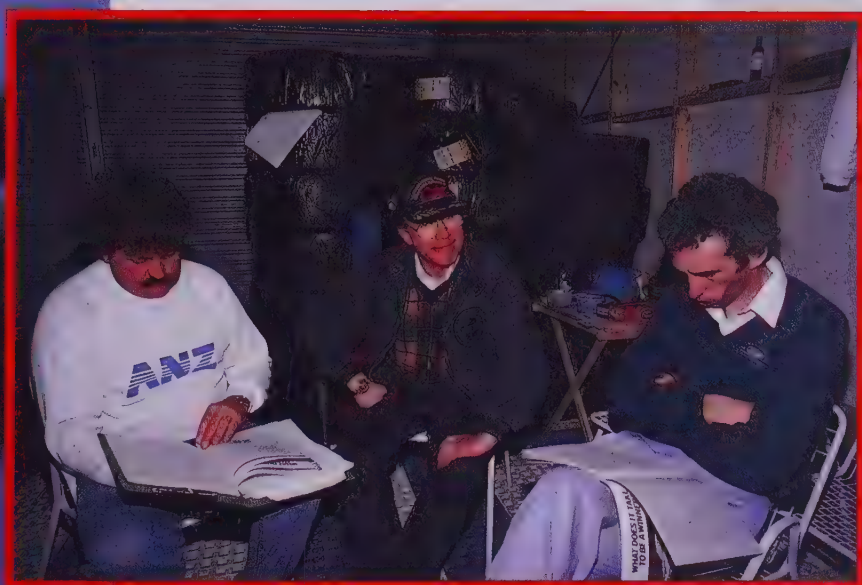




# FAMILIAR NEW FACE

## The lead-up:

**MAN AND MARQUE HAD BEEN RE-UNITED TO BRING SOME STABILITY TO A SETTING TRANSFORMED BY EXPANSES OF CONCRETE WALLS AND PILES OF MONEY FOR GUESTS FROM AFAR.**



**I**f The Mountain had a human personality, had emotions — and there are those who swear it is a living entity — there would have been a metaphorical lump in the throat, some moisture in around the eyes at the name and make most prominent in the first two days of practice for Bathurst 1987. The timing made it all the more poignant: this was the tenth anniversary of his last, greatest victory.

Allan Moffat, the winner of four Bathursts, all at the wheel of Fords, was re-united with the famous marque and this was no accident of fate, no invitation to be a hired gun. This was Moffat back in a Ford at his choice, at his initiation, in a deal he pulled together later in the week following the Castrol 500.

The return to the marque which gave him his beginning, made his name, coincided with his return home after a successful season campaigning his ex- Holden Dealer Team Commodore with John Harvey in selected rounds of the world championship. He had become one of few Australians to win a world championship race when the BMW M3s that finished in front of him during that first race in Monza in March were disqualified. Then came the amazing fourth at the Spa 24 Hours when Moffat endured more than 14 hours at the wheel, many of those hours being dark and wet as storms lashed the famous track.

The Commodore campaign was all the more exemplary because it had been done on the thinnest of shoestring budgets. Moffat had never been happy in the role of a privateer since Ford had deserted him not long after his Ford team's defeat at Bathurst 1978. He had desperately wanted to race in the inaugural world championship in 1987, and the Mobil-HDT's cancellation of those plans was Moffat's stated reason for leaving the team and returning to the role of a privateer.

It was a struggle, but proved to be a timely, successful one. Moffat, credit cards pressed into service, said he enjoyed it and

**Left:** Ford returns to The Mountain as a force, via Europe. Significantly the car carried the name of Allan Moffat.

**Above:** Guess who's fastest? The Anglo-Australian alliance get their heads together in the pits. From left, chief mechanic, Mick Webb, Allan Moffat and Andy Rouse.



that it reminded him of the early years. These were the years of surviving on hamburgers and wooing Ford to begin a happy marriage between man and marque that endured for more than ten years.

While he was in Europe, the Ford Sierra was the rising star and began clawing back the early start conceded to the M3s. The Commodore didn't have the speed of either and when the improving Sierra Cosworths ran away with Spa, and almost outlasted Moffat's bullet-proof Commodore, a deep impression was made on the astute Moffat, especially as the faster RS500 evolution model was waiting in the wings. Away from Australia and those with long memories and imagination weighed down by the emotional baggage of the past, the germ of an idea was planted.

The Commodore had done its job and would stay in Europe awaiting sale. Moffat would need another car and one that would give him and his own revived team, Allan Moffat Racing, its first outright tilt at Bathurst since those golden days of the factory-backed Fords.

Deal clinched and having never raced the Sierra in any form, the 47-year-old Moffat had four days to reacquaint himself with a Ford racer of a new age. He couldn't have chosen a much better ally in Andy Rouse and his British-built, Ford Great Britain-supported Sierra, which had proved to be as quick as the rival Eggenberger cars.

the side of the car, where the driver's name are ranked in order of status, and usually speed, there was 'Allan Moffat' on top, alongside the Australian flag. The Significance? "He's an Australian and this is an Australian race," Rouse grinned.

It was Rouse of course who set the time on the opening day, the car on Dunlop radials for the first time and taking to them immediately, and the driver taking to Bathurst with no difficulty, no doubt aided by Moffat's inside knowledge. But the acclaimed English engineer got a sober warning of The Mountain's dark side in the first few minutes of the morning session when a dog, on the loose and startled by all the noise, darted out of the bush and into the front spoiler of the speeding Sierra. "It was up Mountain Straight near a house," Rouse recalled. "It must have come from there but it didn't go back that way!"

The Sierra, bearing a white automotive dressing on his left corner of its spoiler, was comfortably quickest in the morning, just dipping under 2 min 24 sec. In the afternoon session Rouse reduced that time smartly to 2:20, by getting on top of the suspension fine-tuning. This was to give him the momentum to carry into the first official session on Thursday afternoon in which he stopped the clocks at 2:18.12, comfortably clear of a pack of Sierras led by Klaus Ludwig's Eggenberger car on 2:19.96. Then came the Commodore of Allan Grice and

By Thursday, a good humoured Moffat felt more at ease in the machine, but still admitted to not completely coming to grips with it. It was more stiffly sprung than the Commodore, he remarked, and it was taking time to get the feel out of the tyres. "I'm just not powering out of the deeper, slower corners like Murray's, Hell and The Cutting."

Night was now closing in on Thursday and with just one day of official qualifying to go before Hardies Heroes, Moffat was smiling at the prospect of backing the right horse and getting the exposure of his Australian sponsors for doing that. From the outset the Sierras — all of them — had established their supremacy and the story had simply come down to the order they would be in for the first few rows of the grid and whether their drivetrains would last the distance in the race. No RS500 had yet done 1000 km.

After the Rouse Sierra and Ludwig, came the Australian Sierras of Dick Johnson and Andrew Miedecke, well on the pace. Both the Johnson Shell Ultra Hi-tech team and OXO Supercube had come through a heavy working bee to recover from the annihilation at the Castrol 500. Johnson believed they had sorted out their engine problem, which on both cars had been finally put down to much compression for the low lead fuel of Victoria.

In OXO's case, Miedecke had a brand new car to replace the car written off before Sandown.



The predominantly white Sierra stood out against the all-black of the Swiss-built Ford Europe versions, good guy against the bad guys, local ace against the foreign invaders, perhaps. A single entry against the three of the Eggenberger team and four of the two Australian teams, it occupied the first garage in the paddock. Exposed on three sides, it had more than its fair share of rubbernecked onlookers at the perimeter, some too young to appreciate the significance of the Ford oval on a car bearing Moffat's name. Meanwhile on The Mountain those hardy early arrivals dusted off the unfurled Ford flags that hadn't been waved with enthusiasm for a long time.

They had plenty to be excited about because on Wednesday, when the 55 cars first hit the track for a full day of unofficial practice, the Fords jammed the top of the time sheets. The name on top each time was Allan Moffat. Moffat wasn't actually quickest, some 26 drivers and co-drivers lapped faster, but the car was quickest and Moffat's name was listed ahead of car owner and lead driver, Rouse, and Rouse's regular co-driver, Thierry Tassin. As a consequence, the limelight shone on the most familiar face in the trio of drivers in No. 9.

While Moffat held court, wearing his Spa 1987 cap and plainly enjoying the attention, Rouse, a slim, noble figure immaculately dressed in white shirt, black pullover and grey trousers, pondered improvements on his car in the background. On

the first BMW, the CiBiEmme car piloted by Johnny Cecotto.

Moffat believed he had done a lap in the 23s on the team's own clocks, about the same as Tassin, but officialdom had him down at 2:26.20, considerably slower than Rouse, who was spending most time in the car doing the testing. Moffat was more than four seconds faster in the unofficial morning session, so he was getting there, but there was a long way to go and Moffat was deliberately playing his hand in slowly with a car that was potentially unforgiving due to its immense power.

It was a big change from the Commodore and after 12 familiarisation laps on Wednesday, Moffat concluded that he hadn't experienced anything like it since he drove a Porsche 935 at Le Mans in 1980, which coincidentally was the last year he raced a Ford in Australia. "I am just coming to grips with the flow of the turbo. It requires a bit of finesse. It has so much oomph you don't want anything in front of you when you put your foot down! You have got to balance it right and glide through the curve, off the turbo."

Moffat coughed as he spoke, the legacy of a persistent flu virus picked up on his return to Australia from Belgium. Might that not slow him down? "It won't bother me over 30 or 40 laps," he dismissed, and it had to be remembered that the team did have three drivers to share the load, allowed under international rules.



The fresh shell and a better rollcage design made it a tight car that would respond immediately to fine-tuning of the chassis and the studious Miedecke smiled blithely at that.

The Sierra times were exceptionally quick especially when it was taken into account that the track had been lengthened by 410 metres to 6.213 km with the addition of the 'Castrol Chase', just before the last hump on Conrod Straight. This was part of a \$5.0 mill. facelift at the track, made possible with a NSW Government grant, to comply with international safety requirements and the upgrading of facilities to reflect the world championship status of the race. The changes also marked the 25th anniversary of the race and the 20th anniversary of sponsorship by the Australian conglomerate, James Hardie Industries.

Most of the money, \$1.7 mill., went into the construction of permanent pits and first storey VIP rooms and race control complex replacing the old corrugated iron and wooden humpies. The whole complex resembled a condominium development and had to be some of the best facilities anywhere in the world for such a seldom used circuit. Unfortunately the pits themselves were not that functional. They provided a work area only. Cars could only enter via pit road and equipment had to be either driven in that way, or manhandled down narrow stairs to the recessed, open walkway at the rear of the pits.



The castration of Conrod to build the Castrol Chase was a response to the death of Mike Burgmann during the early part of Bathurst 1986 when his Commodore literally took off on the second hump and speared into the banking at the base of the bridge. The objective was to slow the cars down before the hump by introducing the European answer to pleas for improving safety: a chicane.

The result was a complex of corners that began with a gentle righthand kink, then a proper, tight right and left, and finally, a short burst before a final lefthand kink brought the cars back onto the old Conrod. Around the chase was a run-off area and sand-traps that were the proportions of the Sahara desert and looked deep enough to swallow the whole field in one gulp. All that cost \$300,000, subsidised by Caltex through a sponsorship deal.

This change of Conrod was greeted with mixed reaction on Wednesday when the drivers had their first experience of it. Dick Johnson and Larry Perkins, with all that skill and nerves of steel, were of the view that it had destroyed the unique nature of this fastest and most daunting of tracks, while the always pragmatic, always adaptable Jim Richards felt it had made the track. "It is better than it was," the JPS man said. "There is no point in just going down one long straight." He added that the long straight merely kept the engine straining once it had reached maximum rpm. In the light of that



CURRY SPARKS

**Above:** The Schnitzer team assault gets off to a bad start. The accident by Australian beauty Mercedes Stermitz on Thursday morning began a queue at the TAFE compound.



**Left:** The first big one was on Wednesday morning. Too fast too early and Bill O'Brien pays the consequences in the three-race-old Commodore. He went off at McPhillamy Park which proved slippery and treacherous after some re-profiling of the exit.

comment, the name of the infamous straight seemed no longer appropriate.

Of course the complex played into the hands of the smaller cars such as the BMW because of its emphasis on nimbleness into the approach and good brakes for the chicane itself. Most of the quicker drivers found you could get through the first kink flat, with a lift-off or safety dab, just to be sure. It demanded some acumen though as the new piece of road from the first kerb to the chicane was markedly off camber. Get out of shape and the back could drift out left and have the front of the car pointing at the concrete wall bordering the complex on the right.

Other drivers pointed to the fact that the chase brought with it a safety risk of its own. Although it was designed to slow cars down, by the time the cars reached the complex they had travelled more than three quarters of its still immense length and were flatstick in fifth. That meant more than 270 kmh for the quickest Sierra and more than 250 kmh for the top Commodores and even the little, winged M3s. The chase was like the narrow end of a funnel with the obvious consequence for two or more cars battling to get a clear run through.

Dick Johnson and Allan Grice illustrated the point when the complex was being blooded on Wednesday morning. It is said that there is no such thing as friends in business and when these two professional racing drivers, buddies off the track, chased through the Chase, there were



**Left:** The ace apprentices get cracking on the Lansvale Commodore. It was the final casualty of Thursday.

CURRY SPARKS



fireworks. Grice went for the inside under brakes for the lefthander, locked up and gave his mate a not-so-friendly nudge behind the left front wheel. That shouldn't happen too often, Johnson suggested later, indicating the basis upon which the friendship would continue.

From the point of view of the Europeans who were at Bathurst for the first time, the construction of Castrol Chase did nothing to change the fact that Bathurst was a most dangerous track, mostly due to the narrow ribbon of bitumen which still draped itself up The Mountain. "We love it," the assembled BMW drivers all chorused sarcastically at the expected question at their introduction to the media on Wednesday afternoon.

The rest of the changes to the track proper for 1987 had concentrated on the virtual ringing of the circuit in concrete walls, especially down Conrod. It was better to hit a wall than a tree and according to some Bathurst veterans this made the setting seem less daunting. To build the Great Walls of Bathurst and make other perimeter changes, many of the tracks verges were thankfully pushed back and there was a lot of frittering at the edges and the kerbs, but the width of the track remained the same and there was no less risk having a big accident at the traditional points of peril.

George Fury's co-driver, the normally dependable Terry Shiel was the first unfortunate. Taking over the car from his lead driver, the Sydney resident on his first look at the altered track, was coming through Reid Park, renamed West End, as part of the ever changing Bathurst landscape. "I just made a mistake. It stepped out a bit and hit the fence. I didn't catch it in time."

The left side of No. 15 Peter Jackson Nissan rode up the fence, making a mess out of the front suspension and wheels. The quiet, but genial Shiel was unhurt. He had fully recovered from the brain bruising and blurred vision of the Amaroo Park accident in August and the coughing and spluttering as he conferred to a ring of journalists was just the final stages of flu that everyone seemed to have in some degree. The Nissan team wasn't going to take any chances with the car so went over it with a microscope during the repair. It didn't return to the track until the untimed session on Thursday morning.

The first almighty accident happened in that same session when Bill O'Brien, going too fast, too soon, got the back all tangled up and out of shape on the re-profiled exit to McPhillamy and inevitably did a classic headbutt into the wall at 160 kmh. The baby blue, almost brand new Everlast Commodore was the first big job of the week for the TAFE crew and the beginning of the flood that was to make the TAFE compound an assembly line for smashed vehicles. Miracles were to be performed in the busiest Bathurst on record for the select band of apprentices who display life-giving skill and alacrity that shames every corner panel shop.

Just as the O'Brien car was returned to its owner with a new front end on Thursday morning, the traffic jam began at the compound. First in line, and most publicly, was the Schnitzer BMW of the female crew. Mercedes Stermitz had been at the wheel when it happened. The incident sent the news media into a frenzy and Stermitz, delicious in jeans and nursing a slightly jarred left foot and arm, was matter-of-fact in relating the incident afterwards. The former beauty queen raced for a living and these things were part of it. "I was doing a few more laps and going quicker and quicker. I braked harder and the wheels locked up..." This was at Forrest's Elbow and the car went straight ahead into the tyre and earth wall.

To the hardened, and it had to be said, all-male observers, the crash came as no surprise. The beauties came to Bathurst with a wild reputation at the wheel and the expected had happened sooner rather than later. There were some within the BMW army who challenged the logic of having the women in the car. They were able drivers certainly but so were many others

in Europe, and by that they didn't necessarily mean male drivers.

For members of the gentler sex they didn't seem to have that gentle touch when it came to driving an M3. Before the accident, two of their fellow M3 Motorsport drivers, having a breather, wandered down to Hell Corner to watch the cars making their final dash away from the chase. They winced and muttered sardonically as the No. 47 was rowed down the gears with the finesse of a truck driver.

But of course they were also there to attract publicity and at that they were doing a fine job. They bewitched with their beauty, their intelligence and their angelic manner. They also had to be admired for their deftness at public relations and their professional attitude in a situation that was made difficult by the chauvinistic views of many of those around them.

The BMW of 'Blondie and Benz' was followed into the compound by the Nissan Skyline of Graeme Bowkett. Bowkett had been another trapped into going too fast, too quickly. He leapt Skyline, crossed it up and smacked the wall. The New Zealand team had its older, creakier,



original car entered as a back-up and had the two out on the track to accelerate the setting up process. The fresher car was pretty bad and it was eventually decided that there was no point repairing an out of production car. They would stick with No. 24.

The parking of the bent Nissan was a help to the final casualty of The Mountain on Thursday, Steve Ashby, whose Commodore went barrelling off the track with a broken wheel. "It is worse than the Everlast car, but we will get it done," the towering Steve called out as he headed back to the pits. He should know, being a panel shop proprietor.

From the first day the competitors complained that the track was very dusty, therefore very slippery, therefore very dangerous. It required a cool, disciplined approach to stay out of trouble. A film of dust over the track for a day or two until it is cleaned off by the parade of race cars, and a sticky rubber carpet laid down on the line, is usual for a once a year road circuit such as Bathurst. This time it was worse and the slippery conditions persisted all the way to race day.

A wet winter and late spring, and track verges denuded of grass by excavation work, were the reasons for this. If rain continued through the lead-up to the race, the track would be coated with dust again and remain a trap for the unwary, inexperienced and injudicious. It rained heavily on the Tuesday night before the cars touched the track and on Wednesday morning there was a delay as marshals worked to clean mud off the top of The Mountain. In some critical places, from the end of Mountain Straight on, the concrete walls had acted like dams for the torrent and spewed rivers of mud across the track edge. Rain clouds continue to threaten and late in the session the track was dampened again and awash with more dust.

The Eggenberger Sierras didn't brave the conditions until Wednesday afternoon. All morning, as the rain clouds rolled over The Mountain, the three black cars stayed in the gloom of their garages. A 'cloud' also lingered over the cars themselves, many local teams claiming all was not how it should be with those cars under the Group A regulations. When the three shining black and red cars were exposed to the light of day for the first time — on Tuesday morning, queued outside the scrutineering bay — they attracted a crowd of Australian crews. The cluster, which included members of the Johnson crew, whose cars waited behind, circled the Eggenberger Fords slowly, taking them in. Fingers were pointed accusingly, eyes studied the contours of the wheel arches, and peels of derisive laughter disguised serious contemplation. It was obvious that if the favourites for the race passed through scrutineering, a protest was brewing.

The absence of the Eggenberger trio on Wednesday morning was construed as arrogance, but it was in fact a note of caution that was to become the theme of the team's preparation as only Soper had seen Bathurst before. The tinkering in the garage ensured that cars went out in close to perfect shape. It enabled the world championship leaders, Klaus Ludwig and Klaus Niedzwiedz to produce good times — 22s — straight away without taking any changes. Only Rouse, whose preparation was ahead of the Eggenberger cars, was quicker that session.

Already the M3 drivers were trying to put the Sierras out of their mind and not be irritated by the light year difference in speed. But it was difficult for a skilled driver not to be intimidated by a car that whistled past like a shadow of a low flying jet. The Fords had even surpassed the Commodores as mountain climbers. Once they settled on the suspension out of Hell and the rear squatted under the application of full power, they could outdrag any Holden well before GTX bend loomed.

The BMWs didn't even exist to them and the BMW drivers, both international and local, tried to be realistic about it. "Ford? We don't compete against them because we are not in their class," Emanuele Pirro maintained on Wednesday night.

There was no mounting panic but it was clear that there was a hint of tension, of frustration in the BMW Motorsport camp. This was after all a massive assault on the race. The expectation was to do well, look good, hang in there for a championship that they thought they had in the bag and was now slipping away with the late season emergence of the RS500. Then there was the additional, inter-marque rivalry from the local team, JPS Team BMW, and that man Jim Richards.

At the daily BMW Motorsport press conference under the awning of the BMW bus, the corps of drivers dutifully lined up like ducks in a shooting gallery and threatened to outnumber the media. Richards and the Anzac crew were always given first word, watched intently from the sidelines by the BMW Motorsport manager, Peter Flohr.

Richards deserved his star billing. He wasn't the quickest of the BMWs, but not far off. That in itself was an achievement because all the European BMWs, with engines producing about the same power on test bench, had a 10 to 15 hp advantage over the JPS cars on the track.

The advantage came from the last minute approval for the Motorsport cars to run with their usual open exhaust systems. The JPS cars, and indeed all the Australian vehicles, are fitted with mufflers to comply with local noise control restrictions. That is enshrined in CAMS regulations, but since the meeting was run under the auspices of the FIA, as a world championship, the European cars could not be forced to fit mufflers. The difference was apparent from the first moment the squadron of predominantly white cars headed out onto the track. They produced an unpleasant, ear-splitting buzz.



Frank Gardner's team could have ripped off the mufflers if they wished but it was not quite as simple as that as engine builder Ludwig Finauer explained. The local engines had been tuned to run with mufflers. To get them to work without would require a lot of development work and the swapping of an appropriately programmed computer chip in the engine management system.

With that handicap weighing down the team, any improvement had to come from suspension. The lead JPS M3 did get quicker and quicker with each session and a two second gap to the Cecotto BMW on the first day closed to just 0.22s, with a 2:22.42 on Thursday afternoon, partly due to Richards first outing on fresh Pirelli race rubber. Typically heroic Richards stuff done with minimum of fuss and fanfare but he was quick to put the importance of it into perspective: "We knew from overseas that the Sierras were two or three seconds quicker, so they are in the 'other race'."

In front of him were six Sierras, Cecotto and Grice's Commodore on a 2:21.38. Grice's time looking pretty sad against quickest man Rouse on 2:18.12. Despite his good effort, Richards was only ninth quickest, with the likelihood that cars behind would improve in the two sessions the next day. Tenth fastest and potential pole-winner was Steve Soper, held back from quick times by the responsibility of doing a lot of set-up work on suspension and engine management systems, but nevertheless well into the 22s.

Eleventh was Peter Brock, more than a second off Grice's pace, and a good bet for missing out on Hardie's Heroes on that sort of result. Brock was relaxed about it, however, reconciled to the speed of the Sierras in practice, patient for the race. Perched merrily on the pit railing on late Thursday with co-driver David Parsons and the effervescent Jon Croke, he spoke of a totally straightforward first two days. In between sentences he waved and smiled as wellwishers and fans trudged up garage row.

Even further back came Larry Perkins, working away gradually, and finally, languishing in an uncouth 14th on the list, George Fury. And where was the second Peter Jackson of Glenn Seton? Sitting in the garage.

With the arrival of the Sierras and all those M3s, the Skyline's age had finally caught up with it. Down 100 hp at least on the Sierras and nothing better in the chassis to speak of, the 'taxi-cabs', as the team had begun calling their machines, had fallen well behind their pre-race programme.

The team had been down to one car on Wednesday after Shiel's off, and in addition, staff had to be assigned to fix the car for Thursday. While No. 30's suspension was being bolted back together, No. 15 had chewed up the bearings on two turbos. The team had no answer to the problem overnight as a lot of care had been taken with the turbo-chargers for a race where they couldn't afford to have any mechanical problems. But then turbo-chargers can have minor flaws that can even hide from X-rays.

With another fresh turbo fitted, Glenn tried again in the morning. Same result: two more dead turbos, one of which lasted just one lap. By this time Gibson concluded that it was an engine problem. It was down on oil pressure and since the turbo oil supply comes from the engine, any drop in pressure starves the turbo bearings. The car was therefore consigned to the garage over lunchtime, having a fresh engine fitted, but when Glenn fired the new powerplant up for the timed session, the car stopped before the end of pit with an electrical fault that took the full session to find. The car wouldn't venture trackwards again until Friday morning when the team would be back to full strength and have a busy day in front of it.

A spot in Hardie's Heroes for the car that was on pole just 12 months before now seemed impossible with so many Sierras around. There were seven in the top ten after that first timed

session and Rouse's time was less than a second short of the No. 15 Skyline's pole time of 1986 and achieved on a lengthened track.

However three of those Sierra's were coming increasingly under scrutiny and if four Australian teams had their way, would not be heading out on Friday in their existing specification. The Eggenberger fleet had eventually left the scrutineering bay unchallenged, but not without some friction generated over that issue and others between the FISA technical delegate and CAMS scrutineers. When practice became official on Thursday, the whining and muttering about the cars amongst the Australian teams quickly became official.

A protest was lodged against the legality of the Swiss cars, the first time anyone had dared challenge the works Fords since the same basic panel of FISA stewards had rolled them at Monza in March for running an unapproved fuel injection system. The hearing, to determine the destiny of the cars, went on late into Thursday night and it wouldn't be until Friday morning that many would hear the fate of one of the hottest favourites in the history of the race.



**Above:** The Eggenberger pit was set out like an operating theatre, it was that professional.



**Far left:** We thought Frank was the boss. The JPS mascot makes no bones about how the team is run.

**Left:** Pick a number then double it. The Sierra powerplant was capable of pumping out almost 500 hp on high boost.

**Left:** Canyons of concrete in the new international standard pits. Bathurst was changing to become part of the world.





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# FIRST TIME A HERO

Hardie's Heroes:

**NO FAN OF THE TRACK, NO EXPERIENCE OF FLYING LAPS, HE MADE THE OTHERS LOOK BIT PLAYERS IN THE RUN-OFF FOR POLE.**



CARRY SPARK

**T**o a man who had won Le Mans three times, a scenic drive up the side of a steep hill on the other side of the world held no horrors. However, it had to be said that the prospect of driving around Mt Panorama didn't exactly fill Klaus Ludwig with joy. In fact he was wide-eyed at the narrow strip of bitumen carved up the brow, winding through the trees and perched on the edge of a precipice, wondered how it had survived a safety check under international regulations.

The overriding consideration was that the 42-year-old German was leading the world championship and as lead driver of the Ford Texaco Racing Team, had a big job to do to get the Ford Sierra back on the winner's list at this vital round. An important part of that job was to set-up the car, an onerous task this sports car specialist shared with younger team-mate, Steve Soper.

After two days, the intimidating, black bubbles had been fine-tuned to watchmaker's tolerances and Ludwig had shown this by diving under 2:20 on Thursday. There was nobody else threatening that time and only Andy Rouse's British Sierra had bettered it. Rouse's time was significantly better, almost two seconds better, but Ludwig and team boss Ruedi Eggenberger showed what they thought of it by leaving No. 7 and also the spare team car in the garage for the duration of the second official practice on Friday morning. It appeared that the British Sierra had reached the peak of its condition and was vulnerable to an attack from behind by the black cars, if they desired to stretch out.

Only Soper trotted out for a 15 lap stint as part of the Swiss team's absolutely on schedule pre-race programme now concentrating on final chip-swapping in the engine management system. He carved off two seconds from his Thursday time in the process to leave it at 2:20.52. That was second fastest of the session but not yet pushing it for the car, judging by the

**Left:**

**POLE:** Klaus Ludwig (Sierra) 2:16.969. Being last man out on Saturday morning gave the German a distinct advantage, but he also drove a perfect lap.

**Above:**

**SECOND:** Andy Rouse (Sierra) 2:18.468. The fastest man in the early days, he did not improve on his first session mark.

RUSSELL MARTIN



Thursday time of the lead Sierra and also by the time of Ludwig's co-driver, Klaus Niedzwiedz. The younger Klaus had set 2:20.96 on Thursday with the team spare which had been allocated for his personal use.

Unthreatened on Friday morning, Rouse played the game too, staying in the pits and handing the car over to his co-drivers for them to start accumulating a few quick laps. Of the two, Thierry Tassin shone out with a 2:22.96 compared with Allan Moffat's 2:24.5. Tassin, as Rouse's regular backstop, was totally familiar with the car, Moffat not, but there were some of Moffat's old sparring partners who cruelly made a big issue out of the fact that he had his chance in the car after three days and was still off the pace.

Ludwig was back in black again in the afternoon and the team's qualifying tyres stacked up for his exclusive use. They were not there necessarily for Ludwig to knock off the Englishman's time, although that was likely to happen. Moreover, they were there for older Klaus to test them. To that point the team hadn't even thought about qualifiers and this illustrated the cautious approach of Reudi Eggenberger.

After all, there was no need to rush, the organisers allowing the luxury of one and a half days of unofficial practice and one and a half days of official practice. As well, the team had never been to Bathurst, so this was the time deliberately set aside to test the two different types of Pirelli qualifiers and see how to get the best out of them.

Ludwig had it all worked out before the end of the session. A fresh set of qualifiers was bolted on and right at the end of the session he went out hoping for a clear lap. Miraculously, he got one to take a half a second off Rouse's Thursday benchmark to stop the clocks at 2:17.46, the only competitor into the 17s. It was one of the few clear ones and pure bravery for one who looked on the circuit with disdain. Rouse had been out there too, late in the session, hammering around. But not finding a sufficiently clear track to put the Sierra's acceleration and straightline speed to best effect, he failed to improve on his Thursday time.

All Rouse had to do was have a time within a range that would secure him a spot in Hardie's Heroes, unhindered by traffic and dogs. Ludwig was his only threat because by the end of Friday, after much thrashing around by the rest, nobody else managed to break the 2:20 barrier.

Soper might have figured in the exciting final stages of the last session, that resembled qualifying for a Formula One race. But he did just two slow laps in the middle of the session before parking in the pits to leave the mechanics exchanging lots of words, in German about things electronic. "No real problem," Soper said later, sprawled in a picnic chair and stripped to the waist to soak up some Aussie sunshine. "It is just that the management system is very sophisticated and we try all the aprons to get the horsepower at the mid range or the top end and alter it around. I was the one who was doing all the work. It had a faulty apron."

Soper's early Friday time was still good enough for fifth fastest overall, behind the elite combatants, Ludwig and Rouse, and then the fastest Australians, Dick Johnson and Andrew Miedecke. Sixth fastest was Niedzwiedz making it six Sierras in a row. In seventh and scowling in frustration was Allan Grice on a 2:21.38, recorded on Thursday. He knew the Sierras would be fast, but not that fast. Grice had thoughts of going two seconds faster on qualifiers, of upsetting the Sierra symmetry, of being the fastest Australian, but never got a chance of backing that up with action.

The 1986 winner had put in a few exploratory laps during the early minutes of Friday activity, getting into 24s, in preparation of using some of his Yokohama qualifiers later on. Then he handed the controls of the Bob Jane T-Marts Commodore to his co-driver Win Percy. While



**THIRD: Steve Soper (Sierra) 2:18.663**



**FOURTH: Klaus Niedzwiedz (Sierra) 2:21.318**

the revered Englishman headed out, Grice belted himself into the Roadways-prepared Tony Kavich VK, in which he had been cross-entered. This had been done in case disaster befell the orange car.

'Gricey' had only just thundered up the pit exit when Les Small, with in-car radio gear hanging off him like battle gear, hustled back to the pit counter where Kavich and the Roadways crew stood around: "Win has stuffed it in."

What? Percy point a car at a wall? Hard to believe, but it had happened and Bathurst had claimed its first big name. Well, actually its second, because just a few hundred metres up the road from McPhillamy, where Percy had crashed, the man who had fought him all the way to the 1986 European Touring Car Championship — Roberto Ravaglia — had argued with a wall in a big way at Skyline to send pangs

of anxiety through the BMW Motorsport encampment.

This was a serious setback for BMW's world championship aspirations as Ravaglia headed the points for Schnitzer in its chase of Ford. The wiry little Italian walked away from the accident, apparently unharmed, despite the tug of the harness on the chest and the jarring effect from the head-on. He was nevertheless whisked straight off to hospital for precautionary X-rays which revealed he was apparently still in one piece.

Percy's accident was a carbon copy of the Bill O'Brien's and was due to the gentlemanly Percy being too gentlemanly as he came up to pass Tony Mulvihill's Commodore in the infamous 160 kmh sweeper. "I pulled over to the left and put the lefthand wheel over the kerb. It is incredible, it just sucks you over," Percy said.



The Commodore was heaved sideways and slingshot straight at the wall. Damage was similar to that of the O'Brien Commodore, which had come up brand new, and a complete new chassis rail would have to be fitted to the stoved in righthand front of Grice's car.

An uninjured Percy noted that McPhillamy continued to be very slippery. For 1987, changes had been made to the exit by adding a sturdy ripple strip and filling in the space between the edge of the existing road and the beginning of the ripplestrip with new bitumen. Like all new patches on an old road, it had settled below the level of the previous surface. The effect was for a car to kick its tail out when the tyres dropped down from the old surface and clawed for traction. If you were really drifting, as Percy was when he gave a wide berth to the slower competitor, the car could slide right over the kerby and straddle it.

Ravaglia's accident was at Skyline, one of the points at the top of The Mountain where the M3s are flung around in the knowledge that it is the only place where they could pick up time on the Sierras. The BMWs also get very twitchy and he simply lost it and slammed the wall so hard that the left front was tucked under the firewall. The whole chassis absorbed the impact and creases were even found in the boot.

The car was a throwaway job but so impressed were the BMW Motorsport hierarchy by the repairwork on the Meeuvissen/Stermitz M3, consideration was given to handing it over to the TAFE lads. The team had plenty of cars, but no spares. A spare had been ordered immediately and was being flown out, but it wouldn't make Australia until Monday, so the only other alternative was to speak nicely to Frank Gardner and ask if they could do a deal to take over JPS Team BMW's training car. Gardner didn't think much of the suggestion. "Our stuff is homegrown and couldn't be serviced by the Schnitzer team," he pronounced.

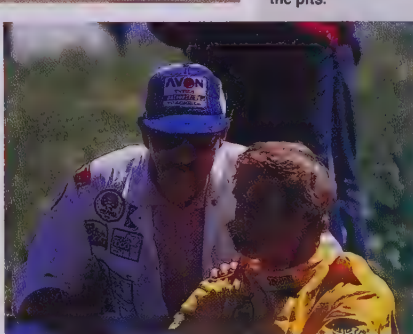
Motorsport chief, Peter Flohr had already stayed up all Thursday night "nursing our baby", No. 47, and now it had happened all over again. The initial tear down on No. 47 had confirmed the worst — a shattered firewall and transmission tunnel pushed right up. A new firewall and front subframe had to be shipped up from BMW Australia in Melbourne, which delayed the repair. Undaunted, the TAFE boys jumped into the work late Thursday night.

No. 47 had been off the track since before the first qualifying session and it was hustled back, largely unadjusted, for the final Friday afternoon session, in a desperate bid to allow the women to qualify. In the meantime, a crippled No. 46 sat in the TAFE compound, 30 metres away from where blurred arms were beginning the resurrection of the Grice Commodore.

"I have never seen anything or experienced anything like it," Flohr said of his all-night vigil at the TAFE compound. "If I ever wanted to become a millionaire, I would import them to Europe!" By Saturday afternoon, he was quite confident that No. 46, gathering dust for a day, could be repaired. "They were still working on the other car. We will give them a rest. This morning we decided to give it a go."

The Percy and Ravaglia accidents had the top of The Mountain sprinkled with bits of orange and white and covered with various slippery fluids. The yellow flags fluttering all over and eventually the decision was made to stop practice and remove the wrecks and clean up the track sufficiently before it was safe to let the cars out again. It took some time and virtually wrote off the session as one for serious qualifying.

Just one driver was fired up from the beginning of the session. Before Win went in and Roberto ran ragged, Larry Perkins, vaulted from nowhere to make his play for a spot in Hardie's Heroes. By chopping more than three seconds off his Thursday time, he was conclusively quickest of the truncated session and quickest Commodore of the week. It raised hopes of the locals that maybe a Holden was in contention after all.



1: McPhillamy snares its first big name. Percy gave the Mulvihill Commodore plenty of room and left himself no margin for error on the slippery exit.

2: Ka-pow. The Commodore hit almost head-on at 160 kmh.

3: Practice is stopped and marshals swarm over the Commodore to figure out how best to get the mess onto the quicklift truck.

4: It happens to the best of them, mate. Percy ponders the consequences of the accident while awaiting a lift back to the pits.

5: Oh oh! Ravaglia catapults the M3 over Skyline too fast and locks it up in desperation.

6: Ravaglia scrambles out of the wreck. This was to be a setback from which the Schnitzer team would not recover.



Later on the time was officially corrected to a 2:22.28. Someone had made a boo-boo and Sierra supremacy was restored. It was still his quickest time, though, and jumped him ahead of his old boss, Peter Brock.

Brock too was on the move but only by tenths to take fifth fastest of the session. It was enough to push the BMW M3s of Jim Richards and Johnny Cecotto down the list on the combined times and by doing so provisionally reserve himself for the final Hardie's spot.

That was to be it for the Mobil and Enzed Holdens, as far as speed went, for the rest of the day. They had shaken all the life out of the carburettored V8s that was humanly possible, without a Less Small engine under the bonnet.

The final session therefore would be left up to the BMWs to scramble for what was effectively only three spots in Hardie's Heroes — the Sierras had all but locked up the first seven spots. BMW really meant Cecotto and Richards because Ravaglia's morning incident in the car that had always led the way for the Schnitzer crew, left the German team without its quickest car.

Emanuele Pirro, the quickest of the Schnitzer brigade was put into the team's second car, No. 40, for the final session to keep alive that glimmer of hope. His best of 2:22.66 on Thursday, using soft race rubber, was within striking distance of Cecotto and Richards and also Brock and just a few tenths more would be enough to scrape into position No. 10. This was asking a lot though, even from an aspiring Formula One driver. The quickest No. 40 had gone in the hands of one of its usual drivers, the lanky, young German Markus Oestreich, was 2:24.82. Could Pirro find more than two seconds in a car that had obviously been set-up to suit a different crew of drivers?

Then there was the problem of qualifying rubber to consider. Schnitzer was tied to new tyres developed for it by Yokohama. The race tyres they tried on Wednesday were fine. On Thursday it was time to see how the qualifiers handled the idiosyncracies of Bathurst. "We tried one set and they didn't work," Pirro moaned. "They didn't last a lap."

So on soft race rubber, compared with the totally suitable Pirelli qualifiers used by the rival CiBiEmme team and JPS Team BMW, Pirro had the job ahead.

The last half hour of the final session was absolutely electric and Ludwig's descent into the 17s seemed of secondary interest at this point as BMW after BMW buzzed around on their grippiest rubber. Also conspicuous was Brock, defending, and George Fury, who had taken over as the quickest of the Nissan duo and was dragging the team back into contention. Less than half a second covered these two as the shadows on The Mountain lengthened.

In the end it was Cecotto, waiting for a clear track, who pulled the hot one just as the man brought down his chequered flag. The session had started two and a half minutes late as the CiBiEmme car flashed across the line for his time to be recorded, the clock read 2 mins 24 secs past the scheduled end of the session. What timing! And the time was 2:21.48, more than a second better than in the morning. "Just in the chicane I was slowed down a bit," Cecotto recalled. "It was the first clear lap I had all day. I can go a little bit faster but not much."

As he spoke the former Volvo team prime-mover Mark Petch smiled in the background. The wealthy Auckland-based engineer had his company's name, 'Mark Petch Mechanical Seals', plastered on the side of the CiBiEmme car, indicating who was the new owner. The deal had been done for all to see on one of the plastic picnic settings under the awning of the BMW bus in the pits two days before. People wandered by aimlessly not realising that a business deal of hefty six figure proportions was being talked out. Hands were shaken with Peter Flohr and distinguished looking CiBiEmme team manager, Umberto Grano, then Petch, smugly packed up



**FIFTH: Andrew Miedecke (Sierra) 2:22.057**



**SIXTH: Johnny Cecotto (BMW) 2:23.147**

a briefcase. "I'm pleased with the car," he said dangling his briefcase playfully. "It is a good car and I'm glad to be out of the turbo because this is more like the racing I started with. This is like a Formula One car with a box around it."

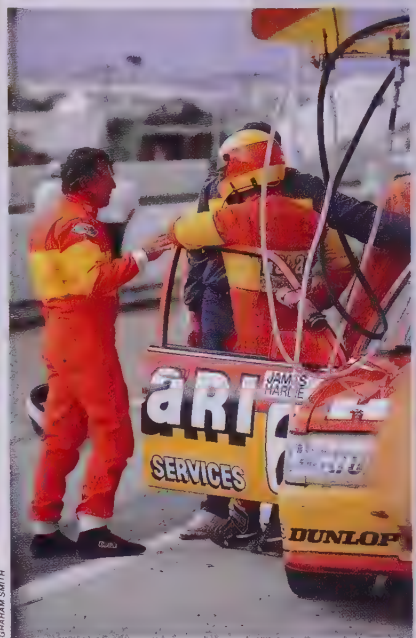
Cecotto's amazing performance eclipsed Brock and Richards and buried the brilliant Fury time. The Nissan, almost overlooked, was the ninth fastest of the afternoon and almost two seconds faster than the car had gone before. Nissan team boss Fred Gibson, who had been frowning since Wednesday, was almost smiling at the result as he had expected the Skylines to be on the pace with the Commodores. He had aimed for low 22s, barring dramas, and had almost got there. "When 30 was going we started to sort the two and try things out on both cars," he said.

Richards and Pirro both had hard luck stories.





# NISSAN KNOW-HOW



1: Larry Perkins made his move on Friday morning to bring some respectability to the Holden camp. It moved him ahead of Brock in the standings.

2: Just remember there's a race tomorrow. Commodore privateers Gary Rush, left and Tony Noske played it cool in qualifying for their first Bathurst away from the speedway ovals.

3: Looked good but that's all. The Maserati's lack of preparation and lack of time on the track resulted in Bruno Giacomelli missing the cut.

4: Sun-loving Italian, Emanuele Pirro, didn't have much to do after team-mate Ravaglia crashed the M3 they shared.

5: Soper, left, with wired-for-sound Grice. I'll be on your tail tomorrow Steve.

6: Parsons takes his turn in the Brock Commodore. The famous 05 didn't make it into Hardie's Heroes for the first time since its inception.





Pirro took a similar brave approach to his teammate, Ravaglia, across Skyline and missed the apex. He ended up, unscathed, in the sandtrap. Richards ended up in the pits, his last lap and perhaps best lap on qualifiers cut short when he was monstered by Gary Brabham. The rising young open wheeler star was just getting to grips with the Schnitzer M3 after a very tense touring car initiation. "I was committed to taking Skyline flat," the youngest Brabham son confessed afterwards. "I thought I could get by him but I misjudged it and just clipped him."

The JPS driver came off worse with damaged front air dam, wheel and bent anti-roll bar bracket. He had been warming up his last set of qualifiers when Brabham arrived on the scene. Richards, out of Hardie's Heroes with every BMW bar one, could see the funny side of its after using four sets of qualifiers that afternoon. "We wasted \$6000 or \$7000 and didn't go any faster! I'm a bit disappointed we didn't get a clear lap but there were plenty of other drivers who didn't!"

One of them who didn't in the latter parts was Brock. He had arrived onto the back of a high-speed BMW train, with little Winni Vogt playing locomotive in the Bigazzi M3 and Mercedes Stermitz playing caboose and admonished these antics with abrupt waves of a gloved hand. This was a tow job at the request of Schnitzer to try and find the extra few tenths that lurked in the slipstream and ensure the crew made the qualifying cut-off point that weeds out the uncompetitive cars and drivers in the interests of race safety.

Under international rules that cut-off comes in at 110 per cent of the fastest time set in the class. For the middle class, Cecotto's screamer made the cut-off 2:36.4. With Vogt's assistance No. 47 made that quite comfortably, but not without expending much sweat and much nervous energy as the repaired car kept dragging to the right. Soon after it was sent to the back of the pits for drawn out fiddling with wheel alignment.

With the excitement over the significance of Ludwig's time began to sink in. At one level it brought the cut-off time for big class down dramatically and took several drivers and their cars out of the event, including Lester Smerdon (Commodore), Gerald Kay (Commodore), Wayne Clift (Commodore), Geoff Leeds (Terry Finnigan's Commodore) and Peter Williamson (Toyota Supra). Another driver to get the chop was the illustrious Bruno Giacomelli who didn't really do a lap of anger in the Maserati as the car spent most of its time in various states of disassembly, disrepair and disgrace. There was a lot of disappointment amongst the Australians as some of these 'once-of-year warriors' had been put on a reserve entry list, because of the over-subscribed entry for the world championship race. Only at the last minute had they been confirmed as entries. Now they were out again.

At the other, more hysterical level, Ludwig's far and away best lap on Friday justified the protest made against the Eggenberger cars late on Friday. The pits had been abuzz on Friday with the news of the seven point protest entered by four Australian teams — Peter Jackson Nissan Racing, JPS Team BMW, Team Enzed Perkins and ICL Racing, the company name of Roadways Racing Services.

That protest was morally supported by several other teams and there was a little bit of surprise at the lack of Dick Johnson's name on the protest, due to his well known, uncharitable opinions about European touring car teams. "The accusations that would follow wouldn't enhance my position with Ford," Johnson stated on Friday morning.

The Australian teams wanting to have this matter cleared up had been waiting for the scrutineers to take some action on their own. It was generally known that CAMS scrutineers had raised the points of contention about the Swiss cars very early in the lead-up and had been pressured to take some action by the local



**SEVENTH: Allan Grice (Commodore) 2:23.626**



**EIGHTH: Larry Perkins (Commodore) 2:24.209**

teams. The problem was, the matter had been taken out of their hands.

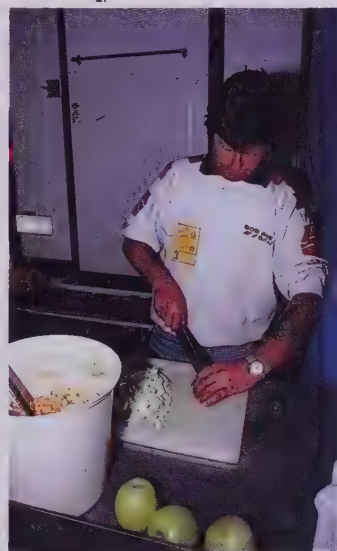
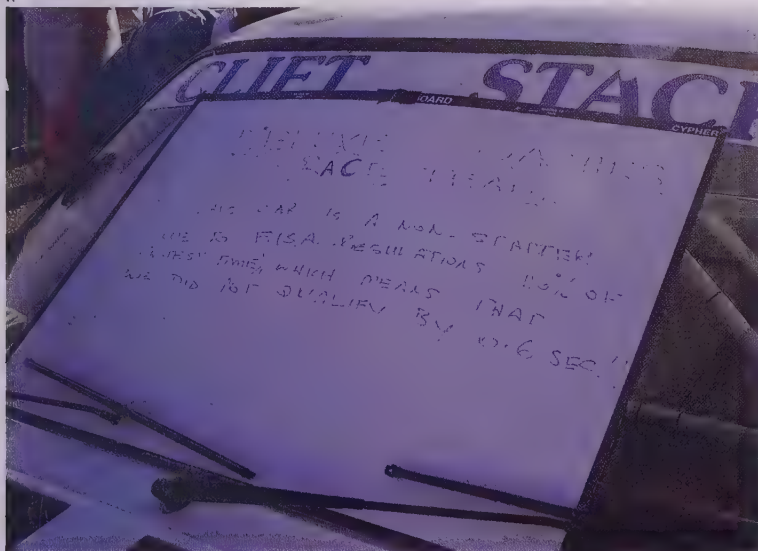
This was a world championship race and because of that scrutineering was put under the control of the travelling FISA technical delegate, a haughty, bellicose Belgian named Marcel Servais. Monsieur Servais initially allowed the CAMS men to get on with their job and generally they went by the FISA rule book, snaring every car on Tuesday with a range of small items from the age of the fuel bladder, to the absence of lefthand mirrors, unapproved helmets and driving suits, etc., etc. The most visible expression of this was the ban on colour-coded numbers. It was black on white, or be blackflagged!

When it came to the Sierras, attention was focused on the guards. The allegation was that wheel arch extension had been attached and

the metal underneath cut away to allow the use of 17 inch wheels with absolute comfort. "If you look really hard, you could see where they had welded," said one Australian crew member, expert in these matters. "But you had to hand it to them, it was done really well." Then inside the Sierra, a more basic infringement: no firewall between the passenger compartment and fuel cell.

This is when Servais intervened. These are Ford of Europe cars, the story went, so they are OK. From then on he applied a veto to the matter, allowing the Sierras to practise on Thursday, free of challenge. On Thursday night, as the Australian teams discussed the form of their protest, there were heated words exchanged between CAMS officials and the rapidly growing ogre, Servais, about what the rules say and how they should be enforced.





- 1: Jim Richards embarrassed the European BMWs. Then Cecotto found a clear lap and the Melbourne-based driver didn't.
- 2: Wheels within wheels. The JPS Team BMW men put together the composites.
- 3: One of the victims of the FISA cut-off was the Wayne Clift Commodore.
- 4: Ray the cook had a busy time in the Schnitzer hospitality area preparing meals to suit tastes of several nationalities.
- 5: The TAFE enclosure was used non-stop from the first day. One bay was for Schnitzer cars, the other for bent Holdens.



The laissez faire European way of doing things had come to Australia with the world championship, after CAMS had spent all season trying to prevent infection of the scene and creating an atmosphere that made a mockery of Group A rules. In Europe a system of 'live and let live' had evolved and fostered a liberal interpretation of things. Only when somebody stepped way out of line did the rulebook start being quoted. It was a way of doing things that had kept Europe at peace since World War II.

That didn't stop you making a protest. Right after practice on Thursday one of the Eggenberger cars was impounded for measurement and the hearing, convened before the FISA stewards — a Frenchman, a Belgian, two Australians and a New Zealander. On Friday morning the result was posted: an indefinite adjournment. In part, the announcement was, "evidence is insufficient to allow any decision to be made in regard to the matters protested, at this time. The stewards therefore instruct the FISA technical delegate, Marcel Servais, to compare the protested vehicles with one or more standard Ford Sierra Cosworth RS500 vehicles."

The problem was that no road-going RS500 existed in Australia and nobody had the necessary data. They had only just been built, so most were still in Europe being sold at a price that only Europeans could afford. On top of that was the problem of the Eggenberger cars not being due back in Europe until the end of November. There could be no opportunity to carry out the comparison until then. Cynics in the Australian teams suggested it would never happen. Larry Perkins at least felt a point had been made. "I just wanted to see how heavily the officials would go by the rulebook. I'm not surprised that they didn't handle it all that well."

Justice delayed seemed justice denied and the bad feeling against the Swiss team built up as the black and red No. 7 shot to the top of the list on Friday afternoon. The enmity turned into anger and open frustration on Saturday morning when Klaus Ludwig was quickest by a country mile to take pole easily, firming the Swiss team to unbackable favourites.

Last out for the run-off, the German had a track dusted clean for him by the nine cars that had gone heroically before. There was a bit of a wiggle, but now that the track was offering more grip, Ludwig could confidently stab on the power for the descent. He had concentrated hard to get it right and it had been perfect.

This concept of running off for pole had been a new experience for Ludwig, and for Soper, and Niedzwiedz, and Rouse, and Cecotto and also for Australians Miedecke and O'Brien.

The first of the Eggenberger crew away was Niedzwiedz. In the spare car, that would be withdrawn for the race, he was all at sea in such new circumstances, and showed it by running wide on the climb, less than smooth elsewhere and missing a gear before the end. As well he was on qualifiers for the first time for several months and uncertain as to how to use them properly. He did not improve on his qualifying best but was at least quicker than those who had gone before him: Perkins, O'Brien, Cecotto and Grice.

By the time Soper headed out, the track conditions had improved somewhat, although still not ideal. His time of 2:18.66 was the reward for flowing with The Mountain. It looked like pole as there was a gulf between that time and Niedzwiedz, but Rouse already knew about 18s and while not as quick as his qualifying time, found the few tenths to assure himself a spot on the front row. He had the car sideways on one occasion and perhaps he could have gone quicker. "I missed the walls by a foot rather than an inch," he commented. "The critical thing is that there is a race tomorrow."

Rouse's caution left it open to Ludwig, who demoralised with a time that was almost half a second below his breathtaking Friday mark and the first time a Group A car had been in the 16s.



**NINTH: Dick Johnson (Sierra) 2:22.744**



**TENTH: Charlie O'Brien (Sierra) 2:21.452**

That was a theoretically impossible lap time for a Group A car, given the changes to the track, and sent an army of pit people shuffling back to the paddocks, head bowed and shaking in disbelief.

While Ludwig accepted the gold and glory for pole at his first Bathurst, Soper and young Klaus, sitting and squinting in the sun, half joked about not being in that position instead. "The best car, the best engine, the best tyres and the worst driver!" Niedzwiedz quipped. Soper laughed in mocking agreement, then responded seriously. "It was very dusty and slippery this morning and basically car one has the worst time and the next car cleans the circuit up and you get a cleaner and clearer racing line."

Then Ludwig had the previous day to practise on qualifiers, he added. "For sure this gives him a clear advantage because he knows when to

warm them up and how far to push them and where they go off and how much grip there is." He went on: "But you can't take it away from him, the old German's quite good. He is the oldest of us all — He is about 62!"

The three Eggenberger cars were therefore in the top four spots, or in terms of the race, two out of the top three. With the automatic withdrawal of the third Swiss car, Andrew Miedecke was promoted to the second row, the fastest of the Australians, to confirm his arrival at the top of the pile in Australian touring car racing. He, like all the Hardie's candidates except Charlie O'Brien and the two Eggenberger Sierras, was significantly slower on the dusty track. At least he didn't have his car sliding around and sucking up clouds of dust like the fellow Aussies Perkins, O'Brien and Grice, who struggled before him. Only Johnson, eighth out, and preferring not to



deviate from race set-up for all of qualifying in a deliberately conservative programme, had the opportunity to do better, but muffed a gear change pulling out of The Cutting.

Even if Johnson, and indeed team-mate O'Brien, had been quicker than their local Sierra rival, Miedecke was still clear on the second row. This was the sensational result of tests done on fuel samples taken from the cars immediately after Hardie's Heroes and a beginning of a weekend blitz on fuel to try and prevent competitors using additives to boost octane rating and gain a performance advantage.

All came through except the two Shell Ultra Hi Tech Racing Team Sierras. The stewards found something amiss with the chemistry when the samples from both cars were tested for specific gravity. "You are charged with a breach of the rules in that your vehicles used a fuel with different characteristics from that supplied by the organisers," the FISA charge sheet read.

Under international rules the cars could have been excluded from the meeting but the rules had no provision for anything like Hardie's Heroes. Instead their times were wiped and they were relegated to ninth and tenth on the grid, which of course became eighth and ninth with the withdrawal of the third Eggenberger car.

The inference of the verdict was that the Johnson team had dosed up the fuel to get superior performance in Hardie's Heroes. In fact the test revealed the fuel was of poorer quality. Johnson's team manager, Neal Lowe, commented later: "It was below the level they had set here and what do you do to fuel to make it low?"

He had no explanation for how it could have happened except that fuel brought in early in the lead-up had been used to check the capacity of the fuel cells. This fuel was pumped out and stored in drums to be used for qualifying. As the fuel was consumed, the partly empty drums were topped up three days later by more fuel brought from the circuit's fuel pump. "The thought is that it had been exposed to the air and evaporated," he said.

There had been a lot of concern about the quality of fuel to be available at Bathurst, away from the big population centres. Don Smith was one who was very wary, claiming that the quality varied with each load and even more wary when the emerging OXO team lost an engine on the first day. "Rouse told us what to do with the cylinder head, but with the fuel, we went one click too far and it detonated," Smith said. But that was behind them now and he was thrilled with Miedecke's performance.

The penalty to the Shell Sierras was a godsend to the Commodores. In a flick of a pen, Grice was on the third row and Perkins on the fourth row. Perkins, who cleaned the track for everybody else in Hardie's Heroes and Grice, the real hero of Saturday morning, deserved such good fortune.

Grice virtually drove the Bob Jane T-Marts straight out of the TAFE bay, unsigned and onto the track for his flying lap. There had been some speculation that the Roadways team

might have withdrawn the car to be on the safe side, sorted it out fully in the untimed Saturday afternoon session and thus give Brock a run in Hardie's Heroes, but Grice wasn't going to let the opportunity slip. Call it foolhardy or simply courageous, the indomitable Grice had the car crabbing down Conrod at a Snooper verified 256 kmh to record his 2:23.62, a quicker lap than the completely straight Perkins VK.

Les Small later confirmed that Allan had been taking it easy! They had got the suspension to a suitable state and all the car required was the correct degree of toe-in. Small conceded that the crash cost the car speed due to lost development time. They had been making progress with shocker rates and had managed to get hold of some super-trick shockers, but only one set. "They were in the car for the crash!" Small said. "They would have worked well and that would have got it a bit quicker."

On Saturday afternoon, with the car tracking properly, Grice cruised into the pits with a 23 on the team's clocks. He had been on full tanks for this customary session when the teams check their race set-up. The team's confidence flooded back because on race boost and a heavy fuel load, the Sierras couldn't go much quicker than that around Bathurst. The other factor working in Grice's favour was that the high revving turbo-cars, with their delicate drivetrain, had never been put through a standing start. It looked like there would be a race after all.



GARRY SPARKE



GARRY SPARKE



GARRY SPARKE

1: Rear axle was the big worry for the Sierras. The Rouse mechanics make sure there aren't going to be any problems.

2: Under the skin of the Rouse Sierra revealing the inner guards. It was this point that was the centre of dispute on the Swiss versions.

3: The powerful Sierras thrived on The Mountain. They pulled out lengths on the Commodores in the climb to the top.

4: The Eggenberger Fords were built with the precision of a Swiss watchmaker — and prepared just as precisely.

5: The cast of thousands at the BMW Motorsport bus reveal pre-race strategy. From left, Vogt, Heger, Fangio, Brabham, Brancatelli, Cecotto and BMW Australia's Ron Meatcham.



GARRY SPARKE



RUSSELL MARTIN







# ENTER, AT CENTRE STAGE

The first hour:

**LOOKING FOR RECOGNITION FROM THE TOURING CAR ESTABLISHMENT, HE LEFT THE LOCAL STARS IN HIS WAKE, MATCHED THE BEST IN THE WORLD TO TAKE THE LEAD AT HIS FIRST TRY.**



RACEPRESS

**R**ecognition as a worthy addition to touring car ranks took some doing. Andrew Miedecke confessed he didn't look or sound like any of the established galaxy of stars who had become household names. And being a long time single-seater competitor, he was only muscling in on hallowed territory after bringing his time in his preferred, purer form of motorsport to a conclusion.

His basic speed was never in doubt, but he had to win the respect of those who were hard-skinned, cold-hearted and just a little jealous. Of those who were only just starting to learn how to pronounce his name. The process began seriously at the beginning of 1987. There were setbacks, but the tall, lanky former Formula Pacific racer they tagged 'Mad Andy', underwrote his ability with his own bank account. Nobody would give him a car, so he bought his own, no established team wanted him so he became a key figure in a new one. All that he needed was the recognition of those nomex-suited men around him that he had arrived.

It came an hour into Bathurst 1987 when race leader, Steve Soper peered out from his Texaco Ford Racing Team Sierra going up Mountain Straight to find out where the Australian Sierra had gone. He was drawing alongside and passing, and Andrew Miedecke in his first Bathurst start, in his first race in a Sierra RS500, and for the first time in his short touring car career was leading a race, the biggest race of them all. Miedecke signalled Soper at this point and Soper confirmed Miedecke's arrival on centre stage by a flick of the glove. A small gesture, but it meant a lot.

Soper, not having heard of the Australian, didn't really know what to expect when red filled his mirrors. "Er, Dick, er . . . whatisname? The OXO car — he was very, very good," Soper said later of that point of the race. "He had a very, very good car

**Left:** The first world championship-status Bathurst gets underway. Rouse and Miedecke do it right in their Sierra, Niedzwiedz does it wrong in the pole-sitting car. The rest, led by Soper, weave around the embarrassed German.

**Above:** Andrew Miedecke climbs to the top of the world. He had the pace to stay with Soper and took the lead confidently after 20 laps. Who is this guy, Soper thought.

RACEPRESS





and you could actually race with the guy without it being dangerous."

Miedecke, starting from the second row, beside Soper, made a close to perfect start in a car that is difficult to get going quickly. Unsuitable gearing, a diff that was too small and delicate to take full power and with lightswitch power beginning high up the rev band, made the Sierra a big gamble off the line, but Miedecke had it all figured out to go into Hell in second place. "You have to keep it revving and the turbo spinning, and you drop the clutch to get the wheels spinning, then back off and go again or otherwise you just light 'em up and go nowhere."

Everyone had expected there to be chaos, if not disaster at the start as the wall of Sierras on the front two rows bogged down. Rolling starts were customary in Europe and the Fords, and also the BMW M3s, had not been built to withstand the driveline strain of a standing start, nor had the engine package been specified to deliver the power necessary low down. The world championship drivers, out of practice with the technique of standing starts, were not thrilled by the prospect of a drag up The Mountain at the beginning of a 1000 km event.

So in the days preceding the race there was much lobbying in foreign tongues to switch the race to a rolling start for the first time in its history. This was no easy task as the standing start was enshrined in the race regulations. There was no process by which the FISA stewards could change the rule, unless the organisers wished to change it. They didn't. The prospect of trying to police a rolling start for a 49 car grid snaking around Murray's corners, breasting a small blind rise and all that lot heading down a short piece of road to the hard left of Hell, was too horrible to contemplate. Better impending chaos than certain chaos.

The win for tradition in these circumstances, created a situation tailor-made for the torquey Commodores to exploit, if the Sierras did indeed bog down. But the leading Commodore trio of Allan Grice, Larry Perkins and Peter Brock, didn't count on the adaptability and nerves of steel shown by Andy Rouse, Miedecke and Soper.

The three Fords moved off the line quickly enough to turn into Hell still ahead of the fast-starting Commodores. The turbo-chargers now took over to whisk the little cars and their heavy fuel up Mountain Straight, leaving Grice, Perkins and Brock unable to make up any ground and become vulnerable from behind by the Shell Sierras of Neville Crichton and Dick Johnson. The Johnson Sierras surged well from the fifth row, thanks to the open spaces left for them by the bellowing Holdens.

Only one Sierra had come unstuck on the grid, but fortunately it hindered nobody. The pole-sitting Eggenberger car faltered in the worst possible fashion to have car after car skimming around its black rear. By the end of the first lap it was in 14th place.

At the wheel was not the pole winner, Klaus Ludwig, but his team-mate Klaus Niedzwiedz. Ludwig, not relishing the prospect of those first few hectic minutes, was being saved up for the next stint when he would have the freedom to charge as he liked. The younger Klaus had been given explicit orders to take it easy on the driveline at the start, but not that easy and Ludwig could only wince as he watched hoping that his team-mate was not collected from behind. Soper's co-driver, Pierre Dieudonne winced in sympathy.

"For a track like Bathurst, we had a fairly long rear axle in first gear and with the turbo engine we don't have a lot of power low down. Altogether we were a bit concerned about the clutch. We had no experience about how the clutch would handle the pressure of a real hard start from the line with the long first gear and so we were very concerned about that," Dieudonne explained later.

"I think Ruedi talked so much to the starting driver that you have to be careful and don't



destroy the clutch and probably Klaus was a bit too careful. Also we had no opportunity to try it before because if you put in the training you put the stress into the car. He will admit that he didn't do too good a job."

The team had to balance the risk of being hit from behind with the damage to the clutch. It was a long race so a slow start didn't have the team wailing in disappointment in those early laps. "Even tenth place at the start of the race you can catch up because it is 1000 km," Dieudonne said.

Those in the rows behind had been prepared for such an eventuality. As Klaus did the right thing and spluttered along the pit wall, waiting for the revs to build back up, the field shifted sideways almost in unison to avoid the hazard. Rouse and Miedecke were gridded such that they were unaffected, while Soper, behind his team-mate, displayed quick thinking and reflexes to flick to the right and tuck in behind Miedecke's boot, before the Commodore of Grice arrived to close the gap. Grice pulled to the inside, with Perkins in tow, in a bid to force a gap on the inside, but Soper had the line and was unchallengeable through Hell.



GAVIN SPENCE

1: Visiting Englishmen Rouse and Soper played cat and mouse in the early laps, with Miedecke prowling behind. Then came Grice, Perkins, Brock and Crichton.

2: Lap one down and Perkins looks good, sitting between the other leading Commodores of Brock, stalking, and Grice, just in front. A few minutes later he was out of the race.

3: After its Friday prang, the Grice Commodore was as good as new, to lead the non-Sierra 'part' of the race.

4: Oomph. The Perkins Commodore is shovelled away by the Crichton Sierra.

5: The momentum of the Ford has it trying to scale the wall.

6: The violence comes to an end and both disabled cars slide to a halt on the approach to the disputed Cutting.

7: That's it for today. Perkins abandons the Commodore after two laps of his tenth Bathurst.

8: Don't like the look of that. Crichton sums up the damage to the Shell Sierra's suspension.



GAVIN HATFIELD



GAVIN HATFIELD



6.



7.



8.

GAVIN HATFIELD

GAVIN HATFIELD



For the first two frantic laps the Rouse Sierra grasped the lead and hung on with some comfort. Soper lurked, the black car a shadow within the the shadow of the English car. Then came the Australians, Miedecke, Grice, Perkins, Brock, Kiwi Neville Crichton, Johnson, Johnny Cecotto in the first BMW, Jim Richards, a recovering Niedzwiedz, the Nissans of Glenn Seton, George Fury and New Zealander Graeme Bowkett, Peter McLeod in the second Mobil Commodore and Italian ace Emanuele Pirro in the first Schnitzer M3.

The rarified atmosphere of Mt Panorama had never sustained such a crowd of talent and it seemed likely that something would snap. The drama began on the way up The Mountain for the third time when Crichton used turbo-power to zip past Brock into seventh place and rapidly haul in sixth place Larry Perkins.

Crichton took the controls of the second string Shell Sierra for the start despite O'Brien doing a spectacular job of getting the car into Hardie's Heroes and being one of the few drivers to improve his time during the Saturday run-off. But O'Brien confessed to being rusty, not having raced since Bathurst 1986.

By The Cutting, Crichton was on the boot of the white Holden, and with greater momentum and nimbler handling, went in tighter to attempt to take the corner, just as Perkins pulled into the apex. With nowhere to go, the Sierra buried its nose into the side of the Holden with considerable force. The Enzed Commodore was bulldozed sideways, off its wheels, then bounced around backwards, into the wall. The Sierra glanced off the wall and bucked along the perimeter, with licks of flame from the turbo adding to the drama of it all before the dusty halt. Crichton first reaction was one of relief. "I thought I was going over the wall."

Hot words were exchanged between the two, Perkins accusing the wealthy businessman/sportsman of barging him off the road, while Crichton maintained Perkins cut him off. "I got my nose ahead. I don't think Larry saw me, he just turned sharply and the wheels hit..."

Later they agreed to disagree. It was one of the 'motor racing accidents' where evidence was not conclusive as to who was to blame. Perkins was simply bitterly disappointed for going out so early in his tenth Bathurst appearance, "I'll never forgive him, but I'm talking to him," Perkins declared later.

Damage to the cars was surprisingly minimal, the most serious being broken front suspension on the Sierra and banged up wheels on both cars making them undriveable.

Right behind these two when the accident happened was Peter Brock, who pulled to the left to avoid getting tangled up. Fortunately the stricken cars were abandoned, out of the way, on opposite sides of the approach to The



1. Cutting and did not interfere with the racing line.

The Brock Commodore was now in an exalted fifth and being absent from Hardie's Heroes for the first time since its inception and having to start further back at Bathurst than before. And just as significant, Niedzwiedz, was seventh, having rocketed by the M3s of Richards and Cecotto with a burst of sheer, straightline acceleration, moments before the Perkins-Crichton accident. In another minute, the German would be in sixth, inheriting the place held by Johnson, and be able to hold his head up high again. A few minutes later, he switched his lights on, to signify he was on his way.

Johnson had made a good start from his eighth grid position, to run with his team-mate on that first lap, but into the Cutting for the first time, faltered as he planted the foot for the climb out in low gear. Uncertain as to the fault and with the car driving again in the higher gears, Johnson recovered all four places he had lost and on the second circuit was clearly the fastest car on the track, dipping into the 22s. It appeared Brock would fall to the Shell Sierra, but coming out of Mountain Straight, the car hiccoughed again, lost all drive. The achilles heel — differential — had struck down the first Sierra.

Late examination revealed a couple of teeth had peeled off. They had juggled around the diff centre until they eventually jammed in the

crown wheel and pinion. Aware of the problem with the smaller differential, the Johnson team had tried out some minor modifications in an attempt to stress relieve some parts. But nothing could compensate for the stress of a standing start.

The tally was now three top Australian entries, and one complete team, down in just seven minutes.

It was on the third lap that Soper took the lead from Rouse. The Eggenberger pilot had managed to shake off a persistent red attachment in the OXO Sierra. He drew up to the race leader in the blast away from Caltex Chase to go through under brakes at Murray's. Rouse responded, took back the lead in the drag out of Hell two laps later, and there began a cat and mouse game to entertain the record crowd for several laps.

The initial surge of adrenalin having subsided, Miedecke left them alone and took up a watching brief, in the knowledge his car had proven, to his admitted glee, that it had the race speed to match the overseas Fords and was able to move up again when he wished, although it was clear he didn't have the raw grunt to pull away. "It was almost as though they had driver adjustable boost," Miedecke recalled. "Earlier on in the race, he (Soper) had a lot more power and when he backed off, I could catch him again and then he would go away."

Miedecke was also relaxed at the orange





speck in the mirrors — the Commodore of Grice a few seconds back — was not getting any bigger.

The Ford trio were quickly into 22s, as everyone expected, and were already showing that they could lap as much as a second quicker or more faster if the drivers so desired. Miedecke: "I think for that first hour while we were racing, none of us was balls out."

That's how the Eggenberger crew saw it too, with their man Soper under firm orders not to take any rash measures in those opening stages. Soper: "We were running fairly conservative from the word go, despite leading the race. I don't think that any of us was completely flat out. We had a lot in hand and all we had to do was keep everyone in sight, and if we had to go faster we could."

The shuffling of the first three spots diverted them from regularly setting that cracking pace, and Grice with a clear road, managed to spin off regular 23s and 24s, with the help of soft rubber and keep them in sight. Other factors went through his mind to top up his confidence. He knew the Sierras would do four stops, and he would try for three, the V8 getting considerably better fuel consumption on commercial grade super. He also knew that the slower co-drivers of the cars in front were not going to be able to maintain that pace, while his co-driver, Win Percy, would drive like the lead driver had never left the car, and take care of the car at the same time.

But Grice had need to look in his mirrors as he headed down Conrod at this point, because the lights of a Ford Sierra were getting brighter. He was unable to do much about it because he had been experiencing lack of grip from the soft tyres he had decided to use for the vital first stint. It required him to back off the pace just a bit to cool them off.

Within six laps, Niedzwiedz was ahead of Brock and was quickly reeling in Grice, reducing his lap times with each lap and comprehensively exceeding the quickest early pace of his team-mate, as the fuel load lightened. For ten laps the lights of the lead Texaco Sierra, standing out more than usual in ever cloudier conditions, probed the road between it and the Holden. The young Klaus was by to make it four Sierras in a row, with just 15 secs up the road to his race-leading team-mate.

When Niedzwiedz moved into a strong fourth, Miedecke began to make his move forwards again. As he did, Rouse came back to meet him, providing Soper with the first clear break of the race. Rouse had noticed the boost go away just a little to take the edge off an otherwise comfortable pace.

Miedecke, with plenty in hand, jumped into the gap between the two visiting cars to secure second place and allow Rouse to be exposed to

Niedzwiedz. Two laps later he lined up the black Sierra, took the deep breath through Hell to range up as close as possible and pulled out from behind and alongside to take the lead up Mountain Straight.

Soper, momentarily cautious of his new sparring partner, noted Miedecke's sportsman-like wave as he went by. A bond had been made and Soper knew it was safe to argue the issue, for the sake of a spectacle in the following laps, without risk to man or machine.

From the world championship point of view, the Sierras had never had it so easy. Points for the championship were only given to cars registered for the complete series. Their BMW foes were almost nowhere to be seen, the whole BMW Motorsport assault falling apart from the first moments.



1: Miedecke continues to harry Soper. The Australian picked up times on the world championship car through the corners, but lost out in a straight line.



2: The fight for seventh was as intense as the struggle for the lead. With Richards having claimed the spot from Cecotto, Seton pushes by the Italian BMW while Nissan buddy Fury puts the squeeze on from the rear.

3: Once they had disposed of the M3s of Richards and Cecotto, the Skylines moved into formation and stayed like that for most of the race.

4: Cunning Swiss Ruedi Eggenberger had it all under control. The orders were firm to his drivers: be defensive.

5: Rookie Tony Noske heads down The Mountain, in the mid-field. The objective in such exalted race company was to finish and try and keep out of trouble.



6: Under the despairing gaze of Schnitzer boss Charly Lamm and BMW Motorsport co-ordinator, Greg Siddle, the great German team's last big hope for the race, Emanuele Pirro, pits early with a misfire.

7: That big Sierra bogie — diff — got Dick Johnson. He was the fastest man on the track before it failed.

8: Niedzwiedz fell down to 14th at the start, but was sixth and reeling in Grice in as many laps.





GARY SPARK



HALFPHOTOS

2. The BMW team had gone into the race with its full complement of cars, including the repaired Nos. 47 and 46. No. 46, which was entered as the Pirro/Ravaglia car, was wheeled out of the TAFE shop in the early hours of Sunday morning. It had been in bad shape, more badly bent than No. 47. On Sunday morning it sat on the concrete slab directly behind the adjoining BMW and Peter Jackson Nissan compounds, having its wheels aligned and new paintwork washed and polished. Sitting beside them in the Nissan's team outdoor hospitality area, watching the activity by the Schnitzer mechanics, were the amused Nissan drivers.

The situation of 47 and 46 resulted in solemn pre-race discussions between the BMW Motorsport hierarchy of Peter Flohr, Greg Siddle and Schnitzer boss Karl 'Charly' Lamm. They decided to concentrate on the still straight No. 40, and switch the drivers around in the cars to suit.

"We have to compete in the world championship and also to look good," was Flohr's intro-

duction late on Saturday to a driver line-up that was so complex that it was almost incomprehensible. All was to hinge around No. 40 with key world championship contenders and the lead Schnitzer pairing, Pirro and Ravaglia, taking over the car, with its regular lead driver Roland Ratzenberger as the third driver.

Ratzenberger's co-driver, Markus Oestreich, was shoved into the repaired No. 46 as lead driver along with partner Ratzenberger and the man who crashed it, Ravaglia. Young Markus was also thrown in as reserve driver in No. 41, the Brabham/Fangio car, as this was a Linder team car in Germany and he had driven it several times during the season and knew it well.

Finally, Ratzenberger was listed as reserve in No. 47, the women's car and a deal was done with CiBiEmme, who happened to be using Motorsport motors for this race, to have Ravaglia back up Cecotto/Brancatelli. The only driver line-up that stayed the same was in the Bigazzi car which had three of its own drivers already.

It meant that key world championship contenders Ravaglia and Ratzenberger were entered to drive three cars and in Roberto's case drive for two teams that were at each others throats in Europe. So by hook or by crook, BMW were going to get maximum points regardless of where the cars were running.

In the early stages of the race Pirro, in the 'good' car, made quite a respectable start to steal six positions and settled down in 13th, behind Peter McLeod. While he led the Schnitzer cause, he was several positions back from the pack containing the first BMWs on the road, those of Cecotto and Richards. By lap 12 he wasn't even the leading Schnitzer car, when he crawled down Conrod with a misfire that would take four laps in the pits to trace and cure.

This left the Group A rookie, Juan Manuel Fangio II, to move up the queue and into 13th before the first hour was up. The nephew of the famous one, he had three other BMWs in front of him: Cecotto, Richards and Robbie Francevic, who started the second JPS BMW.

The sight of Pirro's car popping and banging up the pit entry so early in the event was a crushing blow for the Schnitzer men. They had only just managed to get No. 46 into the race in respectable shape at the last moment. That car had caused a buzz of interest as Oestreich pointed it at the pits after the warm-up lap instead of taking up his spot on grid 13. The car hadn't turned a wheel before then and the young German quickly found the wheels were rubbing on the guards at racing speed. Adjustments were quickly made but he would have to start the race from pitlane. "We had already decided that we were just going to run the car and make some adjustments," Siddle commented. "It was too risky to start the race without adjusting stuff in the pit lane."

When the field stampeded through Hell, Oestreich moved tentatively out of pitlane to join the race, in company with Winni Vogt, in the Bigazzi entry. Little Winni had opted for a pitlane start too, the car in need of some under bonnet attention. He had made an attempt to get out of the pits to drive around the circuit and take up his grid position, No. 16, but the field was about to come under starter's orders and he was told rather bluntly to move back and stay in the pits until signalled. Winni reversed all the way down pitrow in anger and incurred the wrath of the stewards for that infringement of basic safety rules.

After 10 laps thrashing around at the tail end of the field, and doing pretty well by managing low 26s in the traffic, Oestreich headed pitwards again. The car quickly tired and required more serious attention. "We doubted the car was going to win, so just be safe . . ." Siddle lamented. In fact the car was not to finish, the engine being the problem with Ratzenberger at the controls at the 41 lap mark. It started to go soft, not rev out as the valve train began to fail.

In the meantime Cecotto's CiBiEmme BMW had fallen to the back of the pack of Richards, Seton and Fury. The Nissans had the speed to get by the Italian M3 on the drag up Mountain Straight and that is where both Nissans were also able to dispatch the JPS car too.

It was curious that the CiBiEmme car, with the extra power from its open exhaust was not able to deal with its Australian counterpart and also the Nissans. There was an explanation for that. Cecotto: "The problem was with the engine. It was a brand new engine and very good on Saturday. I think on the warming laps some stones or something went into the intake and damaged a valve a bit. The compression was low and the power was low, especially coming out of the corners and compared with the acceleration of the other cars. Compared with the Richards car, it was very low on power."

Not one European M3 was therefore running at peak fitness and the ambitious BMW Motorsport challenge to the domination of the Sierras on neutral territory had been brought to a premature end. If anyone was going to stop the Fords, it was going to be an Australian.





1: A gap quickly opened between the chargers and Peter Brock but he was the second Commodore on the road and well positioned to figure later on consistency and durability.

2: Promising young German, Markus Oestreich, was given the task of starting the just repaired, unchecked Ravaglia M3. He had to pit on the warm-up lap and had to fight up through the field after starting from pit lane.

3: Richards and Seton put a lap on the disappointing Maserati of Armin Hahne in their tussle from seventh. It took Seton four laps to find a way past the BMW.

4: The big break for Peter McLeod. He did all that his new team asked of him to wedge himself between the JPS M3s by the end of the first hour.

5: The Alfa 75 of Colin Bond had the grunt, but reliability deserted it before the unique car had any chance to show its true form.

6: Notoriety for Graham Lusty. His Commodore was the first to crash out of the race all by itself. The car ploughed straight on to make it two crashes in two days for the car.



## TOP 20 AFTER ONE HOUR

POS.	NO.	DRIVER	CAR	LAPS	FASTEST LAP
1	35	Andrew Miedecke	Sierra	25	2:22.50
2	6	Steve Soper	Sierra	25	2:22.42
3	9	Andy Rouse	Sierra	25	2:22.76
4	7	Klaus Niedzwiedz	Sierra	25	2:22.08
5	2	Allan Grice	Commodore	25	2:23.44
6	5	Peter Brock	Commodore	25	2:24.84
7	30	George Fury	Skyline	25	2:25.06
8	15	Glenn Seton	Skyline	25	2:25.12
9	42	Johnny Cecotto	BMW M3	25	2:25.42
10	44	Jim Richards	BMW M3	25	2:25.24
11	10	Peter McLeod	Commodore	25	2:27.02
12	45	Robbie Francevic	BMW M3	25	2:26.88
13	41	Juan Manuel Fangio II	BMW M3	25	2:27.44
14	43	Winni Vogt	BMW M3	25	2:26.92
15	24	Graeme Bowkett	Skyline	24	2:26.02
16	32	Warren Cullen	Commodore	24	2:27.66
17	14	Murray Carter	Skyline	24	2:28.32
18	16	Gary Scott	Starion	24	2:29.30
19	34	John Giddings	Sierra	24	2:28.18
20	37	Brian Callaghan	Commodore	24	2:28.94









# JOINING FRIEND AND FOE

The second hour:

**AS THE BATTLE FOR THE LEAD RAGED ON, AND THE FIRST PIT STOPS NEARED, THE FASTEST CAR ON THE TRACK MOVED EVER CLOSER TO RECLAIMING ITS RIGHTFUL POSITION.**



**W**ith each lap the other black Sierra moved closer to the two front runners. The early race leader, Andy Rouse, holding on grimly to fourth was no match for him, had fallen prey and fallen even further back to be exposed to the Commodores. After an hour Klaus Niedzwiedz could glimpse his team-mate's car on the long stretches, when it was not blocked from view by the red Australian car that separated them and refused to yield to the superiority of million-dollar European technology.

Steve Soper had just re-taken the lead from Andrew Miedecke, pulling beside him in the dash past the pits. The baby-faced Englishman would hang onto the top spot for a few laps, luring Niedzwiedz to join in and squeeze the Australian out, but Klaus was making a meal of the 15 sec gap between second and third. But inexorably he drew closer, his progress measured by the celebrated names he had put behind him.

Miedecke grabbed the lead back again in the trip up The Mountain for the 30th of the 161 laps. This time he hung onto it as Soper eased back, to even the gaps between the pace-setters for the first time in the event. This gave the conscientious Miedecke some heart for later in this long race and indicated that the 37-year-old Port Macquarie car dealer and businessman had done more than just buckle up a harness in his assault on touring car racing. He was now of the view that his car was more comfortable at this tempo than that of his illustrious opponent.

"We had a clear handling advantage over him through the corners, but he was quicker than us up the straights, but only 20 hp more. We had that grip out of the slow corners." This is where Miedecke's single-seater racing experience was coming into play.

"It was the way I set up the car and it was better than Andy's

**Left:** Lights on for the charge, Klaus Niedzwiedz recovers his self-respect. He was the fastest man on the circuit now and would soon be into the lead for the first time.

**Above:** Early race leader Andy Rouse chocks his dead Sierra. A big bang heralded transmission failure and that meant no drive for Allan Moffat.



too," Miedecke continued. "All the cars were reasonably similar, as far as I could find, with spring rates and such and there were a couple of things in our car that aren't in the others."

When Miedecke moved to consolidate his position before that new influence in the race intervened — pit stops — one big name was falling out of the event. This was Andy Rouse, the supplier of the key components in Miedecke's car. Rouse, pokerfaced and contemplative, had been on call to Don Smith during the lead-up. Balding Don hovered around the Rouse compound, juggling bits, dragging on an ever present cigarette and picking the Englishman's brains. "He keeps that one per cent for himself but I was very pleased with him," Smith observed.

Rouse's impending demise would leave a cloud over the durability of the other Sierras and give Smith extra cause to light up. Rouse had been fading in contrast to his client's car. A boost problem shaved a full second off lap times, but Rouse wasn't overly concerned by this, believing the problem could be rectified quickly in the upcoming pit stop, and his existing pace good enough for such a long race.

With the Sierra down to his speed, Allan

gave the car an hour. It had lasted almost an hour and 15 minutes.

Ford flags, fluttering from that first lap, fell limp on The Mountain as the consequences of Rouse's retirement sunk in. But they were hauled skyward again with three Fords chased by two Commodores, became three Fords chased by one Commodore. No. 5 had disappeared.

Peter Brock had his VL stationed about half a minute in arrears of rival Grice. The car was running well, although the brand new engine was not actually pulling the high rpm it had been during Saturday at its running in.

Despite losing ground to both the Fords and the Grice Commodore, Brock was content where he was. "These Sierras are in a class of their own," he said later. "They can afford to back off the boost and run conservatively and be capable of doings 21s and 22s and that is pretty demoralising when the rest are on the doorhandles doing 2:24."

Brock opted for an earlier than scheduled pit stop, to beat the rush. He stepped out to let David Parsons take the controls and cleared out

Brock to have an influence on the last half of the event. The car was still on the lead lap, the second Commodore on the road, at this stage, and would only have the leaders catch him and rush by after two hours.

McLeod was oblivious to all this drama in the Brock team pit and had no way of being told, since only the newer No. 5 was fitted with a two-way. The team plan was always that McLeod would start the race due to his experience and would also do two stints. "We worked out that I'd better do two stints or I wouldn't be in at the finish and would have to do a driver change with ten laps to go," he commented.

On fuel the Brock cars would require three stops plus a quickie for a top up at the end. There was flexibility there to make it four full driving sessions and that worked in the team's favour as they calculated fuel consumption after Brock's pit stop, and, at No. 5's retirement, how to maximise the boss's time in the second car.

McLeod was called in on lap 31, and wasn't expecting to stop until lap 36 or even lap 38. "He (Brock) must have been using more fuel time than they thought. They fuelled him and thought,



Grice was all but running over the British car after 31 laps. He had no need to push the issue. An almighty bang reverberated through the Sierra as it headed down pit straight. It scared the hell out of the Englishman, but at least gave him the clear message that his race had come to an end. With no more drive, Rouse pulled off around the corner.

The car had stripped the teeth off second gear and was viewed stoically as one of those things. The new box had been prepared and run in as usual and there was never any indication of a gearbox problem during practice. The only other new factor introduced was the standing start. Decorated co-driver, Allan Moffat, later dismissed that as the blame for the fault, stating that one of the Rouse cars had run 24 hours at Spa without a gearbox breakage.

"It always happens at that most important race, when you are trying to do something, it can never happen at Timbuktu or somewhere where it doesn't matter," Moffat sighed. "And it can't happen in practice, can it?"

There had been no great surprise at Rouse's retirement. His Sierra had always been quick but when he made the leap up from national to international level, the car was often unreliable. In such a hostile, alien environment, the experts

of the way as the crew set the stage for Peter McLeod to pit next. McLeod, a traditional strong performer in the early stages of Bathurst was doing as the team hoped in Mobil-HDT colours and stayed in the car after his clockwork stop. But before the team's pit personnel could compose themselves after that concentrated blur of airlines, airguns, seat belts and bouncing tyres, came the news that the lead car was coughing smoke.

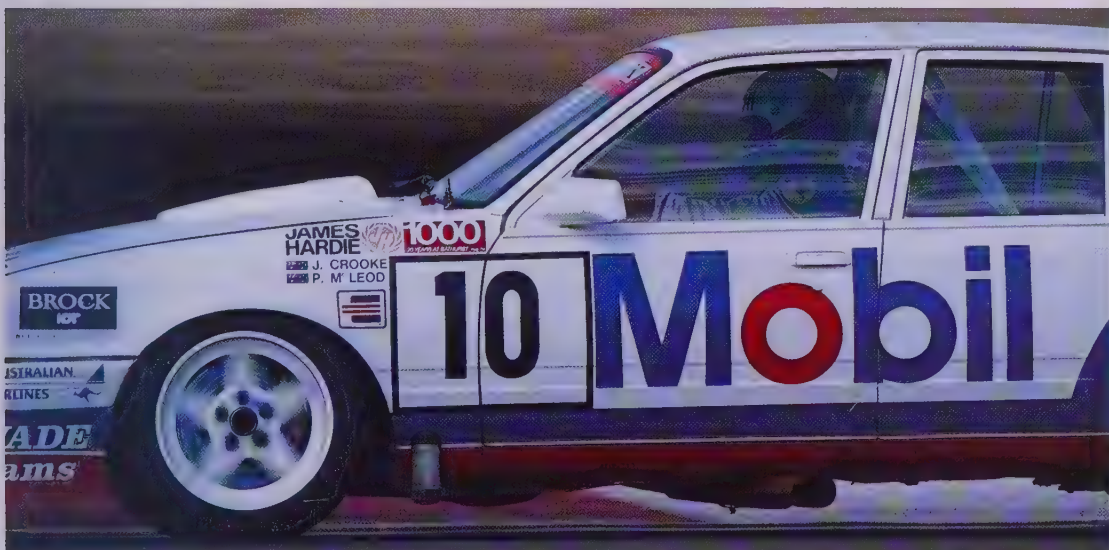
Parsons, who returned the car to the track in tenth, had gunned it out of The Cutting, where the powerful cars pick up a lot of time. The car simply dropped its bundle, went slower and slower on the climb to the summit. Finally came the rattle of a failed bearing on an engine that had been prepared with loving care.

That was not it for Brock by a long shot. The boss had been cross-entered as a matter of course and could move into the spare car any time. Plan B could have gone into action immediately except that the second car had only left the pits a few minutes before. Peter would now have to wait a full stint before he could take over the wheel. Shades of Bathurst 1983 when he won in that position.

A lot now hinged on Peter McLeod bringing the car back in good shape and in a position for







1: Brock's co-driver, David Parsons, heads out after the pit stop. He didn't get much further before the engine gave out. Attention quickly turned to the surviving Mobil Commodore in the replay of a Bathurst previous.

2: The end of the race for 05. The car is returned smokily to the garage, the engine rattling with bearing damage.

3: New Mobil-HDT recruit Peter McLeod suddenly becomes the team's big hope. He had not been informed of the demise of the team's lead car but there was no need as McLeod was doing his job to perfection, holding a place in the top ten.

4: Fury flings the Nissan down the esses, holding seventh place. He has one eye on the Mulvihill Commodore and Smith Corolla he is about to lap and the other on the mirrors as team-mate Seton is not far behind, keeping him on his mettle.







GRANHAM SMITH

'if he is using more fuel, we'd better get the second car in.'

Following the smoky trail of No. 5 into the pits was a freight train of cars for their first scheduled stop: both Peter Jackson Nissans in quick succession for driver changes, and Miedecke and Soper almost as one.

At this Niedzwiedz swung around Murray's in exaltation to do what he had been threatening for several laps. Niedzwiedz, due to second was Allan Grice, a short-lived second though as the car hesitated coming down The Mountain to indicate it was all but out of fuel. It was agony for the Roadways team as Grice rolled in gently for a tankful and driver change to Win Percy. The Englishman turned out of the pit exit, just as Johnny Cecotto in the CiBiEmme M3 moved onto pit straight.

So much concentrated pit action, largely brought about by a higher than normal fuel consumption in the first part of the race, caused some confusion at the front. Niedzwiedz, due to pit in a few laps, was temporary race leader, just clear of Miedecke's Sierra and the second Eggenberger car, both of whom had paid the penalty for slow stops, then Percy. Following them were the yet-to-pit M3s of Cecotto and Richards, now back in touch, and the Peter Jackson Nissans, glued together again with Fury's co-driver, Terry Shiel, now towing along Glenn Seton's co-driver, John Bowe, in a programme running exactly to schedule.

The pit stop for the Nissans was a big relief for the former Kiwi and the Italy-based Venezuelan. While the local and international BMW aces were embroiled in their own dice, the Nissans had chipped away at the gap to close up and get by under power before the first hour was up. Richards managed to make a pest of himself by holding onto Seton across the top of The Mountain and also down. He couldn't keep sitting there however because the envelope of hot air generated by the Nissan's turbo engine started to send the engine temperature up on the little BMW four.

Richards recalled: "In the end the motor started to get too hot. I was slowed slightly by the Nissans and I waved him (Cecotto) past. He did go past and ran behind them for a while. Then the Nissans pitted and Johnny and I continued on."

The first Eggenberger pitstop was much too slow for a world-class touring car team, although on the surface it looked as leisurely and unflustered as you like. But why? Was there a problem? A chink in the armour? Yes, a minor one and sent an intense, wound-up Soper, leaping out of his car, seeking his chief mechanic and yelling information into his ear. For a moment, co-driver Pierre Dieudonne, with his distinctive full face helmet in place, thought it was serious.

He commented later: "He was low on fuel and came in earlier than expected. For some reason the radio wasn't working and he made a sign the lap before. I got the instruction to get ready. I think when he came in it was a little bit of a surprise and also when he got out of the car he was excited which is unusual for him. He got out of the car, disconnected the radio and started to talk to the mechanic instead of helping me and I thought there was a problem. There was a little bit of confusion which made the pit stop slightly slow."

A Bathurst pit stop was something new for the fledgling OXO team and they were expected to be slower than the top teams. Miedecke stayed in the car, in a deliberate move to make the most of the team's strong position. 'Mad Andy' and everybody else knew that his co-driver, Don Smith, would not be able to match his pace and would thus do just the minimum time in the car. The genial Don readily acknowledged that after 22 Bathursts, he was not at his fastest and certainly not in the same league as his co-driver. In fact this was to be his Bathurst swansong. He hadn't made the announcement but had decided after his Sandown crash that it was time to retire from driving.



GARRY SPANE



GARRY SPANE





1: Much was expected of the Network Alfa but instead it was one of the first to flounder. After suffering with electrical trouble, Bond gave the control to Cesario to start the fightback.

2: Kent Baigent had the Team Nissan NZ Skyline on the verge of the top ten until the gearbox packed up. A new one was fitted during a long stop.

3: An early casualty was the Warren Cullen Commodore. Cullen had it the fourth Commodore on the road but that good work was undone when Sprague crashed soon after the first pit stop.

4: The woes continued for the Schnitzer crew. The sight of one or other of the team cars in the pits for attention was a feature of the race.

4: Miedecke returned to the race in a distant second, the car was still running perfectly, his only nagging worry was a faint glow from the dashboard. At that point he was unsure about what it was and as it was not affecting the performance of the car, didn't make an issue of it during the pit stop. "One of the electrical connectors in the alternator just unclipped itself, vibrated out and the red light started to come on a couple of laps before I was to come in for fuel," he said. It was a symptom of a small team working night and day and being physically unable to check all those little things that often lose a motor race for an otherwise competitive car.

"In retrospect we should have done something about it," Miedecke added. The team's tiny budget didn't extend to radio communications, and Miedecke felt that luxury would have prompted him to alert the team about the problem before everybody got diverted by fresh tyres and fuel in the pit stop. The team could have nipped out the problem in plenty of time and come up with a solution.

"But the car was very strong and the ammeter wasn't moving at that stage and I was hoping that it was a slight drain and nothing major, so it just went from there." It didn't become major until well after Miedecke left the car, following his double stint.



5: Gee, we haven't seen this flag flown in anger for quite some time. They sprang up like wild flowers on The Mountain as the Sierras took over the race.

6: After sitting behind team-mate Seton for an hour, Fury took up the running for the Nissan team until the pit stops came due. But Seton kept him in sight.







The slow stops by Miedecke and Soper not only gave Niedzwiedz plenty of time to make up all the ground he had lost at the start, but also a handy cushion coming up to his pit stop. When he did pull in at the 40 lap mark, there was no hesitation in the Eggenberger pit this time, to let slip the fine storming drive by Niedzwiedz, whose 2:22.08 set on lap 20 still remained the fastest lap of the race.

Klaus Ludwig headed out with No. 7 having clear road in front of it. He had about two seconds on Miedecke. Then, in similar close formation came Dieudonne and Percy. Not far behind, the entertaining battle between the two M3s and the factory Nissans had been broken off, for the meantime, with the pit stop to the turbo-charged cars, but Fury's co-driver Terry Shiel and Seton's co-driver, John Bowe, still on the same lap as the leaders, began reeling them in again to resume the scrap.

While they piled on the pressure, Cecotto shed a few seconds, fifth place and class leadership to Richards going into Skyline. The Venezuelan was preparing to put a lap on speedway identity, Garry Rush, in the colourful Tony Noske Commodore. "I had a spin because one of the Commodores wouldn't let me pass. Trying to brake before the corner, he just closed the door and I hit him," Cecotto related.

The spin was a dramatic, swift one, and while the car was undamaged, the Pirellis were heavily flat-spotted. Cecotto made every effort to continue despite the tyre vibration. He was safe in sixth, the Nissan duo not yet having him in their sights, and anyway, it was nearing the two-hour mark and his pit stop. Cecotto tried to get his pit alerted just in case he needed to come in a few laps early. "I tried to get some information from the pits, but the radio wasn't working, so that was a big problem."

The situation was made more difficult by a new factor at Bathurst, the intervention of a pace car. An innovation for Australia, this was introduced as part of the world championship rules, and ended that traditional hazard of Bathurst — quicklift trucks on the circuit picking up stricken cars.

The pace car was summoned by the clerk of the course in response to a spectacular accident in the esses. Lucio Cesario, charging up the field in Colin Bond's Alfa 75, barrelled down The Mountain too quickly, got it out of shape, went straight ahead, over the kerbs and head-on into the wall.

The car had been silenced early in the event with an alternator failure. It lost the Network Alfa entry a lot of time, but they were fighting back with the aggressive Cesario taking over the wheel from Bond.





GARRY SPARKE



GARRY SPARKE

1: Grice looks for the inside at Castrol curve to put another lap off the rented Peter McLeod Commodore, piloted by Peter Fitzgerald. There were 17 places and three other Commodores between them.

2: A spin going down The Mountain trying to lap the Noske/Rush Commodore caused Johnny Cecotto to lose touch with the pack containing the Nissans and BMW rival Richards.

3: The publicity stunt of bringing a young Brabham and a young Fangio together starts to pay dividends on the racetrack, it was the highest placed Schnitzer-run M3 and on course for a high finish.

4: John Smith was a lap clear of his next opponent in the small class — the sister Toyota team Australia Corolla of Faulkner/Quinn.

5: The speedway men Tony Noske and Garry Rush were nowhere in the initial stages, taking it easy at their Bathurst debut. They wanted to be there at the end.

Calling on the pace car would allow marshals to remove the mangled, steaming Alfa mess from its resting place, blocking half the road, without having a race trying to go on around them.

From the viewpoint of entertainment, the pace car couldn't have been sent out on the track at the worst possible time. The event had been delicately poised. The round of pitstops had been completed for the thirstier cars and Cecotto and Richards were showing how close the M3s could be expected to get to the Sierras towards the end of the event through superior fuel efficiency. Added to that was one rapid Commodore and two Nissans filling out the picture.

Confusion would reign both in and out of the pits, cost a former race leader a lap, snuff out any glimmering hope of a BMW Motorsport win and leave just one competitor capable of maintaining the pressure on the formidable visitors from Switzerland.

## TOP 20 AFTER TWO HOURS

POS.	NO.	DRIVER	CAR	LAPS	FASTEST LAP
1	7	Klaus Ludwig/Klaus Niedzwiedz	Sierra	47	2:22.08
2	6	Steve Soper/Pierre Dieudonne	Sierra	47	2:22.42
3	2	Allan Grice/Win Percy	Commodore	47	2:23.44
4	44	Jim Richards	BMW M3	47	2:24.62
5	35	Andrew Miedecke/Don Smith	Sierra	47	2:22.50
6	15	Glenn Seton/John Bowe	Skyline	47	2:25.06
7	45	Robbie Francevic	BMW M3	47	2:25.96
8	30	George Fury/Terry Shiel	Skyline	47	2:25.06
9	42	Johnny Cecotto/Gianfranco Brancatelli	BMW M3	46	2:24.90
10	10	Peter McLeod	Commodore	46	2:26.48
11	41	Juan Manuel Fangio II	BMW M3	46	2:26.72
12	34	John Giddings/Bruce Stewart	Sierra	46	2:26.40
13	14	Murray Carter/Steve Masterton	Skyline	46	2:27.52
14	47	Annette Meeuvissen/Mercedes Stermitz	BMW M3	45	2:29.72
15	37	Brian Callaghan/Barry Graham	Commodore	45	2:28.94
16	19	Graham Cameron/Wayne Wilkinson	Commodore	45	2:28.90
17	16	Gary Scott/Akihiko Nakaya	Starion	45	2:29.30
18	53	Trevor Crowe/Ian Tulloch	BMW M3	45	2:30.38
19	3	Peter Janson/Peter Fitzgerald	Commodore	45	2:29.88
20	4	Graham Moore/Michel Delcourt	Commodore	45	2:29.32







# UPSETTING THE RHYTHM

The third hour:

**THEY HELD THEIR FIRE AND SMOULDERED IN FRUSTRATION AS THE RACE WAS INTERRUPTED IN A MANNER THAT THREATENED TO CEMENT THE SITUATION AT THE FRONT.**



DARREN DOUGLAS

**B**athurst tradition was so powerful that to halt the race was unthinkable, a bruise to the ego of the great Australian sporting tradition. It had only been done before when a wall of crippled cars made it impossible for tradition to be upheld.

Times had changed and Bathurst was suddenly jolted into the modern era, to become part of the world scene for 1987. With that change of status came the phenomenon of the pace car. The unthinkable could happen: the race that had always gone on and on, been unremitting, unrelenting and sheer brutal, could be halted for far less a reason than a wall of metal.

At a track such as this, it was just a matter of time before the lairy Nissan, especially kitted-out for the job, would start winking its caution lights to signal a new point in Bathurst history. It happened a few minutes short of the two-hour mark when Lucio Cesario launched the Alfa Romeo 75 over Skyline and scored a direct hit on the wall. The car was considerably shortened by this acrobatic feat, but there was still enough of its tail jutting out into the esses to create a hazard. This was a job for the pace car.

Of course it was all in the interests of competitor safety, an overriding consideration and therefore a welcomed addition to Bathurst lore. The flipside was the affect it had on the eternal rhythm of the event. The minutes ticked by, all too slowly, as the field jammed up behind the pace car, driven by former Bathurst winner Bob Morris. Excitement and tension of a result still difficult to predict after two hours, ebbed away and began being replaced by feelings of frustration and disappointment. The situation was maintaining the status quo for an event that was renowned for its unpredictable, ever changing plot.

The field continued to snake its way around the track dutifully while marshals scraped the Alfa off the wall. Other cars

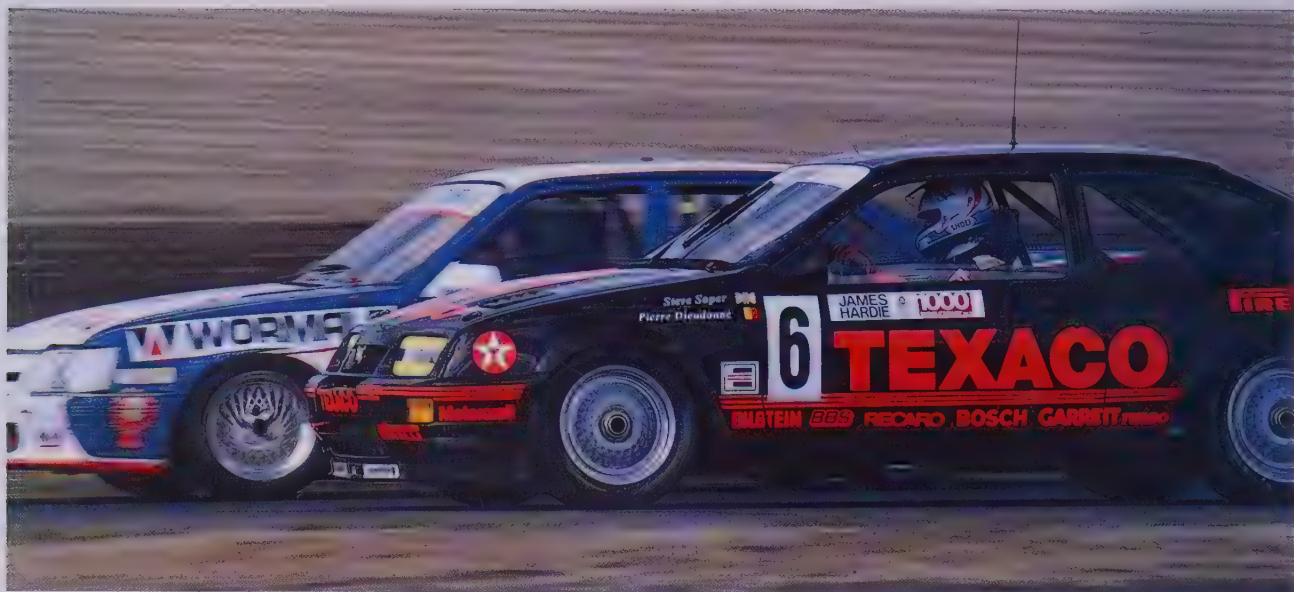
**Left:** A new innovation for Bathurst was the pace car. It shepherded the field around for an agonisingly long time while the track was made safe again.

**Above:** The reason for the pace car. Lucio Cesario took off over the esses and destroyed the Bond Alfa against the wall. There was little room to get by.



RUSSELL MARTIN





abandoned around the circuit were also picked up: the Neville Crichton Sierra notably amongst them. The work was done as efficiently as possible but for more than 20 minutes the competitors droned around.

From the moment the pace car headed out there was confusion in the minds of many drivers about what they could and couldn't do. All had been thoroughly briefed on the eventuality of a pace car. To the local drivers, however the experience was new, and to the international drivers who were accustomed to such circumstances, the local way of doing it was not exactly by the book.

The situation started out badly. Just as the pace car left the paddock gate to round-up the field, and yellow flags blossomed around the circuit in warning, Jim Richards and Johnny Cecotto, in fifth and sixth, hooked around Hell. After his spin which gave Richards a four second break, Cecotto was desperately trying to make up ground again and win back the class lead despite the flat-spotted tyres.

"All of a sudden it just pulled out of the gate and I was accelerating up to it," Richards explained. "So there was no way I could have stopped because I was too close to it. Cecotto, who was four seconds behind me followed me through, so then we went right around and joined the back of the queue."

Richards, looking in the mirrors, reckoned Cecotto could have stopped in time, but was sympathetic. "I can understand it. He and I were battling for ages and perhaps he thought there was no way he was going to lose a lap for that reason."

Cecotto's view of the pace car was apparently obscured by the Richards M3: "The pace car came out in front of him and it was impossible to brake," Cecotto related. "I was afraid that I was going to hit him because of his hard braking. I didn't see it at all."

Competitors were required to hold their position on the road and immediately pull in behind the pace car, once it joined the track. Passing was not allowed, but had it actually reached the track when Richards and Cecotto arrived on the scene?

Both drivers were reported over the incident and after their opening stints finished, were hauled before the stewards in solemnity. In the Richards case they viewed a TV replay of the incident and came to the conclusion that the pace car still had its outside wheels over the white line bordering the circuit when Richards passed. He was cleared.

Cecotto was not so lucky. The evidence was that the pace car had all four wheels on the circuit proper when Cecotto slipped by. He was ticked off and penalised three minutes.

This was another body blow for BMW Motorsport as Cecotto/Brancatelli was one of only four of the six-strong squad still running. No. 46 had long gone cold at the back of the pits where it had been abandoned, and No. 47, the Meeuvissen/Stermitz entry, had gone out with clutch trouble attributed to the strain of the standing start.

Cecotto seemed to indicate that he didn't see the pace car by pitting next time around for his scheduled stop and driver change to Gianfranco Brancatelli. He and his team manager Umberto Grano made this point to the stewards. If his

radio had been working, his pit would have told him to try and stay out because when the field is under the pace car, those who pit are held in the pits until the pace car and the entire field has passed by. They have to resume at the tail of the field and therefore drop a lap.

Cecotto was running short of fuel, though, and with the time under the pace car dragging on, he would have risked running out. For that to happen out on the circuit could cost much more than a lap, or three minutes.

To illustrate how close it was, Robbie Francevic pitted the second JPS M3 for the first time immediately after the race resumed. Richards did the same, the next lap. That saved them dropping a lap.

Richards picked up the story. "I was due into the pits two or three laps after the pace car came out and I actually went past my due time slightly, but at a reduced pace." He estimated that he might have had one or two laps of juice left after the pace car left the circuit. Had the race continued under the pace car there was a danger that the car might have hesitated. "If you do get a hesitation you are going so slow that you would probably not make the next lap around."

The touring car champion wasted no time dashing into the pits, but arrived just as Ludwig Finauer had been buckled in and was firing up the re-fuelled second JPS car. It caught the crew by surprise and the normally efficient drill went haywire as they bustled out No. 45.

Richards, out of the car for Tony Longhurst, wisely kept his distance: "They banged the petrol in it but they actually took the vent bottle out fractionally before they took the fuel hose







1: Pierre Dieudonne flashes by the Janson/Fitzgerald Commodore like the Holden is standing still. The Belgian was lying in second after the car's slow first pit stop. He was to be back in the pits again shortly after an incident at Murray's.

2: Peter McLeod really begins to assert himself. He had split the Nissans coming to the end of his second stint and was placed exactly as planned.

3: Marshals use the opportunity of the pace car to remove other past competitors littered around the track. Most notable was the Crichton Sierra.

GARY SPANNE

2. out (from the gravity feed tank) and that overfilled the tank, stretched the bladder. It was under pressure and just blew petrol out of the breathers and everywhere. So we had to drain the petrol out of the tank to stabilise it which took about two and a half minutes."

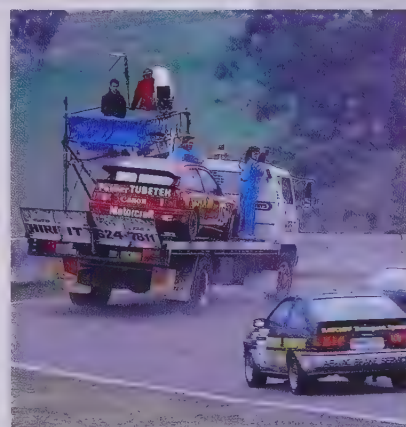
Several drivers were either unaware or had forgotten about the penalty for pitting under the pace car. One key figure who had realised it too late, was second-placed Andrew Miedecke. He had hoped to exploit the situation, make a leisurely driver change and fully brief Don Smith about the state of the car for this crucial portion of the race in which the veteran would do his statutory third.

Miedecke, puzzled as to why other drivers were not following suit, was quickly made aware of his error. The car had to sit in the queue now, waiting for the field to go around one more time. The OXO Sierra would return to the track a lap

down on the leader and seventh, behind Peter McLeod. For them the race was all but over and would require Miedecke to risk everything in a charge to the end.

The paradox was that the inexperienced little Sydney team could have turned the situation into their favour by tracing the reason for the charge warning light coming on. But again that would have required pit to car radio and plenty of notice for the mechanics. Miedecke recounts: "We could have discussed it and come in when the pace car was out, changed the alternator and battery and that could have been done in four minutes. We still would have lost a lap, but that's all, because you would have lost two laps changing the alternator normally."

When the track was clear, it was time for the internationals to be confused. The regulations pointed out that once the pace pulls off, the field is required to do a full lap under yellow flags to



GARY SPANNE



4: The field steers gingerly down The Mountain, obeyed the strictures of the pace car. Moving the awkwardly crashed Alfa took a little working out without completely blocking the track.

5: The best looking car in the field was doing well under Annette Meeuvissen's coaxing but the strain off the start on the clutch in the repaired car was too much. It stopped on The Mountain while in the queue behind the pace car.

6: John Bowe tears away from the bunch at the re-start in seventh place. Endeavouring to hold on in eighth is Robbie Francevic, who has yet to pit in the JPS BMW. Two cars further back is ninth-placed Shiel.

ACE PRESS



allow the competitors to progressively, and safely, build up to race speed. Then comes the all clear with the green flags. The pace car certainly pulled off, but earlier than driver Morris intended due to a transmission fault. Some of the cars, including the Roadways car with Win Percy at the controls, were loath to break ranks at the sudden appearance of green flags. After almost a lap, everyone gradually came to the conclusion that it must be time to race again.

Back to racing speed, the order was Klaus Ludwig, Pierre Dieudonne, and Win Percy. These three drivers, so used to each other's company in European races, were now close together on the lead lap. Less than six seconds covered them as they got stuck into it and began catching the cars who were at the end of the queue behind the pace car.

Ludwig swiftly swept by John Bowe in the No. 15 Nissan. Bowe managed to hang on down The Mountain, to show up the Sierra's handling, but was eventually left behind on raw acceleration. Then the German slipped under the second OXO team car of John Giddings, running sedately just outside the top ten. Dieudonne, with Percy full in his mirrors, shaped to do the same to the red Sierra as the group headed into Murray's. What followed was a little altercation that revealed the black Fords were mere mortal creations and just maybe the race was far from over, at this, the two and a half hour/59 lap mark.

Dieudonne pulled alongside under brakes at Murrays in a straightforward passing manoeuvre, only to have the red car chop across. "Honestly I think the driver didn't see me," Dieudonne recalled. "He had just been overtaken by Klaus Ludwig and maybe he was trying to stay with Klaus and hadn't seen me. When I realised he was about to cuff me, I tried to go on the inside of the kerb because he took all the line."



The previously unscratched Eggenberger car came away from the tangle with a damaged right front wheel, while the OXO Sierra lost most of its front cowling. The blond Belgian hoped that the injury wasn't serious enough to pit. "I did a lap and felt the car was funny, so I came into the pits."

Dieudonne had only been in the car for 20 laps so stayed at the wheel during the stop as the car was re-fuelled and mechanics gave the bruised corner a check over. Everything seemed to be hanging in the right place. "It slightly affected the suspension. The car was doing all sorts of funny things after that but I got used to driving it like that," Dieudonne explained.

He felt that it took one to one and a half seconds off the car's lap times and drove cautiously for the rest of his stint. That was not a problem, as there was no need to push the car. He had resumed in third place, 41 secs behind Percy, and still on the lead lap. Ludwig had in the meantime clapped on the pace after the pace car interlude, pulled clear of Percy, and was a further 19 secs up the road.

The fact that the No. 6 Eggenberger car was not moving as quickly as it had been was quite evident from the moment Dieudonne returned to the race. He exited the pits behind Don Smith and failed to make an impression on the car that had once led the race. Everyone had expected







2.



3.



5.



6.

1: Hurry up lads, Jim is coming down pit road. The JPS crew dive into their pit stop activity not yet realising that Richards was heading for the pits almost out of fuel.

2: In their haste to service the Richards car, the tank is over filled. Fuel blows back through the system.

3: What a mess. Pit officials and the crew clean up the spilled petrol in the JPS pit.

4: Veteran Murray Carter was at it again, easing the car up the list, just two laps down on the leaders.

5: Star of the future, Mark Skaife, throws caution to away in the Nissan Gazelle. He had the job ahead after being delayed early with a cooling system malfunction.

6: The big Belgian Michel Delcourt returns to The Mountain in the Graham Moore team. He and Moore were up against it with lack of power and a brake problem.

RACER

GARRY SHAW





1. the Swiss cars would be able to exploit Smith's lack of speed, relative to his co-driver, but Dieudonne, although less quick than his younger team-mate, should have been able to gobble up the red car in normal circumstances.

And Don wasn't even going as swiftly as he hoped because the car was starting to splutter. This was the dreaded consequence of that ignored warning light. The failing alternator had now run the battery down to a critical level and there was not enough power for the engine management system to carry out its multifarious electronic functions. The result: misfire.

Soon after, the man who was acting out his dream was forced into the pits having done less than he hoped. Outwardly there seemed to be nothing wrong, perhaps the RS500 was pulling too many revs for it to function properly. The decision was made to change the battery. This restored the car to fine, but belated health. Miedecke proved that by taking to the wheel with gusto for another stint, but it was a drive to a finish now, the

Australian Sierra having dropped well down the list.

From the point of an Australian result, the car most favoured by the compacting of the field under the pace car, was the surviving Mobil Commodore, Peter McLeod still at the wheel after 60 laps, but not for long. As expected, Brock was at attention in pit row, ready to go.

Under the pace car, McLeod, was quite legitimately able to close right up the Nissan pair — and sat there behind, waiting, after pursuing the blue and white cars relentlessly, and with not much result. For most of the race he had tried to sneak a look at the placings tower to see where the Nissans were on the road. This was a guide to how competitively he was running because he was convinced the Peter Jackson sponsored cars were the ones to watch, besides the Europeans.

When the pace car was off the track, McLeod had the sniff of the quarry. "When I caught Fury (it was co-driver Terry Shiel at the wheel), I thought that's OK, he must be sixth or seventh,



so that has got to put me in the top half dozen. As it turned out that put me in fifth and I was pretty happy with that because if I had split those two, Seton (co-driver John Bowe at the wheel) is next up. I didn't know whether I could catch him, but certainly if I was sitting on his tail, we have to be looking pretty good."

The pursuit of fourth place John Bowe never really going because McLeod was signalled to pit. This was another early stop, he figured, and wondered why. He had no way of knowing that the team's lead car had retired and the boss was adjusting his helmet in the pits.

"When I came in I didn't know it was Brock standing there. There was just a guy there in his dealer team gear. I jumped out and he jumped in and I'm doing up the seat belts, not looking at his face. I'm yelling, 'The car's good. Everything's fine, track's clear and everything is going great.' Then I looked up and thought Crooke (Jon Crooke), you have forgotten your glasses. Hang on, that's not Crooke. I slammed the door, off he goes. That was Brock! Then I saw Crookie







1: McLeod heads up Mountain Straight knowing that the specs in the distance — the Nissans — are the indication that he is right up there.

2: With McLeod now in fifth, having split the Nissans, Brock prepares to take over the car, thanks to a cross-entry of team drivers.

3: It had been a long time since a Brabham had been seen at Bathurst. Gary moved behind the wheel at the first stop to have the car well into the top ten and second in the class.

3. standing at the back of the pits. What has happened here?"

The team had recalculated the pit stops to give the Bathurst king the full time allowable in the car. Two further stops would be made and it appeared that McLeod's work had been done for the day in the first appearance with the team and done to perfection. Peter Brock had departed the race in sixth, been delivered a car in fifth — about as high up as could be expected.

Something special was now happening around The Mountain. Car No. 10 was now the focus of attention, as life returned to Mount Panorama after the interruption of the pace car. Ripples of cheers and waves greeted the car now running in tenth. It couldn't possibly win from that position, most thought. Or could it? Bathurst could be like that sometimes. So they waved and cheered some more for a man who the news media tagged a fallen hero. One thing was certain: the car was immediately going almost a second faster than before and would lap even faster than that as the race continued.

## TOP 20 AFTER THREE HOURS

POS.	NO.	DRIVER	CAR	LAPS	FATEST LAP
1	7	Klaus Ludwig/Klaus Niedzwiedz	Sierra	69	2:22.08
2	2	Allan Grice/Win Percy	Commodore	69	2:23.44
3	6	Steve Soper/Pierre Dieudonne	Sierra	69	2:22.22
4	15	Glenn Seton/John Bowe	Skyline	68	2:25.06
5	30	George Fury/Terry Shiel	Skyline	68	2:25.06
6	42	Johnny Cecotto/Gianfranco Brancatelli	BMW M3	68	2:24.90
7	41	Gary Brabham/Juan Manuel Fangio II	BMW M3	68	2:26.72
8	10	Peter McLeod/Peter Brock	Commodore	68	2:25.66
9	45	Robbie Francevic/Ludwig Finauer	BMW M3	68	2:25.96
10	44	Jim Richards/Tony Longhurst	BMW M3	68	2:24.62
11	35	Andrew Miedecke/Don Smith	Sierra	67	2:22.50
12	34	John Giddings/Bruce Stewart	Sierra	67	2:23.94
13	14	Murray Carter/Steve Masterton	Skyline	67	2:27.52
14	16	Gary Scott/Akihiko Nakaya	Starion	67	2:29.30
15	19	Graham Cameron/Wayne Wilkinson	Commodore	66	2:28.90
16	37	Brian Callaghan/Barry Graham	Commodore	66	2:28.94
17	4	Graham Moore/Michel Delcourt	Commodore	66	2:29.32
18	38	Bill O'Brien/Brian Sampson	Commodore	66	2:29.92
19	36	Tony Kavich/Kerry Bailly	Commodore	66	2:30.12
20	39	Steve Reed/Trevor Ashby	Commodore	66	2:29.58



4: The Ashby/Reed Commodore showed no signs of its big accident in qualifying. It was up there in the top 20.

5: The only Japanese in the field, Akihiko Nakaya, wedges the Starion between the Commodores of Barry Graham and Wayne Wilkinson. He had put the Kiwi Holden a lap down and now would do the same to the Sydney-based car.







# LESS THAN PERFECT

The fourth hour:

**THE ONE-TWO BECAME FIRST AND THIRD FOR A REASON THAT SHOWED THE BLACK DENIZENS FROM A FOREIGN LAND WERE NOT INVINCIBLE.**



GARRY SPARKE

**T**he detractors of the black Sierras had conceded the superior speed of the turbo-charged Fords, but they refused to concede their greater reliability. Just wait until about three or four hours had passed, they said. This was to be the time for the predicted demise of the cars. The Sierras, in that specification, had never gone further than 500 km. And on such a tough, bumpy road circuit, the suspect Ford drivetrain had never been through such a rigorous test.

The time was up, yet the aura of invincibility seemed reinforced, if anything. When the man who had been keeping it interesting, splitting the Sierras — Win Percy — pitted as scheduled for the second time, the two Fords were again handed complete control of the race. They ran in formation, the lead car running first and the second car backing up in second.

It was at a pace that was fastest enough to keep the opposition panting and slow enough to allow the Eggenberger drivers to feed the power in smoothly and keep undue strain off the driveline. "You have to be very careful all the time," Klaus Niedzwiedz stated before the race. The black-suited men were.

Into the fourth hour of the event, leader Klaus Ludwig made the challenge less likely with each lap. He was opening the gap to Percy when the Commodore was third and was doing the same once Percy, who stayed at the wheel of the Australian car during that swift stop, returned to the track. Ludwig had widened the breach to more than 25 secs while the Englishman prepared for the Holden's second fuel stop. After Percy's stop, these three, the only cars on the lead lap, were evenly strung out around the track with about a minute to second and another minute back to third.

Directly following Percy, but a full lap down was John Bowe in the Peter Jackson Nissan and Terry Shiel in the sister Nissan. A further lap down in sixth was the wild-eyed Italian Gianfranco

**Left:** Pierre Dieudonne put the second string Eggenberger Sierra back into the lead when he darted past the crawling Klaus Ludwig. The Belgian was quickly on the radio to warn the pit crew of his team-mate's demise.

**Above:** Out of fuel! All that technology and money to no avail as Ludwig just manages to make it into the pits for a refill. The fuel computer had lied and the race leader fell to third.



GARRY SPARKE







Brancatelli in the CiBiEmme BMW M3, and the England-based Australian, Gary Brabham, coming up the list with a cautious drive in one of the two remaining Schnitzer M3s. Brabham and co-driver Juan Manuel Fangio II had intended to stay out of trouble and this approach was now paying off in their climb through the field. However, the M3 was soon to make its second stop and would lose that place to Tony Longhurst who was recovering the ground the JPS M3 had lost sitting in a pool of fuel.

Then as the clock showed the race had passed the three and a half hour point, the alarms sounded in the Eggenberger pit: Ludwig was in trouble! The doomsayers appeared to be right on the ball.

For seconds that must have seemed eternity to the Eggenberger crew, the car crawled down Conrod, still hanging onto the lead. By the time the car had reached the Chase, team-mate Pierre Dieudonne, startled at the sight, was approaching and put the second string car back into the lead.

Dieudonne had been preoccupied with what the front suspension of his car was doing, and was communicating this to the pits through a radio that was now working. He was quickly onto the radio again when he saw his team-mate in some sort of difficulty. "I think he was very lucky," Dieudonne recalled. "I saw him crawling down the pits and he managed to go through the last chicane and get to the pits."

The agonising crawl to the pits resulted in that aura of invincibility floating away. Even the fact that there was nothing fundamentally wrong with the car, didn't alter the view that these black apparitions were mortal creations. They could still be beaten.

Of course the car was due to pit shortly and had run out of fuel, something that technology could not defeat. The Eggenberger cars were fitted with a computerised fuel monitor which showed exactly how much fuel was left in the tank. It had 12 litres on the decal when it ran out, Ludwig claimed, so it was wrong. This sort of technology had shown to be unreliable time and time again in Formula One cars and this appeared to be just another incidence of super-sensitive electronics failing in the harsh environment of motor racing. But the computer had to be reset at each fuel stop, and Dieudonne, when hearing



1: The weather began to close in as the race reached maturity. This was the time when the small budget privateers such as Trevor Reed began to crawl up the field, aided by the attrition rate.

2 & 3: Oh dear. The Bagnall/Jennings Corolla comes to a sudden halt going down The Mountain for the 77th time. It was an all-Australian battle for the class now.

of the problem, suspected that Ludwig may have forgotten to do this at the start of his stint.

In any case, Niedzwiedz darted out of the pits on a full tank. He had fallen down to third, Percy having slipped passed while No. 7 was being replenished in the pits. The Englishman, just about adopted as an Australian by this feat of dogged refusal to flag against the dark duo, was holding the deficit to Dieudonne at just under the minute. This was easily bridged with the Sierra showing their mortal side at this stage of the event with so much distance to go.

Percy was circulating smoothly, more than half a minute clear of Niedzwiedz. He was minimising the stress in the car, conserving it for Grice to truly harry the Fords in the latter stages of the event.



4: Terry Shiel nears the end of his stint in Fury's Skyline. Coming up from behind was Peter Brock.





1. In the minutes before Ludwig's car spluttered down The Mountain, Percy was pulling out the gap on the two Nissans, still linked by an invisible tow rope, Bowe, dragging along Shiel. They were preparing for their pit stop, though, to hand the cars back to the lead drivers.

It was at this stop that the Nissans pulled a little bit of a surprise with a brake pad change, the first time this had been attempted on the cars. This change was scheduled, however, and indicated how much harder the cars, with their static power output, were being pushed in their second Bathurst to keep up. The change went to schedule, in what had been an incredibly drama free event for the Melbourne team.

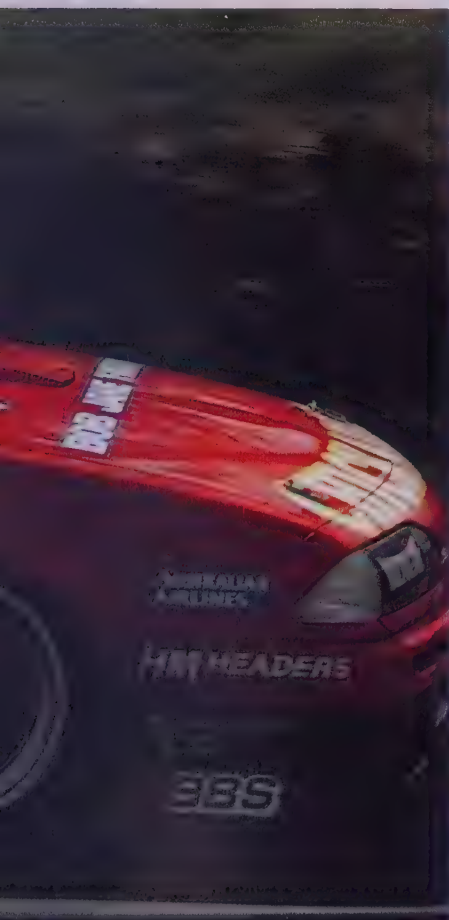
"We were virtually flat out all day," team manager, Fred Gibson, summed up. He had already given the race to the Fords, on their sheer speed. "We set a pace, we could have gone faster, but there was no need to go any faster because our hopes were to finish behind the European Sierras."

The stop conceded fourth and fifth spots to the lapped Brancatelli (CiBiEmme M3), carrying its burden of a three minute penalty, and then the man who was coming back into calculations again . . . Peter Brock. The former winner was restored to the position he was in when he exited the race at his first pit stop in his own car.

Brock had snuck up a place at the setback for the leading local BMW of Bathurst rookie, Ludwig Finauer. The second JPS car had smoked its way to the pits for urgent attention to a battered lefthand rear wheel arch which was cutting deeply into the tyre. It happened when the former BMW Motorsport engineer went to lap the Bill O'Brien Commodore into the Chase and found the Commodore had not left him enough room to complete the manoeuvre safely. "I just got a bit too much brake at the rear and the back end came around," the BMW man admitted. The little BMW bounced off the heavier car and spun out.







GARRY SPARKE



GARRY SPARKE



RACEPRESS

- 1: Win Percy remained the only other competitor on the same lap as the black Fords. When Ludwig ran dry, the Englishman wedged Grice's Commodore between the two Sierras and maintained the pressure.
- 2: The lone Mercedes, spectacularly driven by Phil Ward ran amongst some of the Commodores early. It dropped out of the race with a broken wheel, well before the four hour point.
- 3: After its early race setback, the Gazelle sprinted through the field. Drivers Skaife and Jarrett had a long way to go to salvage the race but did catch and unlap themselves from their former class rivals.
- 4: John Bowe returns the car to Seton's hands. There had still not been one thing go wrong for the team in a clockwork race.
- 5: Some panel bumping through the Chase as Ludwig Finauer tried to lap a slower Commodore sent him into the pits for some panel beating.

Finauer saw the smoke from the crumpled guard as soon as he pointed back onto the track, so headed straight to the pits for some panel beating. "It didn't damage anything on the car so it was still handling alright, it was just the panel damage. It cost us a lap in the pits until they hammered the guard out."

Ludwig continued his stint without further handicap but would drop a further lap down. This would return Longhurst to clear team leadership on the track but still in eighth place.

The continuing pain for the JPS Team, finally gave the CiBiEmme BMW of Brancatelli clear ascendancy in the BMW ranks and a conclusive class lead by three places and a lap, after a race long battle with the JPS cars. But the pressure was on the Italian and Cecotto to push home, unhindered by mirrors full of black and gold. Just one lap separated it from the rear of the first Eggenberger Sierra.

The gap was nothing however — there was more than 70 laps to go and plenty of time for the nefarious, changing moods of The Mountain to influence the outcome. At this, the clouds that had gathered early in the event and hung over the scene for four hours, darkened considerably.

More of them rolled in from the west, sailing on a cool, fresh wind, and clung heavily around the top of the circuit, blocking out the light and sending spectators grasping for warmer clothing. Thunderstorms had been predicted.

The back of The Mountain couldn't bear that increasing weight for long. Sooner or later it would all come tumbling down to drown the race for the first time since 1974. The Sierras had been defeated by rain at their previous appearance in England, drivelines tortured as the powerful cars jumped from wet patch to puddle, spinning wheels all the way to find traction. This would be a further test of their mortality as they had more to lose from the changing conditions than the five cars still in touch behind them.

## TOP 20 AFTER FOUR HOURS

POS.	NO.	DRIVER	CAR	LAPS	FASTEST LAP
1	6	Steve Soper/Pierre Dieudonne	Sierra	94	2:22.22
2	2	Allan Grice/Win Percy	Commodore	94	2:23.44
3	7	Klaus Ludwig/Klaus Niedzwiedz	Sierra	94	2:22.08
4	42	Johnny Cecotto/Gianfranco Brancatelli	BMW M3	93	2:24.90
5	10	Peter McLeod/Peter Brock/David Parsons	Commodore	93	2:25.66
6	15	Glenn Seton/John Bowe	Skyline	93	2:25.06
7	30	George Fury/Terry Shiel	Skyline	92	2:25.06
8	44	Jim Richards/Tony Longhurst	BMW M3	92	2:24.62
9	41	Gary Brabham/Juan Manuel Fangio II	BMW M3	92	2:26.72
10	34	John Giddings/Bruce Stewart	Sierra	92	2:23.94
11	35	Andrew Miedecke/Don Smith	Sierra	91	2:22.50
12	45	Robbie Francevic/Ludwig Finauer	BMW M3	91	2:25.96
13	16	Gary Scott/Akihiko Nakaya	Starion	90	2:29.30
14	14	Murray Carter/Steve Masterton	Skyline	90	2:27.52
15	4	Graham Moore/Michel Delcourt	Commodore	90	2:29.32
16	53	Trevor Crowe/Ian Tulloch	BMW M3	89	2:30.38
17	26	Tony Nöske/Garry Rush	Commodore	89	2:30.10
18	3	Peter Janson/Peter Fitzgerald	Commodore	89	2:29.88
19	39	Steve Reed/Trevor Ashby	Commodore	89	2:28.96
20	36	Tony Kavich/Kerry Bailly	Commodore	89	2:30.12







# ALL BY THEMSELVES

The fifth hour:

**A POOL OF OIL UNDER THE TITLEHOLDER'S CAR SIGNIFIED THE FINAL, LINGERING CHALLENGE WAS OVER, BARRING THE UNCERTAINTIES OF WORSENING WEATHER.**



**A**n icy wind swept across the track, causing a traffic jam of thunderclouds around The Mountain. The wind also blew directly down the new pits, made all the more biting by the funnelling effect of this concrete canyon. It whistled around the first group of pits where the Swiss flag flapped vigorously. No matter there, the black-garbed crew were used to such conditions. Those in the pits further up weren't, and it tested their resolve in a race that was slipping away with each lap.

In the Roadways pits, titleholder, Allan Grice, stood, still confident of upsetting the calculations. Co-driver, Win Percy, completely reliable at the wheel, had the orange Commodore catching the eye between the black of the Sierras. This car was the hope of an 'Australian' victory, as a gulf was building between those three and the rest with less than 70 laps of the race to run.

The car was the colour of the race at this stage, as the light of the afternoon dimmed. The black Sierras by contrast blended into the darkness, a hiss of the turbo-charger and an occasional tongue of flame a minute before Percy rumbled by and another hiss and flash half a minute later. To those slower cars, who were about to be lapped, the Sierra were almost indistinguishable from the enveloping gloom. A buffeting from the slipstream was all that announced their presence unless they had their lights on.

Percy couldn't see them either. Pierre Dieudonne was too far up the road, a speck of deep black on a grey road, against a steely sky. There were few shafts of lights through the cloud cover to make the lustrous black paintwork glisten and little of the day left to make the dayglo signage glow. Just a blink of the brake lights gave the leader away in the distance. Maybe.

The plan was for Grice to take the controls next for the crucial last two stints homeward. His greater familiarity with the

**Left:** A minute up the road was race leader Dieudonne, a minute behind was third place Ludwig. Win Percy remained the only one keeping the Swiss Sierras on their mettle.

**Above:** Just as race leadership beckoned at Dieudonne's pit stop, Percy was in trouble. Anxious looks around the back from Gricey and company and drips of oil said it all.





car would allow him to find that extra second, and perhaps some more. His drive to the end would be a charge with the brilliance that few in the world could match. Two shifts of Win Percy caressing the controls would ensure that the car was in shape to take it. And the prospect of this would brighten up the race.

The three cars were poised for this struggle when race leader Pierre Dieudonne broke off for his scheduled second stop and driver change to Steve Soper. In a minute's time the orange Commodore, that beacon in the dark, would round Murray's and most likely snatch the race lead for the time. Just.

A minute passed. No Commodore. Soper, belted in, returned to the race unchallenged. The first car around was Klaus Niedzwiedz, now less than half a minute behind his teammate. One-two again and still no Percy. Then came Don Smith, in the ninth-place, OXO Sierra. The new battery in the Sierra was being quickly sapped of power and was about to cause the electronics to misfire again. He would be in the pits soon for a long overdue alternator change and another fresh battery.

The circuit was searched for Percy. There he was heading down The Mountain. Slowly, noisily, and with the diff temperature off the dial. It was pretty obvious that an axle had gone. So had the last chance of anyone staying in sight of the Sierras. While this drama unfolded they were disappearing into the stormy twilight.

When Percy rolled into the pit, a cursory look under the vehicle's back showed it liberally smeared and dripping with that fine clinging diff oil. Grice, draped in his multi-coloured Yokohama storm jacket gave the right wheel a fierce shake and nodded. Problem confirmed, end of race. Actually the axle came away with the whole centre of the pinion.

The resignation in the Roadways pits told that deep down this had not been totally unexpected. At Percy's tyre stop, an hour before, the team had spied an oil leak at the back. It was minor at that stage, probably a faulty seal, the crew surmised. With the experience of Bathurst 1986 behind them, team manager Les Small had decided to wait until the next stop before attending to it and topping up the oil.

The difference in 1987 was this was the new adjustable rear end with its complex, rather heavy arrangement of flanges and CV-joints. It had also been through a 160 kmh accident on Friday morning.

The seal had deteriorated in condition and allowed the diff oil to seep out at an accelerating rate with the obvious consequences as Percy doggedly held onto Dieudonne and protected his back against Niedzwiedz. If it had just held out a little longer, the team just may have been able to prevent it happening.

Much later the team came to the opinion that the offending righthand seal in the Small-designed rear end hadn't been positioned ideally and was too vulnerable to failure. It should have been set further into the flange that allows the axles to be angled for negative camber.

With the Sierras let off the hook, it became a race in two parts, what all the anti-Ford camp had feared might happen. The other race was going on a lap behind where third-place was shaping up as a scramble. At Percy's retirement, Johnny Cecotto (M3), Peter Brock, Glenn Seton and George Fury were strung out over a lap, and a further lap clear of Tony Longhurst. Brock was to fall to the end of this queue, behind the Nissans, a few minutes later when he pitted for the third and second last time to give the car its third driver of the day: David Parsons. The most highly placed Commodore would sit in line, a safe sixth, for the next hour.

Seton, the so-called whizz kid, had only just left the celebrated Cecotto in his wake when a new opponent appeared: the weather. "As soon as the rain came down he dropped right back," Seton grinned. "He was right behind me when the showers came. Then I couldn't even see him behind."



By now the pits were wall to wall with wet weather rubber as everybody was expected a downpour of epic proportions. The clouds had been holding back for too long, in fact holding back since the last big downpour at Bathurst in 1974.

At first the rain sprinkled, teased, and then came a heavy shower, but just on the upper reaches of the circuit. Trapped on slicks and with his pit stop ten laps away, Seton attached himself to his hard won third place.

The Nissan, nervous at the best of time across the top, took some wrestling. Constant flicks of the wheel to keep the car pointed at high speed, became heroic half twists of the wheel. On several occasions the spectators on The Mountain peered out from their shelter to the spy the Skyline powersliding by. One time the car was impossibly sideways at West End, but Glenn wasn't about to back-off. And over the hump at Conrod, where the Skyline is at its most unstable, the car sailed in the air and skipped once like a stone thrown across a pond, before Glenn dragged it back on line. "I was calling back to Freddo (Fred Gibson) on the radio saying it was fairly dangerous and I should come in for wets," Seton commented.

What made it more dicey was the changing roads conditions: wet up top and almost dry down below. Grip was inconsistent. "We had a few moments," Glenn conceded. "But if you don't have any moments there is no fun in life!"

While this was going on, Cecotto remained an interested spectator behind, letting Glenn take the risks in such treacherous conditions. He planned to keep going on slicks, and his more sober approach was gauged by the fact that he didn't make any ground on the Nissan during the rain shower, despite Glenn's waltzing.

Then Cecotto became otherwise occupied. Ranging up from behind was George Fury, his car control skills coming into play. So in the space of a few laps, Cecotto had fallen to fifth.

The rain eased within five laps and a dry line quickly appeared. Nobody was fooled however. It was going to rain in a big way before the day was out and those stacks of wet weather tyres stayed within easy reach.



1: The retirement of Grice removed the last serious threat to an Eggenberger victory. Niedzwiedz was promoted to a safe second. Third-placed Seton was more than a lap away.

2: Meanwhile, the Ralliat Stalion, worked its way up the field softly. After five hours it was on schedule to attack for a place in the top ten.

4. During this scrap for the minors, Niedzwiedz was moving up to make the one-two visual again. Soper had joined about 25 secs up on his German team-mate, but within half an hour the difference was more than halved, having dropped considerably during the wet patch. Of course Niedzwiedz had the advantage of near empty tanks against the full tanks and cold tyres kept cold by the rain shower, on Soper's car.

There was one other thing. Co-driver Dieudonne had cautioned Soper at the hand-over about the odd handling at the front which had developed during the incident at Murray's earlier in the race. Soper was initially wary, a bit more defensive than before.

And just one more thing. Soper now knew that Allan Grice was out of the race. All that he had to do now was to prepare himself for wet weather. That was hardly a handicap for an Englishman. He had covered those five brief wet laps as if there had never been any rain. The real stuff was being saved on top of The Mountain for the final big test.



RUSSELL MARTIN

5.



GARRY SPANKE

3: David and Goliaths. The Schnitzer flag waver lines up to sweep by O'Brien, Kavich and Fitzgerald as it scrambles up into 19th place.

4: A misfire due to another flat battery put the one-time race leader back into the pits for more under bonnet surgery. This time the real culprit, the alternator, was fingered with scorn and changed.

5: While Miedecke and Smith were having trouble, team-mates Giddings and Stewart flew the flag for the sponsor, hanging on just three laps down on the leader.

6: The Tony Kavich Commodore bears scars of five hours of racing. The car was delayed securing its front spoiler.

6.









**1:** When it showered on top of The Mountain for five laps, Seton had the Skyline at terrifying angles. While sliding around he took third from an older and wiser Cecotto.

**2:** Once Seton caught and passed Cecotto for the second time in the event, the Venezuelan again came under threat from Fury, as the two Nissan double act continued unabated.

**3:** Rain sprinkles down to make The Mountain like ice. It stayed dry on the lower reaches, so the field left the wet weather tyres in the pits and slid around instead.

**4:** Almost five hours into the race and the youngest driver to enter the event, Graham Gulson, is still there, aiming for a finish.

**5:** Soper took it gently on returning to the car for the run to the end. It allowed second-placed Niedzwiedz to close the gap. The one-two was set-up already and there was more than an hour and a half to go.

## TOP 20 AFTER FIVE HOURS

POS.	NO.	DRIVER	CAR	LAPS	FASTEST LAP
1	6	Steve Soper/Pierre Dieudonne	Sierra	118	2:22.22
2	7	Klaus Ludwig/Klaus Niedzwiedz	Sierra	118	2:21.64
3	15	Glenn Seton/John Bowe	Skyline	117	2:25.06
4	42	Johnny Cecotto/Gianfranco Brancatelli	BMW M3	117	2:24.90
5	30	George Fury/Terry Shiel	Skyline	116	2:24.92
6	10	Peter McLeod/Peter Brock/David Parsons	Commodore	116	2:25.66
7	44	Jim Richards/Tony Longhurst	BMW M3	116	2:24.62
8	41	Gary Brabham/Juan Manuel Fangio II	BMW M3	116	2:26.72
9	34	John Giddings/Bruce Stewart	Sierra	115	2:23.94
10	45	Robbie Francevic/Ludwig Finauer	BMW M3	115	2:25.96
11	16	Gary Scott/Akihiko Nakaya	Starion	114	2:29.30
12	14	Murray Carter/Steve Masterton	Skyline	113	2:27.52
13	26	Tony Noske/Garry Rush	Commodore	112	2:30.10
14	3	Peter Janson/Peter Fitzgerald	Commodore	112	2:29.88
15	39	Steve Reed/Trevor Ashby	Commodore	112	2:28.96
16	53	Trevor Crowe/Ian Tulloch	BMW M3	112	2:30.38
17	4	Graham Moore/Michel Delcourt	Commodore	111	2:29.32
18	29	Tony Mulvihill/Ken Mathews	Commodore	110	2:30.38
19	40	Emanuele Pirro/Roberto Ravaglia	BMW M3	110	2:24.58
20	43	Winni Vogt/Oliver Grouillard/Altfried Heger	BMW M3	109	2:25.68







# THE GREAT FLOOD

The concluding stages:

**THEY WERE UNTOUCHABLE NOW. THE ONLY BARRIER TO A RESOUNDING VICTORY WAS THE DARKENING MOOD OF THE MOUNTAIN AND A LINGERING PROTEST.**



**O**n top of The Mountain there was anger. Swirling and churning and blocking out the sun. The darkest of emotions had been building up for most of the day. And in the perspective of Bathurst mythology, had been building since 1974, the last wet race. It would spill out of the heavens at any moment with such force that it would humble man's attempt to tame the scenery and it would stop the race.

In just a few frenzied minutes, darkness descended. Rain and hail, riding along with a gale, lashed The Mountain mercilessly in wave after wave. Riverlets, trimmed with icy balls, became torrents on the slopes. When they reach the tracks they washed over the bitumen like breakers over an ocean beach. With the water came all the trackside debris and mud. Borne on the top ominously was almost six hours of oil. It had been swept off the racing line now it was flushed out of the pores of the surface.

The rain was sudden, so focused on the most dangerous reaches of the track that the lower parts of the circuit were still dry. That fooled many, lured them up The Mountain in innocence. Thinking that what was happening up top was another passing shower, most of the field headed up Mountain Straight on lap 135. They were on slicks and wrongly equipped for a game of dodgem cars on a track that had now been turned into a stormdrain.

The first group of cars to run blindly, helplessly into this wall of water as it surged down The Mountain to confront them, included Johnny Cecotto, who was beaming after getting back into third at the pit stop to the Nissans. He was making good use of his position in the handful of laps still to do before the car's final pitstop and driver change. He could have stopped right away, if he wished, as there would have been enough fuel capacity to carry the car to the end.

"I didn't know if it was the type of rain that would stay there

**Left:** The flashflood and the demolition derby that it caused brought the field under the pace car for the second time, with less than 30 laps to go. Soper, at home in such conditions, approached it all calmly, avoided the trap The Mountain had laid for the field.

**Above:** On the darkened stage that was now Bathurst, the spotlight was on Peter Brock. He anticipated the rain to the minute and a swift stop left his unfortunate Nissan opponents stuck in the pits. Third was wrapped up for the Bathurst king.



because on the last part of the circuit it was not really wet, only a little bit damp. So I decided to do one more lap and pass in front of the pits and show them that I was going to come in and to be ready.

"Unfortunately on the higher part of the circuit there was a lot of water, and perhaps some oil, because it was undriveable. I was going very, very slowly on the slow lefthander. It was so slippery that another car going slow hit the fence (the No. 44 OXO Sierra) and I almost hit the car.

"I could manage to stop and go backwards and to start again with difficulty because of wheelspin and tried to go up the hill in second gear very slowly. I just turned the wheel and nothing happened! I went straight into the wall and damaged the front and rear left suspension."

It was a very heavy glancing blow, the car bouncing up and back with the force of the impact and headlights momentarily spotlighting the top of the trees. Somehow Cecotto got the car back to the pits, threading through the aftermath of other accidents at West End despite a front wheel slumped on the ground. Perhaps the disabled conditions of the car have worked in his favour, slowing him to a snail's pace, hampering the M3's ability to track and turn properly.

Others, such as Robbie Francevic in the JPS BMW, who was near to Cecotto on the road, found his M3 carried down The Mountain like a sail boat. With no traction the car followed the course of the water: straight over the kerbs. The Kiwi was helped by the fact that the different temperatures between the cabin interior and icy blasts outside quickly fogged up the windows, impairing vision.

While Cecotto and Francevic were swimming up The Mountain, just ahead of them cars were darting in all directions in the underwater stretch between Reid Park and McPhillamy, where the dip in the road collected the water. The runner-up in the small class, Mike Quinn, splashed into the middle of it and was whisked away, a leaf in an overflowing gutter. Instead of pointing left, the little Toyota aquaplaned straight into the fence. As the car came to a halt, badly mangled on the other side of the road, he looked up the track to see his team-mate and class leader, Drew Price, do exactly the same. Price was similarly out of traction, out of control and slithered speedily off the track for the inevitable meeting with the barriers. It was just about class genocide as just one other small car was still in the race.



Quinn later blamed it on a mixture of oil and water and directed an accusing finger at a Commodore which had been in difficulty a few minutes before. Like most of those all at sea in the water, they had planned to pit for wets the next time around.

Price and Quinn had been running one-two in the 1600cc class. Only separated by a lap and a few seconds. They had seen off most of the opposition earlier in the event. The British Corolla of Kiwis Andrew Bagnall and Mark Jennings had crashed out, the Italian Alfa 33 had done terminal damage to one of its cylinders and the David Ratcliff/Mark Gibbs Corolla had snapped its crankshaft.

The only opponent left was the ever present Bob Holden Corolla, seven laps in arrears and virtually out of the event. That car, to be driven by Bob Holden, Gary Willmington and Kiwi Brian Bates, got off to a bad start in the event when it developed a misfire on the first lap and this after a trouble free practice. More time was lost when the car had to have its computer replaced to solve the recurring problem. Then

more time when the starter cable broke. It turned out that the starter motor was the problem. A fraying cable was earthing against the chassis. "It was a case of out of sight, out of mind," Holden said later. "You can't see it as it is under the exhaust manifold."

Pursuing the red and white cars became love of racing at The Mountain. The love and devotion was about to be repaid many times over in the 26th year since Bob Holden had fondly fingered the laurels of class victory.

The watery, summary destruction of the Toyota Team Australia cars was the worst of it but not the end of it. Cars danced and spun around the two wrecks, ran over the debris. Graeme Bowkett successfully negotiated his Nissan through the gap between the stranded Corollas, then spun. Juan Manuel Fangio was next into the bend. He had the BMW sideways in an effort to avoid the Price car, but clouted it with the M3's rear. The track was now completely blocked and only because Fangio managed to slam his car into reverse and crab it out of the way did he avoid being tee-boned by the next





competitor on the scene — Akihiko Nakaya in the Ralliart Starion. Lucky for the Japanese champion that he was already on wets and able to muster some control under brakes.

The twisted Toyotas had created an artificial chicane, almost blocking the track by themselves. Somebody would eventually plug the gap so they had to be moved. The pace car was summoned for the second time. The car had been repaired by then and at the wheel this time was Damon Beck, the former racer turned motorsport administrator.

Cars had come streaming into the pits for wet weather tyres at this stage and had been trapped at the exit by a barrier of damp, bedraggled officials when the pace car headed out. This had a fundamental influence on the last interest in the event — the scramble for third place — and probably resolved the issue as little time was left for challenges.

The big profiteer of this was The Mountain's favourite son, Peter Brock. It was almost as though The Mountain had wanted it this way. Had ripped the linings of the overloaded clouds over the most perilous part of the circuit at the propitious moment. This was a hazard designed to catch out the unwary. The final test.

Brock dealt with it calmly, so did race leader Steve Soper. The Englishman was taking no chances, pitted around scheduled time for a final load of fuel and for rain tyres. He had turned into the pit entry, just as the victims headed around once more to their fate. On wets he was able to steer through the accident damage safely. Immediately afterwards the pace car required him to fall in behind for 15 minutes of paddling around waiting for the marshals to clear the track. He mused on his first lap, idling gently through the wrecks: "We often get a wet race but I couldn't believe it when it rained. It looked like a dodgem track with everyone getting points for hitting each other."

Following him out of the pits before the pace car — but only just — was Brock, who had taken the car over from David Parsons at this vital point of the event. Fitted with wets, the car was now third, two laps off the leader and a full lap clear in the minor place. All that lay ahead was two Ford Sierras and the crowd knew it. Came alive. They knew that the Swiss cars had been racing under protest and if they were tossed out at the post-race FISA hearing, Brock could win his ninth Bathurst.

Just before the pace car corralled the field, the diminutive Parsons had been lying sixth behind third-placed Johnny Cecotto and the Nissans of Glenn Seton and George Fury. Brock, in the bunch behind the pace car, was elevated suddenly into a clear third, as the Italian M3 and Skylines had pitted under the pace car and forfeited a lap. For the Nissans, it had just been bad timing. A sensible Bowe and Shiel had been tiptoeing around during the lap of carnage, under instructions.

"I called Bowie in for wet weather tyres and he actually pulled up in the pits before the pace car pulled out and Terry was right behind," Gibson said. He cursed when he realised what had happened and that Brock had already been and gone, beating that pace car.

Although Cecotto too dropped a lap, it worked in his favour. Repairs that may have cost the team three or more laps, only lost them a lap. The front suspension was also bent, but that was not as simple to fix. It was left as it was and with much trepidation, co-driver Gianfranco Brancatelli joined the queue waiting for the pace car to pull off. The rain was still tumbling down, but the flashflood on The Mountain had subsided.

From the relative dryness of the pits, Cecotto watched his good work and good fortune under the pace car, flushed away. The lap they lost in the pits dropped them to seventh, but once the race got going after 15 minutes, worse was to come. "The handling was not very good and he was losing four or five seconds a lap compared with the other cars. I mean it was good enough to finish but the problem was that he had



1: A rugged up Johnny Cecotto, in the background, watches his good work go down the drain. Co-driver Brancatelli was forced to pit in the dying stages with a flat caused by the damaged suspension. It cost a further two places.

2: The second pace car was needed to allow time to remove the carnage on the top. It caught many teams in the pits changing to wets and resolved the battle for third place.

3: The pain of his Friday injury proved too much for Roberto Ravaglia at the end of his final stint. He collapsed through dehydration and was stretchered away for medical attention. The BMW team clustered around in concern for their big hope in the world championship.



4: All through the rain the smartly turned out New Zealand M3 of Crowe/Tulloch rolled on entrenched in a respectable 11th place.

5: Try as he might, John Bowe could do nothing about the one lap deficit to Brock. Fourth it would have to be.





K. DOWNES

1. another stop because the rear left tyre was flat because of the damage."

That stop to change a flat left came with just five laps to go and because of it, the M3 dropped from seventh to ninth, being passed by the steady Ralliant Starion in its Bathurst swansong and Robbie Francevic in the JPS BMW. The CiBiEmme entry was still the first European BMW in the standings and six places ahead of the only surviving factory Schnitzer car, but it was also the lowest position the car had been all day.

The CiBiEmme woes gave its Australian foes the opportunity to run away with the class, but they needed all of the break because the black BMWs were in for unscheduled stops. Ten minutes before the pace car was summoned, Jim Richards brought the team's lead car in with smoke pouring from underneath and a sudden reduction in braking power. A faulty brake pad at the rear had worn through and the caliper popped out when it failed. Hence the smoke.

Mechanics buried their heads under the wheel arch examining the problem while Tony Longhurst shifted in behind the wheel. The piston was quickly forced back in and a new pad fitted, but unfortunately the seal had been pinched during this activity. Longhurst confronted the same difficulty of no brakes on the rear and while the pace car was on the track, headed back to the

pits for further attention. Not much could be done in the time except for blanking off the brake line on the offending wheel.

Longhurst drove the rest of the race with the car in that condition. Relying almost totally on front brakes, he had the black BMW sliding at brave, terrifying angles, but always kept the car under rein to grab class victory.

The second-string team car was into the pits with smoke trailing too, but for a different reason. This scheduled stop by Francevic came a few laps into the re-start. The Kiwi, who had never driven an M3 on wet weather tyres, thought there was something leaking inside the car. It was in fact the rear guards rubbing inoffensively against the new wets which obviously wear less on the edge than dry tyres. Everything OK, Robbie, they said, after an inspection that was to oh so narrowly cost the car seventh place and a finish just behind the sister car.

Also favoured by the pace car's intervention and interruption was the Fangio BMW. It had been manhandled into the pit bay, after Fangio managed to tiller the car down Conrod, which was also awash at the peak of the downpour. Under shelter the crew used dry and slightly warmer hands to hastily repair the right rear corner which had clouted the Drew Price Corolla. In the line-up immediately behind the pace car was the Bigazzi BMW, an entirely comfortable

Soper, then Emanuele Pirro, John Bowe and Klaus Ludwig. Ludwig was now down a lap as he had done what the Nissans had done, made a stop for wets just as the pace car went out. The experienced German had no choice in the matter, however as his fuel stop was due.

Pirro had been out on wets before the pace car took control of the field. Team-mate Roberto Ravaglia had pitted, seemingly without malady, for Pirro to do the final dash to the flag. That was until the wiry Italian climbed out of the car. He collapses into the arms of his team-mates. As Roland Ratzenberger and Annette Meeuvissen clustered around to comfort, an ambulance was called.

He was stretchered away with a combination of fatigue through continual pain from his Friday injury and dehydration. The result of the Friday accident was torn muscles and bruising under the right side, the gearchange side. The injury had been strapped tightly to save further strain, but every time Roberto grabbed a cog and dragged the wheel, the pain was excruciating. He told his team he was OK to drive, and since there were no bones broken, there had been no reason to refuse.

The hint was that Roberto, sanguine in moments of importance, but a mischievous wag when the pressure was off, wasn't laughing much after Friday morning. There was no more assaults on his team-mate with a water pistol as he drove out of the circuit in his road BMW on Thursday night. On Saturday, he was silent and stiff, taking refuge in the darkened caravan behind the CiBiEmme pit to nurse the injury. "We didn't know," Greg Siddle explained later. "We had him properly X-rayed and checked over. Then he dehydrated. He was buggered and didn't tell us."

After the pace car was given the all clear there was some momentary confusion. It suddenly slowed dramatically and pulled off to the right going up Mountain Straight. This was apparently the signal for the race to resume, but not by the book. There was some hesitation, even by race leader Soper, but when he saw the BMW in front go, he took up expedience as well. The pack simply followed the leader and stampeded by the pace car. "There were green flags, the guy turned his lights off and everyone passed. So I thought it was time to go," Soper said.

The rain had eased and settled in to make this a proper, safer wet race. The conditions were made for Soper. He had a fine reputation as a wet weather driver and lived up to it by making full use of the clear road in front. For a short time Ludwig stuck with the Englishman, the prospect that maybe he could unlap himself and still win. He would need his junior team-mate to slow down and wait for him to come around, though. While this was in the interests of the Ludwig/Klaus Niedzwiedz pairing building their world championship points lead, it wasn't in the interests of tightening their grip on victory. Soper knew that Ludwig was too far behind for team orders to be sensibly imposed. But was this considered at this point of the race? "As far as I know, no," Soper said later: "I wanted to win and was going to win."

The Englishman quickly shook off Ludwig, to broadcast his determination. He had given the Sierra its first win in 1986 and was about to make history for the marque again by making it a winner outside Europe. In a burst of driving befitting a winner, he was supremely the quickest on the wet track. He even impressed his team-mate. "He drove really well in the wet," Pierre Dieudonne praised later. He continued to pull away and put the prospect of a staged finish out of the question.

He was fast but not spectacular. Steve squirted on the power carefully, remembering the problems the Sierras had in the wet conditions of Silverstone. He was a picture of neatness and control.

The spectacular one was Peter Brock. There were less than 20 laps to go now but Brock drove to show that he still had a spiritual bond with the place. The Mountain, it seemed, would



GARY SPARE



take care of him. He also drove like he was going for his ninth win. But second-placed Ludwig was a lap ahead and Soper, three laps by this stage. It was impossible. Or was it?

For more than 40 minutes Brock slid around in the drizzle. Graceful power slides brought the crowd to the fences for the race finale. He looked the fastest on the track. Wasn't. That honour stayed with Soper, steering the black Ford around in the 38s and 39s, while the Australian standard bearer was amongst the 43s and 44s. It didn't really matter that much, Brock the everlasting enthusiast, was having a ball in the conditions and so was every person hanging on the fence, waiting for the Mobil Commodore to put on a show for another lap. Brock could see them waving their banners, and he acknowledged that the best way he knew.

The laps were running out. The traditional Bathurst act of an Australian roaring across The Mountain in a homegrown V8 as if he owned the track, had to finish soon and bow to the tyranny of the new high tech age.

But before that, in honour and deference of a determined fightback, the rain began to ease. It all but stopped, despite black, volumous clouds still hanging off The Mountain and with more rolling in. Under the eerie light — the eye of the storm — Peter Brock headed to the pits for a surprise switch to slicks, one wet having chunked.

A dry line was appearing and the heavy car would soon destroy all its wet weather rubber. That was the technical reason. To everyone else it was pure showmanship, more imagery for the legend of Bathurst.

With five laps to go, Brock re-entered the fray. It was a coincidence that he did so right in front of the race leader. The drizzle was still coming down to coat the track and the Commodore's tyres were not yet hot enough to do their job. Soper dashed by, so did Gary Brabham in the M3 as Brock lost some ground finding traction on the remaining wet patches.

Minutes to race end the BMW had been reeled in. Next the red, white and blue Holden was tailing the race leader for the first time in the race. Soper had contributed to that by easing off to spend some of that big lead to cool his tyres on the drying track. Brock drove by irreverently, disappeared into the distance. When the



3.



4.



5.

1: Just before the storm struck in earnest Jim Richards headed down The Mountain without any cares. Then the brake pedal went to the floor at the end of Conrod.

2: Under the pace car, the JPS team work to restore the brakes on the Richards/Longhurst car.

3: Cecotto's dramatic aquaplaning into the wall when third place was assured put the Italian team under great pressure. The mechanics virtually re-built the BMW's suspension in minutes to get it back into the event.

4: Japanese champion Nakaya was one of the first on the scene of the carnage on The Mountain. Fortunately he was already on wets and was able to brake and thread his way through safely.

5: Graeme Bowkett managed to avoid the wrecks of the two Corollas out of West End, but then speared off by himself in the slippery conditions with less serious consequences.

NEIL HAMMOND

DARREN MCGLID

DARREN MCGLID





Australian came across the top for the final time, he was the fastest man on the circuit.

The emotion of the crowd was still running high at the presentation when the Eggenberger quartet, the first foreign crew to win Bathurst, looked down on a sea of Australian faces used to seeing Commodores and used to seeing Peter Brock year after year. A polite but cool reception for the Swiss teamsters was punctuated with un-Australian boos as the pack grew, seethed and became more vocal. Calls then rang out for the man who finished third and when he appeared the response was of a magnitude that is traditionally reserved for the winner.

The boos said a lot. The crowd knew that not one but two question marks hung over the legality of the two black Sierras. They understood that the Sierras had only been allowed to race due to a rule interpretation imposed from the other side of the world. Imposed by the same people who had torpedoed the world touring car championship because of such problems. They also understood from the buzz that went down the pit lane in the last hour of the race, and then spilled into the public arena, that something was up with the fuel the Fords had been using.

CAMS officials had taken samples from the Swiss team's fuel gantry and from a vent bottle, as they did with many teams through the race. The story was that an initial test had shown an additive in the fuel. The sample was sealed and



readied after the race to be examined by an independent laboratory appointed by CAMS.

The accusation of tampered fuel turned the taste of victory bitter, more so than the impending hearing about the protest. Smiles turned to frowns and frowns were accompanied by terse words. Why would we use boosted fuel, Klaus Ludwig lectured after the presentation, we have a knock sensor in our very sophisticated engine electronics. "From Wednesday we were using the same gas. We were buying it from the petrol station at the race track and we were using it without any booster. After two pit stops the gas was perfect and then at the third stop it suddenly raced up in high octane. We were leading by two laps already, so why?"

Good point. A week later the chemical analysis indicated the fuel was within acceptable limits. Not guilty.

That left the protest. "To be perfectly honest I don't care what happens," Brock responded. "Standing up there on the balcony with all the crowd cheering out for us was excellent. It was well worth it."

Most of those below cared. Those who called out his name in jubilation saw it as the cap on a season that had witnessed the fall and rise of Peter Brock. They had seen him battle against the local arm of one of the world's biggest corporations and survive. They had heard him vilified in all quarters. They had seen him greet it all with a smile and a wave and almost win Bathurst. So they still believed in him.

There was one man who also cared. Frank Gardner. For a different reason. The grim-faced team manager was further from a smile than he had been before in his longer career in motorsport. He had been disillusioned by what he saw around him. The organisational bickering at the first truly international Bathurst added to his log of what was wrong with motorsport.

Gardner's protest was the only one that would hold out the distance, pushed to a just conclusion under the code of the sport. The other three Australian teams had wilted under the weight of obstinacy and arrogance displayed by international motorsport officialdom. Six weeks later, in Japan, measurements supplied to a panel of FISA stewards, convened at the end of the world championship, resulted in the protest being upheld.

Peter Brock was declared winner. The fans got their money's worth.



1: Brock makes merry in the wet, completely safe in third. The crowd loved every slip and slide.

2: Somewhere in the gloom there's a winner. Soper whistles under the chequered flag. It was all over. Or was it?

3: Brock strides to the presentation with the bearing of a winner, flanked by a self-appointed pair of fearsome bodyguards and half the N.S.W. constabulary. The king had to be taken care of.

4: Winners Dieudonne, left and Soper accept applause for a chillingly professional driving job. The applause was polite rather than warm. The crowd wanted Brock.

5: The odd boo and hiss echoed out of the unsated crowd. They sensed that there would be a postscript to this most unhappy, controversial 25th Bathurst.



PETER RATTAY

GARRY SPARKS

RACE PRESS



## Top ten finishers:



# MOUNTAIN MEN OF 1987

**SOPER/DIEUDONNE,  
LUDWIG/NIEDZWIEDZ,  
BROCK/PARSONS/MCLEOD,  
SETON/BOWE, FURY/SHIEL,  
RICHARDS/LONGHURST,  
SCOTT/NAKAYA/FRENCH,  
FRANCEVIC/FINAUER,  
CECOTTO/BRANCATELLI,  
MOORE/DELCOURT. THEY WERE  
THE TOP TEN DRIVER  
COMBINATIONS TO BEAT THE  
MOUNTAIN IN 1987.**

**T**he fact that Bathurst was a world championship race for the first time made the objective of finishing in the top ten the prime task of many teams. Beating the Europeans — that is the works Sierra from Switzerland — seemed out of the question.

And so it was, leaving the remaining eight spots to be battled out by those who remained of the Australian teams and the massive BMW fleet from Europe. It added up to seven Australian cars and just one European M3.

The intriguing aspect of that tally was two of Australia's top teams — Peter Jackson Nissan Racing and JPS Team BMW — delivered both their cars home intact, although the stories of the race from the point of view of each team was different. For the Nissan team, a race miraculously to plan. For the BMW camp, a race of difficulty that took determination and character to salvage respectability.

Both of those teams prevailed over the only well-placed BMW Motorsport entries. Significantly this was the CiBiEmme semi-works car from Italy, which had been giving the proper works cars a hiding in Europe from the start of the season.

There were five Australian teams with representation in the top ten, the other three being Mobil HDT, Mitsubishi Ralliart and Graham Moore's little Formula One Investments outfit.

With Brock moving into the second Mobil car at the failure of his own, the race retained the presence of an old favourite and gave the traditionalists something to cheer about as Bathurst moved up to full international status.

Brock's continuing affinity for The Mountain came despite going there without Holden support. In a sense he was the first privateer home, as just his car and the other Commodore of Moore had no sanctioning from a manufacturer. Their presence ensured that a homeground, good ol' V8 lingered at the top of the list for another year.



Soper/Dieudonne, Ludwig/Niedzwiedz

# LIKE LITTLE CHILDREN



On the surface, the domination of Bathurst by the two factory supported Fords from Switzerland smacked of arrogance, was a flaunting of The Mountain. From inside the team, however, the picture was completely different.

Ruedi Eggenberger and his men weren't actually intimidated by The Mountain, they had too much of a performance advantage for that, but they were respectful. It was just that the deliberate, cautious approach was construed as bravado and the self-confidence of four highly skilled professional drivers rankled.

Certainly, they won, boldly, easily, but never at any stage did the team try and attack The Mountain. They were well aware what The Mountain could do in response.

Co-winner, Pierre Dieudonne, summed up the team's attitude: "We knew that driving at Bathurst could be sort of a trap because we are coming here with good reputations for winning races in Europe. Then you come to a place that is very special, like Bathurst and you can very easily think 'OK, we are the heroes, and you just crash the car early in practice and we were very careful to avoid that.'"

Dieudonne believed the BMW drivers fell into this trap. "I think we took the right approach. We came here like little children and we took it very easy and took our time to learn it. As the weekend went on we could set a faster pace and during the race we were very familiar with the track."

Within the dim confines of the Ford Texaco Racing Team pits at Bathurst, where the three black Sierras absorbed light like black holes, the expressionless Eggenberger constantly lectured his drivers about the need to be careful in the long lead up to the event. Right up until the last practice session the Swiss team allowed its British counterpart, Andy Rouse, to set the pace, pinch the limelight.

The black-suited quartet were still up there on times, but those times were only the symptom of the laps spent being meticulous and absolutely convinced about setting up the cars. "Most of the credit must go to Steve Soper in our car and Klaus Ludwig in the other car because they

were nominated to set the cars up," Dieudonne said.

Prudence ruled again on Friday, the team virtually waiting for the last moment to break out its qualifying tyres, but only top gun Ludwig got to use them. His brief was to try out the two compounds provided by the team's supplier, Pirelli, and see how to get the best out of them on this long and unique road track.

While he did that in the morning session, Soper sat contently in the pits, his car spending all its time with the bonnet up. "No real problem," Soper said, totally unconcerned. "It is just that the engine management system is very sophisticated and we try all the aprons to get the horsepower at the mid or the top end and alter it around. I was the one who was doing all the work and it had a faulty apron. Generally we were running through a normal race build-up programme."

Ludwig was all set for the afternoon session therefore and found that elusive clear lap to let the Sierra have its head for the first time. The only other time the car was unleashed was in that scintillating lap of perfection in Hardies Heroes to blitz the mark set by Rouse on Thursday and take pole.

Of course he had the advantage of going last on a dusty track and full understanding of the qualifiers. "For sure this gives him an advantage," the slower Soper lamented afterwards. "Because he knows when to warm them up and how far to push them and where they go off and how much grip there is."

The policy was the same in the race. The team's major worry was how the unchanged Sierra driveline would stand up to the standing start, the Sierra having a light clutch, tall first gear and no power low down. Klaus Niedzwiedz, who started the pole winning car, made the point during the lead-up that you had to be careful with the diff all the time. They had adapted to that, now they had to think of the clutch as well.

Dieudonne felt that the team boss Eggenberger had stressed care of the clutch so much so that Niedzwiedz was too careful. The Belgian cast judgement from the safety of the pits: "He will admit that he didn't do too good a job while

Steve did a reasonable job and went off the line fairly well. But the best Sierra driver was Andy Rouse and incidentally, he had trouble in the race so maybe he was too hard on the clutch. But I think it was not very important. The risk was that being slow at the start you could be hit from behind and we were concerned by that. Even tenth place at the start of the race you can catch up because it is 1000 km."

In 14th on the first lap, Niedzwiedz made a bold charge through the field. He had every opportunity to recover that ground because the three Sierras making the running — Rouse, Soper and Andrew Miedeck all admitted to having a lot in reserve. Even when Soper took the lead early, he was untroubled. "We were running fairly conservative from the word go despite leading the race," Soper said. "We had a lot in hand and all we had to do was keep everyone in sight and if we had to go faster we could."

Niedzwiedz was into the lead at the first pitstops to Miedeck and team-mate Soper. This had been an earlier than expected stop for Soper and caused some confusion and delay. The radio had been playing up and he was using more fuel than usual but could not communicate this until he came into the pits to hand the car to Dieudonne.

The slow stop gave the lead, and self-respect, to Niedzwiedz and this car hung onto the lead when Ludwig inherited the controls at its first stop. It only fell out of top spot when the fuel computer told Ludwig a lie and almost stranded him on top of The Mountain, out of fuel.

This is where the team's steady approach was starting to pay off — two setbacks yet the No. 7 car was back on the track, in third, and within the reach of new leader Dieudonne. It paid off for the other team car too, it sporting a dent on the right front and not handling 100 per cent in Dieudonne's view. The team was particularly wary of lapping other cars, and its only injury was this, which happened just before the three-hour mark of the event. A wheel was damaged when Pierre was cut-off into Murrays.

True to team philosophy, he pitted straight away, bringing forward the fuel stop and resumed with the checked-over car down just one place to third. "It slightly affected the suspension. The car was doing all sorts of funny things after that, but I got used to driving it like that. After Steve got back in I told him to be careful because the car is not good, it is slightly off, but he said the car is better than before. I thought the car was down one second and a half a second a lap, but still he was quicker after."

The Ford team's stamp wasn't really put on the race until Win Percy took the Roadways Commodore to the pits permanently with a broken axle, after four hours. With a lap under their belt the Swiss cars had plenty of safety margin for the most extreme intervention of fate. Even when the rain came down in biblical proportions.

All that did was trap Ludwig in the pits when he dashed in for wet weather tyres. He was not to know that the pace car had just headed out on the circuit for the second time. Such misfortune cost him a lap, but there was plenty of allowance still built in for that.

Soper, well used to the combination of touring cars on drenched British tracks, beat the pace car by five minutes, and pressed on merrily, once he was shod properly. "I couldn't believe it when it rained, it looked like a dogleg track with everyone getting points for hitting each other," he said. He didn't have to play that game.



Brock/Parsons/McLeod

## THE FALL AND RISE...



GARRY SPARKE

**T**he eight times Bathurst victor had just showered and changed. On his return to the pits he was confronted with the news that his Mobil outfit was down to one car. David Parsons had broken down, they told the boss. We are just working out when you can take over the spare car.

Peter Brock recalled: "We knew that once I took over the car, Peter McLeod couldn't get back in. I had been racing for a couple of hours and had been out of it for a relatively short time. We did a quick calculation and figured that if we left Peter out of the car a little bit longer I could get straight back in and away we go."

The failure in the first car, which had been up to sixth when Brock pitted to hand it over to Parsons, had not caused any great concern. "It wasn't attributed to high revs or anything like that, or a bearing problem or a lubrication problem," Brock explained. "It just broke halfway up the conrod. That was my new motor, my best motor. My car had been from a separate manufacturing era so we were quite confident that it was an unbreakable car."

Brock had no doubt he could win from there: "I thought all is not lost here. Bathurst is a very interesting old place. There is a bit of rain and a bit of sun and people with unscheduled pit stops. No, I figure you can never give up Bathurst until the last lap really."

The 'unbreakable' spare car had been delivered into the hands of Brock by new team recruit Peter McLeod, who in a double stint had done just what the team required of him to work the car up to fifth without risk. The popular Wollongong car dealer had actually driven just as he did in the previous eight Bathursts that gave him the credentials that justified his invitation to join the Mobil team.

In fact the team was fortunate to have a spare car at all after Thursday morning when it

fractured the end of a front steering arm joint as McLeod headed through Bridgestone bend. Luck and a bit of good judgement was with McLeod as he found the only gap in the wall.

"We were going bloody quick at that point," McLeod said. "The left front wheel just flapped off like a sail in the breeze and the car just ploughed straight ahead. I locked up all four just before it got to the wall. By bouncing the brakes I managed to get the tail to move out slightly to the right, just enough to turn in and get through the gap."

There was more drama before the car was to get to the race. During the inspection of the race engine, the crew found bearing metal in the filter. The only replacement was the practice engine from the lead car. This engine had begun life in 05 for Oran Park in August and stayed in the car for the Castrol 500, so was far from fresh.

McLeod put those things out of his mind as he climbed from his 20th grid slot, out of the way of the bustle at the front, and was smartly up into the top ten, in sight of the Jim Richards BMW, before his first scheduled pit stop. Brock had already pitted and had given 05 to Parsons. McLeod stayed in the car, the team not wanting to expose co-driver and rookie, Jon Crooke, until the middle part of the race when things had settled down.

McLeod returned to the race just as 05 was crawling around the other side of the circuit to retire. He remained unaware of this and the extra responsibility that he now carried. "I just sauntered on merrily. Because of the new kink you don't have enough time to sneak a look at the big placing tower coming down Conrod. I was trying to sneak a look because I figured that I would have to be in the top ten after the first stop.

"Then when I caught Fury (it was co-driver Terry Shiel) I thought that was OK, he must be sixth or seventh, so that has got to put me in the top half dozen. As it turned out it put me in fifth and I was pretty happy with that because if I split those two, Seton (it was John Bowe) is next up. I didn't know if I could catch him but certainly if I'm sitting on his tail then we have to be looking pretty good."

Meanwhile in the pits the arithmetic had been done and they were about to call McLeod in early. The Commodores were already pitting early in any case. The changing weather conditions at Bathurst had made fuel consumption difficult to calculate accurately for the race and the V8s were drinking much more fuel than expected.

"When I came in I didn't know it was Brock standing there. There was just a guy there in a dealer team thing. I jumped out and he jumped in and I'm doing up the seatbelts and not looking at his face. I'm yelling, 'Everything's fine. Track's clear and everything is going great,' I looked up and thought Crooke, you've forgotten your glasses. Hang on, that's not Crooke! I slammed the door. Off he goes. That was Brock! Then I saw Crooke standing in the back of the pits. What has happened here?"

"They had recalculated the pit stops and brought me in early, so there were three full sessions to go which would necessitate two more stops. They only left me out long enough for me to use up the odd session to give Brock as much time in the car as possible."

Brock re-entered the race in tenth spot. He plugged on efficiently and assisted by the pit stop to the Nissans, shortly after, was into fifth and the second Australian car on the track after the Grice Commodore. When Win Percy parked Grice's car permanently in the pits, the Bathurst king was fourth, although soon scheduled to pit for the third time. Parsons took up the cudgels to continue the fightback and it was he who was in the car when the storm erupted on The Mountain.

Brock and the boys waited tensely for the car to come in for wets. "We had our fingers crossed there, saying, 'Gee, Dave, take it very easy here,' because you could see on TV what was happening up on the hill. But he had no idea as there was no radio in the car. We were wondering how it was all happening. He came in, we did our pit stop and went out behind the pace car and really timed it well."

Was Brock aware that the Nissans had been trapped in the pits by the pace car? "Absolutely. We were right on them. There was none of this business about whether we were well out in front or a lap behind. It was a knock down, drag out dice and we planned it absolutely the way it went. We have done long distance and international races before and we were right up with that."

Then followed Brock's mighty drive in the wet, flinging the car with gusto and enjoying every slip and slide to the cheers and flag waving of the crowd. The dash to the pits in the final few laps for slicks, while the track was still damp, seemed a further concession to theatrics.

"I know some people might love to think it was a tactical error, but it was mandatory because the right rear tyre began to chunk. And I have got the tyre if any of the detractors would like to see it. I thought rather than risking a tyre blow out and risk losing third place, I'd rather go to the pits and some good new tyres."

Slicks did prove to be the right gamble in the final minutes as a dry line appeared. It even allowed Brock, with that protest against the Eggenberger Sierras in the back of his mind, to ironically unlap himself from race leader Steve Soper. "I was hoping that he was in trouble, but he was cruising. He said to me after that race, 'You go pretty fast in the wet Brock!' And he was sort of shaking his head a bit as if to say that was a bit swift. That was good fun."



## FOLLOW THE LEADER



**F**or the first time in its short life, Fred Gibson's Peter Jackson Nissan Racing went into an event not expecting to win. Group A had passed the obsolete Skyline by and in 12 months, the car that was the quickest around The Mountain couldn't even scramble into Hardie's Heroes.

It required a realistic new approach in the presence of the latest version of the Ford Sierra. "We were virtually flat out all day," Gibson summed up. "We set a pace. We could have gone faster, but there was no need to go any faster because our hopes were to finish behind the European Sierras which we virtually did."

This was a "very good race" by the team in Gibson's estimation. In fact it was more than that, it was amazing because the Skylines hammered around all day in team formation without missing a beat. Only seconds separated the two white and blue cars when Glenn Seton and George Fury settled down in seventh and eighth early in the race after dealing with the BMW threat. Less than 11 seconds separated their co-drivers John Bowe and Terry Shiel in fourth and fifth at the end of the day.

What took the gloss off the result for Gibson, apart from the fact that the Eggenberger Fords were allowed to race while a protest was pending, was that Peter Brock finished between his cars and the black Sierras. Even before the protest against the Sierra was upheld and the Nissans were awarded the minor placings subject to appeal, Gibson was annoyed.

The Nissan duo were in pursuit of Brock in 05 early in the event. When the car failed, the Mobil team's second car, with Peter McLeod at the wheel, was a white dot in their rear vision mirrors. With the compressing of the pack at the first pace car, McLeod moved closer and split the Nissans for the first time since the opening laps. Then he had to pit the thirstier Holden and get a pleasant surprise at his team

boss taking over the controls. The two teams did not meet on the track again until later in the day with the Nissans seeming to have the upper hand.

The leading M3 of Johnny Cecotto turned the efficiency tables on the Nissans. That was when the Nissans pitted for the second time, near the halfway mark and took up a few more seconds fitting new front brake pads. Shiel left the car feeling the brakes were OK. "We didn't need it," he said. "It was just a precaution with the extra stop down Conrod. You have got to jump on the stoppers after you go through the kink at Conrod, then another jump, and we thought it might not take its wear during the race and leave us with nothing at the end."

Within an hour, as rain began to fall over The Mountain, the Nissans had the Italian BMW in their sights again, just as they had at the start of the race.

Cecotto, who won the tussle with Jim Richards, Peter Brock and George Fury for the last spot in Hardies Heroes on Friday afternoon, had used his better grid position to keep the more powerful Nissans at bay for the first 14 laps. Then the turbo cars forced their way through and attacked seventh-placed Richards, who had been rewarded by a good start.

"They were quick little jiggers across the top — that's the problem — compared with our cars, which are unstable across there," Seton commented. "Their cars went across like they were on rails. There was little in it going up the hill, maybe one or two cars lengths in it. That's not enough when the Sierras pull out and pass you in about eight cars lengths!"

The second time Seton and Fury went past was more conclusive, and in Glenn's case there was a reason why. "As soon as the rain came down, he dropped right back. He was right behind me when the showers came then I couldn't even see him behind," Seton chuckled.

The drama came as the track became more slippery and Glenn put on an exhibition for those spectators who were hardy enough to brave the showers. A sliding Glenn radioed Gibson that he should come in for wets. "We were going to come in early but luckily it cleared up down the bottom, but it was still wet up top and we didn't have a real good tyre choice on wet or drys so we just stayed out on slicks."

Team-mate Shiel mused in the pits as he caught a glimpse of the action on TV. "It was very slippery and he was trying very hard. It was certainly a lot harder than what I would have tried!"

The passing move put Seton into third place behind the Swiss Sierras and elevated Fury to fourth, but their third scheduled stop and driver change was coming up and Cecotto was up the road and off the hook for the time being. Brock was behind them in sixth.

Little more than a half an hour later, the Nissans were suddenly a lap behind Brock, who was now third! It happened during the violent storm that washed over the top of The Mountain, sending cars bouncing and spinning. Shiel and Bowe were quick to react by buttoning off and thinking about wets. As soon as Gibson saw the rain, he radioed Bowe to come in first.

Meanwhile up on The Mountain, Shiel noted with alarm the trees bending over with the gale and a hail of broken twigs and branches mixing with the rain. He just missed the accidents: "I went through just before them and there must have been something on the track because we lost traction completely," Shiel recalled. "It was pointing everywhere and we were fortunate enough to stay on the black stuff. I got on the two-way and said to Fred, 'I will have to come in because it is all over the road.' He said: 'OK. We are ready for you. Bowe's in as well, but that's no problem, we can handle you both.'"

Shiel continued: "As I pulled in Bowe had got his wets on and gone. As I got changed to wets, I pulled out and got to the end of the counter and Bowe's sitting there and the gate's closed! And I thought, what's going on here?"

Gibson and his crew had no idea the pace car had been out as they were unable to see from the pits. "They should have had a yellow light just before you came into the pit lane to say the pace car is on the circuit," Seton, who watched from the pit counter, suggested. "We were already in and my car was just dropping off the jacks as the pace car went out."

"I think it is the luck of the draw," Shiel said. "Fred didn't know. If he had he would have said stay out and you would have, crawled around. At least we would have retained our lap."

While Bowe and Shiel sat in the queue, with a lot of others who had been similarly caught, Brock idled the Commodore around to move into third. Brock, with that uncanny sixth sense about The Mountain, had been one of the first in for rain tyres and had just beaten the pace car back on the track.

There were just 30 laps left after the re-start, too little for Bowe or Shiel to have any hope of making up that lap on Brock. The Nissans nevertheless proved they were worth a fair fight for third as both were matching Brock's times and in the Tasmanian's case he was often a little quicker. It was back to the strategy they adopted at the beginning.

"It was one of those races where we just set ourselves up to finish. We couldn't improve any and nobody could pass us. Just bring it home. I couldn't have caught him. We would have had to catch at 10 secs a lap. We drove to hold our positions basically," Shiel concluded.



Richards/Longhurst

## TOO MUCH AND TOO LITTLE



In the final stages of Bathurst 1987, Tony Longhurst rocketed the JPS Team BMW M3 past the Commodore of Peter Brock, then disappeared up the road. This had no bearing on the outcome of the race as two laps separated the two. But the BMW had lost those laps needlessly and it could have been the passing move for third place.

The wavy-haired Queenslander was motoring up to four seconds quicker than Brock in the wet at a time when all the attention was being focussed on the entertaining slipping and sliding of the Mobil car. "I don't quite understand it but I was told I completed the last 30 laps faster than anybody else," Longhurst stated with pride.

Few watching the race coming to an inevitable conclusion realised that. Under the cover of darkness they missed seeing the black car go by. Only the stopwatches noted it all, silently.

This was a feat of pure bravery, not simply because the loyal sidekick of Jim Richards was flying, but because he was doing so with just three brakes working. This was the result of brake failure near the end of Richards' final stint which caused an extra stop and dropped the car off the lap of the fourth and fifth placed Peter Jackson Nissans.

Only minutes before the thunderstorm began, Richards had gone for the brakes at the end of Conrod, fully expecting the M3 to pull up on a dime as usual. "It started to stop then it went 'boomph' and the pedal went straight to the floor and we only had front brakes," Richards recalled. He headed straight for the escape road.

The right rear pad had worn through to the metal prematurely due to faulty material. The piston had popped out and released all the fluid. With the drama about to start up on The Mountain, the JPS BMW was in the pits having the rear brakes examined. The crew pushed the piston back in and fitted a fresh pad. What they hadn't realised was that they had cut the seal. Longhurst, thankfully on wets, headed out just before the pace car entered the track. On the first application of brakes all the fluid leaked out and the pedal clunked the floor.

"I had brand new wet tyres that had been heated so the car was tracking fine," Longhurst pointed out. "I was fortunate that I had just come out and was being careful to check the road conditions."

The car was undriveable on just front brakes so he pitted for proper repairs under the pace car. "We lost a full lap here. I was hoping that it would give them time. I knew the problem about coming in with the pace car but you couldn't drive the car with no brakes at all."

Then came the charge: "We just balanced the car up so that it was braking mainly on the front and very little on the back," Longhurst said. "It was a bit twitchy under brakes, but in the wet you really can't bore into the brakes and probably it wasn't as bad as it would have been in the dry. You have got to be softer on the brakes and you have to brake earlier and gentler so the car doesn't lock up."

Sixth place across the line, recovered all but one of the places the Richards/Longhurst BMW lost when the team had that and the earlier delay at the start of Longhurst's first stint.

Richards had brought the car into the pits lying fifth and leading the class. Still on the leader's lap after two hours of racing, the Australian Touring Car Champion was keeping the pressure on through typical BMW durability and efficiency. This was to be the first of three stops only.

All was going to plan, then the pace car was called out so that marshals could shift the crashed Caltex Alfa. For the JPS cars the timing was bad. They were running low on fuel but Richards, and Robbie Francevic in the second team car, weren't going to break off and pit because of the one lap penalty.

Francevic, first around after the race re-started, pitted instantly. So did Richards, right behind. He was 10 seconds too close and had to park it until the sister car moved off.

The anxious team tried to win back those lost seconds through extra speedy pitwork. Longhurst was belted in ready to go. "From where I was sitting I could see straight in the pits and was watching it on TV. I could see the fuel spilling out and I thought what had happened,

they had pulled the vent bottle off too quick and pressurised the tank."

The extra fuel pumped had inflated the bladder and was blowing back through the breather. The car itself was fine as Richards, who was watching all this, explained. "We weren't allowed to start before we finished mopping up the fuel. If we had been able to get out onto the road it would have just leaked a bit of fuel out onto the road on the breather, but we couldn't go because the observer said, 'hang on'."

It cost the team nearly a lap and dropped the car to 11th. Longhurst had the job to do, yet hauled the car up to seventh when he handed over to the senior man. But Tony's first stint was made even harder. He suspected that the clutch was a little twisted from the start. "There wasn't enough clutch travel in my stint and I was having quite a bit of trouble trying to change gears without damaging the car, so I had to make slow and precise gear changes." That was fixed pronto at the next stop for Richards to take over.

Before Longhurst took to the wheel, Richards had the car nicely positioned. He made a "reasonable start" from his 12 spot on the grid and managed to catch and outbrake Johnny Cecotto in the CiBiEmme M3 into Castrol Chase to take up the class running and hold down seventh behind Peter Brock. Within a few laps however, the two Peter Jackson Nissans were advancing up from their lowly grid positions and used turbo power to dispatch Richards on the way up The Mountain. But Richards hung on doggedly.

"I was a bit close and the motor started to get hot," Richards said referring to the hot air turbo-charged cars leave in their wake. "They are quicker than you when they pass you, then they slow you down. I was pulling up across The Mountain and down the straight but they would pull out in other places."

Cecotto had made a queue of it now, so Richards waved him past and dropped back for some cool air. When Cecotto spun trying to lap a slower car, Richards dashed through to take back his place and hold a four second break. The next thing he knew there was the pace car at his door handles out of Hell Corner.

"It just pulled out of the gate and I was accelerating up to it so there was no way I could have stopped because I was too close to it." Richards passed it — an infringement under the regulations — and then went around the track to join the back of the queue. Cecotto followed him through and both were reported to the stewards.

"The stewards viewed the TV replay of the incident and found that the pace car when I passed had two wheels over the white line of the circuit and apart from that I couldn't have stopped without locking up the brakes and going into the back of it, or going past it and waiting for it to pass me." He was exonerated, Cecotto not.

That came later. In the meantime Richards was stuck behind the pace car and running low on fuel. "I was due to pit virtually two or three laps after the pace car came out and I actually went past my due time slightly, but at a reduced pace." His concern was that if the car hesitated, he might be going too slow to be able to coast down Conrod. He wasted not one single second getting into the pits at the re-start.

That's when the team's good run ended and Longhurst had taken on a lot of responsibility in recovering lost ground. In fact, the young understudy spent as much time at the wheel as Richards for the first time at Bathurst.



Scott/Nakaya

# KNOWING WHAT TO DO



**B**efore the re-organised Mitsubishi Ralliart team headed to its first Bathurst, new team manager, George Shephard, left nothing to chance. Shephard ensured the team did its homework and that included a 15-page Bathurst 'brief' that the drivers were required to learn.

The document summarised all the rules and regulations of the world championship as they affect the driver and significantly included three pages on that new innovation, the pace car, and how the team could turn it to its advantage.

Lead driver Gary Scott saw this as indicative of a well run little team utilising its resources to the fullest. "There were two other teams, and I don't have to name them, who made obvious stuff-ups because they didn't read the rules properly and they got caught with their pants down," the forthright Scott said in reference to the pace car. "But we knew precisely what to do and that's why we did so well."

Not a lot of notice was taken of the little team in the lead event itself because of the out-of-production, unchanged two-valve Starion turbo, in its last Bathurst, was no longer a contender on outright speed.

Out of the limelight, the team continued to work on maximising its efforts in an environment devoid of pressure, tension and high expectations. For much of the time during the weekend,

when not required at the wheel, Queenslander Scott sat on a stack of tyres outside the team garage, dangling his legs, grinning and chatting. He was totally at ease in his new team after departing the Brock team earlier in the year. But twenty-third on the grid in a small team was a dramatic contrast to a pole position the Bathurst previous for the quick, hard-charging Brisbane service station owner.

"I felt that we did a terrific qualifying time considering that we were only one and a bit seconds slower than the Nissans, considering how slow the car is in the power department. George Shephard knew that we were going to be outgunned and we stuck to a plan. Obviously that was the best we could do when we qualified."

That time put the unique Dulux-sponsored car in the company of the second-string Mobil Commodore, JPS BMW and OXO Sierra and up with some of the less speedy BMW Motorsport M3s on the grid. Not too bad after all.

Scott was the quickest of the three drivers who qualified the car, ahead of Ralliart of Japan lead driver, journalist, Akihiko Nakaya. Scott had set his quick time very early in the final session, before things got too frenetic out there. The third driver in the line-up was veteran, John French, who didn't get his hands on the cars during raceday. He remained on call in case one

of his younger team-mates had a mishap. This was important, especially in Nakaya's case. Anything could happen with tight commitments in Japan and international travel, the team figured. "With Frenchie, you can always rely on him to do a good job," Scott said. He had teamed with the car dealer previously in both the early Johnson and Nissan outfits.

The 34-year-old Scott started the race and by the time his first 40 lap stint was over, had hauled the car well into the top 20 and was threatening to move it much higher through unstinting progress. In that first part of the race he found himself in among the visiting BMW M3s, one of which was driven by Juan Manuel Fangio. Also in the pack was the Francevic/Finauer JPS BMW. Scott: "It was the same sort of deal. We were virtually hanging in there in the tow. They had more power, but I could pick them up in the corners."

The only 'problem' the car had all day was in that first pit stop and driver change which was ten seconds slower than the 28 seconds of the other two scheduled stops for the race. Nakaya, blooming as a touring car driver, bumped the ignition switch unknowingly as he wiggled his way into the harness. The car wouldn't start. "I stuck my head in and worked out what was happening," Scott recalled, "but that was nothing at the end of the day."

The car leapt into the top ten during the underwater section of the race. This is when the team's homework bore fruit. The drivers had not conceded any ground to that point and had remained watchful for the pace car, knowing that they would be sluggish a lap if they pitted.

When the downpour began the Ralliart men were positioned to exploit it. Just before the rain Scott was lying an impressive 11th, six laps down on the leaders. However the Mitsubishi was two laps behind the tenth-placed Giddings/Stewart Sierra and ninth-placed Francevic/Finauer and three laps down on the Brabham/Fangio M3 in eighth. It relied on these to falter. All were to be trapped by the rain or snared in the pits by the pace car while the Mitsubishi pushed on.

Scott had pitted as scheduled for the third time, prior to all the wet weather drama. It began to rain as Nakaya headed out. The canny Shephard acted quickly: "He was coming down the straight and I could see it was going to rain, so I called him, 'Come in for tyres'. We left just as the pace car went out."

The Mitsubishi was one of the few cars on wets. It helped the Japanese avoid getting tangled up in the many accidents, although he only narrowly missed nudging the spun Fangio M3 at the scene of the pile-up out of West End. "He could pull up," Shephard observed whereas those on slicks had no hope.

Nakaya stayed out as the race ambled on under the pace car for 15 minutes, avoiding that mandatory dropped lap. Meanwhile, two of those ahead of him — the Sierra and the Fangio BMW — were in the pits for lengthy repairs. Francevic found his way around in the wet unscathed but had to pit for wets.

When the JPS car made another unscheduled stop before the end, Nakaya, on the same lap now, splashed clear. The Kiwi would have had to respond mightily if he was to take back seventh. "We weren't worried about him at all," Shephard recalled. "In fact on most occasions when we wanted to we could pull away from him a little bit."

Scott, watching from the pits saw the reward for the planning by the team and consistency by the drivers. He mused at the opposition "falling down around us."

"It was a terrific result for the car. To me it was more satisfying than coming third last year because the Nissan didn't really deserve to come third in that company. Obviously we all like winning but I also like to do the best possible job and that was exactly what I did."

GARY SPANKE



Francevic/Finauer

## KEEPING IT UP THERE

8



GARRY SHANE

**L**istening to Kiwi Robbie Francevic during race week was a revelation. The 1986 Australian Touring Car champion was not shooting straight from the mouth as everyone had been accustomed to him doing during the Volvo days. Now every word was measured.

Francevic and JPS Team BMW team-mate Ludwig Finauer had a brand new car for the race. When it arrived at The Mountain it had only done a few laps at Oran Park. Despite its newness Francevic was quite happy. "It was the best race car I've have ever driven," he said. "It all went well on Wednesday morning straight out of the box."

The performance was not quite as encouraging in the afternoon and the Sydney team discovered the front anti-roll bar was bending — the same problem afflicted the Jim Richards-Tony Longhurst lead car. New mounting brackets were machined up and ready for Friday's qualifying.

Francevic was only 22nd fastest with a 25.50 on the one set of qualifying tyres the team had allocated him, saving the rest for Richards, who was trying to make the top ten. "I should have tried to qualify on Thursday," said Francevic. "It was hopeless on Friday trying to do a clean lap. Half the field were going for it and the other half were trundling around waiting for a gap in the traffic."

When Francevic did decide to use his qualifiers he got a clear run up to the top of the mountain only to find three cars "wandering around like Brown's cows" and that was the end of his attempt. "I felt there was a 23 in the car, but I had to have a clean run."



The unlikely pairing of Robbie Francevic, left, and JPS team engine builder, Ludwig Finauer, worked well.

GARRY SHANE

Although he would have liked to have been further up the grid, Francevic was content enough and took the wheel for the first stint in the race.

After half an hour he was up to 15th place and after 25 laps was 12th. By the time the race was

90 minutes old Francevic was ninth, doing the job to a tee. "I had to make sure our car was up there in case Jim had to take it over."

After two hours Francevic was seventh and the only BMW in front of him was team-mate Jim Richards. Then the pace car came out for the Alfa wreck, and once it had cleared the track the No. 45 car pitted and Ludwig 'Goofy' Finauer got behind the wheel. That dropped the pair to tenth place, but still nicely in touch with the leaders and only one lap down.

At three hours, Finauer was ninth. Shortly afterwards he got involved with lapping a slower Commodore in Castrol Chase and bashed the right rear guard. 'Goofy' pitted right away. The car was topped up with petrol while the guard was beaten out so the tyre would not rub. "That was our demise really," Francevic said.

"Goofy lost some confidence and his times dropped off two to three seconds a lap and we slipped back."

After four hours Finauer was 12th, now three laps behind. By the time Francevic took over again in a later stop than had originally been planned because of the fuel top up when the accident damage was repaired, Finauer was back to ninth spot.

"I went out on D5s," said Francevic. "I'd done the first stint on D4s, but even after two and a quarter hours they weren't very worn so we opted for the softer tyres for the run to the finish."

Francevic had only been out on the track for a few laps when the rain arrived. "The car just fogged up straight away."

The M3's exhaust system is mounted very close to the floor — almost touching in places — and once the bottom of the car became covered in spray, the cabin turned into a steam house. "I managed to avoid all the Corollas and things on the top of the hill," Francevic said.

He was one of the first on the scene and threaded his way through the wreckage while others were not so fortunate. That was, until he headed down The Mountain.

"I was only doing about 20 mph when I went over Skyline and the car just went straight ahead, crashing over the mound of earth." Somehow he managed to get down onto Conrod, where he could not see anybody else. "I thought I might be the only car still running!"

"Then it started drifting on the straight and wandering off the road."

Francevic reckons he spent more time off the road and bouncing over kerbs through the kink and Caltex Chase, than he did on the track because of the diabolical conditions.

Needless to say he headed straight for the pits, some wet tyres and a rag to clean the windscreen. But the rain tyres had a higher profile and the right rear began rubbing on the beaten bodywork. "The car started filling up with smoke," said Francevic. "I wasn't sure what it was so I stopped again." More panel beating gave more tyre clearance, and then it simply became a matter of driving around to finish. But by the time he got to the chequered flag the black car had made five stops instead of the two planned.

Surprisingly in all the mayhem Francevic and Finauer did not lose any places and even gained one as the Brabham-Fangio M3 spent even longer in the pits having its suspension sorted out. The JPS car also got ahead of the Cecotto/Brancatelli M3, but was passed by the Scott/Nakaya Starion.

Although Francevic had finally finished Bathurst at his third attempt he was disappointed with his second driving stint. "I wanted to really get into it," he said. "Instead I just had to tip toe around."

For Finauer, the engine builder turned race driver, it was a fine result. Rookies might have won the race, but Finauer was the first 'real' rookie home behind seven other teams of highly experienced drivers.



# 9

## FLUSHED DOWN THE LIST



**T**hrough the European season the little CiBiEmme team from Italy had irked the big budget Schnitzer BMW team with gritty, determined performances. The team brought its good form to Bathurst and the power brokers from BMW Motorsport were glad it did. It turned out to be the only European BMW in with a chance in the race.

For almost all the race, the talented, vastly experienced duo of Johnny Cecotto and Gianfranco Brancatelli wedged themselves in there. They were outpaced by the Eggenberger Sierras. Everyone expected that. But then they moved their way up gradually. Everybody expected that too.

This was a classic BMW performance. The BMW army had predicted the rise of the little M3 late in the race, around the four-hour mark. And just a few minutes after that point the curly-haired Venezuelan was into third place. This was about as good as could be expected and he was in a position to exploit any problems for the Swiss Sierras.

It was also at that point that the car was literally swept off course, and swept off the track. The rain was coming down a lot harder than it had earlier in the race and looked as though it would set in. Cecotto considered pulling in for rain tyres, realising that it was coming close to the point where the car could get to the end on fuel. Before he could do that, he had to communicate with his pits by signal as the radio had failed early in the event.

"I didn't know if it was the type of rain that would stay there because on the last part of the circuit it was not really wet, only a little bit damp. So I decided to do one more lap and pass in front of the pits and show them that I was going to come in and to be ready.

"Unfortunately on the higher part of the circuit there was a lot of water, and perhaps some oil, because it was undriveable. I was going very, very slowly on the slow lefthander. It was so slippery that another car going slow hit the fence and I almost hit the car.

"I could manage to stop and go backwards and to start again with difficulty because of wheelspin and tried to go up the hill in second gear very slowly. I just turned the wheel and

nothing happened! I went straight into the wall and damaged the front and rear left suspension. I don't know how, but I could manage to drive into the pits and the mechanics were fantastic. They changed all the front suspension in maybe five minutes!"

The pace car was out by now so the repairs that may have cost the team three or more laps, only lost them a lap. The rear suspension was also bent, but that was not as simple to fix. It was left as it was and with much trepidation Gianfranco joined the queue waiting for the pace car to pull off. The rain was still tumbling down, but the flashflood on The Mountain had subsided.

From the relative dryness of the open pits, Cecotto watched his good work flushed away. The lap they lost in the pits dropped them to seventh, but once the race got going, worse was to come. "The handling was not very good and he was losing four or five seconds a lap compared with the other cars. I mean it was good enough to finish but the problem was that he had another stop because the rear left tyre was flat because of the damage."

That stop to change a flat left came with just five laps to go and because of it, the M3 dropped from seventh to ninth, still the first European BMW home and six places ahead of the only surviving factory Schnitzer car. But it was also the lowest position the car had been all day.

The CiBiEmme car, which had been actually purchased by New Zealand businessman Mark Petch in the lead-up, had consistently been the quickest M3 around The Mountain. With former Schnitzer driver, Cecotto, back at the wheel of a BMW after a stint with the RAS Volvo factory team, the Italian car seemed to have an edge on handling. The car was also Pirelli-shod as opposed to Yokohamas on the Schnitzer cars. It proved to be a bigger advantage than anyone expected when the Schnitzer men discovered that the Yokohama qualifiers they brought with them couldn't survive half a lap of this unique track.

In official qualifying he leapt ahead with a simply breathtaking run late on Friday, after finding one of those rare clear laps: "Just in the chicane I was slowed a bit. It was the first clear lap I had all day. I can go a little faster, but not much."

He also strode ahead of the similarly shod local M3s of JPS Team BMW, to tip Jim Richards out of a Hardie's Heroes spot and be the sole BMW representative in the run-off. But of course, the European cars were running an open exhaust and that was worth perhaps 10 hp or more.

In the race that power deficit was wiped off and Cecotto, initially settled for the duration in the wake of the Sierras and quicker Holdens, waiting to wear them down. In a few laps however he was joined by a pack of cars including the Richards BMW and the Peter Jackson Nissans and would stay in company with those cars for most of the race until the rain became a factor.

Cecotto, in his second Bathurst, had never made a standing start in the M3, but after so much experience of grand prix racing, did a good job. He had been worried before the start, though, because a different type of clutch was being used after the team had had problems with clutches early in the season.

After coping with the start, he turned his concern to the engine. The car was fitted with a BMW Motorsport engine for this race, instead of one of the team's own engines. The difference is that the Motorsport engine, a better prospect for a race such as Bathurst, uses different pistons and as a consequence has higher oil consumption.

The brand new race engine was pulling strongly when fitted for Hardie's Heroes helping Johnny snare a spot on the third row. "I think on the warming up laps some stones or something went into the intake and damaged the valve a little bit. The compression was low and the power was low. Especially coming out of the corner, on acceleration. Compared with the other cars, compared with the Richards car, it was very low on power."

The struggle with the evenly matched Australians was interrupted just prior to the first pit stops when Cecotto spun at the top of The Mountain trying to lap a Commodore. "I destroyed my tyres and then I tried to continue. I tried to get some information from the pits but the radio wasn't working. So that was a big problem."

While Cecotto attempted to inform his pits that he must pit, the pace car was about to move onto the circuit. Peddling hard to keep class leader Richards in sight, he shot around Hell corner: "I was behind Richards then and he passed the pace car. I didn't see the pace car. I just passed it and did a lap then stopped at the pits because I didn't know the pace car was out."

The pit stop dropped the car a lap. In ninth now and with Brancatelli at the wheel, the car climbed progressively for the next two hours. While the Italian was at work, Cecotto and team manager Umberto Grano were sitting in the stewards room being ticked off for passing the pace car. The car copped a three minute penalty for that to make the recovery more onerous.

By the time Cecotto pulled on his helmet for his final stint and the car's second last, it was into third. It turned into fifth, briefly, when he was joined and passed again by the Nissans. They were due to stop shortly, so he had third back again. Then came the big wet.

"We could have finished third without a problem," Cecotto reflected. "For the points for the championship we didn't lose anything. We got the maximum points, but this was because the regulations are so crazy."



Moore/Delcourt

# SAVED BY THE RAIN

10



GANNY SPARK

**T**here is an old racing saying that rain is a great evener. To the little Sydney team of Graham Moore, it was more than that. It saved the race for Moore had his regular Bathurst partner, Michel Delcourt.

The dapper Moore was convinced it was going to pelt down sooner or later. After spending most of time driving a Belgian Commodore in the wet at Spa earlier in the year, he was attuned to that. So was the big Belgian, Delcourt. "I wanted him to be in the car when it rained," Moore recalled. "He is very fast in the rain."

So waiting in the pits for what Moore saw as the inevitable, were brand new sets of proper wet weather tyres, a real extravagance for a team running on a miniscule budget.

The reason for the raindance was that the distinctive red and white Commodore's lack of grunt. "Through lack of racing during the year, we must have been 40 hp down on everyone else," Moore explained. "We were just getting blown off something terrible up the hill."

This deficiency in the Bob Stevens-built car made the team's object of making the top ten a difficult task. What made it appear all the more difficult in the lead up to the race was all the string of other problems with the car. The biggest of those was a broken gearbox on the first day out on the track. Then Thursday a new CV joint mysteriously broke to give everybody a fright. Moore: "We ran around all week trying to get bits and ended up getting them Thursday. They worked throughout Thursday night and Friday morning trying to get the gearbox back into it."

The team appeared to get on top of it by then. Delcourt was unleashed on a set of qualifiers in the final session and ripped in a 2:28 for a place in the middle of the grid among similarly placed

Commodores such as the Callaghan/Graham, Cullen/Sprague and Billington/Crosby examples. They were also just ahead of the Carter/Masterton Skyline. Quite respectable considering the setbacks of the opening days. "He had a rev of our practice engine and braked late and did all those crazy things that you have got to do to qualify and he loves doing that. I had so many other things to do anyway, trying to keep the whole team together and the associated problems, so I let him qualify," Moore commented.

Moore started the race as usual, the two being within three tenths on race pace. Moore remarked that this is why they could go around all day and do a good job. He quickly discovered their problems were not over.

"All the way we had to left foot pump at every corner to get the brakes up. We had organised to go the whole way without a pad change. We had a special pad made up. But we had hassles with pad knock-off and losing fluid and this sort of stuff."

It was another mystery and was again blamed on lack of racing and development. They had a few clues about what caused the problem but it was too late to go out and do the testing to be sure. "It was the old problem," Moore lamented. "Lack of development, lack of money makes that sort of thing happen and makes it happen again."

As the team attempted to drive around that handicap, concern remained about the state of the new CV joint, following the failure in practice. At the second stop the crew noticed an oil drip so made a note to check the component on the third stop. When Moore took over the car for the second last session, the cover was stripped off the joint, some grease forced in and the

cover sealed again. The car had been up to 15th place before the stop and sacrificed two spots. "It was a long stop and it was a precautionary situation we felt we should do."

Much more hinged on the rain therefore. But it was late coming. "As it was I was in the car when it rained. But that was good because at the particular time we picked up about three places in the half wet and half dry."

That was the first sprinkle. Moore had managed to move the car into the top 20 before the end of his stint and during that damp part and was into 17th, just four laps behind the leaders, and one lap behind the five cars ahead of him in the running order. "I just kept going and I passed lots of cars, more than I had passed during any time during the day. With 40 hp less it didn't matter much then."

When the rain was worth the name, Moore was back in the car again, but near the end of his second shift. As soon as he saw it come down, he headed for the pits, but first he had to go around The Mountain one more time on slicks.

"Coming up through The Cutting I saw Cecotto coming at me out of control. I got through and over the hump, I was doing 60 mph if that. I let him go past again and then he clouted the fence!

"I passed him and got to the accident. I went through there alright. When I got through I steered off a little. Everyone knew what was going to happen because you could hear the crowd yelling and screaming!

"I got down alright and proceeded down the straight at maybe 15 mph in second and that was as fast as I could do to get it home. I was just aquaplaning from one side of the road to the other. I was just totally out of control.

"I put the big Belgian in, strapped on his webbed feet and into the night!"

Moore reckons he was one of the first in for wets and as a result Delcourt was one of the first cars in the queue on the track when the pace car was called out, thus picking up a lap on most of those ahead of them. The Commodore team had been in 16th then, on the same lap as the Carter/Masterton Skyline. A lap ahead of them before the pace car were the Commodores of Noske/Rush and Reed/Ashby and the BMW M3 of Crowe/Tulloch. The intervention of the pace car put them on the same lap. As well, the tenth placed Giddings/Stewart Sierra and eighth-placed Fangio/Brabham were delayed through repairs. The Moore/Delcourt Commodore had therefore just four places to make up to be on target at the end and plenty of time to do it.

From the re-start Delcourt was in his element. All the places he made up were earned by passing cars on the road. "Without horsepower we were saved by the rain," Moore stated. "We were rocketing past cars that were blasting us off down the straight."

According to the Moore crew Delcourt was flying in the latter stages of the event and maintaining the pace lap after lap. They had him as one of the fastest on the wet track with lap times comparable to the other Australian cars that were charging at the end — Peter Brock and Tony Longhurst.

Smiles erupted in the No. 4 pit. "All we could aim for was the top ten and if we made the top ten we were laughing. The sponsor was absolutely delighted."

What also pleased Moore was the fact that the car was delivered back to the pits with hardly a mark on it, just a scratch on the front bumper. That left little work for his smash repair shop in Sydney.



# ENTRY LIST

**James Hardie 1000, Mount Panorama, Bathurst, October 5, 1987**  
**ROUND EIGHT, 1987 WORLD TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP**

CAR No.	ENTRANT	DRIVER	CO-DRIVER(S)	CAR	CAPACITY
1	<b>Pro Team Italia</b>	Bruno Giacomelli (I)	Armin Hahne (D) Kevin Bartlett (NSW)	Maserati Biturbo	2491
2	<b>Bob Jane T-Marts</b>	Allan Grice (VIC)	Win Percy (GB)	VL Commodore	4980
3	<b>Peter McLeod</b>	Peter Janson (VIC)	Peter Fitzgerald (VIC)	VK Commodore	4980
4	<b>Formula 1 Investments P/L</b>	Graham Moore (NSW)	Michel Delcourt (B)	VK Commodore	4980
05	<b>HDT Racing P/L</b>	Peter Brock (VIC)	David Parsons (TAS)	VL Commodore	4980
6	<b>Ford Texaco Racing Team</b>	Steve Soper (GB)	Pierre Dieudonne (B)	Ford Sierra	1994
7	<b>Ford Texaco Racing Team</b>	Klaus Ludwig (D)	Klaus Niedzwiedz (D)	Ford Sierra	1994
9	<b>Allan Moffat Enterprises</b>	Allan Moffat (VIC)	Andy Rouse (GB) Thierry Tassin (B)	Ford Sierra	1994
10	<b>HDT Racing P/L</b>	Jon Crooke (VIC)	Peter McLeod (NSW)	VL Commodore	4980
11	<b>Enzed Team Perkins</b>	Larry Perkins (VIC)	Denny Hulme (NZ)	VK Commodore	4980
12	<b>Ford Texaco Racing Team</b>	Klaus Niedzwiedz (D)	Klaus Ludwig (D)	Ford Sierra	1994
14	<b>Nettcomm (Aust) Racing</b>	Murray Carter (VIC)	Denis Horley (VIC) Steve Masterton (NSW)	Nissan Skyline	1990
15	<b>Peter Jackson Nissan Racing</b>	Glenn Seton (VIC)	John Bowe (TAS)	Nissan Skyline	1990
16	<b>Mitsubishi Ralliart</b>	Gary Scott (QLD)	Akihiko Nakaya (J) John French (QLD)	Mitsubishi Starion	1998
17	<b>Shell Ultra Hi Tech Racing Team</b>	Dick Johnson (QLD)	Gregg Hansford (QLD)	Ford Sierra	1994
18	<b>Shell Ultra Hi Tech Racing Team</b>	Neville Crichton (NZ)	Charlie O'Brien (QLD)	Ford Sierra	1994
19	<b>Canam Enterprises</b>	Graeme Cameron (NZ)	Wayne Wilkinson (NZ)	VL Commodore	4980
20	<b>Terry Finnigan</b>	Terry Finnigan (NSW)	Geoff Leeds (NSW)	VK Commodore	4980
21	<b>D.F.C. NZ Ltd.</b>	John Billington (NZ)	Graeme Crosby (NZ)	VK Commodore	4980
22	<b>Lusty Engineering P/L</b>	Graham Lusty (VIC)	John Lusty (QLD)	VL Commodore	4980
23	<b>Jagparts</b>	Gerald Kay (VIC)	Alf Grant (QLD)	VK Commodore	4980
24	<b>Team Nissan Racing NZ</b>	Kent Baigent (NZ)	Graeme Bowkett (NZ)	Nissan Skyline	1990
25	<b>Team Nissan Racing NZ</b>	Graeme Bowkett (NZ)	Kent Baigent (NZ)	Nissan Skyline	1990
26	<b>Kalari Transport Services</b>	Tony Noske (VIC)	Garry Rush (NSW)	VK Commodore	4980
27	<b>Ray Gulson</b>	Ray Gulson (ACT)	Graham Gulson (ACT)	BMW 635CSi	3430
28	<b>Wayne Clift</b>	Wayne Clift (QLD)	Bernie Stack (SA)	VK Commodore	4980
29	<b>Mulvihill Racing</b>	Tony Mulvihill (NSW)	Ken Mathews (NSW) Barry Jones (NSW)	VK Commodore	4980
30	<b>Peter Jackson Nissan Racing</b>	George Fury (NSW)	Terry Shiel (NSW)	Nissan Skyline	1990
31	<b>Lester Smerdon</b>	Lester Smerdon (QLD)	Bruce Williams (VIC)	VK Commodore	4980
32	<b>Warren Cullen</b>	Warren Cullen (VIC)	Gary Sprague (QLD) Gary Cooke (NSW)	VK Commodore	4980
33	<b>Peter Williamson Toyota</b>	Peter Williamson (NSW)	John Sax (NZ)	Toyota Supra	2759
34	<b>Oxo Supercube Motorsport</b>	John Giddings (NSW)	Bruce Stewart (NSW)	Ford Sierra	1994
35	<b>Oxo Supercube Motorsport</b>	Andrew Miedecke (NSW)	Don Smith (NSW)	Ford Sierra	1994
36	<b>Yellow Pages</b>	Tony Kavich (NSW)	Kerry Baily (NSW)	VK Commodore	4980
37	<b>Brian Callaghan Racing P/L</b>	Brian Callaghan (NSW)	Barry Graham (NSW)	VK Commodore	4980
38	<b>Everlast Automotive Service</b>	Bill O'Brien (ACT)	Brian Sampson (VIC)	VL Commodore	4980
39	<b>Lansvale Smash Repairs</b>	Steve Reed (NSW)	Trevor Ashby (NSW)	VL Commodore	4980
<b>Class B (1601-2500cc)</b>					
40	<b>BMW Motorsport/Schnitzer BMW Team</b>	Roland Ratzenberger (A)	Markus Oestreich (D) Roberto Ravaglia (I)	BMW M3	2303
41	<b>BMW Motorsport</b>	Gary Brabham (NSW)	Juan Manuel Fangio II (RA)	BMW M3	2302
42	<b>BMW Motorsport/CiBiEmme</b>	Johnny Cecotto (VEN)	Gianfranco Brancatelli (I)	BMW M3	2302
43	<b>BMW Motorsport/Bigazzi</b>	Wilfried Vogt (D)	Oliver Grouillard (F) Altfried Heger (D)	BMW M3	2302
44	<b>JPS Team BMW</b>	Jim Richards (VIC)	Tony Longhurst (QLD) Ludwig Finauer (NSW)	BMW M3	2302
45	<b>JPS Team BMW</b>	Robert Francevic (NZ)	Ludwig Finauer (NSW) Jim Richards (VIC)	BMW M3	2302
46	<b>BMW Motorsport/Schnitzer BMW Team</b>	Roberto Ravaglia (I)	Emanuele Pirro (I) Roland Ratzenberger (A)	BMW M3	2302
47	<b>BMW Motorsport</b>	Annette Meeuvissen (D)	Mercedes Stermitz (A)	BMW M3	2302
50	<b>Riethmuller-Ward International Motorsport P/L</b>	Phil Ward (NSW)	Lyndon Riethmuller (NSW)	Mercedes 190E	2302
53	<b>Cardinal Network</b>	Trevor Crowe (NZ)	Ian Tulloch (NZ)	BMW M3	2302
57	<b>Network Alfa</b>	Colin Bond (NSW)	Lucio Cesario (VIC)	Alfa Romeo 75	1770
60	<b>Peter Jackson Nissan Racing</b>	Mark Skaife (VIC)	Grant Jarrett (SA)	Nissan Gazelle	1990
<b>Class C (1001-1600cc)</b>					
90	<b>Toyota Team Australia</b>	Drew Price (VIC)	John Smith (NSW)	Toyota Corolla	1587
91	<b>Toyota Team Australia</b>	John Faulkner (VIC)	Mike Quinn (NSW)	Toyota Corolla	1587
92	<b>Ratcliff Transport Spares</b>	David Ratcliff (NSW)	Mark Gibbs (NSW)	Toyota Levin	1587
93	<b>Bob Holden Motors Manly Vale</b>	Bob Holden (NSW)	Garry Williamson (NSW) Bryan Bate (NZ)	Toyota Sprinter	1587
94	<b>Gullivers Travel Limited</b>	Andrew Bagnall (NZ)	Mark Jennings (NZ)	Toyota Corolla	1587
100	<b>Alfa Romeo</b>	Giorgio Francia (I)	Daniele Toppoli (I)	Alfa Romeo 33	1489



# PRACTICE TIMES

**SESSION ONE:** OCTOBER 1, 2.00-3.30 p.m.  
**SESSION TWO:** OCTOBER 2, 11 a.m.-12.30 p.m.  
**SESSION THREE:** OCTOBER 2, 2.00-3.30 p.m.

TOP TEN TIMES PER SESSION IN BOLD

CAR	DRIVER	SESSION ONE	SESSION TWO	SESSION THREE
1	B. Giacomelli*	DNP	2:34.38	DNP
	A. Hahne	2:31.02	2:28.88	DNP
	K. Bartlett	DNP	2:37.24	2:30.82
2	A. Grice	<b>2:21.38</b>	2:24.14	DNP
	W. Percy	2:25.18	2:25.20	DNP
3	P. Janson	DNP	2:32.16	2:30.80
	P. Fitzgerald	2:30.38	2:31.34	2:29.84
4	G. Moore	2:32.56	2:32.58	2:30.44
	M. Delcourt	2:32.24	2:36.66	2:28.18
05	P. Brock	2:22.54	<b>2:22.38</b>	<b>2:22.66</b>
	D. Parsons	2:24.22	2:25.08	2:24.66
6	S. Soper	<b>2:22.52</b>	<b>2:20.52</b>	DNP
	P. Dieudonne	2:27.68	DNP	DNP
7	R. Ludwig	<b>2:19.96</b>	DNP	<b>2:17.46</b>
	K. Niedzwiedz	2:21.92	DNP	DNP
9	A. Moffat	2:26.20	2:24.50	2:24.26
	A. Rouse	<b>2:18.12</b>	DNP	<b>2:18.96</b>
10	T. Tassin	2:23.00	<b>2:22.96</b>	DNP
	J. Crooke	2:27.16	2:27.00	2:46.42
11	P. McLeod	2:28.34	2:28.16	2:27.96
	P. Brock	DNP	DNP	2:25.12
12	L. Perkins	2:23.64	<b>2:22.28</b>	2:25.02
	D. Hulme	2:26.42	2:26.22	2:25.68
14	K. Niedzwiedz	<b>2:20.96</b>	DNP	<b>2:21.92</b>
	M. Carter	2:28.22	2:40.54	2:32.18
15	D. Horley*	2:39.52	DNP	DNP
	S. Masterton	2:29.28	DNP	DNP
16	G. Seton	DNP	<b>2:23.40</b>	2:23.50
	J. Bowe	DNP	2:25.88	DNP
17	G. Scott	2:27.60	2:28.22	2:25.82
	A. Nakaya	2:28.54	2:29.02	DNP
	J. French	2:37.50	2:36.56	2:31.38
18	D. Johnson	<b>2:20.18</b>	<b>2:22.70</b>	<b>2:22.26</b>
	G. Hansford	DNP	<b>2:21.36</b>	2:25.24
19	N. Crichton	DNP	DNP	<b>2:23.14</b>
	C. O'Brien	<b>2:22.30</b>	<b>2:21.50</b>	DNP
20	D. Johnson	DNP	2:25.04	DNP
	G. Cameron	2:28.96	2:29.92	DNP
21	W. Wilkinson	2:27.58	2:26.56	DNP
	T. Finnigan	DNP	2:28.46	DNP
22	G. Leeds*	DNP	DNP	2:33.14
	J. Billington	2:27.22	2:36.52	2:34.04
23	G. Crosby	DNP	2:27.68	2:27.84
	G. Lusty	2:31.48	2:32.52	2:32.12
24	J. Lusty	2:30.70	2:33.90	2:30.66
	G. Kay	2:34.00	2:33.14	DNP
25	A. Grant	2:35.06	DNP	2:31.10
	K. Baigent	2:27.98	DNP	DNP
26	G. Bowkett	2:24.60	2:26.04	2:26.58
	T. Noske	2:31.14	2:30.16	2:30.24
27	G. Rush	2:31.06	2:30.14	2:29.00
	R. Gulson	2:33.82	2:36.68	2:32.30
28	G. Gulson	2:31.86	2:35.64	2:31.24
	W. Clift*	2:33.16	2:38.36	2:35.72
29	B. Stack	2:33.56	2:34.54	2:31.88
	T. Mulvihill	2:30.04	2:29.92	DNP
30	K. Mathews	2:31.80	DNP	2:30.76
	B. Jones	2:28.42	DNP	DNP
31	G. Fury	2:24.54	2:26.22	<b>2:22.76</b>
	T. Shiel	2:28.32	2:27.94	DNP
32	L. Smerdon*	2:36.00	2:34.58	2:32.90
	B. Williams	2:32.64	2:32.78	2:30.48





32	W. Cullen	2:27.52	2:27.16	2:28.00
	G. Sprague	2:31.58	2:30.28	2:28.68
	G. Cooke	2:31.66	DNP	2:30.62
33	G. Williamson*	2:35.70	2:35.08	DNP
	J. Sax*	DNP	2:41.86	2:39.62
	C. Clearihan*	2:41.76	2:37.72	2:37.76
34	J. Giddings	2:30.00	2:38.96	2:27.92
	B. Stewart	2:26.10	2:29.38	DNP
35	A. Miedecke	<b>2:20.26</b>	<b>2:23.86</b>	<b>2:20.50</b>
	D. Smith	DNP	2:32.24	2:27.92
36	T. Kavich	2:29.36	2:28.72	2:28.88
	K. Bailly	2:31.90	2:30.76	2:31.30
37	B. Callaghan	2:26.84	2:27.22	2:27.52
	B. Graham	2:28.28	DNP	2:28.74
38	B. O'Brien	2:32.26	2:30.58	2:28.52
	B. Sampson	2:37.50	2:31.10	2:29.42
39	S. Reed	DNP	2:32.26	2:30.12
	K. Ashby	DNP	DNP	2:30.62
40	R. Ratzenberger	2:25.38	2:26.28	DNP
	M. Oestreich	2:25.96	2:24.82	DNP
41	G. Brabham	2:27.48	DNP	2:26.96
	J.-M. Fangio	2:24.68	2:28.26	2:25.44
42	J. Cecotto	<b>2:22.28</b>	<b>2:22.52</b>	<b>2:21.48</b>
	G. Brancatelli	2:25.36	2:25.44	2:25.04
43	W. Vogt	2:34.20	2:26.62	2:35.44
	O. Grouillard	2:29.08	DNP	2:28.06
	A. Heger	DNP	2:24.54	2:25.20
44	J. Richards	<b>2:22.42</b>	2:27.42	<b>2:22.42</b>
	T. Longhurst	2:26.02	2:25.42	DNP
45	R. Francevic	2:54.84	2:26.98	2:25.50
	L. Finauer	2:27.80	2:27.44	DNP
46	R. Ravaglia	2:22.88	2:25.44	DNP
	E. Pirro	2:22.66	2:24.04	2:23.32

47	A. Meeuvissen	DNP	DNP	2:34.74
	M. Stermitz	DNP	DNP	2:34.84
50	P. Ward	2:30.72	2:40.86	2:31.34
	L. Riethmuller	2:47.34	2:33.04	2:38.90
53	T. Crowe	2:30.36	2:30.14	2:29.08
	I. Tulloch	2:30.88	2:29.42	2:29.66
57	C. Bond	2:25.34	DNP	2:25.84
	L. Cesario	2:26.24	2:28.86	2:27.54
60	M. Skaife	2:35.78	2:47.10	2:36.68
	G. Jarrett	2:40.38	2:38.94	2:36.40
90	D. Price	DNP	2:39.10	2:37.88
	J. Smith	2:37.52	2:35.30	2:37.58
91	J. Faulkner	2:37.58	2:40.10	2:40.30
	M. Quinn	2:38.74	DNP	2:40.70
92	D. Ratcliff	2:48.04	DNP	2:54.42
	M. Gibbs	2:44.28	DNP	3:17.08
93	B. Holden	2:43.48	DNP	2:47.70
	G. Willmington	2:39.18	2:39.48	DNP
	B. Bate	2:49.34	DNP	DNP
94	A. Bagnall	2:39.26	2:40.96	2:41.58
	M. Jennings	2:40.48	DNP	2:42.58
	C. Hodgetts	2:39.32	2:40.22	2:37.84
100	G. Francia	2:44.10	DNP	2:47.84
	D. Toffoli	2:45.54	2:54.92	DNP

DNP: did not practise

\* Did not qualify

#### 110% QUALIFYING CUT-OFF TIMES:

Class A — 2:32.44

Class B — 2:36.40

Class C — 2:53.08

#### 130% CUT-OFF TIME — 3:00.16



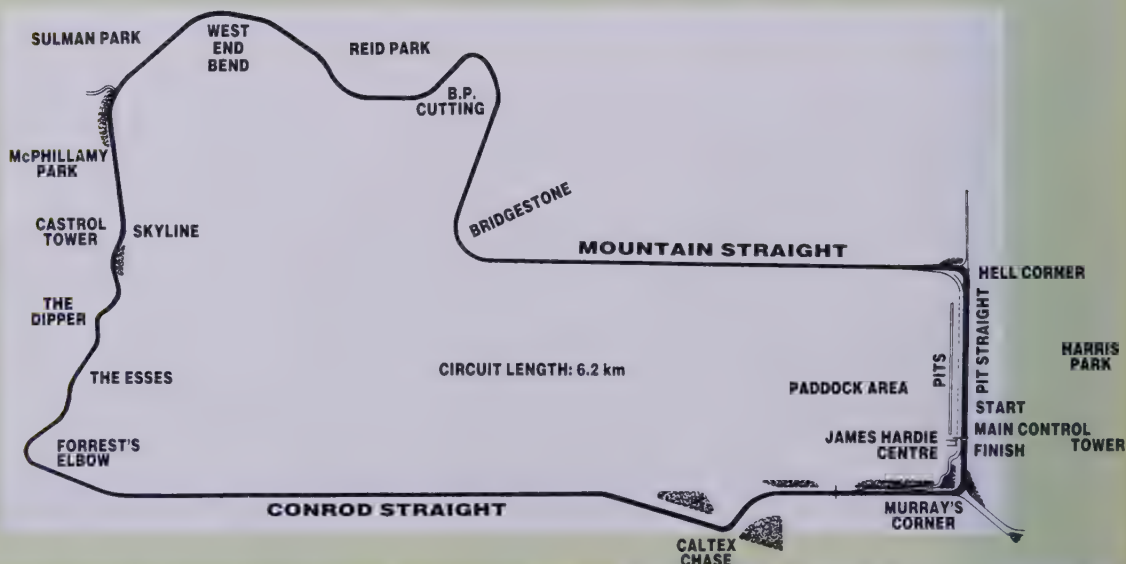


# STARTING GRID

- 1 — **K. Ludwig/K. Niedzwiedz**  
(Sierra) 2:16.969
- 3 — **S. Soper/P. Dieudonne**  
(Sierra) 2:18.663
- 5 — **A. Miedecke/D. Smith**  
(Sierra) 2:22.057
- 7 — **A. Grice/W. Percy**  
(Commodore) 2:23.626
- 9 — **D. Johnson/G. Hansford**  
(Sierra) 2:22.744\*\*
- 11 — **P. Brock/D. Parsons**  
(Commodore) 2:22.38
- 13 — **R. Ravaglia/M. Oestreich/R. Ratzenberger**  
(BMW M3) 2:22.66
- 15 — **G. Seton/J. Bowe**  
(Skyline) 2:23.40
- 17 — **K. Baigent/G. Bowkett**  
(Skyline) 2:24.60
- 19 — **R. Ratzenberger/E. Pirro/R. Ravaglia**  
(BMW M3) 2:24.82
- 21 — **C Bond/L. Cesario**  
(Alfa Romeo 75) 2:25.34
- 23 — **G. Scott/A. Nakaya/J. French**  
(Starion) 2:25.82
- 25 — **G. Cameron/W. Wilkinson**  
(Commodore) 2:26.66
- 27 — **W. Cullen/G. Sprague/G. Cooke**  
(Commodore) 2:27.16
- 29 — **G. Moore/M. Delcourt**  
(Commodore) 2:28.18
- 31 — **T. Kavich/K. Bailly**  
(Commodore) 2:28.28
- 33 — **B. O'Brien/B. Sampson**  
(Commodore) 2:28.52
- 35 — **T. Noske/G. Rush**  
(Commodore) 2:29.00
- 37 — **P. Janson/P. Fitzgerald**  
(Commodore) 2:29.84
- 39 — **G. Lusty/J. Lusty**  
(Commodore) 2:30.66
- 41 — **R. Gulson/G. Gulson**  
(BMW 635 CSI) 2:31.24
- 43 — **D. Price/J. Smith**  
(Corolla) 2:35.30
- 45 — **J. Faulkner/M. Quinn**  
(Corolla) 2:37.58
- 47 — **B. Holden/G. Willmington/B. Bate**  
(Sprinter) 2:39.18
- 49 — **D. Ratcliffe/D. Gibbs**  
(Levin) 2:44.28
- 2 — **A. Moffat/A. Rouse/T. Tassin**  
(Sierra) 2:18.468
- 4 — **K. Niedzwiedz/K. Ludwig**  
(Sierra) 2:21.318\*
- 6 — **J. Cecotto/G. Brancatelli/R. Ravaglia**  
(BMW M3) 2:23.147
- 8 — **L. Perkins/D. Hulme**  
(Commodore) 2:24.209
- 10 — **N. Crichton/C. O'Brien**  
(Sierra) 2:21.452\*\*
- 12 — **J. Richards/T. Longhurst**  
(BMW M3) 2:22.42
- 14 — **G. Fury/T. Shiel**  
(Skyline) 2:22.76
- 16 — **W. Vogt/O. Grouillard/A. Heger**  
(BMW M3) 2:24.54
- 18 — **G. Brabham/J. M. Fangio II/M. Oestreich**  
(BMW M3) 2:24.68
- 20 — **J. Crooke/P. McLeod**  
(Commodore) 2:25.12
- 22 — **R. Francevic/L. Finauer**  
(BMW M3) 2:25.50
- 24 — **J. Giddings/B. Stewart**  
(Sierra) 2:26.10
- 26 — **B. Callaghan/B. Graham**  
(Commodore) 2:26.84
- 28 — **J. Billington/G. Crosby**  
(Commodore) 2:27.22
- 30 — **M. Carter/S. Masterton**  
(Skyline) 2:28.22
- 32 — **T. Mulvihill/K. Mathews/B. Jones**  
(Commodore) 2:28.42
- 34 — **A. Hahne/K. Bartlett**  
(Maserati) 2:28.88
- 36 — **T. Crowe/I. Tulloch**  
(BMW M3) 2:29.08
- 38 — **S. Reed/T. Ashby**  
(Commodore) 2:30.12
- 40 — **P. Ward/L. Reithmuller**  
(Mercedes) 2:30.72
- 42 — **A. Meeuvissen/M. Stermitz/R. Ratzenberger**  
(BMW M3) 2:34.74
- 44 — **M. Skaife/G. Jarrett**  
(Gazelle) 2:35.78
- 46 — **A. Bagnall/M. Jennings/C. Hodgetts**  
(Corolla) 2:37.84
- 48 — **G. Francia/D. Toffoli**  
(Alfa Romeo 33) 2:44.10

\* Withdrew after practice

\*\* Regridged at direction of stewards, following fuel irregularity in Hardie's Heroes.





# RESULTS

POSITION	CAR No.	DRIVERS	CAR	LAPS	FASTEST LAP
1	6†	Steve Soper/Pierre Dieudonne	FORD SIERRA	161	2:21.14
2	7†	Klaus Ludwig/Klaus Niedzwiedz	FORD SIERRA	159	2:21.64
3	10	Peter Brock/David Parsons/Peter McLeod	COMMODORE	158	2:25.40
4	15	Glenn Seton/John Bowe	SKYLINE	157	2:25.06
5	30	George Fury/Terry Shiel	SKYLINE	157	2:24.92
6	44*	Jim Richards/Tony Longhurst	BMW M3	156	2:24.62
7	16	Gary Scott/Akihiko Nakaya	STARION	154	2:29.30
8	45	Robbie Francevic/Ludwig Finauer	BMW M3	154	2:25.96
9	42	Johnny Cecotto/Gianfranco Brancatelli	BMW M3	154	2:24.90
10	4	Graham Moore/Michel Delcourt	COMMODORE	152	2:29.32
11	53***	Trevor Crowe/Ian Tulloch	BMW M3	151	2:30.38
12	26	Tony Noske/Garry Rush	COMMODORE	151	2:30.10
13	39	Steve Reed/Trevor Ashby	COMMODORE	150	2:28.96
14	43	Winni Vogt/Olivier Grouillard/Altfred Heger	BMW M3	150	2:25.68
15	40	Emanuele Pirro/Roberto Ravaglia	BMW M3	150	2:24.58
16	34	John Giddings/Bruce Stewart	FORD SIERRA	150	2:23.94
17	14***	Murray Carter/Steve Masterton	SKYLINE	147	2:27.52
18	38	Bill O'Brien/Brian Sampson	COMMODORE	146	2:29.92
19	27	Ray Gulson/Graham Gulson	BMW 635CSi	146	2:32.10
20	41	Gary Brabham/Juan Manuel Fangio	BMW M3	146	2:26.56
21	35	Andrew Miedecke/Don Smith	FORD SIERRA	144	2:22.50
22	3	Peter Janson/Peter Fitzgerald	COMMODORE	144	2:29.88
23	60	Mark Skaife/Grant Jarrett	NISSAN GAZELLE	138	2:36.18
24	29	Tony Mulvihill/Ken Mathews	COMMODORE	136	2:30.38
25	24	Kent Bagent/Graeme Bowkett	SKYLINE	135	2:26.02
26	36	Tony Kavich/Kerry Bailly	COMMODORE	131	2:30.12
27	93**	Bob Holden/Garry Willmington/Brian Bate	COROLLA	123	2:44.84

## Retirements

28	90	Drew Price/John Smith	COROLLA (accident)	5:36:41.50	2:39.04
29	91	John Faulkner/Mike Quinn	COROLLA (accident)	5:36:33.36	2:40.20
30	7	Allan Grice/Win Percy	COMMODORE (rear axle)	4:08:40.00	2:23.44
31	92	David Ratcliff/Mark Gibbs	COROLLA (crankshaft)	4:41:10.22	2:41.40
32	37	Brian Callaghan/Barry Graham	COMMODORE (engine)	3:47:52.66	2:28.94
33	94	Andrew Bagnall/Mark Jennings	COROLLA (accident)	3:42:39.14	2:39.38
34	19	Graeme Cameron/Wayne Wilkinson	COMMODORE (fuel pump)	3:15:37.26	2:28.90
35	50	Phil Ward/Lyndon Reithmuller	MERCEDES (suspension)	3:17:49.42	2:34.18
36	100	Giorgio Francia/Daniele Toffoli	ALFA ROMEO 33 (engine)	2:49:47.86	2:48.54
37	47	Annette Meeuvissen/Mercedes Stermitz	BMW M3 (clutch)	1:56:25.44	2:29.72
38	46	Markus Oestreich/Roland Ratzenberger	BMW M3 (engine)	1:50:17.24	2:26.26
39	5	Peter Brock/David Parsons	COMMODORE (engine)	1:24:47.90	2:24.34
40	57	Colin Bond/Lucio Cesario	ALFA ROMEO 75 (accident)	1:47:19.20	2:26.22
41	9	Allan Moffat/Andy Rouse/Thierry Tassin	FORD SIERRA (transmission)	1:14:44.74	2:22.76
42	32	Warren Cullen/Gary Sprague/Gary Cooke	COMMODORE (accident)	1:18:11.70	2:27.66
43	1	Armin Hahne/Kevin Bartlett	MASERATI (differential)	1:13:56.94	2:27.66
44	22	Graham Lusty/John Lusty	COMMODORE (accident)	43:47.60	2:31.16
45	21	John Billington/Graeme Crosby	COMMODORE (oil pressure)	23:40.26	2:30.10
46	17	Dick Johnson/Gregg Hansford	FORD SIERRA (differential)	7:23.14	2:22.90
47	11	Larry Perkins/Denny Hulme	COMMODORE (accident)	4:54.56	2:25.14
48	18	Neville Crichton/Charlie O'Brien	FORD SIERRA (accident)	4:55.46	2:24.72

**Race time:** 6 hr. 58 min. 45.44 sec.

\* Winner Class B (1601-2500cc)

\*\* Winner Class C (under 1600cc)

\*\*\* Disqualified at post race scrutineering

† Disqualified at hearing of pre-event protest

**PLEASE NOTE:** Results provisional only at time of publication.



## THE KINGS OF THE MOUNTAIN

- 1963: **HARRY FIRTH** (Vic.) — **BOB JANE** (Vic.) Ford Cortina GT  
1964: **BOB JANE** (Vic.) — **GEORGE REYNOLDS** (Vic.) Ford Cortina GT  
1965: **BARRY SETON** (NSW) — **MIDGE BOSWORTH** (NSW) Ford Cortina GT500  
1966: **RAUNO AALTONEN** (FIN) — **BOB HOLDEN** (NSW) Mini Cooper S  
1967: **HARRY FIRTH** (Vic.) — **FRED GIBSON** (NSW) Ford Falcon GT  
1968: **BRUCE McPHEE** (NSW) — **BARRY MULHOLLAND** (NSW) Holden Monaro  
1969: **COLIN BOND** (NSW) — **TONY ROBERTS** (NSW) Holden Monaro  
1970: **ALLAN MOFFAT** (Vic.) — Ford Falcon GTHO  
1971: **ALLAN MOFFAT** (Vic.) — Ford Falcon GTHO  
1972: **PETER BROCK** (Vic.) — Holden Torana XU1  
1973: **ALLAN MOFFAT** (Vic.) — **IAN GEOGHEGAN** (NSW) Ford Falcon GT  
1974: **JOHN GOSS** (NSW) — **KEVIN BARTLETT** (NSW) Ford Falcon GT  
1975: **PETER BROCK** (Vic.) — **BRIAN SAMPSON** (Vic.) Holden Torana L34  
1976: **BOB MORRIS** (NSW) — **JOHN FITZPATRICK** (GB) Holden Torana L34  
1977: **ALLAN MOFFAT** (Vic.) — **JACKY ICKX** (B) Ford Falcon  
1978: **PETER BROCK** (Vic.) — **JIM RICHARDS** (Vic.) Holden Torana A9X  
1979: **PETER BROCK** (Vic.) — **JIM RICHARDS** (Vic.) Holden Torana A9X  
1980: **PETER BROCK** (Vic.) — **JIM RICHARDS** (Vic.) Holden Commodore  
1981: **DICK JOHNSON** (Qld.) — **JOHN FRENCH** (Qld) Ford Falcon  
1982: **PETER BROCK** (Vic.) — **LARRY PERKINS** (Vic.) Holden Commodore  
1983: **PETER BROCK** (Vic.) — **LARRY PERKINS** (Vic.) — **JOHN HARVEY** (Vic.) Holden Commodore  
1984: **PETER BROCK** (Vic.) — **LARRY PERKINS** (Vic.) Holden Commodore  
1985: **JOHN GOSS** (NSW) — **ARMIN HAHNE** (D) Jaguar XJS  
1986: **ALLAN GRICE** (NSW) — **GRAEME BAILEY** (NSW) Holden Commodore  
\*1987: **PETER BROCK** (Vic.) — **DAVID PARSONS** (Tas.) — **PETER McLEOD** (NSW) Holden Commodore



\* Provisional winner only at time of publication





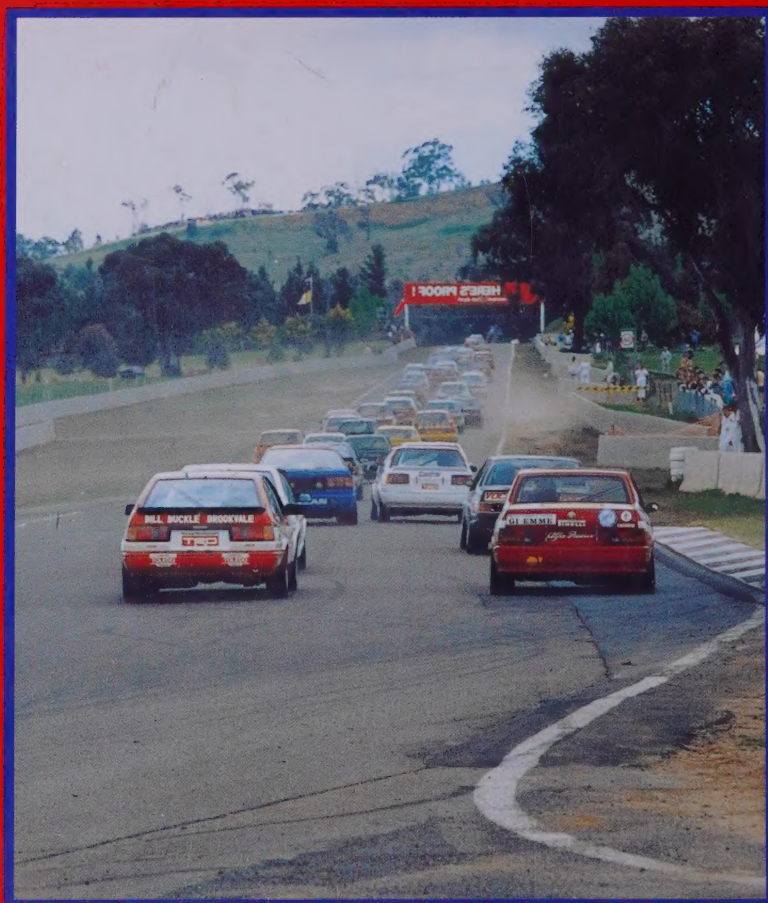












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