



MAYDAY

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After a number of tries, the computer seems to want to work again. Needless to say, I am again behind in my issues. This one will catch up on an ongoing story, print a new contributor's article (wonder of wonders) and give a short lowdown on upcoming events - which by necessity is short as we have little left of the season.

LETTERS FROM EUROPE

Although Dennis' return precedes these letters from him by a few months, I thought you would like to read 'em anyway. I must confess that Dennis met his deadlines as a good contributing editor should, but the editors-in-chief and printing mechanisms have been on strike lately. And so, without further ado, heere's Dennis...

May 13, Silverstone, England
World Endurance Championship, Round 2

We've all grown accustomed to the "animals" at Westwood and other tracks that come out on a sunny Sunday to exercise their biceps by hoisting vast quantities of their favourite yeast bi-products, only to pass out half way through the pace lap. Some like to create instant chicances by throwing Molson's bottles (empty, of course) onto the back straight. We've all heard stories about the bog monsters of Watkins Glen (in case you haven't, they burn cars and buses) and the "tifosi" in Italy (they run in front of cars on the last lap). The German fans are the same, but they build better cages to hold them. But British race fans are a different breed. Equipped with a program and a jacket that rivals the best of the patch-covered turn workers', they come out by the thousands. And they've all done their homework. Then they actually watch the race.

The green flag drops and the Patrese/Wolleck Lancia jumps into the lead and sets a blinding pace. Jochen Mass, in a works Porsche, sets off in pursuit. Behind me, on the other side of the fence, I hear Trevor discussing strategy with Nigel:

"They'll never last a thousand kilometres at that pace."

"The Lancia's just trying to sacrifice himself to get the factory Porsche to chase him and blow up."

"Mass is too smart for that. He'll slow down."

Trevor is right. The Porsche settles back into a more reasonable pace, as does the Lancia.

A couple of hours later and the Palmer/Lammers Porsche has worked its way up into the lead, with the Ickx/Mass Porsche in second and the Lancia in third.

"Now," says Nigel, "this would give Palmer and Lammers the points lead for the

series. Bell and Bellof would be second, and..."
 "Only if the appeal is upheld," interrupts Trevor, referring to a disputed Bell/Bellof victory at Monza.

They continue their points analysis down to sixth place. For both situations.

Suddenly, the leading Porsche starts to smoke and pulls into the pits.

"Now all four factory Porsche drivers will be tied..."

One of the slower cars comes by with his door ajar. Trevor points out that the chassis flexes a little more than the others as it's going through the chicane and that's what probably caused the door to open. His colour commentator replies, "And he probably has a lot of trouble back at Maggott's bend."

The play-by-play continues for the entire 5 hours, 10 minutes it takes these cars to travel 1000 km. It's nice to work a race where the spectators are fans of the race instead of the event.

Finally, the checkered flag drops on the Ickx/Mass Rothman's Porsche and the 40,000 fans let out a collective "Jolly good show!"

June 22

Today's subject is survival on the international commodities market. It's a dog-eat-dog world out there and it takes an astute business sense to come out on top. I am, of course, talking about the collecting and trading of racing souvenirs.

I came to Europe armed with a collection of patches and stickers that have been gathering dust for the last few years, please a small stack of META stickers. My intention is to collect and trade enough goodies to cover a new pair of whites, a new cooler and one more wall of my bedroom.

The stock market opens in Hockenheim. I've heard these Germans are ruthless at the bargaining table, so I start with a good-will gesture. META stickers for everyone. Between sessions, I notice one of the Swiss workers eyeing the SCCA patch on the sleeve of my whites. "Schön" he says. Well it just so happens that I've been carrying another one around for about six years. So, I pull out my camera bag and ask him "Ein fur ein?" His eyes light up like a kid at Christmas - I've got him in the palm of my hand. Then he pulls out his briefcase (covered with racing stickers, of course) and the trading begins. When the dust clears, I've scored three stickers, a patch and a friend for life.

Next, it's time for some speculation investment. Remember the Professor? He casually mentions that the Westwood patch is the nicest looking one he's ever seen. Now, I have in my possession one of the last surviving, genuine, original fully sewn "Westwood Mountain High Racing" patches - a rare commodity indeed! A tru collector's item. In return, I get an original "Skoal Bandit" sticker, plus when he gets back to Arizona, a patch from "the other PIR" (Phoenix International Raceway), the coveted Desert Moose Racing sticker and a future draft choice.

On to Silverstone, where the trading should be a little easier. I can almost understand the language here. One of the "blokes" that I work with is a truck driver for

Volkswagen/Audi parts distribution. He delivers to a dozen or so racing teams. It's time to start trading in "futures". After a morning of "Well, I think I can get you this", and "back home I can get you that", the deal is finally set. If I send him some "real American" patches - you know, Holley Carbs, Harley Davidson, etc. - then he'll send me as many patches and stickers as he can get his hands on - including an Audi Sport patch and a player to be named later.

On to Le Mans (only spectating) where it's time to REALLY score. Things are done a bit differently here. Every sponsor and manufacturer shows up with a tent or trailer, or they rent a display building and then they just sort of give things away. It really takes all the fun out of "appropriations". Just a quick walk through the infield to collect a few things. Skoal Bandit stickers? I'll take a few, please. New Man Porsche stickers? OK. I'll have some of them, too. Gitane? They don't sponsor a car here, but who am I to argue? A B.F. Goodrich hat? Yes, thank you. And of course, we can't forget the Michelin F1 posters. In a 24 hour race, you can take several tours through the infield.

Inventory with one race to go: over 100 stickers, 20 posters, a half dozen patches, 3 hats and 1 t-shirt. By the time you read this, I'll probably be back in Vancouver. (Ed. note - yeah sure). Then the trading REALLY begins!

And for all of you hanging on the edge of your seats, waiting to hear the final comment from the first letter from Europe, here it is:

...possibly work? Don't ask silly questions. This system has been working for decades. It's a system. No better or worse than any other system. Just different.

This completes the written saga of Dennis' travels through Europe.

AND NOW, DIRECT FROM "THE UNKNOWN SCRIBER"

My goodness, who can this be putting pen to pad? I've wanted for some time to put my thoughts across on paper. To stimulate some thought, maybe some discussion, even an argument or two. I love excitement and challenge. So don't pick a fight with me, because I love it even if I know it's pointless!

I've got you wondering what might be so contentious, to even get people angry. Well, I've felt that for a long time, some people in the club are either frustrated and hungry for power or need their egos fed. The idea a worker is god is a lot of crap. I'm qualified to say so because I are one, with all my imperfections. The thing that gets my dander up is the difference I see in the workers from Portland, for example. Some of them are the pits, but I've found a healthier attitude there. They are concerned with being the best they can. Now some might go about it funny, and some think they are wonderful, but they don't stop trying to improve. They also aren't obsessed with the thought that they are so indispensable that racing would not survive without them. That notion is also a lot of crap. I've always maintained that the priority should be that the driver is number one. Drivers have to be supported and kept excited in order for them to do some of the crazy, fun things that they enjoy. Then guess who is next - the spectators - they pay our bills and without them, we die! Ever see a track

survive without them, ever tried to find sponsorship? Then last, but not least, guess who? Us, of course. If the drivers are having fun being crazy, feeling safe knowing we are keen and competent and the crowds are screaming and cheering into a frenzy, guess who's Valvoline patches are falling off coveralls from excitement?!

Now am I being a little hard on my own people? You bet. But then I care about us, and I want to work with a finely tuned corner crew. I get excited about watching a class act on my corner. The people I've been with lately need some brushing up. We don't know how long the track is to be around for, so go for it. Before acknowledgement and recognition is handed out, people need to earn it. As far as the other people who don't need brushing up go, well maybe, but who am I to say - I'm not perfect!

See you at the track.

Ed. Note

Maybe you can guess who this is, but I won't tell you, yet. What I would like, though, is if this article gets your back up, write a rebuttal. If no one does, I'll assume you all think the same, and we'll at least know where we all stand! Since the Mayday does act as a forum for people's views, I think we would all be well served if this was dealt with through this vehicle and not a regular club meeting. What do you think?

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

September 21, 22 & 23	TransAm/WCAR	Seattle
October 6 - 7	7 Hour Enduro	Westwood
October 13	6 Hour Enduro	Portland

Well, looks like I've got a little room to write a bit myself.

DRIVER TRAINING

It is from a totally different standpoint that I write this article - one of driver! I must tell you, this is fun stuff. Something one could get addicted to, I should think. But not me, of course.

My friend Denise Jimmo and I shared her little beastie, a VW Scirocco (the Honda would never have made it through Turn Two) and both of us had the time of our lives. I want to put into words the way I felt when I first started gaining speed through Turn 3 - AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH!!!! Being not one of the quickest cars on the circuit, it was double panic time, knowing all the faster cars had caught up at this point and were chomping at the bit (they weren't in my mirrors in 2 or 3A!) Thank you, thank you to Rick Smale's blue flagging. It really did help. (But if I had a 510...)

Boy, there sure is a lot to know. Even with a knowledge of flags and signals, having an idea where the lines were and that sort of thing, the concentration and awareness that is required is phenomenal. And brain fade for just a millisecond can send you where you

don't want to go. Roger & I discussed this after our high-speed practice and decided we'll think twice before criticizing drivers who suddenly spin out where you least expect them to - it's awfully easy. (Though if I had an RX3...)

Yes, you can see the flags clearly. No, it is not easy to remember to drive the line, acknowledge the flag, slow down, not pass anyone, watch where the oil is, guess where the deer are leaping, shift, brake, accelerate and wave to the workers all at the same time!

I'm sure glad you (us) guys in white are there. I felt a sense of confidence (although I was counting to see how many people were there to roll me back on my wheels at each turn). And flagging is important - be proud of yourself if you are a skilled flagger. It makes a difference when I can trust the people on the corners to warn me in time - it really does.

It was an excellent experience for me. I highly recommend it to all. (I wonder if there's a Formula Ford for sale...)

Handwritten signature

Next meeting Wed Sept 26

Faint, illegible text or stamp