

SPORTS-CAR RACING IN AMERICA

*An Attempt to Analyse the Position, with a Digression
Concerning Sports-Car Racing in Europe*

AMERICA is taking an increasing interest in sports-car racing. Up to now, however, she has not staged any long-distance classic events and, were it not for the dollar sales which result from the successful participation of British cars in her events, they would be of no more moment than our own pleasant but unimportant races for amateur drivers which take place at Silverstone, Goodwood, Castle Combe and elsewhere.

However, the prevailing topsy-turvy state of affairs makes dollars desirable and American sports-car races an excellent publicity and sales medium for our faster cars. In 1948 a few thousand spectators attended the Watkin's Glen Grand Prix, in 1949 the number was 100,000, and last year, when Goldschmidt's Cadillac-Allard won the main (sports-car) race, it became front-page news in such influential American newspapers as the *New York Herald Tribune* and *New York Times*. So the importance of these short, perhaps rather haphazard and sometimes rather "out-law" races cannot be overlooked. Moreover, late last year the S.C.C. of America ran a 6-hour race for the Sam Collier Memorial Trophy at Florida, in which half the race was deliberately run in darkness, prelude, we are told, to a 12-hour Le Mans type race this year.

Although the rules appertaining to these American sports-car races seem more akin to those prevailing in Italian than in

French or British races of this kind, i.e., stock cars are not insisted upon and considerable "hotting-up" is allowed, gradually the organisation is being tightened up, road-equipment now seems compulsory, and certainly the latest British high-performance cars are watched very closely by many potential buyers wherever they run. Observe, too, that Chinetti thought it worth while appearing in more than one of these races in a Ferrari.

So it behoves us to take a quick glance at what befell last year. In doing this I propose to give points for first, second and third placings in seven American races. The usual plot seems to be to have capacity classes and not necessarily to recognise an outright winner, but I have no compunction about regarding each race as a single race for all-comers, without handicap.

At this point I feel I should digress to state that in connection with a similar article which appeared last November on the European Sports-Car Races of 1950 I have been criticised "in certain quarters"—as a journalist says when he wishes to hide someone's identity—for basing my findings on such "scratch" placings. So before we return to the States I would like to recapitulate, and give revised markings for the Targa Florio, Mille Miglia, Le Mans, Silverstone and T.T. Regarding each of these as an unhandicapped speed-contest pure and simple, I allotted six marks for a

win, five for a second, four for a third place, and so on, down to six places. Using the same system but taking the handicap aspect into account the result is somewhat different, as shown in the table below. I should explain that the Targa Florio and Mille Miglia places are unamended because, like the American races we are going to consider in a moment, these rely on class results and there are no handicap placings.

SIX RACES ON GENERAL PLACINGS		SIX RACES ON HANDICAP PLACINGS	
Ferrari ...	34 marks	Ferrari ...	34 marks
Jaguar ...	24 "	Frazer-Nash ...	19 "
Lago-Talbot ...	11 "	Aston-Martin ...	16 "
Alfa-Romeo ...	10 "	Jaguar ...	14 "
Aston-Martin ...	8 "	Alfa-Romeo ...	10 "
Frazer-Nash ...	5 "	Monopole ...	6 "
Allard ...	4 "	Lago-Talbot ...	4 "
Healey ...	3 "	Ermini ...	3 "
Ermini ...	3 "	Maserati ...	2 "
Maserati ...	2 "	D.B. ...	2 "
Abarth ...	1 "	Abarth ...	1 "

* Six marks have been awarded to Aston-Martin and Monopole for the Le Mans tie and other cars moved up as if it hadn't happened.

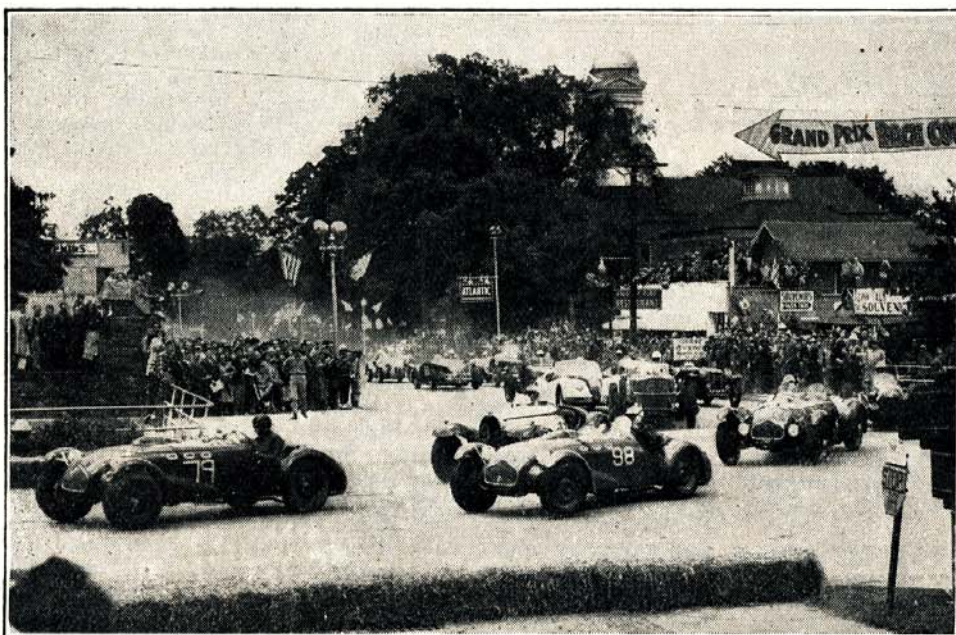
I hope the "certain quarter" will now be satisfied! To get things quite straight the International markings now become:

GENERAL PLACINGS		HANDICAP PLACINGS	
Italy ...	50 marks	Italy ...	50 marks
Britain ...	44 "	Britain ...	40 "
France ...	11 "	France ...	12 "

With this off my conscience I can return to American sports-car contests.

The first of concern took place over a 2-mile course at Palm Beach, over 105 miles, organised by that live body the S.C.C. of A. Leslie Johnson took his XK120 Jaguar over and, contrary to opinion—again "in certain quarters"—I believe it was a standard car, not more than 3 b.h.p. up or down on any other XK120 that claims to be standard. Johnson had entered without sanction from the R.A.C. and was granted an American licence for the occasion. The course proved tough on brakes, the "Achilles heel" of the XK120. Although Tom Cole's Cadillac-Allard led for a time, George Huntoon wore it down in a Ford V8-engined Duesenberg, winning at 57.4 m.p.h., and Briggs Cunningham came second in a Cadillac-motored Healey, his "Inter 166" Ferrari being third, in George Rand's hands, Johnson's XK120 fourth.

Five months later, for Palm Beach is a January fixture, American Grand Prix, Ltd., organised the Heart Trophy races for the American Heart Association. I do not know whether those who watched the racing found it beneficial to their hearts or the reverse, but the 3-mile circuit at Suffolk County airfield, Long Island, proved very tough on tyres, though the Englebert racing covers on Cunningham's Ferrari appeared not to mind. The big event was over 100 miles, with a Le Mans start. Tom Cole's Cadillac-Allard was off first, but eventually



[Photo by "Elmira Star Gazette," U.S.A.]

ALLARDS IN THE VAN.—An excellent shot of the start of race at Watkins Glen, with a "4.9" Bugatti amongst the 5.4-litre Cadillac-Allards of Davidson, Goldschmidt and Grier, the last-named in the Allard which was second at Le Mans.

Briggs Cunningham's Ferrari passed him, two laps from the end, winning by 1.4 sec. at nearly 77 m.p.h. Goldschmidt's XK120 Jaguar had a ding-dong battle with Kulok's Frazer-Nash but just made third place.

June saw the M.G.C.C., S.C.C. of A. and M.S.C. of A, under the sponsorship of the Lions Club of Bridgehampton, hold an 80-mile sports-car race over a 4-mile road circuit. This time Cole's Cadillac-Allard came home, winning at nearly 80 m.p.h. from Sam Collier in Cunningham's Ferrari, with the Ford-Duesenberg hybrid third.

From there we pass to a 40-mile affair at Santa Anna, California, won by Richter's J2 Allard from Hill's XK120 and McAfee's XK120. In fairness to the Jaguars it must be said that the Allard had a somewhat "souped-up" Ford V8 engine with alloy flywheel, magneto ignition, Allard dual manifolds and other non-standard features.

Linden airfield was the scene of an 88-mile race in July, when Kulok raised British prestige by getting his Frazer-Nash home first in front of an H.R.G. and a Cisitalia, at 84.87 m.p.h. On a road circuit at Elkhart Lake, the Chicago and Milwaukee Region of the S.C.C. of A. held some races, of which the 67-mile sports-car Feature Race was won by James Kimberly's Ferrari at 73 m.p.h., from Fred Wacker's Healey "Silverstone" and James Feld's XK120 Jaguar.

Watkin's Glen, in September, was a highlight of this American sports-car racing. Organised by the S.C.C. of A., the Grand Prix was actually a sports-car event, over a road course near Lake Seneca, New York. It was for Le Mans-type cars and attracted great interest. Entries included many Cadillac-Allards, of which Wacker's had Hydramatic transmission, a Bugatti with Dynaflo transmission(!), masses of "TC" M.G.s, as many XK120 Jaguars, of which Logan Hill's had a Wade supercharger, H.R.G., Frazer-Nash, Ferrari, Veritas and Healey. Cunningham's Healey "Silverstone" had a five-carburettor Cadillac engine and a de Dion back axle. It is interesting, but hardly surprising, that the o.h.v., 90-deg., short-stroke V8 Cadillac engine, of 5.4 litres, was proving more popular with those who really went racing than Ford engines, in spite of "hot-rod" knowledge. These engines give 160 b.h.p. at 3,800 r.p.m. in twin carburettor form and I understand that in the States, with special camshaft, do over 6,000 r.p.m., after the hydraulic tappets have been replaced with normal ones. It is hardly surprising, either, that these engines find their way into J2 Allards, for here is a stock car all complete with de Dion rear end, weighing 17 cwt. with a Ford engine and presumably not much more than 18 cwt. with the Cadillac engine installed. One is tempted to wonder, however, whether an Ardun-converted o.h.v. Mercury engine will not soon prove as good as the Cadillac unit.

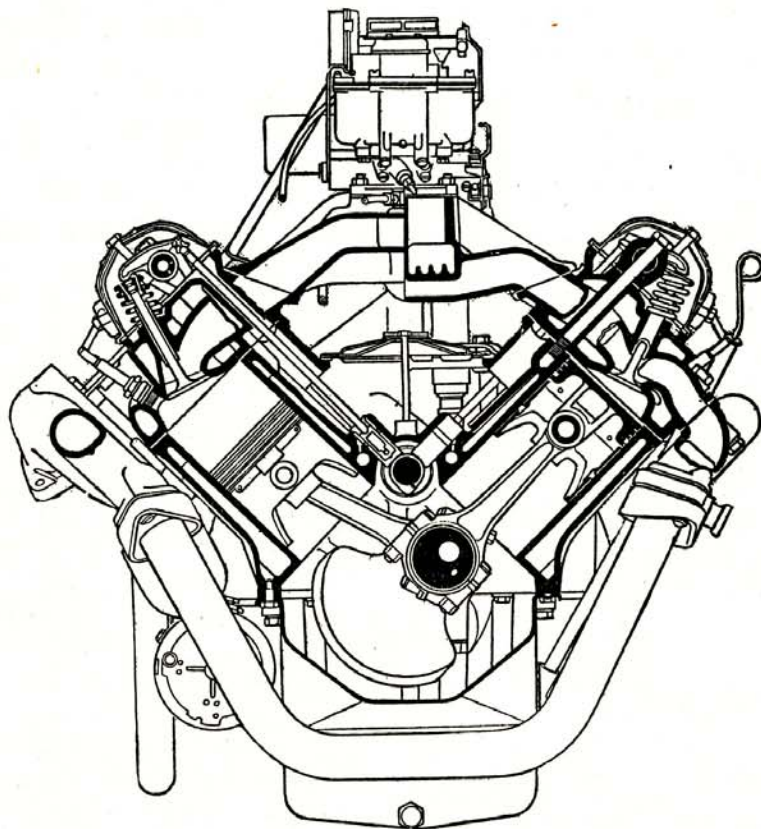
Goldschmidt now had one of these cars, and he took the lead after three laps, catching Cole's sister car and the auto-transmissioned "4.9" Bugatti. Cole overdid some four-wheel sliding at Townsend corner and crashed. Later the Bugatti crashed, and Sam Collier had already done so, unfortunately with fatal

results, in Cunningham's Ferrari. Wacker's Cadillac-Allard lay second to Goldschmidt's until the 13th lap, when Cunningham's Cadillac-Healey passed it. Cunningham couldn't catch Goldschmidt in the time remaining and had to be content with second place for the third year in succession.

So we come to November 5th—fireworks in England, and fireworks of a different sort at Pebble Beach, where the San Francisco region of the S.C.C. of A. and the M.G.C.C. held what was billed as its "First Annual Road Race." Originally a four-mile circuit had been mapped out in the 20,000-acre playgrounds of the Del Monte Estate on Monterey Peninsula, but this was reduced to 1.8 miles to curtail speeds. Over 7,500 spectators watched genuine road racing. After a "TD" M.G. had beaten two "TC" M.G.s in the up-to-1½ litres race and an Edward Sports Car, a blown "TC" M.G. and a "328" B.M.W. in the 1½-3-litre race, the 3-8-litre sports cars had a 21½-mile race. In this, Phil Hill's XK120 Jaguar was second to Graham's Cadillac-Allard in spite of weak brakes and having to make clutchless gear-changes after nine laps because the clutch lining pulled loose and locked the clutch—shades of Johnson at Le Mans! Parkinson's XK120 was third. Before the 45-mile Pebble Beach Cup Race, with which we are really concerned, Hill's front brakes were relined, but his clutch was still solid. Incidentally, he had tried to get new aluminium-alloy wheels for the car, to keep brakes and tyres cool, but these had not come in time. Stubbs' V8 M.G. having slowed

and Graham's Cadillac-Allard spun at a turn, later to lose much time repairing a broken fan-belt, Hill had only to catch Breeze, whose brakes were fading, which he did, winning at 61.4 m.p.h., virtually brakeless himself but full of praise for the stoutness of the Jaguar gearbox. Parkinson's XK120 was second, Seeley's Cannon third, Graham fourth, ahead of a "328" B.M.W. After which, as *Road and Track* so graphically expressed it, "like raisins in the batter, home-bound M.G.s, Jaguars, Allards, Hillmans, Austins, and a Morris or two were soon stirred into the thick fog"—November in San Francisco and England apparently have something in common!

Finally, at Sebring on New Year's Eve, the S.C.C. of A. ran the 6-hour Le Mans replica Sam Collier Memorial Trophy race at Sebring airfield, where a 3½-mile circuit had been mapped out. The field included three XK120 Jaguars, three DBII Aston-Martins, two with "Vantage" engines, five Allards, both Cadillac and Mercury powered, three Ferraris, including Luigi Chinetti's "2.3," and many smaller cars. The race developed into a tussle between the Cadillac-Allards of Goldschmidt, Wacker and Walter's Cadillac-Healey. A short-circuit stopped Goldschmidt and, like Phillips at Le Mans in 1949, he was disqualified because a mechanic went out to help him. All the XK120s had brake trouble, Chinetti's Ferrari was throwing oil, and the Cadillac-Allards of Wacker and Davidson and the Cadillac-Healey remained in the lead. A Le Mans formula was used for this race, so true victory went to the little 750-c.c. Crosley driven by



READY-MADE POWER.—A sectional view of the production 5.4-litre Cadillac V8 engine which makes the Allard J2 go so effectively. With two Carter downdraught carburettors Allard gets 160 b.h.p.

Kesterton and Deshon, from Kimberly's 2-litre Ferrari and a FIAT.

That, I think, includes all the sports-car races of any moment. I have not included the feature "road race" at Carrell Speedway because, run over a one-mile dirt course, it was under half the distance of the shortest of the races I have tabulated. As a matter of fact, its inclusion would not alter placings, because, run on handicap, the M.G.s of Erb and Armstrong finished ahead of Panzer's Allard J2, with Hill's and McAfee's XK120 Jaguars fourth and fifth, handicapped out. Hill had spun during a heat and McAfee collided with him, Hill only getting into the final by borrowing a front suspension unit from a non-competing Jaguar. Le Mans starts were used but the fuel, I gather, smelt odd for pump stuff!

I am aware that road-racing is rather new to the States and that driving skill varies a good deal between one driver and the next. Nevertheless, I think it worth tabulating the first three places in these races:—

Awarding 15 points for a win, 10 for a second, and 5 for a third place, we get, on all-scratch results:—

PLACINGS (SCRATCH):

Cadillac-Allard ...	70	marks
XK120 Jaguar ...	60	"
Ferrari ...	50	"
Ford-Duesenberg ...	20	"
Cadillac-Healey ...		
Ford-Allard ...	15	"
Frazer-Nash ...		
Healey "Silverstone"	10	"
H.R.G. ...		
Cisitalia ...		
Cannon ...	5	"

Taking the Formula placing in the Collier Memorial Trophy 6-Hour Race into account, the reckoning becomes:—

PLACINGS (HANDICAP):

Ferrari ...	55	marks
XK120 Jaguar ...	50	"
Cadillac-Allard ...	45	"
Ford-Duesenberg ...	20	"
Cadillac-Healey ...		
Ford-Allard ...	15	"
Frazer-Nash ...		
Crosley ...	10	"
H.R.G. ...		
Healey "Silverstone"		
Cisitalia ...	5	"
Cannon ...		
FIAT ...		

The battle is clearly an Anglo-American, Italian, British axis, in which it is to be hoped that Britain will figure even more prominently this year. My findings may leave loopholes, but I am pretty certain that this is about how the American racing enthusiast and the American buying public see it. Ferrari looks like being able to crash the market if so desirous, and it is scarcely to our credit that it takes a 5½-litre American engine in a British chassis to keep us in the picture—however, much credit is due individually to Cadillac and Allard. The showing of the XK120 Jaguar is magnificent. Its very rugged engine gives away nearly 2 litres to the Cadillac-powered cars, yet develops the same 160 b.h.p. The Jaguar is some 3 cwt. or so heavier than the Allard. Its ability to go is the more meritorious for that; it would do even better in these fierce little U.S.A. races if it would stop going when told to.—W. B.

	(105 m.) PALM BEACH	(100 m.) HEART TROPHY	(80 m.) BRIDGE- HAMPTON	(40 m.) SANTA- ANNA	(88 m.) LINDEN	(67 m.) ELKHART LAKE	(99 m.) WATKIN'S GLEN	(45 m.) PEBBLE BEACH	(6 hr.) COLLIER TROPHY (Scratch)	(6 hr.) COLLIER TROPHY (Handicap)
1st	Ford- Duesenberg	Ferrari	Cadillac- Allard	Ford- Allard	Frazer- Nash	Ferrari	Cadillac- Allard	Jaguar	Cadillac- Allard	Crosley
2nd	Cadillac- Healey	Cadillac- Allard	Ferrari	Jaguar	H.R.G.	Healey	Cadillac- Healey	Jaguar	Cadillac- Healey & Cadillac- Allard	Ferrari
3rd	Ferrari	Jaguar	Ford- Duesenberg	Jaguar	Cisitalia	Jaguar	Cadillac- Allard	Cannon	Ferrari	FIAT

