

Jaguar D-Type XKD 531: History overview

Compiled by new owner William Rooklidge, August 2023

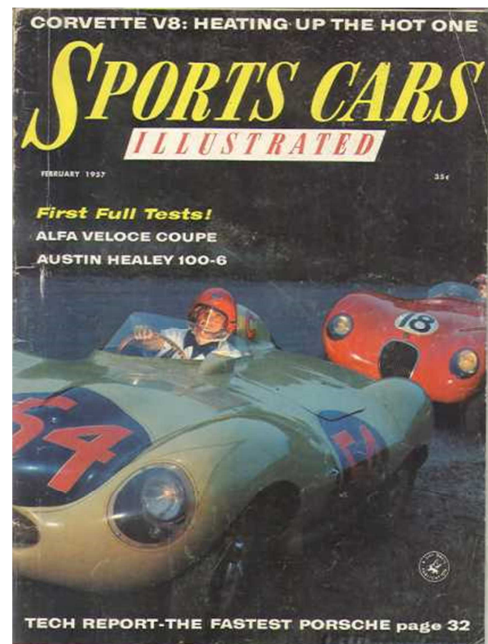
At the 2023 Monterey Motorsports Reunion 1955 Jaguar D-type XKD 531 is presented in the livery in which it was raced throughout 1956 by its first owner, Hollywood comedy writer Jack Douglas. Although the car was delivered in British Racing Green, Douglas repainted the car yellow before its first outing. Despite Douglas's claim to have repainted the car yellow "because I'm yellow," the present restoration revealed that the yellow paint had been added during repair of damage to the passenger side. Those repairs had not straightened all the deformed sheet metal, and the over-bucked rivets on certain seams testified to exactly which panels had been removed and repaired.



In 1958 second owner Ray Seher, a Reno, Nevada, scale merchant, initially had his daughter Rhea sand off the numerals, roundels, and pinstriping, and raced the car in yellow with red numerals. He later resprayed the car in red with white numerals. In 1960 third owner Tom Groskritz, a Costa Mesa, California, machine operator, stripped all the paint off the car's body except portions of the original British Racing Green on the interior and inside the head fairing, leaving Jack Douglas's yellow and Ray Seher's red in only a few tiny spots.

The car was depicted in its 1956 livery (yellow, black and red with black and red pinstripes) on the covers of Sports Car Illustrated, Sports Car Graphic, and the Imported Cars supplement of the Los Angeles Times. In 1956 Douglas raced it in its current livery throughout California as well as in Utah and Texas, and in 1958 and 1959 second owner Ray Seher raced the car throughout California and Nevada, first in yellow and then in red.

Jaguar XKD 531 is not a "Postwar Racing" car in name only, as it competed in road races, drag races, and gymkhanas extensively in period. The first owner's mechanic, former Jaguar factory race mechanic Joe Thrall, modified the car by adding the distinctive rectangular intake ducts to the nose, a remote oil filter from a Jaguar XK120, seatbelts, screen-covered ports to the airbox, and a host of changes to the drivetrain and suspension, which Douglas characterized in his autobiography as adding "sway bars, locked rear ends and other stabilizing influences" in an effort to tame "an extremely fast, if somewhat unmanageable, car." Later, to improve performance, Tom Groskritz replaced the cylinder head with an unnumbered factory replacement



head and sold the original head as scrap. XKD 531 carries modifications from its 1956 racing setup in order to comply with present-day historic racing competition rules and practices, primarily safety rules, including an electrical cutoff switch and attendant wiring, plumbed-in fire extinguisher system, wired-in transponder, front and rear tow hooks, and safety stickers.



Restoration of XKD 531 used almost all parts either from this car with less than 8,000 miles (over half of which were clocked by the original owner Douglas driving the car from the dealership in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, to his home in Hollywood, California) or from the third owner Tom Groskritz's fortuitous purchase of a station wagon and trailer-load of the parts he knew he would need to restore the car when Jaguar North America closed its Long Island, New York, warehouse in the early 1970's.

Appendix: Jaguar D-Type XKD 531 Race history

Owner Jack Douglas

April 22, 1956, Pebble Beach National Championship Sports Car Road Races, Pebble Beach, California, wearing car number 254 on a plain yellow livery, practiced but did not race.¹

May 19-20, 1956, Bakersfield National Sports Car Races, Minter Field, Bakersfield, California, wearing car number 54 on a yellow, black and red livery, finished eighth in the preliminary race and sixth in the final race.²

June 3, 1956, Texas National Championship Sports Car Races, Eagle Mountain, Fort Worth, Texas, wearing car number 54 on a yellow, black and red livery, finished tenth in the fourth race and eleventh in the sixth race.³

June 23-24, 1956, Regional Salt Lake Races, Salt Lake City, Utah, Salt Lake Races, wearing car number 54 on a yellow, black and red livery, finished second in the final race.⁴

July 8, 1956, Santa Maria Road Races, Santa Maria, California, wearing car number 54 on a yellow, black and red livery, finished fifth in qualifying and sixth in the final.⁵

July 21-22, 1956, Fiesta Del Pacifico Road Races, Montgomery Field, San Diego, California, wearing car number 54 on a yellow, black and red livery, finished twelfth in qualifying and eleventh in the final race.⁶

September 1-2, 1956, Santa Barbara National Championship Road Races, Santa Barbara, California, wearing car number 54 on a yellow, black and red livery, finished eleventh in both of two races.⁷

November 4, 1956, First Palm Springs National Championship Races, Palm Springs, California, SCCA National, wearing car number 54 on a yellow, black and red livery, finished tenth in the final race.⁸

¹ William Nolan, Sounds and Sights to Remember, 1:15 *MotoRacing* 7 (May 4-11, 1956); Sports Car Club of America, Official Results: Pebble Beach National Championship Sports Car Races, 24 National Newsletter 3 (May 31, 1956).

² Bakersfield Race Charts, I:17 *MotoRacing* 8 (June 1-8, 1956).

³ Official Results, XIII:5 *Sports Car* 30 (SCCA September-October 1956); Kellam, George, Victory Gives Shelby National Lead, Fort Worth Star-Telegram 24 (June 4, 1956).

⁴ John B. Howard, The Utah Premier, XIII:5 *Sports Car* 61 (SCCA September-October 1956); Barneson Snares Salt Lake Races, 1:20 *MotoRacing* 3 (July 13-20, 1956); Tom Wilson, Grandpa and the Spyderys Ride Again, XIII:5 *Sports Car* 49 (SCCA September-October 1956); Californian Snares Honors in S.L. Road Race Event, Salt Lake Tribune 24 (June 25, 1956); Sports Car Races: Out-Of-State Cars Annex Most Honors, Deseret News, 20 (June 25, 1956).

⁵ Santa Maria Charts, I:20 *MotoRacing* 11 (July 13-20, 1956); Jack Douglas, The View from Casey's Head, XIII:5 *Sports Car* 40 (SCCA September-October 1956).

⁶ San Diego Results, I:21 *MotoRacing* 8-9 (July 27-August 3, 1956).

⁷ Santa Barbara Race Charts I:24 *MotoRacing* 6 (September 7-14, 1956).

Owner Ray Seher

June 15, 1958, Laguna Seca Sports Car Road Races, Laguna Seca, wearing number 100 on a plain yellow livery, finished eighth in the final race.⁹

August 2-3, 1958, Nevada Grand Prix Sports Car Races, Minden, Nevada, wearing number 100 on a plain yellow livery, finished seventh in the “Corvette, Porsche and Jaguar” race, but did not finish the final race.¹⁰

October 5, 1958, First Annual Vaca Valley National Races, Vaca Valley Raceways, Vaca Valley, California, wearing number 100 on a plain yellow livery, finished sixth.¹¹

October 25-26, 1958, Minden Sports Car Races, Douglas-Tahoe Airport, Minden, Nevada, wearing car number 100 on a plain red livery for the first time, finished third in the preliminary and fourth in the feature race.¹²

April 18-19, 1959, Seventh Annual Stockton Lions Club Sports Car Races, Stockton, California, wearing car number 100 on a plain red livery, finished fourth in the final race.¹³

June 14, 1959, Nevada Timing Association Drag Meet, Carson City, Nevada Airport, finished second overall and first in class at 107.462 mph.¹⁴

June 28, 1959, Nevada Timing Association Drag Meet, Carson City, Nevada Airport, finished first overall at 109.09 mph.¹⁵

July 19, 1959, Silver State Timing Association Quarter Mile Drag Races, Carson City, Nevada Airport, finished first in Sports Cars at 93.55 mph.¹⁶

August 15-16, 1959, Second Annual Tracy Road Races, Tracy, California, wearing car number 100 on a plain red livery, finished second in the final race.¹⁷

⁸ Palm Springs Charts, II:3 *MotoRacing* 6 (November 16-23, 1956); Sports Car Club of America, Official Results: Palm Springs National Championship Races, 27 National Newsletter, 2-3 (November 30, 1956).

⁹ Tom Wilson, First Annual Laguna Seca Races, XV:6 *Sports Car* 26 (SCCA August 1958).

¹⁰ Reno Gazette-Journal, Expensive Scarab Runs Away From Fast European Cars, 1, 15 (Aug. 4, 1958); Reno Gazette-Journal, Local “Tire Stompers” in Grand Prix, 28 (Jul. 25, 1958); Reno Evening Gazette, Nevada Grand Prix Races Draw Throng 18 (Aug. 5, 1958).

¹¹ Vaca Valley Charts, 4:1 *MotoRacing* 5 (October 17-24, 1958); Oakland Tribune, Von Neuman in Sports Car Victory; Reventlow Crashes 27 (Oct. 6, 1958).

¹² Nevada State Journal, Balchowsky’s ‘Old Yeller’ Minden Sports Car Winner 13 (Oct. 28, 1958); Reno Evening Gazette, Buick Special Is Winner in Minden Races 13 (Oct. 27, 1958); Los Angeles Times, ‘Old Yeller’ Wins Nevada Car Race 75 (Oct. 27, 1958); Los Angeles Times, Reventlow’s Scarab Wins 76 (Oct. 26, 1958); Minden Race Charts, 4:2 *MotoRacing* 6 (October 31-November 7, 1958).

¹³ Robert C. Fenmar, Flaherty Scores in Lister-Jag, 4:14 *MotoRacing* 1, 5 (May 1-8, 1959); San Francisco Examiner, Flaherty Edges Weiss 38 (Apr. 20, 1959); S.F. Pilot Nabs Stockton Race, Oakland Tribune 45 (Apr. 20, 1959); Eric Hauser, 1959 Pacific Coast Race Summary, 5:5 *MotoRacing* 5 (January 8-15, 1960).

¹⁴ Reno Gazette Journal, Ray Seher is Winner, 16 (Jun. 15, 1959)

¹⁵ Reno Evening Gazette, Drag Races Sunday at Carson Airport, 30 (Jul. 9, 1959); Drag Races At Carson, Reno Gazette-Journal, 29 (Jul. 10, 1959).

¹⁶ New Drag Race Program Makes Successful Debut, Reno Evening Gazette, 13 (July 21, 1959).

September 27, 1959, Vaca Valley Grand Prix, Vaca Valley Raceway, Vacaville, California, wearing car number 100 on a plain red livery, finished fourth in the final race.¹⁸

October 11, 1959, United States Grand Prix for Sports Cars, Riverside Raceway, Riverside, California, wearing car number 100 on a plain red livery, did not qualify for the main event but finished fifth in the Consolation Race.¹⁹

October 25, 1959, Laguna Seca Road Races, Laguna Seca Raceway, Salinas, California, wearing car number 100 on a plain red livery, finished fourth.²⁰

Owner Tom Groskritz

July 2, 1960, Santa Maria, California, wearing car number 171 on a black primer livery, practiced but did not race.²¹

Drag racing time trials, San Fernando Raceway in 1960, Fontana Raceway in 1963, San Fernando and Lions Associated Drag Strip in 1964, and San Fernando Raceway and Riverside International Raceway in 1965 and 1966, achieving a top speed of 110.42 in the quarter mile and 125.69 in the half mile.²²

April 21, 1979, Vintage Sports Car Races during the Los Angeles Times Grand Prix Weekend, Riverside International Raceway, Riverside, California, wearing car number 2 on a British Racing Green livery, Don Zweifel finished fourteenth in race number 1, the "Torrey Pines" group.²³

¹⁷ San Francisco Examiner, Emil Pardee Drives to Victory in Tracy 51 (Aug. 17, 1959); Oakland Tribune, Palo Alto Pilot Wins Tracy Race 37 (Aug. 17, 1959); Sacramento Bee, Pardee Wins Tracy Feature Road Race 22 (Aug. 17, 1959); Emil Pardee, Palo Alto, Wins Feature At Sports Car Races, Tracy Press 8 (August 17, 1959); Palo Alto Wins Tracy Road Race, Daily Palo Alto Times, 17 (Aug. 17, 1959); Garner, Bob, R.P.M., Daily Palo Alto Times, 31 (Aug. 19, 1959); Eric Hauser, 1959 Pacific Coast Race Summary, 5:5 MotoRacing 5 (January 8-15, 1960).

¹⁸ Vaca Valley Results, 4:24 MotoRacing 3 (October 2-9, 1959); Eric Hauser, 1959 Pacific Coast Race Summary, 5:5 MotoRacing 5 (January 8-15, 1960); Randolph, Hugh, Oakland Tribune, Augie Pabst in Easy Race Victory at Vaca Valley 44 (Sept. 28, 1959).

¹⁹ Phil Hill Captures Grand Prix, Los Angeles Times 76 (Oct. 12, 1959); Phil Hill Wins Riverside Race, Oakland Tribune, 38 (Oct. 12, 1959).

²⁰ Oakland Tribune, Pigott Wins Laguna Seca Races as Tempers Flare 44 (Oct. 26, 1959); Los Angeles Times, Pigott Wins Race as Four Leaders Ousted 80 (Oct. 26, 1959); Laguna Seca Race Chart, 5:1 MotoRacing 6 (October 30-November 6); Eric Hauser, 1959 Pacific Coast Race Summary, 5:5 MotoRacing 5 (January 8-15, 1960).

²¹ Photos in possession of the author.

²² Dated time slips and photos in possession of the author.

²³ Michael T. Lynch, Riverside Revisited, 2 The Historic Motor Sports Journal 10 (1979).

Appendix: Jaguar D-Type XKD 531 ownership history

From Philip Porter for Jaguar Sports Racing Cars
From <http://www.coventryracers.com/cars/detail/?car=XKD531>

Supplied to Hornburg, USA (presumed); sold to Jack Douglas (California); painted yellow & raced from early 1956; June, Texas National Championship races, 10th & 11th; June, Great Salt Lake Trophy 100-mile race, 2nd; October 1957, advertised for \$7000 by ex-factory mechanic Joe Thrall on behalf of Jack Douglas; winter, sold to Ray Seher (Reno, Nevada); June 1958, Laguna Seca, 8th; February 1959, sold to Tom Groskritz; 1964 used for quarter-mile runs at San Fernando Raceway; new factory D head fitted; used for SCTA Time Trials at Riverside; Tom Groskritz (Costa Mesa, California, USA).

Philip Porter is the author of numerous books on the Jaguar marque. In addition to writing books and magazine articles and managing several businesses, he runs the XK Club and E-Type club from Worcestershire, England. His latest books include the [Jaguar Scrapbook](#) and the [Stirling Moss 1929 - 1954 Scrapbook](#).

- Also... find the chassis numbers of all Jaguar racing cars at http://www.wsrp.cz/chassis/chassis_jaguar.html
- Find 11 race results for XKD 531 at <http://www.wsrp.cz/natus1956.html>
- Find XKD 531 in the Jaguar race car reunion in July 2001 on the streets of Franklin TN <https://www.jag-lovers.org/xk8/cdreunion.htm>
- Find a 1959 race result for XKD 531 at <https://historic-challenge.racing/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/riverside.pdf>