

DEL MONTE TROPHY RACE GROUP

Celebrating the Pebble Beach Road Races



Velocity Invitational, Sonoma 2023

Race 2 report, Saturday November 11, 2023

Eventful and great to watch – the Group 1 Feature Race

Velocity Invitational, a world-class motorsports and lifestyle event <https://velocityinvitational.com/>, returned to its roots November 10-12, 2023 at Sonoma Raceway in Northern California. Our brave boys were there too, dealing with the ice-cold climes of Northern California's Wine Country. Although, Jim, what were you thinking? Jim Alder did not drive all the way in his Jaguar XK120 from Reno, Nevada. That's only 199 miles (less than to Laguna Seca, who knew), but we fear that the Jag was not yet in running order. Jim graced the commentators' booth by walking all the way instead, and we appreciated his physical fitness and his insights.



The Del Monte Trophy Race Group cars ran with Velocity Invitational's **Group 1 - 1947 – 1956 Sports Racing Cars & Production Sports Cars** so Cooper, Talbot Lago, Maserati, Porsche and Aston Martin represented in the field of 22 cars. Now we are so privileged to have these extraordinary racing cars on the grid, many of them which raced at Pebble Beach in the 50s... that's **the origin of the Del Monte Trophy group** as that was the name of the trophy at Pebble Beach.



Race 2. The starting order on Sunday is the finishing order from Race 1 on Saturday. As they roll towards the start line in orderly formation, pole sitter Tony Garmey (driving Rob Manson's white 1953 Tatum GMC Special #25C) had #23 Alex MacAllister in his 1955 Jaguar D Type in Ecurie Ecosse colours on his left. The #9c 1953 Kurtis 500S Dodge is being driven by Don "Slim" Pepperdene while its owner Rob Manson is near the back of the grid with his 1951 Barlow Simca

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Special. Next to Slim is the yellow #15C 1952 Streets Manning Special driven by Jay Streets, son of the car's builder, carrying a fine 360° camera on the car whose footage you can see on the links at the end of this report. His race start is at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZJ_7fRiz38 . McCabe and Buddenbaum, third row, are ready to pick up the pieces.

Green flag and it's the Kurtis who gets the jump, from 3rd to 1st in 100 yards. Go Slim. Having driven the tiddly Barlow yesterday, Slim Pepperdene is enjoying a different sensation under the right foot. Streets drives the Manning round the outside of the Jaguar. Half way round the first lap we get the impression Slim might be holding up the Tatum and the Manning; indeed Garmey slips up the outside entering Turn 6, the Caroussel, and is ahead by the end of the turn. Streets follows through, with MacAllister, Buddenbaum and McCabe making up the leading group of six.

Jay Streets is climbing all over the kerbs at 9 and 10 (I thought only Nascar and Porsches did that...) to give Slim the willies but cannot get past. That is, until the hairpin at Turn 11 when Jay Streets leaves his braking a tad late and locks up both front wheels. The smoke is one thing. The screeching noise is another, loud enough to be heard through the commentators' microphones! Luckily Slim is even closer and that audio alarm is enough for him to make the right decision and hold his line a bit before turning in on the Manning.

Rob Manson has had no luck in the 1100cc Barlow Simca (a French division of FIAT) in its first race since the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. Immediately after he reported the engine down to one cylinder and only afterwards "one of its SU carburettor float bowls came loose on the first hot lap of the Feature race. "I got the car back to the pits without a major conflagration and parked it." The carb would have been spilling fuel on the nearby exhausts... yes, that's before the days of the cross-flow head so Rob was lucky not to have a car-destroying conflagration. "Then I got out the car and did the race play by play with Jim Alder in the commentary box." And very good the commentary was too.

After two laps the order is as follows, Garmey stretching his legs ahead but 2 through 6 in close order battling for every corner. Biggest gain down the field is by Gilbert Hakim, from 11th up to 8th, in just his second race in Rob Manson's dark blue 1949 Baldwin Special. He is clearly getting to grips with the junk-yard dog. Why, of course it drives like a Mustang. Kevin Adair in the Elva and Hakim are battling for 7th with Denis Bigioni in the glorious French racing blue 1948 Talbot-Lago on their tail.



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Tony	Garmey	1953	Tatum
Jay	Streets	1952	Manning
Alex	MacAllister	1955	Jaguar
Don	Pepperdene	1953	Kurtis
John	Buddenbaum	1950	Parkinson
Charles	McCabe	1956	Cooper
Kevin	Adair	1955	Elva
Gilbert	Hakim	1949	Baldwin
Denis	Bigioni	1948	Talbot-Lago
John	Mote Jr	1954	Allard
Wesley	Abendroth	1955	Chevy
John	Mote	1950	Sorrell
Ned	Spieker	1957	Maserati
David	Nelson	1955	Triumph
Nick	Price	1953	Jaguar
Uwe	Biegner	1953	Porsche
Jonathan	Kitchen	1954	Aston
Stefano	Natoli	1953	Fiat
Timothy	Barnes	1951	Jaguar
Robert	Davis	1953	Siata

The live stream announces 6 laps to go.

Then, in the flash of an eye and a cloud of acrid smoke, Alex MacAllister's Jaguar D-Type is a smoke screen reminiscent of the Battle of the River Plate. approaching the hairpin at 7. The oil must be getting on his own tyres but he pulls off to the left, raises his arm as a signal to the cars behind. "To thy strong bidding, task Ariel and all his quality, whether it's to fly, swim, jump into fire, or ride upon the clouds" (The Tempest Act 1, scene 2). Indeed John Buddenbaum's white Parkinson Jaguar hits the oil slick and spins gloriously in a straight line, just misses the Jag, and comes to rest pointing the wrong way but in one piece. In the commentary box Jim and the others thought it looked like steam from a hose, and that's the impression given on the live stream footage. But drivers' reports that the amount of oil and bits of flywheel and cogs on the track when circulating during the clean-up indicated that the Jag engine had a massive blow-up. We have the privilege to be able to show you the whole sequence of the MacAllister blow-up and Buddenbaum's spin from Jay Streets' camera at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZV_JpA2nAss about one minute in.

To our amazement the race continues for long minutes, a lap or two, before the course yellows and the safety car are deployed. To my mind, any clerk of the course seeing images of a blow-up and a car spinning behind would know that the track is dangerous and would act within seconds. Just saying. Concomitant with the oil and Buddenbaum's spin, the order behind the course car is ...

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Garmey
Streets
McCabe
Pepperdene
Buddenbaum
Adair

Hakim
Bigioni
Abendroth
Spieker
Price
Nelson

Biegner
Davis
Natoli
Kitchen
Barnes



Stefano Natoli 1953 Fiat 1100 103 zips up the hill into Turn2.
Photo by Kristina Cilia for Race Car Digest,
www.kristinaciliaphotography.com

Only the top 8 get on the back of the pace car so those behind the Talbot Lago of Bigioni must have been scared out of their wits by the oil slicks and backed off somewhat and are way back, but running together. Ah, after another lap of safety car, here they come, on the tail of others. Mote and the Sorrell have retired with overheating problems. Mote Jr appears not to be running or over a lap down with the Allard, but no reason shown. Yes, the Motes, father and son, had switched mounts for Race 2.

At the end of the third lap of full-course-yellow, the lights on the safety car go out and 3 laps to go is shown on the live stream. Wild; a lap later it shows 4 laps to go. I am told that the Clerk, at the urging of an “unnamed official”, added a lap. Let battle recommence. Streets is right on the back of Garmey with McCabe slower to the gas. Jay’s footage <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3MJtWN1x1Q>.

Under the bridge Alex MacAllister does a marvellous job of correcting an elbow-knocking slide from the rear of the Jaguar, as recorded on Street’s rear-facing cam www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZV_JpA2nAss. Alex had described the Jag as “active” in the pre race interview, and by George it LOOKS active! They raced at Le Mans with that, oh yes they did, at 180 mph down the Mulsanne Straight. On every turn, the Jaguar turns in fine but then has a bit of an understeer struggle to complete the corner and each exit point beckons alarmingly, except when it decides to drift, all four wheels, which has a similar effect on the intended-to-actual direction ratio. There are still five California road race specials in the top seven.

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Woaw, Wesley Abendroth's Chevy Mistral is going great guns in the hands of Luca Maciucescu of Santa Fe, New Mexico, just for Race 2. You know Luca and you've seen him variously in a 1953 Aston Martin DB2/4, a 1959

Chevrolet EDP Special and a 1928 Bugatti 37A. So Luca has the Mistral on the tail of Bigioni's Talbot-Lago. Behind them we have a three-way tussle between Ned Spieker in the deep red 1957 Maserati 200Si, Robert Davis in his 1953 Siata 208s (where did he come from!) and Nick Price in the rare 1953 Jaguar C-Type. David Nelson and his 1955 Triumph TR2 (British Racing Green with the cutest of orange radiator opening surrounds which he drove to the track from home in Geyserville CA) are trying to say with that group, showing



Ned Spieker, Maserati 200S

the little car's four-wheel drifts to perfection. Woaw, just as the camera is on them, Robert Davis goes late on the brakes into the hairpin at Turn 11 and slips inside the Maserati. Nick Price is looking at Spieker for an opening all the way round the track. Wonderful racing to watch. Gilbert Hakim has retired Rob's Baldwin on lap 7.



Tony Garmey, Tatum GMC Special

Have a look up-front again. The leader, Tony Garmey, driving the Tatum for the first time this weekend, has not let up the pace. He comes out of Turn 10 in the white 1953 Tatum 6-cylinder GMC Special in a four-wheel drift, to the amazement of Jim Alder in the commentary booth. Garmey is a short country mile in front but still turning in laps at 2'03.797, his best of the day. Chuck Tatum raced his Special, this very car, in the Del Monte Trophy feature race at the 1954 Pebble Beach Road Races. Maybe Garmey is easing off a bit or mothering the motor car because Jay

Streets and the yellow 1952 Streets Manning Special is hardly more than a second behind. But it's Charles "To Infinity and Beyond" McCabe, best known pedalling his 1936 ERA R5B at the *Grand Prix de Monaco Historique*, who is making the last lap his. His dark blue Cooper Bobtail sports car with 1500cc 4-cylinder Coventry Climax engine is all over the back of Streets down the hill and through the slinky curves of 8, 9 and 10. Streets is between the devil and the deep blue sea, hoping to catch the leader in the dying seconds but wary of the Bobtail on his tail. Indeed, Jay Streets spins the Manning at Turn 11. To his relief the official video stream misses the spin itself, but, oh no what is this, a cam handheld by Uwe Biegner's better half Diana reveals all.



<https://youtu.be/clg70fxHax0>. So has Jay's in-car video <https://youtu.be/ofmE3jHx3nY> at 2

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minutes. Jay Streets has lost the rear end and spins onto the inside of the hairpin turn. McCabe was challenging up the inside of the turn so now there's nowhere to go except even further off-track to the inside. As the dust settles McCabe reappears on track from the direction of the Golden Gate Bridge to make it into second place, now 4 seconds behind Garmey. Jay Streets gets the engine started but then makes a Horlicks of recovering (Google will explain!). He gives the flathead V8 with 365hp a boot of right foot and the car's rear pivots 45° to the left, then 45° to the rights, stops at right angles to the track then moves off in a generally straightish line to the chequered flag. Oh joy for the spectators. You can see at the end of Jay's in-car video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZV_JpA2nAss 1 minute 55 that the car is very twitchy coming out of this hairpin anyway. Jay crosses the line at modest speed and with a modest red face, his waving at the crowd more like a slowing down sign! Just imagine how this story will be exaggerated in future gene rations; I have not exactly played it down here.

The finishing order was

Garmey	Bigioni	Biegner
McCabe	Abendroth	Kitchen
Pepperdene	Davis	Natoli
Buddenbaum	Spieker	Barnes
Streets	Price	
Adair	Nelson	

Jay Streets was racing for the first time the Streets Manning which his father built. Appreciative? You bet. Here are some of the words he expressed to the car's owner Rob Manson after wards. "Rob. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to drive your car. I can't begin to express how big it was for me to get the drive. I knew it would be a good time but the fun we had exceeded my expectations.



"Racetrack Camaraderie" Copyright 2023 Kristina Cilia for Sports Car Digest. 1949 Baldwin Special. www.kristinaciliaphotography.com

The whole group you put together was amazing. To have strangers come up to me and ask about the car and be able to tell them the story of my father building the original and rebuilding it again in the 80's and now, me, getting to drive it was truly special, Thank you! Going into the weekend I expected a solid mid pack drive, my drive certainly surprised me. I'm sorry that in the end I didn't bring it home in second but I still feel very

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proud of what we did and thank you for the opportunity to do it. It is a special car and a very special drive.”

You can watch Sonoma’s Race 2 video stream, packaged by the Goodwood folk, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6iF6IDBCVc>

...and two laps from Jay’s Streets Manning in four separate clips

https://youtu.be/ZV_JpA2nAss

<https://youtu.be/m3MJtWN1x1Q>

https://youtu.be/HZJ_7fRlz38

and his last lap – spin <https://youtu.be/ofmE3jHx3nY>

You can see the full list of entries, as published before race day, at

<https://airtable.com/appdjL2IJV9cldWVe/shrirqUJwLPJYRIRd/tbl26W7Z15SID08xp>

Written by Marcus Bicknell on November 20, 2023