

Mid-Ohio

eye, a connecting rod turned left, the oil cooler went, the car spun in its own blood, and hot oil/hot exhaust created a minor fire as Baker was left stranded crosswise in the middle of the track. Only when a puddle formed on pit lane as Baker poured more Pennzoil in the top was the extent of the damage finally known.

This brave young car is now destined to become a coffee table in the crusher back at the factory after it is subjected to barrier crash tests, according to a team member, noting the similarity to shooting a race horse with a broken leg.

Baker, however, was not done for as he joined his Bedford Porsche-Audi SSGT 944 team of Steve Millen, Jeff Milstein, Paul Dickinson and Bob Nikel, and helped them to a third overall finish.

The Maserati Biturbo ran in an OK fashion until Jim Mullen found both mushy brakes and a stuck throttle as he braked from 100mph at the end of the backstraight around 12:15 a.m., creating a car the size of a BMW 320i, and suffered a small cut on his leg.

The factory 1985 Avanti GT, built for Avanti maven Steve Blake by Herb Adams for a driving lineup which included Herb, IMSA nice guys Gene Felton and Jack Baldwin along with Kim Mason, got as high as ninth overall in the first hour. But Felton drained the gas tank dry on course once, dropping it to 41st (out of 51) at the second hour, and forcing them into an uphill charge.

Around dawn, Gene brought the swoopy Avanti into the pits with the left front wheel tucked under its bulbous wheel arch, the result of a broken lower A-arm — an Adams-fabricated piece. Somewhat lacking of spares, and with the intelligent Baldwin and Felton being hesitant to race on welded-up pieces, a rear A-arm was adapted to the job and the car was 29th overall (and third in class at the end). It sported Eagle VR50 P255/50 VR 16 (same as the Corvette rears) all around, another traditional Adams idea, tires which stuck out beyond the fenders so far it wouldn't even pass Ohio highway requirements.

The 305 c.i. Chevy V-8 in the car suffered from a lack of relative power, but Blake is jerking the proper chains to have the 350 Bosch fuelie available in '85. Road racing will hear from Avanti again....

Firestone also entered the SS racing game with two factory Firebirds from Clay Young's

entourage and with Roger Marble's Z-28 Camaro, the tires being 215/65x15s, which were so new they didn't even have a style name (but will be available at your red tire store soon). Marble and his co-driver Dave Weitzenhof are both Firestone engineers.

A Honda CRX appeared in the GT class and ran as high as ninth overall, but a left front suspension failure dropped it to 25th at the end. Mid-Ohio owner Jim Trueman drove an SSP turbo Audi Quattro for the first hour as the team prayed for rain and picked up eight places to 15th, but after a blown head gasket the car was garaged. Long down time is not *always* fatal in these races, as one other team persevered on after changing two transmissions, a rear end, a water pump and head gasket. They were last, but they had come to race.

The SSA class was a big battle between a Mitsubishi and a TR8, but the folks who brought you the Zero won it, finishing sixth overall, with cockpit duties handled by Dave Wolin, Ron Cortez, Bill Shaw, Mike Rutherford, Jim Johnson and Ted Vedrinski. They had also won the class at Nelson.

SSB marked the second endurance win for the VW Rabbit GTI driven by Bill and Phil Pate, Jack Ryan and Peter Schwartzott, eighth overall. SSC finally fell to a Datsun 200SX driven by Doug Ruth, Bill Koch and the SCCA's Costa Dunias, the latter redeeming himself for crashing the car at Nelson. The expected SSC win by the Baker Automotive Bertone X1/9 did not materialize; Kim Baker lost a protest on his 11th-place overall Nelson car and was forced to run with his older, more Fiat-ish car which was about seven seconds a lap slower. Still, they're good and were only four laps down to Ruth/Koch/Dunias.

The Guldstrand team made only 10 pit stops, compared to nine projected, going through only 10 Eagles, but a couple of them were long ones because of broken and jammed wheel studs on the '85 car, a problem to be remedied soon by Chevrolet.

Grable, one of the all-time nice guys ever to hit racing, was proud of his car: "Throughout the weekend, we have proved that the Corvette is now the world's performance benchmark for vehicle dynamics. No longer will it be a case where the car has superior power and inferior handling. We not only had as good or better top speed (112mph through the traps) than anybody here — specifically the Porsches — but the chassis could outhandle anybody."

For the first time since the late 1960s, Mid-

Ohio permitted overnight infield camping by the crowd and the turnout from Saturday morning on was remarkable for a first-time effort, ending up roughly as good as or better than average SCCA National weekend. Prize money for the teams was minuscule, but companies like Red Roof Inns, Firestone and Escort Radar Warning Receivers helped boost it to about \$40,000 in all.

-Dave Arnold

SCCA The Escort Happening 24 Hours Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course (2.4 miles) Lexington, Ohio, Aug. 10-12, 1984 QUALIFYING

1. Donald Knowles/Jim Cook/Ron Grable (SSP Chevy Corvette), 1:50.691; 2. Freddy Baker/Jim Busby/Pete Halsmer (SSP Porsche 944), 1:52.801; 3. Tony Swan/John Heninicy/Tommy Morrison (SSGT Chevy Corvette), 1:54.526; 4. B. Bayley/D. Goad/B. Fehan/T. Evans (SSP Pontiac Trans Am), 1:56.214; 5. B. McConnell/J. Mueller/R. Ashley/M. Puskar (SSGT Camaro Z28), 1:56.616; 6. K. Williams/D. Heap/M. Puvol/P. Hacker (SSGT Porsche 944), 1:57.101; 7. Gary Mathewson/Kurt Mathewson/J. Coughary/Alistair Gog (SSGT Porsche 944), 1:57.497; 8. M. Kranefuss/L. Wiltzberg/L. St. James/K. Roberts/B. Bondurant (SSGT Mustang SVT), 1:57.669; 9. R. Hurst/R. Strange/M. Brockman/J. O'Steen (SSGT Porsche 944), 1:57.686; 10. J. Gogbill III/J. Cogbill/B. Snodgrass/Elliott-Forbes Robinson (SSGT Porsche 944), 1:57.790

ALSO
20. D. Wolin/R. Cortez/B. Shaw/M. Rutherford/J. Johnson/Vedrinski (SSA Stator Turbo), 2:00.842; 21. Weitzenhof/R. Marble/L. Ritz/D. Baker/Brian Goodwin (SSA Camaro Z28), 2:01.076; 25. Kirk Miller/Garth Ullom/Jon McKnight/Kjel Skavnew (SSA Saab 900 Turbo), 2:01.380; 27. J. Wade/R. Kryder/Cat Kizer/D. Murray (SSB Shelby Charger), 2:01.996; 35. K. Baker/M. Right/L. Hendricks/D. Dinkel (SSC Bertone X1/9), 2:03.967; 38. P. Pate/B. Pate/J. Ryan/P. Schwartzott/T. Elliot (SSB VW GTI), 2:05.215; 39. G. Levy/J. Crawford/J. Gibson/N. Haniman (SSB Shelby Charger), 2:05.719; 45. Charlie Schnell/J. Liss/T. Allison. L. Bradley (SSC AMC Spirit), 2:07.280; 46. P. McConnell/E. Ozburn/W. Burnette/K. Martin (SSC VW Rabbit), 2:07.739; etc. 54 qualifiers.

RESULTS (702 laps, 1684 miles)

1. Knowles/Cook/Grable (1st SSP), 702 laps, 70.136lph; 2. Hurst/Strange/Brockman/O'Steen (1st SSGT), 701; 3. J. Milstein/E.P. Dickinson/B. Nikel/S. Millen (2nd SSGT), 694; 4. G. Mathewson/K. Mathewson/Coughary/Gog (3rd SSGT), 692; 5. John Casey/Richard Jones/Ted Dann (4th SSGT), 683 laps; 6. Wolin/Cortez/Shaw/Rutherford/Johnson/Vedrinski (1st SSA), 673; 7. Ben Burrell/Pepe Pomba/John Gleason (5th SSGT), 673; 8. P. Pate/B. Pate/Ryan/Schwartzott/Elliott (1st SSB), 661; 9. B. Baker/C. Bates/R. Baker/M. Roberts/J. Lindameed (2nd SSA), 660; 10. Tom Abbot/R. Sharp/Terry Abbot/Tom Juckette (3rd SSA), 655

ALSO
16. James Briody/Bob Nagel/Jon Woodner (2nd SSP), 649; 21. William H. Koch/Douglas Ruth/C. Dunias (1st SSC), 629; 22. Baker/Right/Hendricks/Dinkel (2nd SSC), 626; 23. Tom Estinger/J. Baumgardner/Mike Cook (2nd SSB), 625; 26. R. Pfeiffer/C. Kazumoto/B. Shadel/M. Bender (3rd SSC), 621; 28. Bill King/Dave Finch/Michael Cheung/John Detrick (3rd SSB), 620; 29. Gene Felton/H. Adams/K. Mason/J. Baldwin (3rd SSP), 619; etc.