

# Renault Cup off to healthy start

## 54 entries send sponsors scrounging

There was a lot of racing at Road Atlanta over the weekend, but from the perspective of time the shortest race may prove to be the most significant. Next week *AutoWeek* will run a more comprehensive report on the Renault Cup, an attempt to provide an inexpensive way to go racing, where the emphasis is solely on driving skill, and a place to train future professional racers. This is just a brief report of the 10-lap (25-mile) race itself:

Everybody had new cars since this was the inaugural North American Renault Cup race. That everything went smoothly was a miracle and the turnout went beyond even Renault's wildest imagination. There were 54 entries for this first race.

Suspension kits, wheels and rollbars were being air freighted into Road Atlanta to supply all of the entrants. Goodyear, a company with more than a little racing experience, had figured that no more than 30 cars would show up, and just to be safe brought tires for another 10. The Goodyear people were scrounging to supply everyone.

The pole was won by Ed Allen, a member of the "Raleigh Mafia," a group of North Carolinians who have been racing together for years. He pointed out the importance of drafting in these low-powered racers when he credited Dennis Shaw for his help in setting quick time. It was

Shaw who was sitting next to him on the grid.

I was back in 24th spot after the driver who had originally been assigned to the factory entry didn't show up. Actually the car got there too late for practice, so I wasn't too unhappy with my spot, exactly midway back among the cars that took time.

Pole sitter Allen led the first four laps, but his margin was so slim as to be meaningless. Shaw, Kurt Roehrig, Steve Pope and Steve Coleman headed the group that was nipping at his heels. And up from the back of the field, after replacing a driver who was set back for making an unauthorized modification to his car, was the infamous Don Knowles. He drove past me very rapidly, and by lap 7, when Richard Korupp rolled (there were more than a few metal to metals, and three rolls in the race itself) and brought out the pace car. Knowles was up to fifth. On the restart, which was on the last lap, he made up another two spots to finish third behind a thrilled Dennis Shaw and Steve Pope.

I finished 16th, happy to have moved up eight spots from where I started, pleased to have finished on four wheels with four intact fenders, and having learned a bit more about racing as well

—Steve Potter