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**BITTER STORY: WORLD'S
MOST APPEALING OPELS**

NOVEMBER 1984

PONTIAC FIERO V-6

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**F1 FESTIVAL:
CANADA, DETROIT, DALLAS GPs**

Grand Prix Times Three: Montreal, Detroit, Dallas

North America says "Bienvenu," "Welcome," and "Howdy" to the Formula One circus

by Bob Nagy and Gary Witzenburg

The fast, flashy, and ever volatile Formula One series hit its midseason stride as the world's premiere road racers crossed the Atlantic for a three-race swing through Canada and the U.S. Besides the existing sites at Montreal and Detroit, FISA gave Dallas its first Grand Prix event, as a replacement for the date vacated by Long Beach on the 1984 schedule.

The month-long Canadian-American summer junket proved the most challenging four weeks of the year for many of the F1 teams. Working primarily out of a toolbox and a rent-a-truck while attempting to prepare such high-tech wonders for battle, these diverse venues can make life miserable for team managers and mechanics alike. The sweeping 2.74-mile Circuit Gilles Villeneuve in Montreal is a permanent facility where lap speeds average in excess of 110 mph. The two American sites offer a sharp contrast. Detroit, a 2.5-mile street course, and Dallas, a 2.4-mile temporary track created from existing access roads and custom paved stretches around the Cotton Bowl stadium, are much more punishing. Lap speeds are some 25 mph slower on these serpentine circuits. But both are lined with car-eating concrete barriers and place absolutely outlandish demands on gearboxes, halfshafts, brakes, and CV joints, as well as on the drivers themselves.

By the time the three-stop pilgrimage had ended, the World Driver's Championship point standings afforded a good deal more representa-

tive view of the relative strengths of the frontrunners. To the surprise of many, the heretofore almost invincible Team McLaren somehow managed to go three whole races without a win. Still, the British organization remained the unquestionable short-odds favorite to take the Constructor's title, and the TAG turbo-powered MP4/2s kept drivers Alain Prost and Niki Lauda atop the interim WDC point standings. Happily, the Trans-Atlantic excursion also served as a springboard for Teams Brabham, Williams, and Lotus, an encouraging sign that this year's struggle for the driver's crown could turn into the much hoped for duel of the titans before the season ends.

At long last, Bernie Ecclestone's Brabham outfit managed to solve the reliability problems that had plagued its BMW turbo engines. And defending WDC king Nelson Piquet wasted no time in showing that he's still got the skills when he's given a car that can go the distance. After a succession of six straight DNFs in the opening rounds, Piquet's masterful performances at Montreal and Detroit got the Brazilian star back on track and graphically demonstrated the true potential of the BMW-powered BT53.

Another key competitor to rise up from the ashes was Keke Rosberg. Despite persistent handling problems with the Williams-Honda FW09, the 1982 F1 champ finally put his name in the win column for 1984 with a brilliant drive at Dallas. A third challenger to move within striking dis-

tance of the McLaren juggernaut was Elio deAngelis, who used his Renault V-6 Turbo-powered Lotus 95T to score points in all three races.

While the races in Montreal, Detroit, and Dallas differed dramatically in specific character, all shared one common trait. Each served as a showcase for the most sophisticated race cars in the world. Whatever failings it may have, there's nothing quite like the power and the glory that is uniquely Formula One.

Montreal

It was at the picturesque Circuit Gilles Villeneuve on the Ile Notre-Dame where Nelson Piquet showed the first real flashes of Brabham brilliance in 1984. A number of teams introduced technical advancements for the Canadian race. The Tolemans had a new electronic fuel management system on their Hart turbo engines, the Renault powerplants in the Lotus 95Ts employed air-to-air intercoolers like those used by Team Renault at the French GP, and new winglets were fitted to the rear spoilers of the Alfa Romeo 184Ts. But the most effective change was made on the Brabhams. The BT53 of Piquet and part-time teammate Corrado Fabi incorporated a front-mounted oil cooler in an effort to prevent the terminal engine overheating problems that beset them throughout the opening rounds of F1 competition.

Piquet set the general tone in qualifying, handily beating out points

Nelson Piquet led the Brabham breakthrough in his BMW-powered BT-53.

The Brabham's relocated oil cooler did its job with the oil but also cooked Piquet's right foot

leader Alain Prost's McLaren for the pole. At the start of the race, Prost did manage to grab a momentary lead when Nelson smoked the Brabham's rear tires as the lights flashed green. But the defending WDC titlist quickly recovered, and midway through the first lap slipped past the McLaren driver to regain a lead he would hold throughout the entire 70-lap contest. When overheating brakes forced Prost to drop back after his opening bid for the lead, teammate Niki Lauda seized the opportunity to strut his stuff. Lauda moved up from 8th on the grid to 3rd by lap 14. On lap 43, he got by Prost and for a while entertained visions of challenging Piquet for the lead. But the Brazilian would have none of it, and maintained a 3-4-sec margin on Niki's McLaren to the finish.

Despite his clear superiority, Montreal was far from an easy victory for Piquet. Unbeknown to anyone but Nelson and his crew, the Brabham driver struggled mightily just to finish the race. While the newly relocated oil cooler did a splendid job of helping the BMW engine live, the radiator spent all afternoon passing hot air directly over Piquet's right foot causing painful blisters and burns. After the race, Nelson had to be helped from the car, and was clearly in great discomfort as he limped up to the victory stand.

Prost held on for a solid 3rd, although he was nearly a full lap behind the two lead cars by the time the checkered flag fell. Elio deAngelis finally took 4th place in a Renault-powered Lotus 95T. The spot was contested for much of the race by Derek Warwick in the Renault RE50, Rene Arnoux in the Ferrari 126C4, and deAngelis' teammate Nigel Mansell

before all three fell prey to mechanical ills and dropped out of the race. Warwick ultimately retired with severe damage to the underbody of his car, but Arnoux and Mansell hung on to claim the last two scoring positions, two laps down.

Ayrton Senna ran extremely well in the revised Toleman-Hart T184; the ex-F3 star continued to look impressive with the ever-improving team. Senna clinched 7th place just ahead of Manfred Winkelhock's ATS-BMW 007 and his Toleman running-mate Johnny Cecotto, who finished 9th on the day. Best of the non-turbo (read Team Tyrrell) runners was rookie Martin Brundle, who collected 10th place in the Cosworth DFY-powered Tyrrell 012.

Montreal was another dismal outing for Keke Rosberg and the still troublesome Williams-Honda FW09. Handling problems left Rosberg and teammate Jacques Laffite buried in 15th and 17th places on the grid, and neither was around at the finish, as both cars retired midway through the race with engine failures.

Renault driver Patrick Tambay, who had suffered a broken left shin in a crash at Monaco two weeks earlier, was the most prominent non-starter at the Canadian event. Tambay went out for a few semi-hot laps during Friday's qualifying session but decided to withdraw from the event.

Detroit

Detroit sure looks great on TV. The sun always shines on race day. It reflects off the multi-towered, chrome-on-glass Renaissance Center, illuminates the choppy waters of the busy Detroit River, deepens and brightens the colors of the expensive and sophisticated race cars and the multitudes that swarm around them.

If you watched the race from home, the first thing you'll remember was a nasty crash at the start. It resulted when Englishman Nigel Mansell tried to punch his Lotus-Renault through a front-row hole that got con-

siderably narrower as he arrived. He was forced into Nelson Piquet's pole-sitting Brabham-BMW, spinning it into the wall and sending several others off in various directions trying to avoid the mess. One flying wheel slammed down on the nose of Ayrton Senna's Toleman-Hart, crushing its suspension and narrowly missing Senna. Then, just when all the fragments seemed to have settled, Marc Surer's Arrows slid into the picture on someone else's oil and collected what was left of the Brabham.

Mansell apologized and tried to explain, but the frustrated Brazilian was having none of it and he stalked off. "No car could pass there," he said later. "Maybe he thought he had a motorbike." Someone asked Brabham designer Gordon Murray if he thought the start was the proper place to pass. "That depends on your I.Q.," he grumped.

The officials declared it a non-start and everyone but poor Surer, whose under-financed team didn't have a backup car, took a second green light some 30 minutes later. Piquet made a clean getaway on his second try and, after a determined charge by the undaunted Mansell ended with gearbox problems—a half hour into the race—nursed his backup Brabham to the win. That was about it for excitement—except during the last few laps, when everyone suddenly realized that a hard-charging young Brit named Martin Brundle in a non-turbocharged Tyrrell-Ford was catching Piquet. But the savvy World Champion had his boost turned down, saving his tired machinery, going only as fast as he needed, and Brundle's valiant effort ended with a well-deserved 2nd place.

Elio deAngelis was 3rd in the second Lotus-Renault, Teo Fabi finished 4th in the other Brabham-BMW, front-row starter Alain Prost took 5th place in his McLaren-TAG, and Jacques Laffite brought his Williams-Honda in 6th, one lap down, for the final championship point. Of the 25 who started, no one else managed to finish.

Had you viewed from trackside, you might have seen why. Much of the course was in miserable shape, breaking up into "marbles" that sent unfortunate racers into the walls if they strayed a fraction off the clean racing line. The main straight along the river was so rough that the drive wheels skipped on hard acceleration alternatively clawing air and asphalt and stressing engines and drivetrains beyond endurance. It seems the annual Grand Prix has been so good for Detroit that the city has experienced a building boom around the RenCen

Canadian Grand Prix Top 10 Finishers

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1..... | Nelson Piquet, BMW/Brabham BT53—70 laps |
| 2..... | Niki Lauda, TAG-Porsche/McLaren MP4/2—70 laps |
| 3..... | Alain Prost, TAG-Porsche/McLaren MP4/2—70 laps |
| 4..... | Elio deAngelis, Renault/Lotus 95T—69 laps |
| 5..... | Rene Arnoux, Ferrari 126C4—68 laps |
| 6..... | Nigel Mansell, Renault/Lotus 95T—68 laps |
| 7..... | Ayrton Senna, Hart/Toleman T184—68 laps |
| 8..... | Manfred Winkelhock, BMW/ATS 007—68 laps |
| 9..... | Johnny Cecotto, Hart/Toleman T184—68 laps |
| 10..... | Martin Brundle, Cosworth-Ford/Tyrrell 012—68 laps |
| Average speed: 108.170 mph | |

Commenting on Mansell's starting line antics at Detroit, Piquet said, "Maybe he thought he had a motorbike"

area, and the resulting construction traffic has ruined the roads.

But the mostly good-natured, beer-swilling, sun-dazed crowd, by far the largest in the event's three-year history, seemed to love it nonetheless. Robert McCabe, president of the organizing Detroit Renaissance committee, declared himself delighted and announced that the city's option to stage the race had been picked up for another four years.

For the first time, he added, the Detroit Grand Prix may even have broken into the black. The thousands of vendors, hawking everything from Polish sausage sandwiches to Style Auto designer jackets, certainly had themselves a time. All weekend long, the smell of money changing hands almost overpowered the pungent fragrances of burning rubber and exotic engines at speed.

When everything was done, most of the people gone, work crews already shoveling trash into trucks and pulling down the miles of chain-link fence in preparation for the next morning's normal city traffic, you might have reflected on the ironies. A British-built car powered by a German engine and piloted by a Brazilian had dominated and won Motor City's own Grand Prix. In the supporting events, Mercury Capris had come 1-2-3 in the Pontiac-sponsored Trans-Am, while Renaults finished 1-2 in the Chrysler-backed Champion Spark Plug Challenge race.

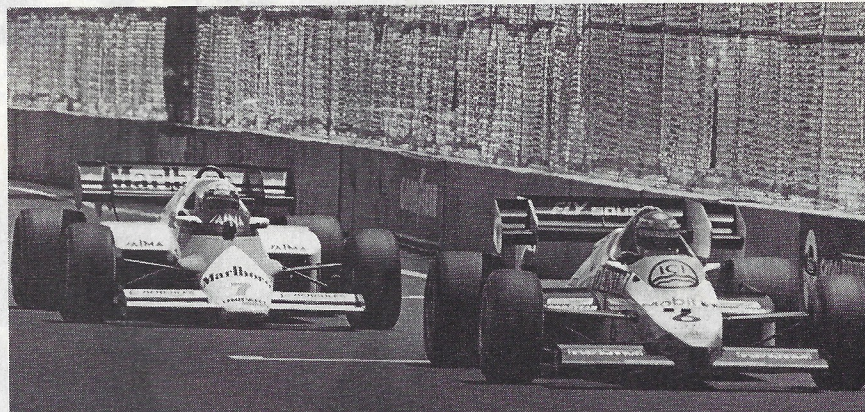
To some, this event is Racing Mecca: World Championship Formula One, the world's best, practically in their backyards. To some, it's simply the year's biggest party. To others, it's a colossal, week-long pain in the tail. To the jovial black man still try-

ing to peddle Eskimo Pies among the handful of stragglers shuffling through the rubble, it was a chance to earn himself a few extra dollars. "Say, pretty ladies, I'm talkin' to you," he sang in a hoarse, lilting voice to no one in particular. "I'm sellin' ice cream because my rent is due."

And isn't that really what it's all about?

Dallas

Last stop on the North American GP tour was Dallas, Texas. The city was hosting its first-ever F1 race on a temporary course that encircled the Cotton Bowl and wound its way around various areas of the adjoining State Fair Park. For a while, it looked like the Big D might come to stand for Disaster. Four consecutive days of 100°-plus temperatures coupled with a questionably designed and surfaced track combined to make



Some of the best action in Dallas came as Alain Prost closed in on and later passed Keke Rosberg. But the little Frenchman's hopes were dashed against the concrete.

this the most grueling race of the season. As fate would have it, Dallas also proved to be one of the most competitive outings of the year.

So was it really all that hot? Well, Goodyear technicians measured track temperatures during Friday's qualifying at 150° F, the highest ever recorded in 20 years of record keeping. Team McLaren's John Barnard

reported finding 175° surface temps on tires that had merely been sitting in the pit lane. According to Barnard, that's a couple degrees hotter than they'd be running under full race conditions.

Besides the debilitating heat, which all veteran F1 watchers in attendance agreed was even worse than Brazil, the 26 starters had to contend with a very bumpy track and a paving job well below F1 standards. Conditions degenerated throughout practice and qualifying, and at the conclusion of Saturday's activities, race officials declared that six of the 16 corners needed major repairs. Two loads of special quick-drying epoxy concrete were trucked in that night to do the job. But next morning, one of the batches was found to be defective, requiring three of the patches to be dug out and replaced. The second round of repairs was completed barely one hour before the start time, but the show went on as promised.

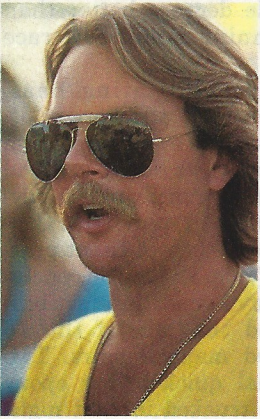
For one driver, the problems became academic. Tyrrell's Martin Brundle suffered the worst crash of the weekend on Saturday when he slammed into one of the concrete retaining barriers during qualifying. Besides trashing the 012 tub, the shunt broke Brundle's left foot and right ankle, and knocked the young British charger out of action for the remainder of the season.

The JPS Lotus Team looked to have the advantage going into the race. Having qualified their Renault-powered 95Ts 1-2, Nigel Mansell and Elio deAngelis took off ahead of Warwick's Renault, Arnoux's Ferrari, Lauda's McLaren, Senna's Toleman, Prost's McLaren, and Rosberg's Williams as the drivers scrambled for position on the start. Derek Warwick was the first of the leaders to give up the chase. He had taken over 2nd spot and was pressing Mansell for the lead when he tagged the wall and retired.

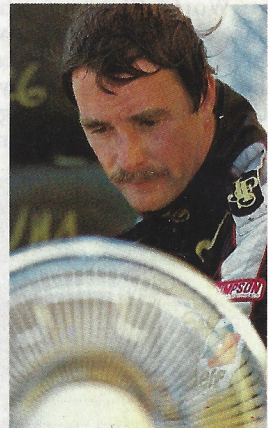
Detroit Grand Prix Top 10 Finishers

- 1.....Nelson Piquet, BMW/Brabham BT53—63 laps
 - 2.....Martin Brundle, Cosworth-Ford/Tyrrell—63 laps
 - 3.....Elio deAngelis, Renault/Lotus 95T—63 laps
 - 4.....Teo Fabi, BMW/Brabham BT53—63 laps
 - 5.....Alain Prost, TAG-Porsche/McLaren—63 laps
 - 6.....Jacques Laffite, Honda/Williams FW09—62 laps
 - 7.....Michele Alboreto, Ferrari 126C4—49 laps (NR)
 - 8.....Keke Rosberg, Honda/Williams FW09—47 laps (NR)
 - 9.....Derek Warwick, Renault-Elf RE50—40 laps (NR)
 - 10.....Stefan Bellof, Cosworth-Ford/Tyrrell 012—33 laps (NR)
- Average speed: 81.979 mph

Keke Rosberg demonstrated the potential of his Honda-powered Williams with a hot run in Dallas



Nelson Piquet looked unbeatable after Montreal and Detroit, but his hopes of a repeat championship wilted in Texas



Nigel Mansell led most of the Dallas GP, but both he and his Lotus succumbed to the heat.

Track temps during qualifying hit 150°, highest in 20 years

By lap 20 of the 67-lap affair (ultimately run on the two-hour time limit rather than the originally scheduled 78-lap distance), things had gotten considerably tighter. Mansell remained the leader. But he was at the head of a five-car train that included Prost, Rosberg, deAngelis, and Lauda, all nose-to-tail behind him. On lap 36, Mansell missed a shift, which allowed Keke to slip by into the lead. Two laps later, Mansell took himself out of contention for good when he brushed the wall and had to pit for new wheels and tires. Piquet, who qualified 12th, saw his early hopes of making it three in a row dashed on lap 45, when the Brabham's accelerator pedal stuck, and Nelson became just one more DNF.

With Mansell gone, Prost and Arnoux took up the attack on Rosberg, who continued to experience handling problems with the Williams-Honda. When Keke drifted off line on lap 49, Prost moved on by into the lead. The Frenchman's joy was short lived, as eight laps later he too hit a concrete retaining barrier and retired, leaving Rosberg in command for the rest of the contest. Arnoux, having started the race from dead last after the engine in his Ferrari died on the grid, continued his charge, maintaining 2nd place for the duration. The runnerup spot was his best performance of the year, and left him the only other driver on the same lap as the leader.

Lauda looked like a good bet for the show position, but he too made just one tiny slip tagging the wall to become an instant DNF. This opened the door for deAngelis, who motored on to grab 3rd place a lap down. Laffite took 4th on the day for his best finish of the year. Also making his strongest showing of the season was Piercarlo Ghinzani, who claimed his first points of the season by taking 5th in the Osella-Alfa Romeo. Last of the scoring positions went to Mansell who vainly attempted to push his Lotus across the finish line after it succumbed to transmission failure on the last lap. Only eight cars were running at the end, the final two survivors being Corrado Fabi's Brabham and Manfred Winkelhock's ATS.

Despite the truly unpleasant weather and a variety of track-related headaches, the inaugural Dallas GP still came off well enough to ensure a future for itself. An estimated 90,000 spectators turned out on race day, and what they lacked in exper-

tise they made up for in enthusiasm. For their long-suffering, the fans got to see one of the hardest-fought GP races in a while. With organizers Don Walker and Larry Waldrop promising substantial improvements to the track and a change in date for next year's contest, the Dallas F1 race shows real possibility for becoming one of the country's major motor-sport events.



DAVID HILTON

Team owner Frank Williams practices for his upcoming Ultra Brite commercial following Rosberg's victory in Dallas.

Afterword

When the F1 show returned to Europe, FISA met to pass judgement on a number of issues relative to the North American races. Not surprisingly, Detroit turned out to be the most controversial of the contests. Nigel Mansell was fined \$6000 for his part in the first lap accident that caused the event to be red-flagged at the start and threatened with suspension should he be involved in any similar actions. Nigel followed up that performance with more cute moves at Dallas, which did little to endear him either to Rosberg

or deAngelis. They both agreed that the British driver was guilty of blatant balking of clearly faster cars on a one-line circuit where passing under pressure requires a huge expenditure of energy. Rosberg was particularly adamant, accusing Mansell of driving in a style beneath F1 standards.

Team Tyrrell found itself embroiled in a far more serious controversy, involving accusations of possible cheating in the Detroit contest. Following analysis of a liquid sample taken from a tank in Martin Brundle's car, the FISA decided to ban Tyrrell from participation in F1 competition for the rest of season. The fluid in question contained small metallic balls and was fed from the tank into the air intake horns by means of a pump-activated spraying system.

Ken Tyrrell successfully appealed the banishment to a British high court just prior to the F1 race at Brands Hatch. Whether or not he can force his way into the game in other countries, the forfeiture of all championship points remains in effect. At least until FISA rules otherwise. If Tyrrell does manage to go racing, Stefan Johanson has been secured to take over for the injured Brundle.

Dallas came in for its share of castigation when FISA required the organizers to post a \$200,000 bond and promise to carry out all required safety changes before receiving final approval for the 1985 event. There's also been talk regarding a possible new date for the Dallas race, probably following the Brazilian GP, in late March or early April. While increasing the chances of rain, it will almost certainly guarantee less tropical conditions than those at this year's race. (M)

Dallas Grand Prix Top 10 Finishers

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1..... | Keke Rosberg, Honda/Williams FW09—67 laps |
| 2..... | Rene Arnoux, Ferrari 126C4—67 laps |
| 3..... | Elio deAngelis, Renault/Lotus 95T—66 laps |
| 4..... | Jacques Laffite, Honda/Williams FW09—65 laps |
| 5..... | Piercarlo Ghinzani, Alfa Romeo/Osella FA1E—65 laps |
| 6..... | Nigel Mansell, Renault/Lotus 95T—64 laps |
| 7..... | Corrado Fabi, BMW/Brabham BT53—64 laps |
| 8..... | Manfred Winkelhock, BMW/ATS 007—64 laps |
| 9..... | Niki Lauda, TAG-Porsche/McLaren MP4/2—60 laps (NR) |
| 10..... | Alain Prost, TAG-Porsche/McLaren MP4/2—56 laps (NR) |
| Average speed: 80.283 mph | |

World Driving Championship Top 10 Following Dallas GP

| | | | |
|--------|----------------------------|---------|---------------------------|
| 1..... | Alain Prost—34.5 points | 6..... | Nelson Piquet—18 points |
| 2..... | Niki Lauda—24 points | 7..... | Derek Warwick—13 points |
| 3..... | Elio deAngelis—23.5 points | 8..... | Michele Alboreto—9 points |
| 4..... | Rene Arnoux—22.5 points | 9..... | Martin Brundle—8 points |
| 5..... | Keke Rosberg—20 points | 10..... | Patrick Tambay—7 points |