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Elford wins Monte for Porsche — McLaren's Teretonga



Porsches mop up Monte

Dry conditions allow first rear-wheel-drive win since 1960—a possible French victory for Alpine ruined by vandalism

By JOHN DAVENPORT

Photography by PETER BURN



A composite shot of some over-exuberance by Vic Elford, with David Auber, on the St Auban test, the first stage of the Monaco—Monte circuit. Elford wrestles from opposite lock to opposite lock as he hits the first patch of ice on the stage.

in that they had to find the control in Lille during the morning rush hour, and only six of them emerged from that control without penalty. Even the experienced John Sphinzel, driving a BMC 1800 with Gerry Ryan, took a minute's penalty after arguing with a truenite gentleman. On that same itinerary, Rosemary Smith/Margaret Lowrey burst an oil pipe on their works Group 3 Imp, but they got it fixed and arrived at Monaco immaculate as usual. A surprise face amongst the British drivers was that of Roy Fidler, who had been summoned from his first fish emporium only the day before the rally started to join James Gordon and Barry Hughes in a Lotus-Cortina. Unhappily Fidler had not left the frying-pan behind, as on the first common mountain circuit the car caught fire and very nearly toasted the occupants.

The only shadow cast over the rally was the death in an accident on the Yugoslav *amand* of Luciano Lombardini, co-driver to Sandro Munari, who had both started in a works Lancia Fulvia from Athens. His car was hit by a local Mercedes that was overtaking two buses. Lombardini was killed instantly; Munari was severely injured and taken to hospital in Skopje, where Lancia had a surgeon flown to him from Italy. He has recovered from the operation and will return to Italy soon.

After the arrival of all the cars on Monday morning, the drivers had 24 hours to rest before going out on the first circuit to Vals Cooper drivers had a restless time of it. One French journalist called the proceedings *le cinema*, and perhaps he was thinking of the Marx Brothers in which case he had a point. The BMC Coopers were running with two single-choke carburetors fabricated by BMC Competitions from two double-choke SU manifolds, taking advantage of the regulation which says that the carburetors can be changed in Group 2 provided the new one fits on without modification to the manifold or use of spacers. When the scrutineers saw them the trouble started, and for a while it looked as though they would not start on the mountain circuit.

Then came a most astonishing proposal from the club: if BMC would like to go into the *parc ferme* and change the carbureters for SUs they were welcome to do so. Quite naturally BMC rejected this offer as it would have laid them wide open to protests from other competitors. Eventually after arguing into the next night, the club said that the Minis could start as far as they were concerned but they reserved their judgment on the question of whether any modification had been made to the manifold.

Even with the rally running in pretty mild weather, the Athens starters had their share of snow, both falling and fallen, while the other itineraries were treated to doses of fog and ice in the area between Geneva and Lyons on the last night before arriving at Monaco on Monday morning. The Dover starters in particular had special problems,

be driven on thickly studded summer tyres. This made most of the driving more reminiscent of the Coupes des Alpes than the Monte Carlo Rally. If the event had been held some 10 days earlier, it would have been a classic Monte Carlo Rally in the sense that 1965 was a classic, with plenty of snow and every road section a real struggle for survival. This is not to suggest that the result would have been any different, as the times of the Porsches and Alpines over the stages that did have snow and ice suggest that they were still faster than the front-wheel-drive cars in such conditions.

This was the first year that all the competing cars were on scratch, with no form of handicap to differentiate between them. There was no handicap on special stages relating to the class or cylinder capacity of the cars, and no restriction on tyres or other accessories except the normal limits imposed by Appendix J and the International Sporting Code. This was undoubtedly a good thing, as most of the carping and criticism in the past has stemmed from such regulations, but the other exceptional thing was not so good—the conditions. Never has rally started many of the special stages were dry, especially as in the last week before the weather been so mild or the roads so covered feet deep in snow, closing them for days on end. In fact, 10 of the 13 special stages were eminently suited for racing tyres, while at least two of the others could best

minutes through a navigation error. Third to fifth places were occupied by the Mini-Coopers of Ranno Aaltonen, Tony Fall and Paddy Hopkirk, who had passed the Lancia of Ove Andersson after he too had an accident on the Turini and fell to sixth from fourth place. Seventh was the sole survivor of the Alpine team, Jean Vinarter, who had driven very fast on the last night to improve his position by no less than three places.

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covered that after three tests Vic Elford was lying fourth behind the three Renault Alpines of Gérard Larousse, Jean-François Piot and Jean-Claude Andruet, while Pauli Toivonen in the second works Porsche was lying sixth behind Leo Cella's Lancia Fulvia. Although two of the Alpines subsequently dropped out, Larousse led back at Monte Carlo from the two after three tests Elford led by 19 secs; then Larousse crashed on some snow thrown on the road by some irresponsible spectators at the Col de Turini.

Thus Porsches finished first and second, with poor Cella eighth after he had lost six minutes through a navigation error. Third to fifth places were occupied by the Mini-Coopers of Ranno Aaltonen, Tony Fall and Paddy Hopkirk, who had passed the Lancia of Ove Andersson after he too had an accident on the Turini and fell to sixth from fourth place. Seventh was the sole survivor of the Alpine team, Jean Vinarter, who had driven very fast on the last night to improve his position by no less than three places.

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