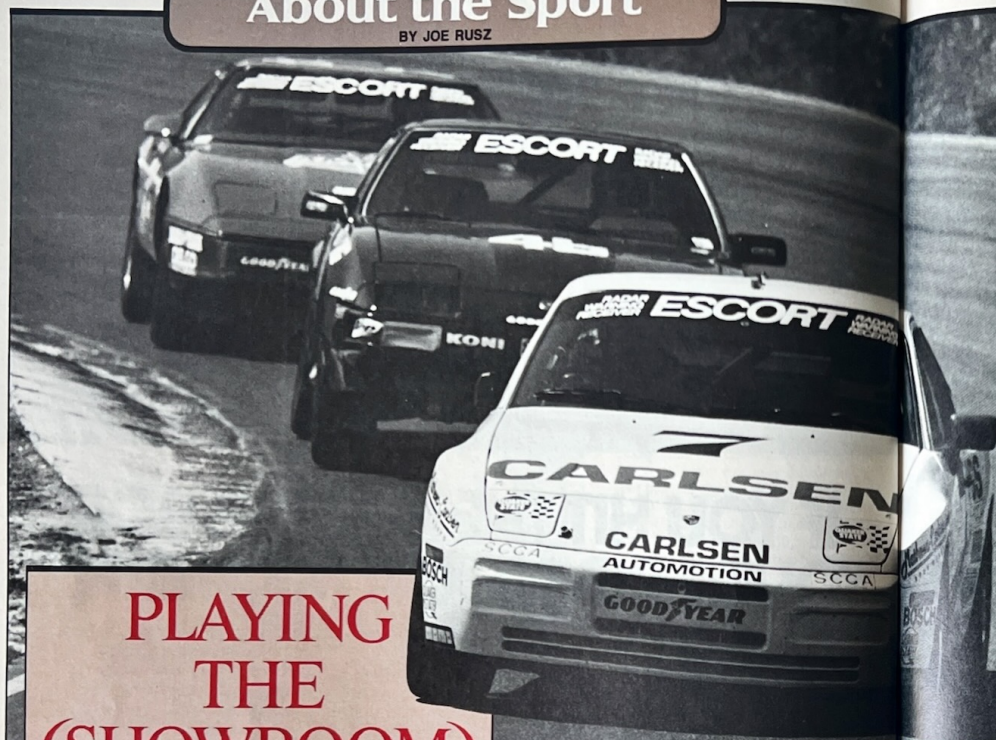


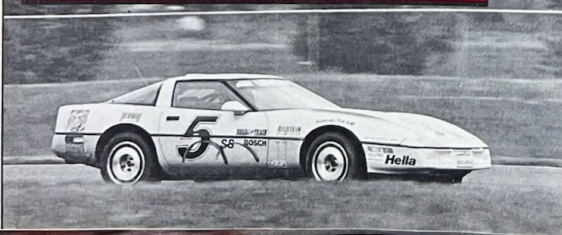
About the Sport

BY JOE RUSZ



PLAYING THE (SHOWROOM) STOCK MARKET

Bullish times for IMSA and SCCA professional showroom stock racing



Chevy Camaros and Pontiac Firebirds looked strong at IMSA's Firehawk Sebring enduro, but don't rule out the Nissan 300ZX Turbos and Porsche 944s.

Champions last year, the Corvettes are well on their way to a second title with victories at Sears Point and Portland.

Also-rans in 1985, Porsche 944 Turbos may finally beat the Corvettes in the SCCA's Escort Endurance Championship.

IT ALL BEGAN with the Quaker State Longest Day of Nelson, a 24-hour romp through the Ohio countryside that is to showroom stock what Le Mans and Daytona are to Group C, GTP and other assorted full-blown racing categories. At Nelson Ledges, any amateur showroom stock racer could be a Jack Leck or a Derek Bell for about as much as these two Le Mans winners spend on a nice dinner at the Hotel Moderne in Le Mans. Well, all right, maybe a bit more than that. But much less than Porsche shelled out to keep a 936 in racing tires.

Beginning in 1980, the Ledges held an annual enduro for SS racers, automobiles that were essentially road cars fitted with a rollage, competition lap and shoulder▶



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CHARCOAL MELLOWED FOR SMOOTHNESS

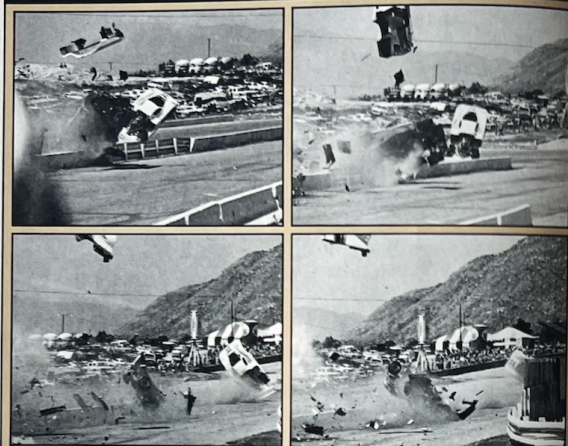
Sport

belts and other safety gear. The idea caught on and soon there was a profusion of professional teams treating the Quaker State Longest Day of Nelson as if it indeed were Le Mans. Before long the automakers were involved, and by 1984 what had started as a simple gathering of club racers had become a media happening. The success of the Longest Day prompted other enterprising souls to get in on the SS enduro act, and by season's end similar races had been staged at Mid-Ohio, Lime Rock and Willow Springs. Sanctioned by the Sports Car Club of America, they formed a loosely knit series known as the SCCA Endurance Racing Championship.

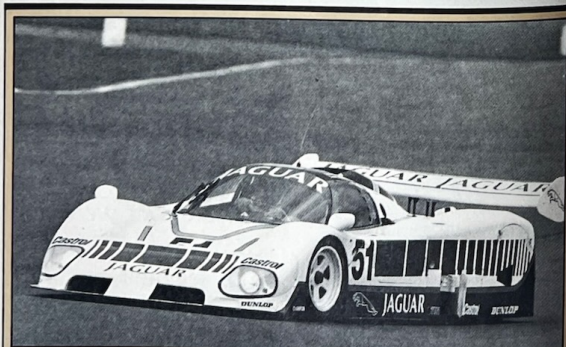
In 1985 when the SCCA returned to formally back what was called the Playboy United States Endurance Cup, it found it had company—the International Motor Sports Association's Firestone Firehawk Endurance Championship. Although there was some variation in the rules, both series had similar formats and were open to the same cars—with a few exceptions: The Playboy, which required mufflers but no catalysts, was open to Corvettes and Porsche 944 Turbos and allowed any tire brand; the Firestone, which required neither muffler nor catalyst, permitted no cars more powerful than the Nissan 300ZX Turbo, Porsche 944 non-turbo and Chevy Camaro/Pontiac Firebird and permitted only you-know-who's tires.

With decent purses and a heavy influx of contingency money (in the Playboy, Goodyear paid \$50,000 per race to the overall winner if any winning car was shod with its tires), both championships attracted sizable numbers of entries and generated an intensity of competition that one would expect in Grand National stock car racing—or figure eight! The automobile industry thought of showroom stock as the perfect arena for its wares, and before long nearly every domestic and foreign car company was involved in either the Playboy or the Firehawk or both. A few threw caution and money to the winds; it is interesting to speculate how much, say, Chevrolet or Porsche or Nissan or Honda or Dodge spent. Or how much Chevy and the rest will spend to win either or both series in 1986.

This season there are a few changes. No longer sponsored by Playboy magazine, the series is now backed by Cincinnati Microwave and is known as the SCCA/Escort Endurance Championship. R&T has signed on as an associate sponsor and will provide promotional support for the EEC, which has undergone some restructuring. ➔



The laws of physics (and probability) got a good workout at IMSA's Riverside 6-hour enduro. When Doc Bundy tried to squeeze past Lyn St James, at about 165 mph, his Corvette GTP nudged Lyn's Ford Mustang Probe and sent it into Chip Robinson's Jaguar XJR-7. In this dramatic photo series, the Vette has already come to rest behind the crash wall, but the Probe is thrashing itself to pieces and the Jag makes like a big-game fish before it and the Ford land upside down in the dirt. Although all three cars were destroyed (the Probe also burned), none of the drivers was injured.



Jaguar's Group C contender, the Tom Walkinshaw Racing XJR-6, put an end to Porsche's winning streak in the Sports Car World Championship. Drivers Derek Warwick and Eddie Cheever finished 2 laps ahead of the factory 962C of Derek Bell and Hans Stuck in the 1000-kilometer Makes enduro at Silverstone.

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Sport

Although there are still four classes, they now include Super Sports, SSGT, SSA and SSB rather than SSGT, SSA, SSB and SSC. The results of last year's enduros proved two things. First, many of the lower-power C cars were more than competitive with the B cars in an enduro setting. Honda CRXs, for example, blew away their C and B class competition. So the SCCA has combined the two classes for 1986. Second, no car except a Corvette (especially a Corvette) or a 944 Turbo was competitive in GT. So the SCCA decided to move these two cars up a notch and put them against cars of their own potential.

Given last year's regulations, this would have been a very short list because there was a \$30,000 limit on price. Not any more. For 1986 the sky's the limit, meaning that in addition to the Vette and the regular 944 Turbo, the category includes such pricey numbers as the Ferrari 308 Quattrovalvole, 328 GTS and GTB; BMW 635CSi; Lotus Esprit Turbo; Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.3-16-valve; Porsche 911 Carrera (with the so-called Turbo-look option), the 928 and something called the 944 Turbo Club Sport, a very limited-production, built-for-racing special that may break the Corvettes' stranglehold on the EEC.

That was the SCCA's intention when it allowed Porsche to build this car. "We couldn't afford another year of Vette domination, and although Chevy has been very supportive, it's better for competition if they don't win every race," says the club's special projects manager, Bill King. Initially, Zuffenhausen made only seven examples of the Club Sport Turbo and parceled them out to their loyal standard-bearers including Freddie Baker, Jon Milledge, Rick Hurst, Ken Williams and Joe Cogbill. This raised quite a hue from the boys at Brand C, and King assures me that it is now possible for a mere mortal (albeit, not a poor one) to walk into the local Porsche showroom and order a 944 Turbo with option M637.

What should come out after the computer has been re-booted and your check has cleared the bank is a special 944, one with wider-than-stock forged alloy wheels, wide tires, stiffer springs and anti-roll bars, externally adjustable Koni shocks, but without electric window lifts, power actuated seats, a/c, radio and anything else that would add unneeded weight—such as a steel hood. Yes, my friends, the Turbo Club Sport's bonnet is fiberglass and if that doesn't say "purpose-built," what does? This is what stuck in

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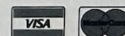
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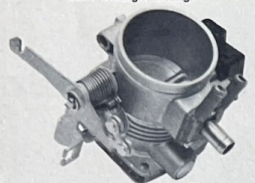
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Sport



Small but feisty, Honda Civic CRX-Si.

the Vette group's crew (hey, c'mon, guys, your whole car is fiberglass!), but they needn't have worried. Because at the season opener at Sears Point, the best of the Porsches qualified 4th and finished 5th—behind three guess-whats.

At this time the 944 Turbo is not quite dialed in. It is a car that doesn't transition well and at a twisty track such as Sears Point, this hurts. According to Freddie Baker, it's too loose because it needs more front bar and wider tires. As it is, the car understeers until you lift. Then it oversteers. Bill King says that at Sears the Porsches wound up cooking all four tires. Fortunately (or unfortunately, depending on your automotive bent), the results may be different when the series moves to circuits that are not as twisty as Sears.

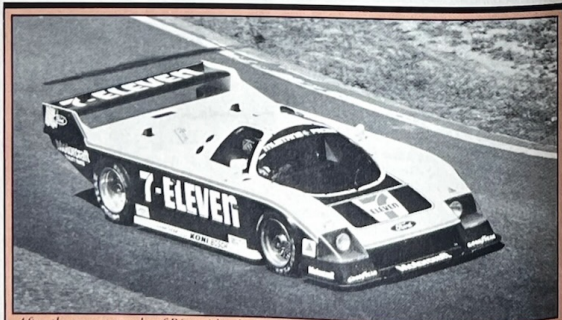
For those of you wondering about some of the other hot cars in this class, don't bother. After much discussion with "those who know," the Corvette and Porsche Turbo Club Sport are still the best choices.

With SSGT purged of the infidel Vettes and 944 Turbo Club Sport, the charter members such as the Camaro, Mustang, non-turbo 944, Nissan 300ZX Turbo and Mazda RX-7 Turbo (to name a few) are joined by two noteworthy newcomers, the Audi Quattro and the Maserati Biturbo. So far, no one has ponied up \$40,000 for a Maser, but at Sears Point the two Quattro entries qualified 1st and 2nd in class, serving notice that they will be a force to be reckoned with. However, 944s finished 1st and 2nd in class.

In SSA where there is a profusion of

small-displacement turbos, the Mitsubishi Starion and the Dodge Shelby Turbo (1st and 2nd in class, 15th and 16th overall at Sears, respectively) once again appear to have a competitive edge over most of the field. SSB could be anybody's ball game and although a Honda CRX-Si won the class at Sears, the Nissan 200SX, Toyota Celica and MR2, Mazda 626GT and Peugeot 505 T were in there pitching. And let's not overlook this rookie, the Volvo 740 Turbo wagon. Campaigned by John Overton, this Yuppie-mobile qualified 2nd in class and bears watching, especially when I take it for a guest drive at the Longest Day of Nelson and at the Road Atlanta 6-hour.

No need to wait for my hands-on report though, because R&T Editor John Dinkel is once again a Bakeracer and competed at Sears Point with the Kim Baker team. Unfortunately, one of the team's two Corvettes broke early in the 6-hour, and the other was bunted into the wall while running 4th, 10 minutes from the checker. This lack of sportsmanship aside, John feels that most drivers in the series are being very courteous. "At least, they're stay-



After the near-tragedy of Riverside, the Ford Mustang Probe's victory at Laguna Seca was sweet indeed. Long-time Ford contract driver Klaus Ludwig started from the pole and led from start to finish to win the IMSA 300-kilometer dash, one of the series' few sprint races.



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Sport

ing out of the way of the Vettes and other fast cars," says the boss. Also, Dinkel believes that the SCCA has got its organizational house in order and that officiating and scoring (ahem!) should run smoothly this year.

Not to be outdone by Denver, IMSA has upped the purse to \$40,000 per race in its Firestone Firehawk Endurance Championship, which has grown from seven to 10 events. End-of-season points fund monies are up in this series, which, by design, is devoid of the high-dollar cars found in the Escort.

This is Camaro, Firebird, normally aspirated Porsche 944 and Nissan 300ZX Turbo country, plus a lot of other lesser models that make up the Firehawk's Grand Sports, Sports and Touring classes (the Compact category has been eliminated for 1986).

If the 6-hour-long season opener at Sebring is any indication, the cars to watch in the big-bore category may be the Pontiac Firebirds, which finished 1st and 3rd—sandwiching the Datsun Alley 300ZX Turbo between them. Don't rule it out. And don't dismiss the 944, which won the series last year. The Porsches finished 4-5-6 at Sebring, a horsepower course. At a handling track such as Sears Point or Lime Rock, the outcome may be different.

In the Sports and Touring classes, the new challengers and the cars to watch include the BMW 325e and Shelby Charger in Sports (1st and 2nd at Sebring) and the Honda CRX and Toyota MR2 in Touring (same finishing order at Sebring).

R&T is represented by our Contributing Photographer Bill Warner, who won the media points race in last year's Firehawk. Our southern gentleman driver, teamed with Corvette engineer (and Vette racer) John Heinrich and Tom Nehl in a Camaro, finished 10th at Sebring. Heinrich qualified 3rd and was leading when, exiting the pits, John spun on spilled fuel and overrevved the engine, damaging the valve train.

From his E-ticket vantage point, Warner reports that the series has two glitches: slower drivers who don't watch their mirrors ("Thought muh heart was gonna jump up into muh throat when the MR2 braked going into the sweeper," says Bill) and scrutineering (maybe the tech guys should read Smokey Yunick).

But it's still fun (right, Bill and John?). Otherwise, why else would Warner and Dinkel, plus 200 to 300 other drivers from throughout the U.S. keep coming back to Showroom Stock?



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79-81 530i, 528i	104	89	
82-86 528e, 533i	97	89	
76-83 320i	104	74	
84-85 318i	97	82	
84-85 318i	97	82	
82-84 733i	104	89	
77-81 733i	104	74	
Chevrolet/Pontiac			
83-86 Camaro, Firebird	149	67	
83-86 Corvette	59	59	
63-82 Corvette	67	67	
Datsun			
70-74 240Z, 260Z	97	97	
74-78 260Z, 280Z	97	89	
79-83 280ZX incl. Turbo	89	67	
Mazda			
81-85 RX7	89	59	
79-82 626	74	59	
Mercedes Benz			
Type W107 body	47	48	
W108, W111 bodies	47	51	
W109 body	63	56	
W115 body	48	48	
W123, W126 bodies	46	48	
W201 body	88	46	
Porsche (only with Boge shocks o.e.)			
All 914/4, 914/6	104	82	
76-84 924 incl. Turbo	97	87	
82-84 944	97	87	
All 928	134	134	
Saab			
68-85 99, 900 including Turbo	59	59	
Toyota			
83-85 Celica GTS (ind. rear)	89	67	
82-85 Celica exc. Supra. GTS	89	59	
82-85 Celica Supra	89	67	
79-81 Celica Supra MA46	89	59	
Volkswagen			
76-80 Super Beetle	67	44	
75-84 Rabbit, Scirocco	82	74	
79-84 Rabbit GTI	82	82	
80-84 Jetta	82	74	
85-86 Golf, Jetta incl. GLI	89	74	
Volvo			
75-84 240, 260 series	97	67	

Phone for filaments not listed here.

Michelin XZX

Steel belted radial tubeless blackwall.
180/65HR390 \$82 200/60VR15 117
190/65HR390 91 220/55VR15 123

Michelin XWX

Steel belted radial tubeless blackwall.
195/70VR14 \$121 185/70VR15 \$117
205/70VR14 125 205/70VR15 125
215/70VR14 138 215/70VR15 125

KONI

Adjustable Shocks & Suspension Kits

Alfa Romeo	prices ea. KIT*	F	R
71-84 GTV, Spider Veloce	\$48	\$48	
72-84 Alfaetta	44	44	
Audi			
84-85 5000 incl. Turbo	87	48	
80-83 5000 except Turbo	87	48	
80-83 5000 Turbo	87	48	
81-86 4000 Coupe	55	48	
79-86 4000 sdn exc. Quattro	84	48	
83-86 4000 Quattro	55	52	
BMW			
66-76 1600, 2000, 2002	\$579	79	
72-78 2500, 2800, 3.0S	78	77	
69-74 2800CS, 3.0CS	78	77	
80-82 633CSi	78	79	
77-81 530i, 528i	805	79	
82-86 528e, 533i	805	79	
77-79 320i	74	53	
80-83 320i	632	73	
82-86 318i	632	73	
Chevrolet/Pontiac			
70-81 Camaro, Firebird	\$66	48	
82-85 Camaro, Firebird	\$47	48	
63-82 Corvette	48	45	
Datsun			
79-83 280ZX	\$119	55	
74-78 260Z, 280Z	\$195	54	
70-73 240Z, 260Z	\$308	55	
Fiat			
73-83 X1/9	\$4	84	
67-80 124 Coupe, Spider	\$7	87	
Jaguar (4 shocks required all rear)	\$5	55	
61-74 XKE 6-cylinder	\$4	79	
71-74 XKE V-12	\$4	79	
69-84 XJ types	\$4	79	
Mazda			
81-85 RX7	\$303	55	
79-82 626	\$5	54	
Mercedes Benz			
Type W107 body	\$3	38	
W108, W111 bodies	\$3	38	
W109 body	\$3	38	
W115 body	\$3	38	
W123, W126 bodies	\$3	38	
W201 body	\$3	38	
Porsche (call for prices if Konis used)			
All 914/4, 914/6	\$2	56	
76-82 924 including Turbo	\$2	56	
82-84 944	\$2	56	
68-78 99 except Turbo	\$2	56	
79-81 99 Turbo	\$2	56	
79-85 99, 900 except Turbo	\$2	56	
79-85 900 Turbo	\$2	56	
Toyota			
82-85 Celica GTS, Supra	\$95	55	
82-84 Celica except GTS and Supra	\$95	55	
Volkswagen			
75-84 Scirocco, Jetta	\$719	82	
76-80 Super Beetle	\$74	42	
75-84 Rabbit GTI	\$74	42	
75-84 240, 260 series	\$74	42	
Volvo			
75-84 240, 260 series	\$74	42	

*Kits has preassembled shocks/springs sway bars.
**Kits has preassembled shocks/springs sway bars.
Phone for filaments not listed here.

euro-tire

**TESTS: ALL 5 OF THE NEWEST FERRARIS,
MERCEDES-BENZ 190E 2.3-16, VW SCIROCCO 16V**

ROAD & TRACK

AUGUST 1986

UK £1.95

\$2.50

FERRARI FANTASY

**MARANELLO TO
LE MANS**

