

CARRERA PANAMERICANA

Mexico



2,178 MILE STOCK CAR

ROAD RACE ACROSS MEXICO

By Fred Van Buren

The Mexican Pan-American Race (Carrera Panamericana Mexico) will be the crowning event of the inauguration on May 5, 1950, of the highways which will complete the network linking Mexico's northern and southern borders.

More than 1000 drivers from Mexico, the United States, Canada, other Latin American nations and possibly Europe are expected to compete. Inquiries already received from Argentina, Venezuela, Columbia, El Salvador, and the United States indicate that the entry list may reach 200 by deadline time, midnight April 5.

THE RACE

When and Where: The 330,500 peso Mexican Pan-American Race will be a five day open speed competition for stock cars. It will start on May 5 in Ciudad Juarez, which is across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas, and will finish on May 9 in El Ocotal, a village of less than 300 population on the Guatemalan frontier.

Who: The race is in the charge of the Organizing Committee for the Mexican Pan-American Race, a nonprofit organization with Mexican Government and private support. The honorary president of the Committee is President Aleman, and the active president is Agustin Garcia Lopez, Secretary of Communications and Public Works, the cabinet department which is in charge of Mexico's arterial highways. The committee's general manager is Antonio Cornejo C., active sportsman and prominent in the Mexican automobile industry.

Route: The 2,178 mile race will be run in eight legs, one each on the first and last days, and two each (divided by a half-hour rest period) on the other three days. The legs are as follows:

1. Ciudad Juarez-Chihuahua 367 K. (228 m.) 1st
2. Chihuahua-Durango 781 K. (485 m.) 2nd
3. Durango-Leon 459 K. (341 m.) 2nd
4. Leon-Mexico City 448 K. (279 m.) 3rd
5. Mexico City-Puebla 139 K. (86 m.) 3rd
6. Puebla-Oaxaca 408 K. (253 m.) 4th
7. Oaxaca-Tuxtla Gutierrez 556 K. (345 m.) 4th
8. Tuxtla Gutierrez-El Ocotal 258 K. (160 m.) 5th

Competing automobiles must be in Ciudad Juarez for examination three days before the race.

Prizes: Based entirely on speed will be: 150,000 pesos (\$17,341.04) for first place; 100,000 pesos (\$11,560.69) for second place; and 50,000 pesos (\$5,780.35) for third place, plus small prizes for each leg. For seven of the legs, first prizes will be 2,000 pesos (\$231.21); second prizes 1,000 pesos (\$115.61), and third prizes 500 pesos (\$57.80). Prizes will be greater for the fourth leg, from Leon to Mexico City; 3,000 pesos (\$346.82) first prize, 2,000 pesos (\$231.21) second prize, and 1,000 pesos (\$115.61) third prize. Altogether, prizes will total 330,500 pesos (\$38,208.09).

Entry rules: Entry is open to any five-passenger closed-body standard passenger car, regardless of make, model or year of manufacture. Sport, convertible, and coupe models are specifically barred. All auto-



mobiles entered must have only regular factory equipment. They may carry any spare tires and parts which will fit within this definition. The only departure from this rule will be the requirement that every automobile have an extra gasoline tank installed to avert refueling stops.

While reserving actual rulings for specific cases, the committee has indicated that it will apply its definition strictly.

If they are *absolutely* stock, sedans or sedanettes with seats for 5 passengers may compete. This will allow Bristols, Healeys, Allards, Allas, Delahayes, and Talbots to run against American Fords to Cadillacs.

Any number of automobiles may be entered by any person, organization, or company in the world. Each car must have a driver and assistant with credentials from the Mexican Automobile Sport Commission, or from an accredited foreign automobile club such as the AAA Contest Board.

Entry fee: Registration of entrants opens on February 1, 1950, and closes at midnight April 5, 1950. The entry fee is 2,500 pesos (\$289.02) which covers insurance for damage done in accidents, but not injuries of racing crews.

Fuels and Lubricants: The race will be a test for Super-Mexolina, an 80-octane gasoline produced by Petroleos Mexicanos, the Mexican government oil corporation. All competing automobiles must use Super-Mexolina, which will be provided without charge.

Competitors may use any lubricants they prefer, at their own expense. They must also pay for their own food, lodging, and all other expenses, but the Organizing Committee will make arrangements for food and lodging for all competitors and the press.

Minimum Speed: Competitors must maintain a minimum speed of 80 kilometers (50 miles) an hour on each leg to be eligible for the principal prizes. If they fall below this speed on any leg, they may continue competing for the minor prizes.

THE HIGHWAYS

The route will be paved all the way except the last 107 miles, which will have good gravel surface.

As the second day's run is the longest, and as it is over comparatively flat country, it should eliminate a number of cars whose drivers push them too hard. European cars having small engines will be at a disadvantage on this stretch.

The race will probably be won during the third, fourth and fifth days, when the mountains come in and, on the fifth day, over the 100 miles of gravel road to the finish. On those stretches the heavy American cars, and particularly the newest with their C.G. far forward, will take a terrific beating if they try to keep up. European cars will be at an advantage on these stretches.

Descriptive: The competitors will traverse an unending variety of scenic areas, beginning with a desert in the north, the mountainous mining region of Chihuahua, and the mile-high Bajio plateau between Leon and Toluca. Two great mountain ranges will be crossed between Toluca and Puebla, the high point being more than 10,000 feet, before the drivers head south across lower sierras and through great green valleys.

Near Tehuantepec the route will reach its lowest point, about 100 feet above sea level, with patches of jungle relieving the flatness of the Pacific coastal plain. After Tuxtla Gutierrez the highway ascends rapidly from 1,500 to almost 8,000 feet in less than 40 miles. The road goes through high mountains as far as Comitán, then descends again to about 2,000 feet at the Guatemalan border.

Competitors will find mile on mile of curves to test their skill, but the scientific construction of the highway, with properly banked turns and limited grades, comparable to the best in the world, does not make any unfair demands on men or machines.

Entry forms and rules may be obtained by writing ROAD and TRACK, P.O. Box 409, North Hollywood, California.