



# CORVAIR RACER UPDATE

MARCH 21, 2016

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## FROM RICK NORRIS' CORVAIR ALLEY

Slow going here as I wait on some machine shop work. The nice warm weather went back to winter just in time for spring! The week coming looks a lot better in terms of warming up again. I want to welcome Eric Shakel to our little cadre of Corvair drivers who will attend the Road America event. It'll be nice to have him on track with us. See below.

### Eric Shakel sez:

I have bitten the bullet and registered for the WIC, can't miss the 50th Anniversary of the Yenko Stinger. There's no engine in YS-066, so I have a bit of work to do. I will send you a full update with a few pix in a couple of weeks.

### SEBRING BEGINNINGS, by Marc Valero. Highlands Today Published: March 13, 2016.

That first race wasn't 12 hours long, didn't have "Sebring" in the title, wasn't in March and didn't start in the morning — but it was the start of something big in sports car endurance racing.

Only about five years after Hendricks Field was decommissioned as a training site for B-17

*Corvair Racer Update* is published by the Performance Corvair Group (PCG). We accept articles of interest to Corvair owners who are interested in extracting high performance from their classic Corvair cars and trucks. Classified advertising is available free of charge to all persons. Commercial advertising is also available on a fee basis. For details, email our club President. Email address shown in the Officers section on the back page of this newsletter.

PCG is one of the many regional chapters of the Corvair Society of America (CORSA), a non-profit organization that was incorporated to satisfy the common needs of individuals interested in the preservation, restoration, and operation of the Chevrolet Corvair. Membership is free of charge. To join, please use the handy form on our website: [www.corvair.org/chapters/pcg](http://www.corvair.org/chapters/pcg).

bomber crews for the World War II war effort, the runways and connecting roads would serve a new mission — as a platform for man and machine to compete at a world-class level.

It all started one chilly New Year's Eve in 1950. On 3 p.m. Dec. 31, 1950, a field of 28 cars lined up for a six-hour race on a 3.5-mile track for the "Sam Collier Memorial Grand Prix of Endurance." A small crowd, estimated at 2,800, was on hand to view the race on the chilly winter day for what would be remembered as the most important event in American sports car racing history.

Ken Breslauer states in his book, "Sebring - the Official History of America's Great Sports Car Race." "The crude Sebring circuit was marked by hay bales and a few signs. The pits were merely wooden tables," Breslauer writes. "It was certainly a modest beginning."

Based on an index of performance, which is a handicapping system accounting for each car's performance specifications, a Crosley Hot Shot driven by Ralph Deshon and Fritz Koster won that first race.

The second race in 1952, which also was the first 12-hour race at Sebring, was sponsored by the American Automobile Association. It was on a 5.2-mile track. The race was scheduled to start at noon, March 15, 1952, but it was delayed for more than hour due to heavy rains. The 1952 race was called "The Sebring International Grand Prix of Endurance."

Sebring resident Doug Morton, who has an extensive collection of Sebring race memorabilia including programs, tickets, credentials and posters, has delved into the history of the race since he saw his first running of the 12 Hours of Sebring in 1988.

The man behind the races, Alec Ulmann, was a rich man with a home in Palm Beach. He had a hangar or storage building at Hendricks Field for his business, which refurbished planes, Morton said. He was also a sports car enthusiast.

Ulmann and Sam Collier, an accomplished racer, flew over Hendricks Field and observed that the runways and roadways would make a great location for a sports car race. They got with the Sebring Firemen and several city leaders and were able to put on a six-hour Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) race.

"The generally favorable climate and the close proximity of many sports car racers living on Florida's east coast were prime factors in choosing Sebring," Breslauer noted in his book. According to The Crosley Auto Club's account of the first race: "Hendricks Field had few amenities for spectators; no grandstands, security, ticket booths or public-address system and few lavatories."

Collier was killed in an accident at the Watkins Glen (New York) race a few months before the first Sebring race, so it was called the "Sam Collier Memorial Grand Prix of Endur-

ance.”

Morton said the Crosley Hot Shot, which won the first race based on the performance index, was a very tiny car. Sebringraceway.com notes, in its race “fact or fiction” page, that it is a “fact” that the winning Crosley Hot Shot was actually a spectator’s car. The spectator was convinced to loan his car to drivers Deshon and Koster.

Another remarkable fact is that a Florida governor was once given a tour on the Sebring circuit while the race was going on. In 1950, Ulmann took Gov. Fuller Warren on a lap around the track while the race was in progress.

After the first race, Ulmann and racer Briggs Cunningham went to the 24 Hours of Le Mans and decided to develop a longer distance race at Sebring and extended the race circuit to 5.2 miles, Morton said.

Today, the Sebring sports car racing continues with The 64th Annual Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring Fueled by “Fresh from Florida,” takes place Saturday, March 19 at Sebring International Raceway. This year’s entry list includes 49 cars to race on the 3.74-mile circuit.

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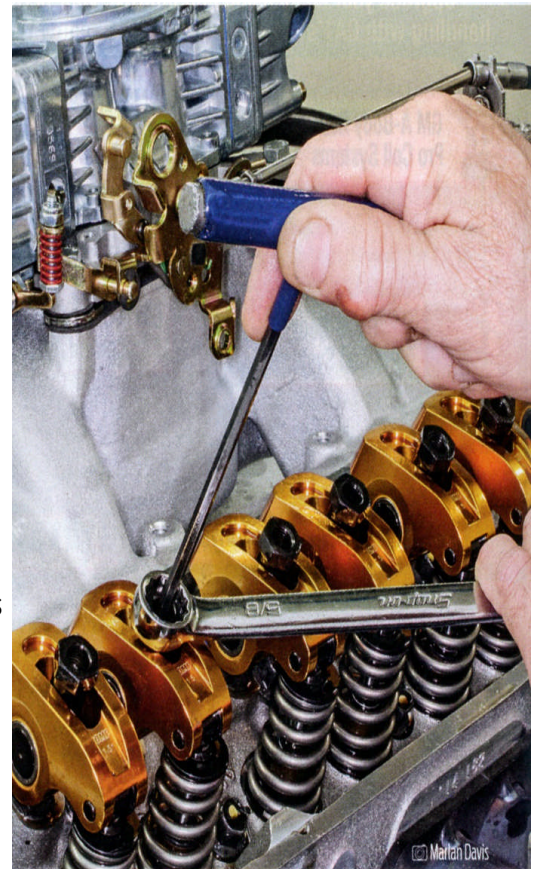
### **WRENCHIN’ AT RANDOM**

Hot Rod Magazine, April 2016.

Here’s something we are familiar with...  
When Adjusting Hydraulic Lifters, How Much Further  
Should the Rucker Arm Be Tightened Past Zero-Lash?

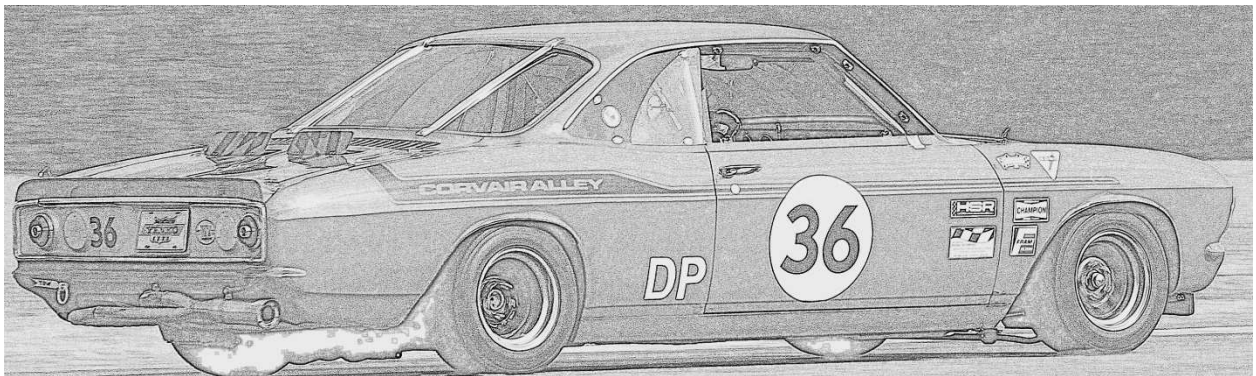
For engines with adjustable, stud-mounted rocker arms and hydraulic lifters, stock specs typically call for a conservative 1 turn past the zero-lash point. Turning the rocker arm adjustment nut a lesser amount after reaching the zero-lash point positions the hydraulic lifter’s internal plunger closer to the lifter plunger’s snap-ring retainer. At high rpm, this delays hydraulic lifter pump-up because the plunger can’t move far enough to interfere with valve closure when hydraulic force overcomes valve spring pressure.

In fact, some racers even adjust the nut as close as 1/8 turn or less down from zero lash, which positions the hydraulic lifter plunger practically against the snap ring, effectively causing the hydraulic lifter to act like a mechanical lifter because it can’t take up any clearance in the valve train.



Running tight plunger-to-retainer clearances can be risky if using standard lifters that have a paperclip-type retaining ring because hydraulic pressure may cause the plunger body to pop out of the groove, resulting in catastrophic failure.

Lifters with full-contact internal Truarc-style snap rings can better withstand these tight clearances. For long-term street durability with a high-perf cam, adjust lifters with Truarc-type retaining rings 1/4 to 1/2 turn down from zero lash. Adjust paperclip retaining-ring lifters 1/2 to 3/4 turn down from zero lash.



### **PERFORMANCE CORVAIR GROUP FACEBOOK PAGE:**

You can join the Performance Corvair Group on Facebook. Visit this page on your web browser:

<https://www.facebook.com/performancecorvairgroupworkshop2015/>

When you get there, enter a request to be added to the group. The page is administered by Ned Madsen, VP of PCG!

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## GOING FASTER: 10 SPEED SECRETS FOR THE REST OF US

*Not quite ready to dedicate your entire life to your on-track escapades? How about some tips for the rest of us—those who'd just like to fully enjoy our classics, whether it's slicing through Road Atlanta's esses or traversing our favorite mountain pass?*

*Carl Heideman has gotten intimate with just about every form of classic machinery, from '50s Fords to Britain's best. He knows a bit about what makes our classics tick, and has some speed secrets to share.*

### 1. LOOK AT YOUR IGNITION

You don't need the latest and greatest high-tech ignition system in your car, but you do need one that's strong and dead-nuts consistent. Hold a timing light on your engine while it's running at 5000 rpm: If it's not giving you a super-stable reading, your ignition system could use some work. We usually find that a fully rebuilt distributor—again,

that's rebuilt, not just cleaned up—teamed with a Pertronix ignitor solves a lot of woes.

### 2. CONJUNCTION JUNCTION

Hoses, lines and wires do fail, but problems usually occur at a junction. Are your systems as simple as they can be, or is your fuel pump actually powered by three wires spliced together? On a related note, how are your grounds?

### 3. KEEP IT SIMPLE

Going fast doesn't do you any good if the car keeps breaking and can't finish a race or make it over that pass. Constantly check the car for loose wires, stray cables and simple adjustments that have gone out of spec. For example, does your throttle still open all the way? And is the cable going to last the whole weekend, or is it about to pull out of its stop?

### 4. KNOW WHEN TO SHIFT

Just buzzing to the redline before shifting isn't good enough. If you've gone to the dyno, you can figure out your best shift points and put them to use. An illuminated shift light can be your friend here, although a piece of red tape stuck on the face of the tachometer works well, too.

### 5. MEASURE STUFF

Get a probe pyrometer to make sure your tire pressures and alignments are correct. Tire temperatures should be even across the tread. Get an infrared pyrometer to make sure your brakes are all about the same temperature. Know exactly where your ignition timing is set. The bottom line is that when you measure things and record that data, you can take an informed, diagnostic approach to speeding up.

### 6. ORGANIZE YOUR TOOLS

Call us lazy, but we don't always like going through our entire toolbox before beginning every repair. Hand tools are relatively inexpensive, so we'll buy some duplicates and keep them bunched together for specific fixes. For example, we'll keep together everything needed to bleed the brakes. It makes for less stress when time is short.

### 7. GET SOME FEEDBACK

Talk to the guys who are going faster than you and see if they'll give you some pointers. If they're good, they'll know what works and why they're passing you. If they're nice, they'll tell you. When and how you ask can be important here. After their third beer during the evening social is probably better than while sitting on the grid.

### 8. COMMON SENSE RULES

Everyone has their theories about why they're faster or better. Listen to them all, but learn to separate the snake oil from the superstition from the silver bullets. If something doesn't make sense, it probably doesn't work. Most factors come down to math, physics, and thermal law. A Ph.D. isn't necessary—if you understand some basic concepts, your common sense will provide the answers you need.

### 9. TEST, TEST, TEST

There are now so many testing opportunities out there that it's silly to not take advantage of them. From local autocrosses to noncompetitive track events, there are plenty of opportunities to shake down a car before that big weekend. Not sure your skills are sharp enough? Hire a seasoned driver for the day.

### 10. AVOID SLOP AND BIND

We see two common and opposite problems on race cars. Sometimes things are sloppy—like linkages that have too much free play or wear. Sometimes things are in bind, like an anti-roll bar whose geometry doesn't match the suspension. Too often we see both at the same time, which can be dangerous. An anti-roll bar that is in bind will wear components, causing slop that will eventually lead to catastrophic failure.