

# PRODUCTION CAR RACING

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Editor "Autosport"

The "Autosport" Series Production Sports Car Championship was instituted in 1956. With innumerable events for sports-racing machines, it was felt that some opportunity should be given to the entrants of more normal road-equipped sports cars to race their machines on British circuits. In consequence, a list of races was drawn up which were qualifying events for the final; also bonus marks were awarded for best performances at speed events at Prescott and Shelsley Walsh.

Final event to decide the Championship was a three hours race run on a handicap basis, credit laps being worked out according to lap times recorded by each competitor on various circuits. Actually this worked out exceptionally well, and resulted in a close race with the issue in doubt right up until the finish. No less than seven cars were on the same lap as the winning Fitzwilliam/Carnegie M.G. received the chequered flag. Ken Rudd's A.C. Bristol narrowly missed catching the M.G., and covered the greatest distance of any competitor.

The competition proved so popular, that, after many requests from intending competitors, it was decided to continue it for 1957. It was decided, however, to abandon the handicap system, and to concentrate on scratch races within three classes; i.e., up to 1500 c.c., 1501 to 2700 c.c., and over 2700 c.c. Later in the season, owing to the few entrants in the over 2700 c.c. class, this was merged with the over 1500 c.c. section. An extremely large entry was received and, as always, difficulty was experienced in providing a sufficient number of events to give entrants the best possible chance of amassing points. Also, the Suez crisis caused the postponement and abandonment of several events, and at one time it looked as if the contests would have to be held over until 1958.

However it was found possible to find enough races to keep interest going, and bonus marks were awarded for sprint events at Prescott, Shelsley and Brighton. To encourage development of small-capacity sports cars, modified cylinder heads were permitted on side-valve engines, a move which appears to have assisted in the marketing of efficient overhead valve conversions, particularly for the Ford Ten engine. Also, as Jaguars announced road equipment as being available for the "C," this car was permitted, as was the XKSS, although it was unlikely that there would be any available in Great Britain for many months.

During the season, Lotus-Ford, A.C. Bristol, Austin Healey 100S and Jaguar have been noticeably faster than any of their competitors, and it will be interesting to observe their performance at Snetterton to-day in an entry which includes Porsche Carrera, Alfa Romeo, Morgan, Triumph, M.G.A., Healey Silverstone, Berkeley, Frazer-Nash, etc. Many entrants are of the opinion that the contest should be confined to the widely-sold production sports cars, but this would be most unfair on the smaller manufacturers. It is quite true to say that the "Autosport" Championship has caused, indirectly, great interest in Lotus-Ford, and A.C. Bristol, with consequent benefit to the manufacturers. Next year, the contest may be modified to encourage other classes of car. After all, an M.G.A. won in 1956. The claims of touring car, and Grand Touring enthusiasts must also be studied, and everything will be taken into consideration when planning the 1958 events.

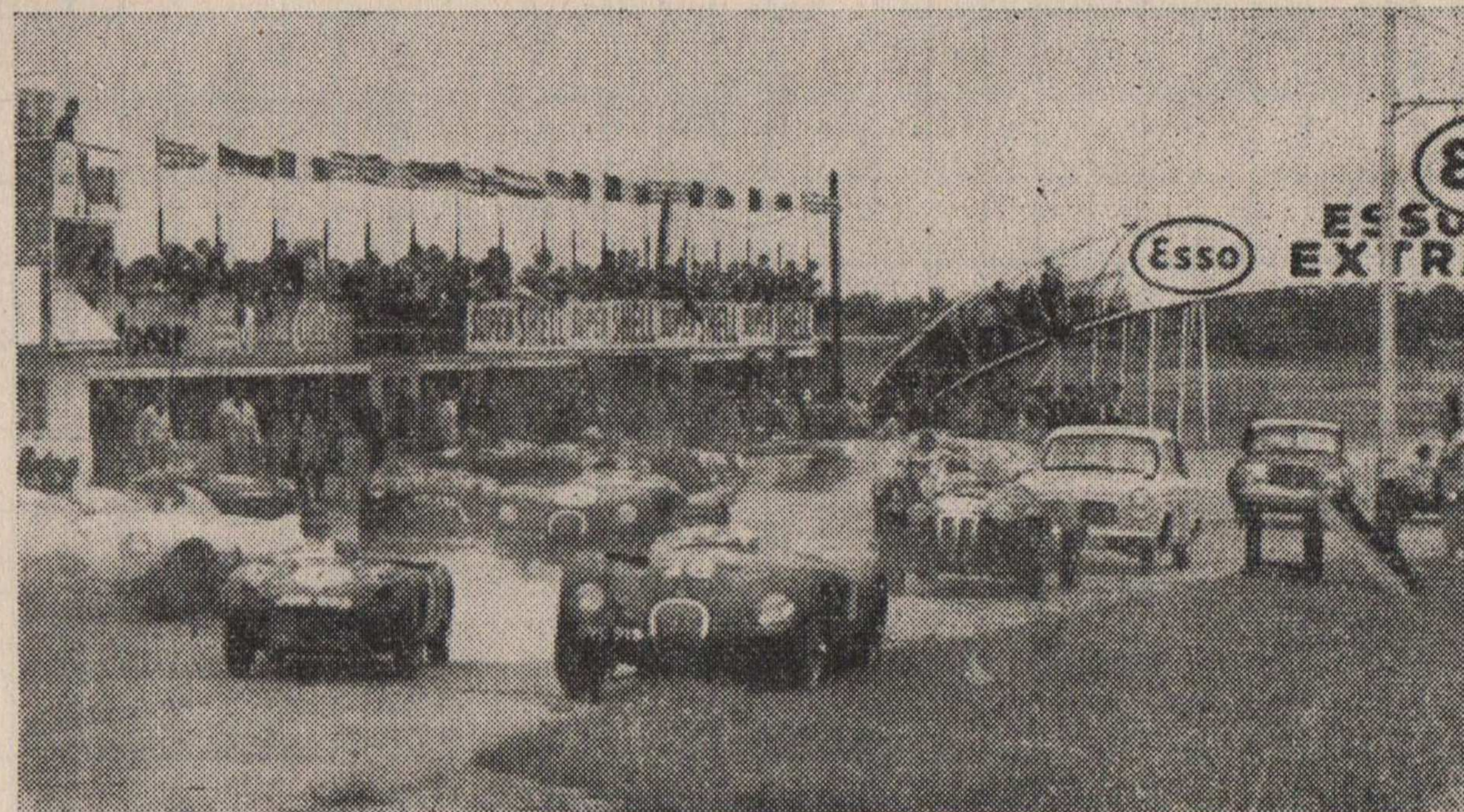
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11th. 23	12th. 27	13th. 30	14th. 15
79	75	75	
3.01.09	3.01.10	3.02.17	

To-day's race, organized by the Snetterton M.R.C., is a highly interesting experiment. With no R.A.C. Tourist Trophy races this year, it is the only long distance event for sports cars to be staged in Great Britain. Also, it is the only chance spectators will have to see night racing in this country.

Although the destination of the Championship Trophy lies between half-a-dozen entrants, the "Three Hours" can be won by any of the 30 competitors. There are also class awards and a team prize to be considered. The "Three Hours" is a purely scratch race to find the outright winner. For the Trophy, points will be awarded according to the placings in each of the two classes.

With no handicapping, it should be comparatively simple to follow the progress of the race, assisted by commentators and an up-to-the-minute scoreboard. Under 1500 c.c. cars will bear odd numbers, and the larger cars, even numbers. All cars will have their offside numbers illuminated at night. To assist in spotting course signs, the organizers are grateful for the co-operation of the "Scotchlite" people, in supplying many yards of their self-illuminating materials.



A TYPICAL SNETTERTON START

## Penalized 1 lap RESULT

Up to 1500 c.c.	1st..... 1	2nd..... 3	3rd..... 5
Winner's Speed :	Mins..... 3	Secs..... 74.50	Fastest Lap : Mins..... 73.56
Over 1500 c.c.	1st..... 2	2nd..... 6	3rd..... 4
Winner's Speed :	Mins..... 3 Hrs. 00	Secs..... 37	Fastest Lap : Mins..... 76.03
			Secs..... 78.05

2.	6.	4.	1.	12.	3.	28.	5.	24.	16.
87 laps	88 laps	85 laps	83 laps	83 laps	82 laps	82 laps	82	80	80
3.00.37	3.00.23	3.01.00	3.00.28	3.01.03	3.00.35	3.00.36	3.01.11	3.00.54	3.01.53
234.137	229.989	228.244	223.509	222.024	220.689	219.429	219.959		