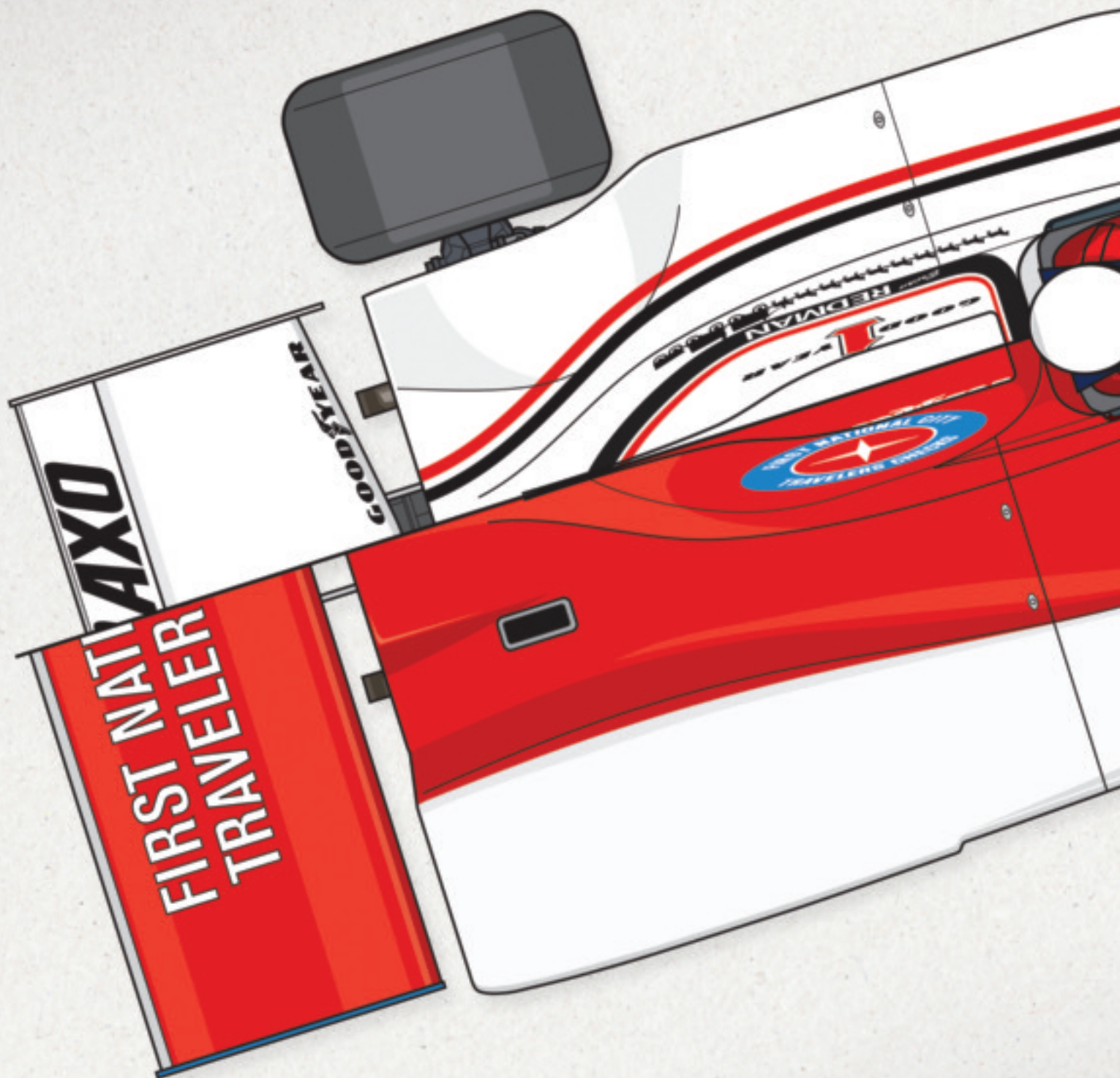
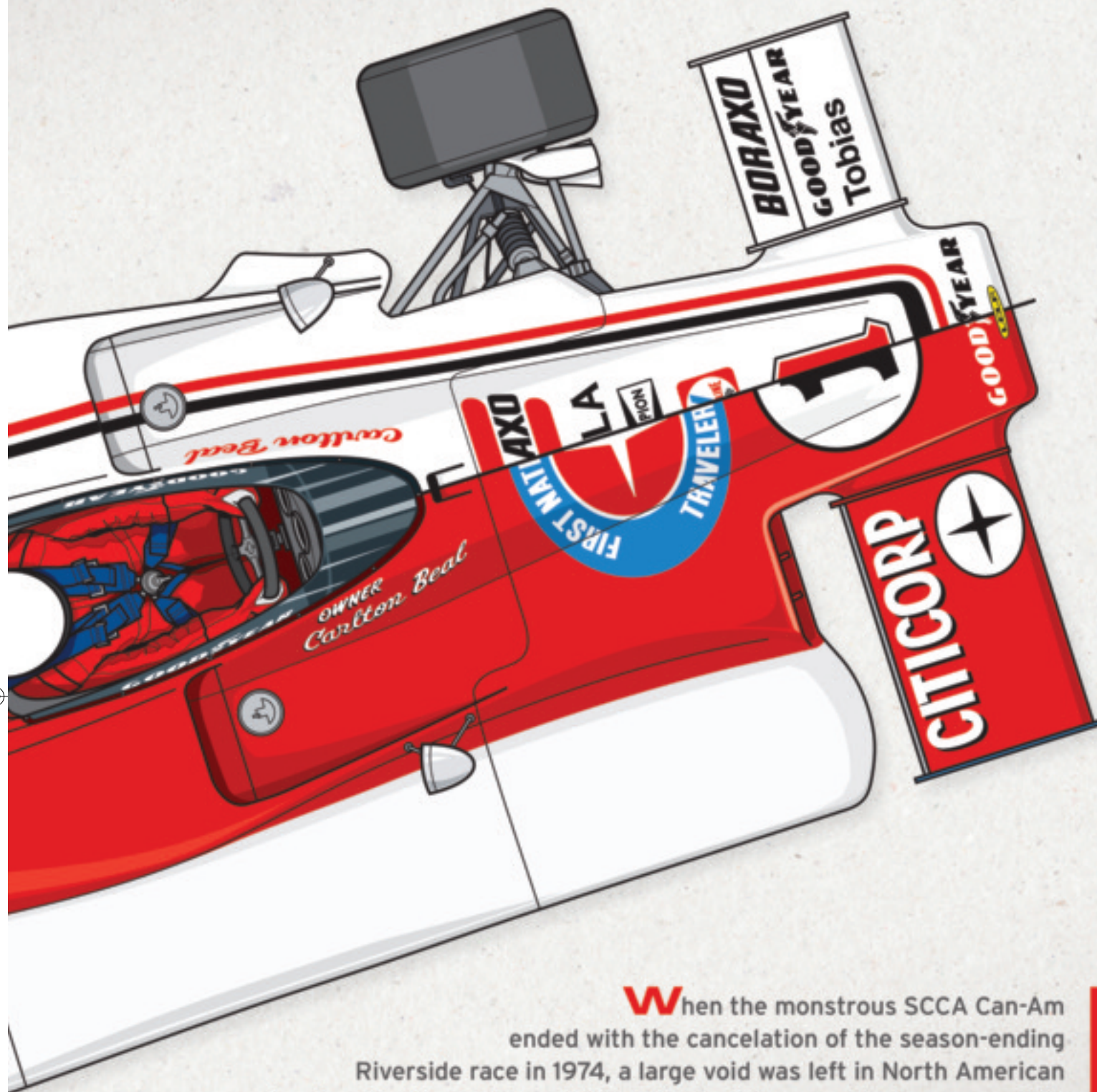


Transformation: F5000 TO SINGLE-SEAT CAN-AM





When the monstrous SCCA Can-Am ended with the cancelation of the season-ending Riverside race in 1974, a large void was left in North American road racing. For the SCCA and USAC, that void seemed to be successfully filled by the highly competitive Formula A/5000 series. However for track and race promoters, who were still struggling to draw the crowds they enjoyed in the mid- to late-1960s, they went looking for an alternative. Ultimately they chose a brand-new series, with an existing chassis, a new “glider-kit” and an old name.

Their hopes that the passion for the original Can-Am still burned in fans hearts—ultimately killing one of history’s best open-wheel series. This is the story of how that decision was made. **BY TOM STAHLER**

By 1976, Formula 5000 had become a worldwide phenomenon. In the United States, it enjoyed fierce competition with some of the greatest names to turn a wheel in anger on its grids. Beyond several Formula 1 stars, jumping the pond to compete, a joint sanction between the Sports Car Club of America and the United States Auto Club allowed many of the Indycar heroes of the day to participate—and they came in droves. The 5.0 liter engine formula, incorporating 305cid powerplants meshed with the open-wheel Formula Continental chassis proved to be a far less expensive “bang for the buck” experience for many teams and racers. By the early- to mid-1970s, Formula 5000 attracted teams that included Carl Haas, Dan Gurney’s All American Racers, Vel’s Parnelli Jones, VDS, Don Nichols’ Shadow and a number of independents. It had Formula 1 appeal without the Formula 1 price tag.

The original Can-Am was virtually

euthanized in 1974. Only five events happened by the time promoters at Riverside International canceled the season’s final race. The catalyst was SCCA’s decision to impose a fuel mileage limit, citing the global energy crisis, creating an “emergency situation” and calling for immediate amendments to the rulebook. Ultimately, as many speculate, it was the SCCA’s way of eliminating the dominant Porsche 917-10s and specifically the boundless 917-30 from the field. This ultimately cleared the path for Jackie Oliver to handily win the championship over teammate George Follmer in the fearsome Shadow DN4s. The Penske 917-30 did run one race that year at Mid-Ohio, finishing 2nd to Oliver’s Shadow in the hands of Brian Redman under new “team manager” Mark Donohue.

Beginning in 1967, Formula A, in its infancy, produced very competitive road racing across the United States and began attracting interest from teams across the SCCA spectrum. Incorporating Lotus, Lola,

LeGrand, March, Surtees and Eagle Continental Chassis, teams could inexpensively mount and build a \$600 Tonawanda crate small block and be competitive. The phenomenon spread as more and more teams around the world saw the value. The Tasman series in Australia and New Zealand had long legs and would compete into the 1982 season. Similar series also ran in Europe and South Africa as the popularity of the Formula blossomed, with the wide availability of the Ford Cosworth DFV. But for race promoters in the United States, the Formula 5000 series would disappointingly not be as big of a draw for spectators as the Can-Am once was.

The Real Deal

In 1971, Formula 5000 moved forward as a formidable series. The 5000s (in reference to the 5.0 liter metric displacement of the motors), with the most notable American drivers from Indy car and sports car racing, faced off against Formula 1’s top cars and stars. This was North America’s only recorded open-wheel “Formula Libre” race: The Questor Grand Prix. Held at the palatial Ontario Motor Speedway in Southern California, Mario Andretti’s Ferrari 312B beat Jackie Stewart’s Tyrrell 001 to the flag as the Grand Prix cars effectively “spanked” the Lola T-190 and 192 F5000 cars. The top F5000 car, a T-190 piloted by Ron Grable took 7th.

But that wasn’t really the end of the story. Mark Donohue, in a highly developed Penske T-192 drove as high as 3rd place in the two-heat Questor event before suffering mechanical problems. He very prophetically said at the time, “...they cost so much money to go Formula 1 racing needlessly, when you can go just as fast with a lot less invested in the car. Our cars are 10 times cheaper and I think that is very important in racing today—the finances.”

It wouldn’t be long before Lola would produce the T-300 and T-332 chassis. The T-300-series cars focused on much improved aero and a much lower center of gravity. Ultimately, with development, the Lola T-332 F5000 cars could lap as fast or faster than Formula 1 cars on certain tracks. Ingenuity was moving forward in American racing. Consider also that Dan Gurney offered a challenge shortly after the Questor race.

“In 1972, we made an open \$100,000 bet that an Eagle Turbo-Offy Indy car could lap the Nürburgring (Nordschlieffe) faster than the current F1 Cars. We were set to run Jacky Ickx in such a challenge—but no one in F1 took the bet.” At Long Beach, Mario Andretti’s 1975 pole time of 1:21.297 in a T-332 could not be undone the following year by the



Al Unser Sr. was a regular in the F5000 series, driving a Lola T-332 for Vel’s Parnelli Jones Racing.

LARRY FULHURST



Doug Schulz goes through turn 6 at Road America in his Lola T-332.

SCHULZ COLLECTION



Brian Redman had claimed three F5000 Championships for Carl Haas in the T-332 from 1974 to 1976.

LARRY FULHURST

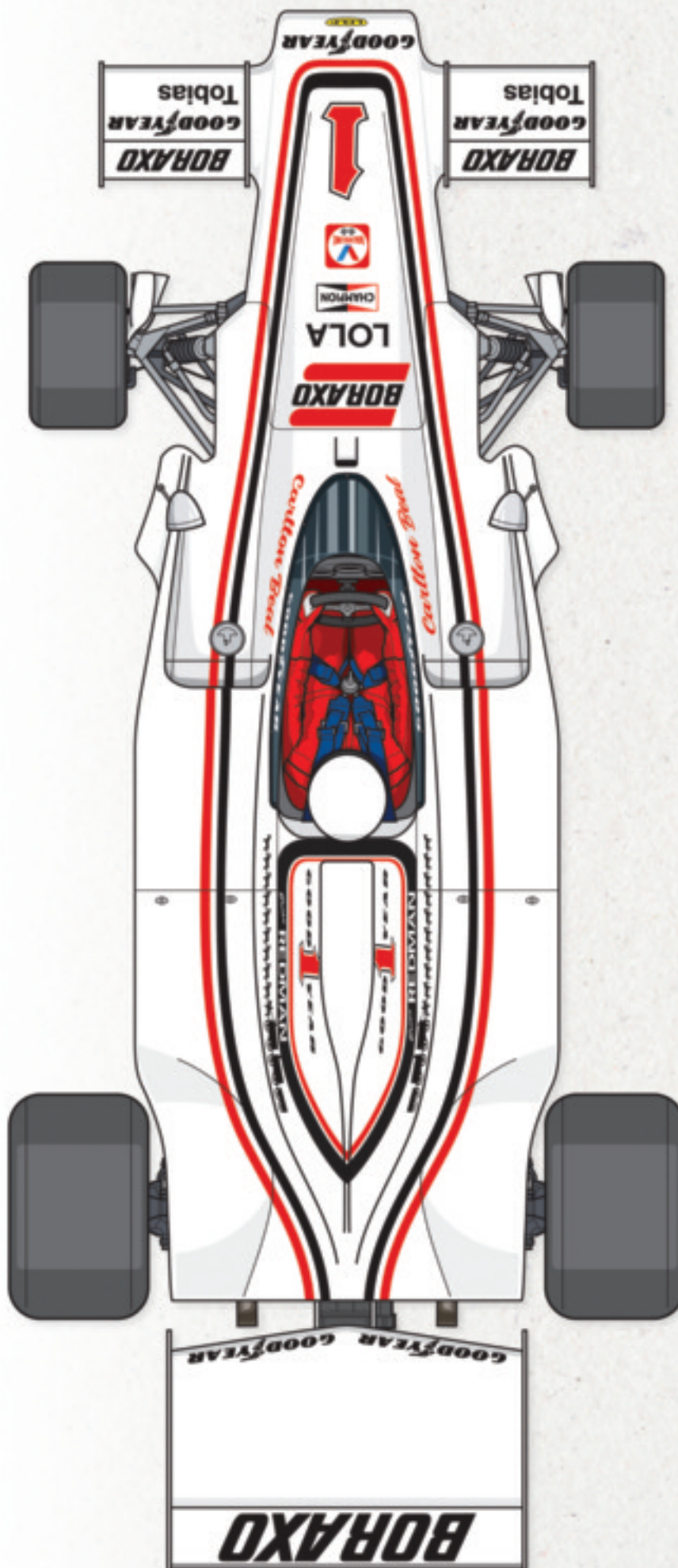
Formula 1 cars. Clay Regazzoni's pole in the 1976 U.S. Grand Prix West was 1:23.099.

Brian Redman would three-peat the F5000 Championship from 1974 to 1976 for car owners Carl Haas and Jim Hall, while going wheel-to-wheel with some of the best race drivers of the day including Mario Andretti, James Hunt, Al Unser, Jody Scheckter, David Hobbs, Alan Jones, Teddy Pilette (who was twice European F5000 Champion), Sam Posey, Jackie Oliver, Vern Schuppan, Peter Gethin, Bob Lazier and Brett Lunger.

Burdette "Burdie" Martin was heading up competition for the SCCA at the time and was the chief steward of the Long Beach circuit. Martin, who would lead The Automobile Competition Committee for the United States (ACCUS) the official liaison of U.S. sanctioning bodies to the FIA, loved the Formula 5000 cars. Specifically, and like designer Eric Broadley, loved the T-332—with one issue. "The only problem those cars had is they were breaking a lot of ankles in crashes because the legs were sticking so far forward in the car." Injuries sustained in the 332s gave way to a melancholy nickname for the effected: the "Lola Limp." Martin made overtures to change the tubs, in hopes of keeping legs more protected.

A number of the track promoters were complaining loudly to the SCCA about the lower attendance during the 1976 season. Subsequently, a meeting was scheduled to discuss options and solutions for the 1977 season. The biggest technical beef with the F5000, as a top-flight series, was mostly about fuel capacity. The cars only held 30 gallons of race fuel in their cells, which meant they had a window of just 100 miles maximum. All the F5000 races were broken down into 80-mile sprint "heats" over the course of a race weekend, and the promoters felt that this was a distraction for fans. Further, there was an ominous shake-up on the horizon as USAC and Indy car racing was looking at moving further into road racing, adding to its successes as a circle track open wheel icon.

Chris Pook, founder of the Long Beach Grand Prix, opined, "USAC and the SCCA did a very poor job of promoting the series as they dumped it on (the individual track) promoter." In the Can-Am series, Johnson Wax had done a phenomenal job of co-promoting the series with each track where the series appeared. Unfortunately though, the SCCA had not had a large corporate sponsor since 1971—and the Formula 5000 series never had a major sponsor. Pook speculates, "the SCCA didn't want to share the series with USAC."



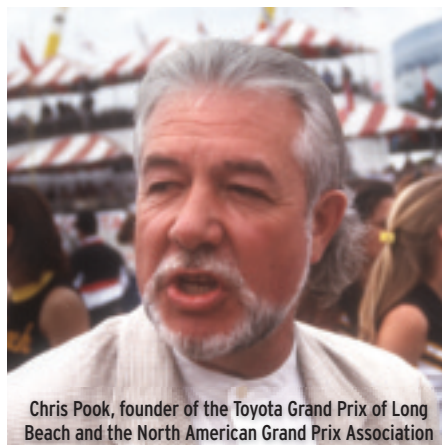
Top-Secret Speedway Test

The F5000 cars were so good that many in the sport had suggested that with some engine modifications they should be the cars running the Indy 500—ultimately cutting the cost of entrance into the 500. At the time, competitors in the 500 were running turbo Offys and other outlandish engines. USAC decided to have a look at an alternative. In early 1976, in a 500-mile race distance top-secret test, Mario Andretti ran a Vel's Parnelli Jones Lola T-332 at the Speedway. The car was supposedly doing phenomenal—and running some very competitive lap times.

But Andretti himself was against the idea too, at the time of his test. “I was against that chassis running at Indy because I felt it was not designed to withstand the constant corner loading of a high speed oval like Indianapolis. They tried to get Indy car to rule that that chassis could be legal to run at Indy. That’s why I did the test—to assess the viability of that chassis to run at IMS.” Mario knew it going in, he felt it was a big risk and not safe enough, which is why he was against it. But he did the test to satisfy the question.

Reportedly, at roughly the 300-mile mark, however, Mario broke a rocker arm. This prompted Speedway grounds and maintenance chief Charlie Thompson, to exclaim, “See! They won’t last! I’m not going to have those V8 engines blowing up all over my race track.” The idea died as fast as that engine let go. Just a handful of years later, in 1980, Gurney produced the normally aspirated stock-block Chevy BLAT Eagle—forcing USAC to re-write the rules requiring turbocharged engines.

When the engine failed, Mario said he was done. “I wasn’t going to wait for the chassis to fail and kill me. I didn’t like the



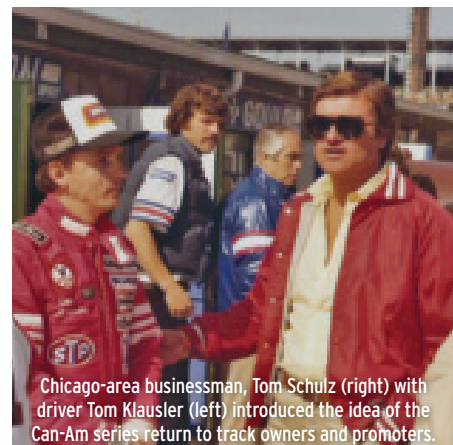
Chris Pook, founder of the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach and the North American Grand Prix Association

feel of the car [on the Speedway]. When the engine failed—the test was done.”

A Scale Model and Politics

Doug Schulz loved fast cars. From the time he was a kid, his dad, a Hamburg-born machinery wholesaler, would buy Mercedes cars—including bringing home the fourth 300 SL imported to the United States. “I was hooked,” recalls Schulz, “and have been hooked ever since.” From the time he was 16 he began to buy and sell cars. He then developed a company that imported industrial machinery from Germany. Schulz prospered from his business dealings which included a large machinery contract with Ford Motor Company.

Like many successful Chicago-area motoring enthusiasts of the day, Schulz was a customer of Harry Woodnorth, a car-sleuth who found and sold cars to high profile customers including Saudi Kings and Muhammad Ali. He first bought a Jaguar XK120 from Woodnorth, then began buying and selling other special interest cars in the region. Schulz also started going to Road America. He began attending races such as

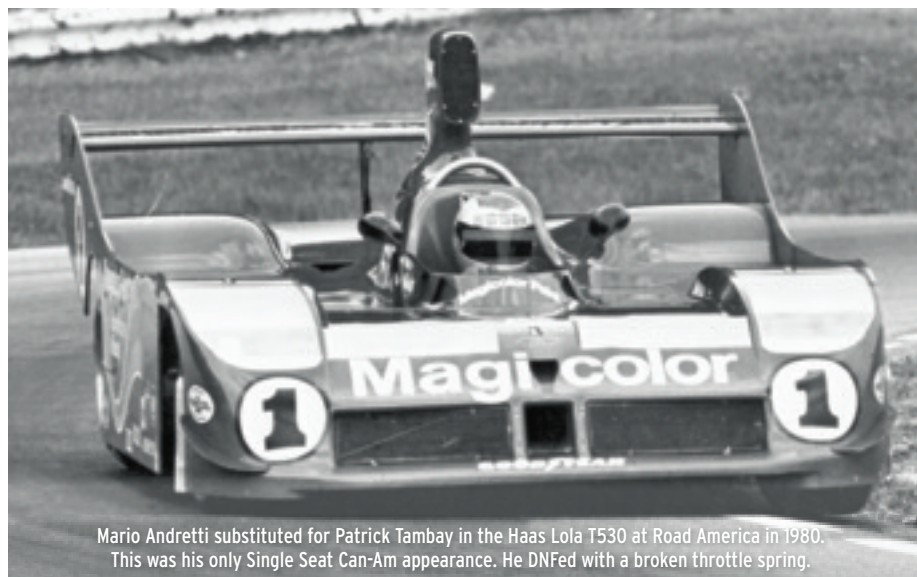


Chicago-area businessman, Tom Schulz (right) with driver Tom Klausler (left) introduced the idea of the Can-Am series return to track owners and promoters.

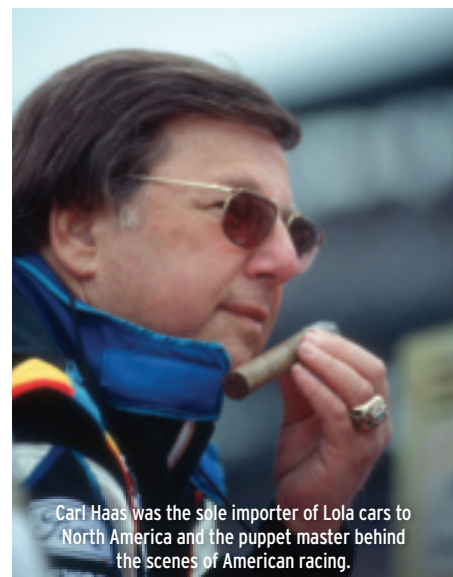
the June Sprints and the Road America 500 in the early 1960s, watching a friend of his father run an H-Modified sports racer. By the time the Can-Am came to town, he was completely enamored with the sport. “Those orange McLarens were absolutely classic and so cool! I decided someday I would do something like that!”

He eventually went to racing school in early 1975, earned his SCCA license and campaigned a Volkswagen Scirocco. The bug fully seated, he quickly acquired the ex-Mike Mosley/Gordon Johncock Lola T-332 from famed Indy mechanic George Bignotti—and was successful enough to be crowned the Chicago Region SCCA’s “Rookie of the Year.” In 1976, Schulz ran the two rounds of F5000 at Road America in July and August. He loved the Formula 5000 car, but his heart still yearned for the powerful Can-Am cars that had impressed him so much in the mid- to late-1960s.

Bob McKee at McKee Engineering in Lake Zurich, Illinois, was race-prepping the Lola T-332 for Schulz. Schulz lived in Barrington, a Northwestern suburb of Chicago, adjacent to McKee Engineering. It



Mario Andretti substituted for Patrick Tambay in the Haas Lola T530 at Road America in 1980. This was his only Single Seat Can-Am appearance. He DNFed with a broken throttle spring.



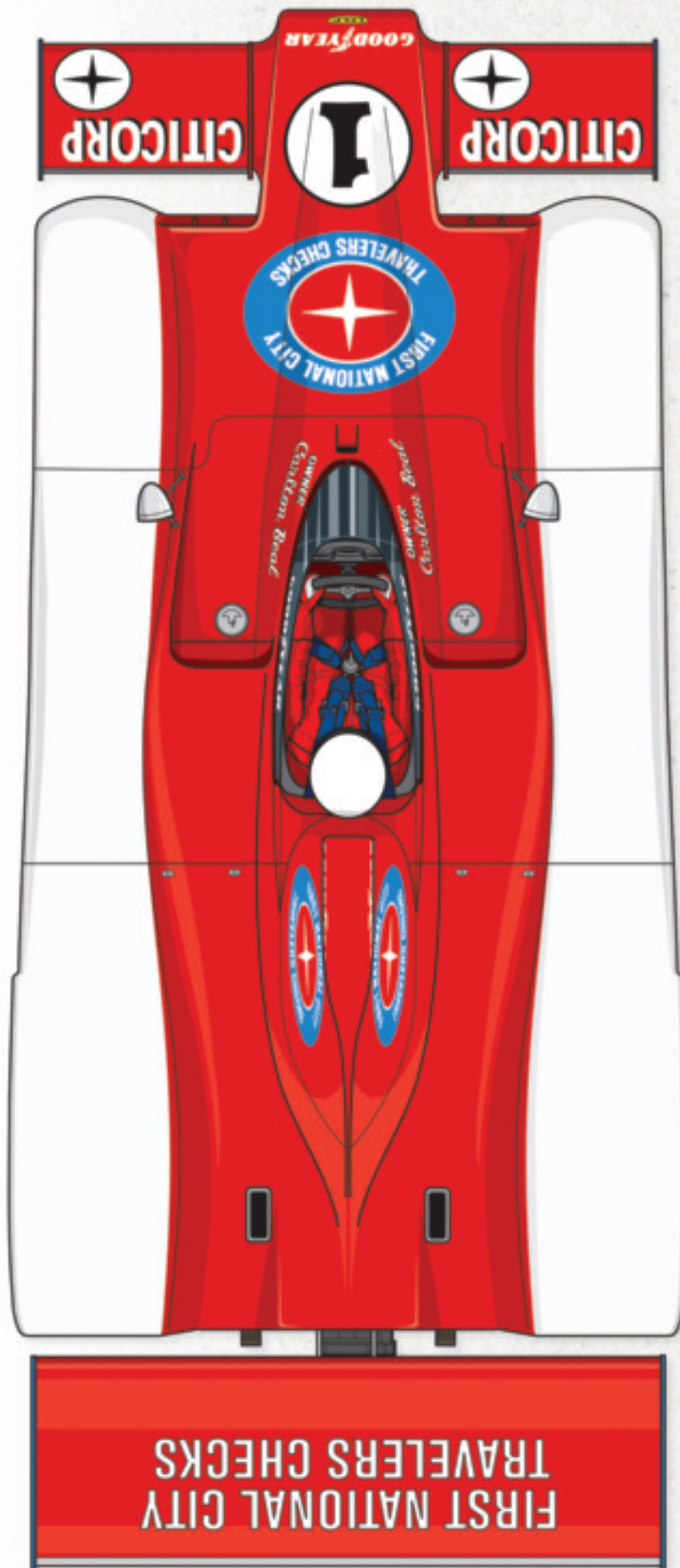
Carl Haas was the sole importer of Lola cars to North America and the puppet master behind the scenes of American racing.

was a convenient, and soon to be an innovative relationship. McKee himself had developed outrageous designs and builds for everything from USAC to the USRRC. Perhaps one of his most prolific creations, the Howmet TX turbine, sealed his legend in North American racing. The two began talking about Schulz's desire for the return of Can-Am and proposed the idea of retrofitting a Can-Am-styled body to the Lola chassis. McKee was game.

The car that would come to be known as the DB1 "SchKee" was penned by Mike Williams, an industrial designer. "Mike made the drawings and the model. He moonlighted for us here," said McKee. "He was designing TV sets most of the time." McKee remembers meeting the designer: "One day (Mike) showed up at the shop and said, 'you don't know me but a lot of your cars are pretty ugly and I think I can help you on that.' He ended up designing a number of our electric cars and the (McKee Mk10) four-wheel-drive Can-Am car." Idea in hand, Schultz immediately began contacting all the North American track owners and promoters, having also heard the grumbling. In naming the car, Schulz honored the efforts of Bob McKee with the moniker D(Doug) B(Bob) 1 Sch(Schulz) Kee (McKee) = DB-1 SchKee (pronounced Sha-Kee).

"I thought wouldn't it be great to figure out a way to 're-birth' the Can-Am. I wrote up some rules and went and visited most of the promoters, managers and track operators that I thought would be the obvious choices. We created a 12th-scale model of what this car should look like," recalls Schulz. One particular track owner jumped on board immediately. "The guy that really bought into the concept was Les Griebeling who owned Mid-Ohio," said Schulz. "He was absolutely adamant about the concept." He reasoned that the tracks were putting up the prize money and not making the returns."

In the same vein, Burdie Martin was very intrigued by the cross-talk of the promoters. As good as the Formula 5000 series was, there should probably be some ideas to address the issues. One particular race weekend, Burdie found a photograph of a T-332, and with a pen, scrawled fenders onto the chassis and showed it to longtime friend Carl Haas. Haas obviously saw something in the idea as Martin and Haas then met with Lola chief Eric Broadley. "Broadley said that they could design a kit that would convert the 5000 cars to Can-Am cars," said Martin. "Broadley however questioned it, suggesting he felt the 5000 was such a perfect series."



Ahead of the Curve

Carl Haas had grown very successful in the 1960s and 1970s. As the sole importer of Lola Cars and Hewland gearboxes to North America, he not only sold many formula and sports cars to competitors throughout the United States and Canada, but entered his own teams. He had three successive Formula 5000 Championships with driver Brian Redman by the end of 1976—add to that a Formula Super-Vee championship in 1975 with “Fast” Eddie Miller. Haas was also on the SCCA Board of Directors and with his business and racing savvy, helped steer North American professional road racing. One of the best cars he was selling was the Lola T-332. Thanks to being as fast as a Formula 1 car, with stellar competition provided by the F5000 series, he was moving many, many copies.

Chris Pook was in the midst of his own creation: the North American Grand Prix Association, a partnership of promoters of

Formula 1's three North American tracks and the Formula 5000 series, which kept audiences keen to the idea of open-wheel road racing and in an effort to get the teams more involved in the promotion of the races. Beyond Carl Haas, no teams had any sponsors that were considered national consumer power players. Pook watched the situation throughout 1976 with great interest. He remembers, “The discussion of the Can-Am kit car came in mid-1976. It was driven primarily by Carl. Carl was the Lola dealer and he wanted to be sure he had a demand for his cars and spares. While I think that [Doug] Schulz played some sort of role, Carl was the driving force.”

During the course of the summer, Haas had begun having discussions with Fred Stecker, president of First National City Travelers Checks. Citicorp, as they would come to be known, was sponsoring Team Penske's effort in Formula 1, and was looking for a North American promotional

presence. This would not be an exclusive team sponsorship though. Stecker was interested in sponsoring a major racing series—like Johnson's Wax did with the Can-Am—but had a slightly different strategic approach. Citicorp was looking to be a “wholesale sponsor.” What this meant was that they would provide the series trophy, prize and promotional monies—but had little interest in the end consumer/spectator. Stecker wanted a place to entertain retail bankers at all the races: wine them and dine them on lobster and filet mignon, give them insider tours and sell them on the idea of offering his travelers checks ahead of American Express.

“This change did not just happen in two days. This started to happen in the middle of the summer—and the discussions with First National City were ongoing—as they were a big company and had to have their budgets done,” recalls Pook.

Another meeting during the summer of 1976 took place at Burnham Harbor on Lake Michigan in Chicago. Burdick Martin and SCCA technical director John Timanus met Schulz and McKee on Schulz' yacht. McKee and Schulz showed the SchKee model to Martin and Timanus and discussed the possibilities. “He showed us a scale model. McKee was there too. He wanted to know if the car would be eligible. We thought it was a very nice car.” Later Doug's father appeared during the meeting. Martin remembers, “I thought it was funny, his father came on board and immediately asked (after introductions) ‘are you automobile and racer people, too?’”



The SchKee takes the victory at Mt. Tremblant in the hands of Klausler.

PETE HARMeyer



Riverside International boss Les Richter (right) chats with Roger Penske.

PETE BIRCH



The lobby of the Marriott Lincolnshire Resort.

MARRIOTT



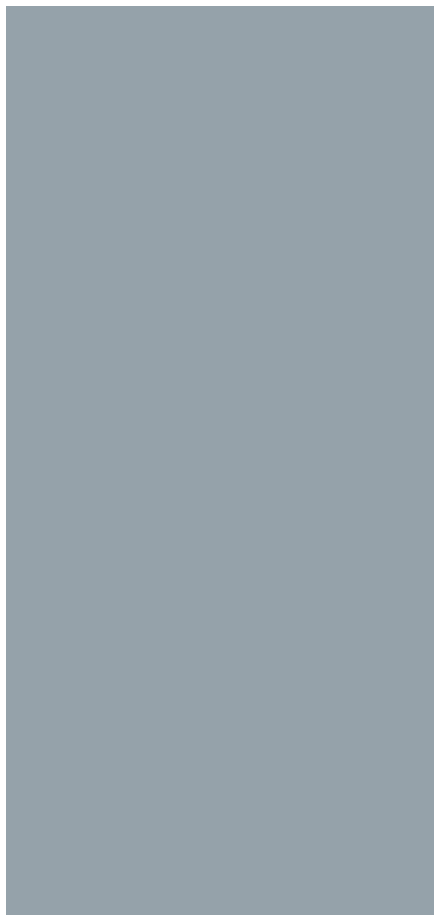
A perfect example of how the T-332/3 was fitted for the glider body.

BOB HARMeyer

Behind Closed Doors

Which brings us to November 1976, after the completion of the F5000 series at Riverside in October. A meeting took place at the Marriott Lincolnshire Resort on the North Shore of Chicago with the SCCA, USAC and several track promoters—and a top-secret meeting of the promoters and Schulz the day before.

T. Richard “Dick” Stahler had been doing PR work with Carl Haas for about eight years. The two met when Stahler became the PR lead for Simoniz in the Johnson Wax Can-Am series. Stahler had moved into a position as senior vice president and creative director at Aaron D. Cushman and Associates, a top Michigan Avenue public relations firm in Chicago. Their clients included Bill Veeck and the Chicago White Sox, the Denver Broncos, Milton Bradley and other well-known consumer products, entertainment entities and sports teams. Haas remained a regular personal client for Stahler after he left Haas' full-time employment in





The unfortunate wreckage of Brian Redman's Lola at Mt. Tremblant.



The two SchKees make their first sister appearance at Road America 1977.

1971. Stahler remembers, "I got a call at my place of employment from Carl who said, 'I need your help'."

Haas wanted Stahler to work with Watkins Glen founder and interim SCCA executive director Cameron Argetsinger to develop a Formula 5000-centric slide-presentation to the attendees of an SCCA/promoters meeting. Stahler and Argetsinger spoke at length to develop the enhancements to the series and what could make the series viable perpetually. He put together a presentation based on Cam's outline. Haas, Argetsinger and Stahler then met. "After we met on Thursday night and went through the presentation, Carl insisted that I give the presentation. But I was going to work the next day. I called in sick, citing a family matter... I guess, with Carl, it kind of was a family matter at that time," Stahler laughs.

Little did Haas, Argetsinger and Stahler realize, but simultaneously Schulz had called a meeting on Thursday with all the track promoters. "I called a meeting at O'Hare Field (the Chicago Airport) with the promoters when they all flew in." The group would be congregating with the SCCA the following day in Lincolnshire. The only promoter who did not show up was Cliff

Tufte of Road America. I passed out the rules and showed the scale model and everyone agreed to go Can-Am racing. I was not invited to the [Lincolnshire] meeting. Les Griebing would tell me after the meeting they were pushing Formula 5000 very hard. At the time, I was considered the enemy, I guess."

Friday morning arrived and the larger group congregated at the Marriott Resort. The meeting was well attended by track promoters including Harvey Hudes of Mosport, Road America's Tufte, Les Griebing of Mid-Ohio, Jim Hunter of Road Atlanta, Les Richter of Riverside, Mal Currie of Watkins Glen and Don Wester from SCRAMP. The team owners were represented by Dan Gurney of All American Racers and Count Rudy Van der Straten of Team VDS. USAC was represented by Dick King and the SCCA was represented by Argetsinger, Martin and Wally Reese. Citicorp's vice president Rip McEldowney and field representative Jim Melvin rounded out the group.

While not invited to the Friday morning meeting, Pook had received an invitation to a cocktail party at the home of Carl and Bernadette Haas that evening. He would not attend either function as he was in Ohio

working on a different deal. But he remembers, "We thought it was important to maintain the Formula 5000 series, because that was an open-wheel single-seater series that kept that product in front of an American audience all year, while we just had the one Formula 1 race. Mal Currie was also a supporter. He did not want to see the 5000 series go away as it was supportive of his Formula 1 program." The pro-5000 promoters present were Mal Currie of Watkins Glen, Harry Hudes of Mosport and Cliff Tufte of Road America.

Dick Stahler remembers the meeting, "Cam spoke for a few minutes, then introduced me. So I guess instead of being a fly on the wall I was the monkey at the podium. I gave a 15-20 minute slideshow proposal on how SCCA/USAC were going to solve the problems of the F5000 as they pictured it. F5000 cars only could run about 100 miles on fuel. Mario Andretti was always critical of the heat races: Heat on Saturday, Semi Final and Final on Sunday. We proposed the idea to do 175- to 200-mile races with NASCAR style fuel stops with fuel dump cans—by design to save money—as opposed to the sophisticated Indy car-styled fueling rigs. The interest and intrigue didn't start right away."

"After the presentation, Tufte jumped up and said 'this is absolutely fantastic!' He said that he was not normally outspoken, but it seems the SCCA really has gotten their act together in addressing some of the issues that myself and other of other promoters, I have spoken with, have had. Tufte said this is the best race car we have ever had in a prime series. It's close competition, the cars are beautiful, they are faster than Formula 1 on certain tracks, and they are affordable because of the stock-block engines. All the right pieces are in place."

But now the opposition spoke. Les Griebing reportedly commented, "There is something wrong here! This presentation is too professional and too slick. Too fast, too hard sell." Griebing was seemingly already on board with a major change. He had opened the Mansfield, Ohio track in 1962, and had great success during the Can-Am years. "Mid-Ohio and Road America were both vying for the Chicago market. I don't think Tufte and Griebing were particularly good friends," said Pook.

Argetsinger reportedly then said, "This is on my watch. We have commitments from the sponsors and hopefully USAC." USAC's Dick King was dead silent to this point. But now prompted, he spoke up: King said "... on paper it really looks good, but we have not made a decision yet on whether to continue co-sanctioning the series."

Behind the scenes, IMS was putting a lot of pressure on King to drop the F5000. Because F5000 was a road-racing series, Indy car was considering expanding the series into road racing and wanted Dick to nicely walk away and continue sanctioning all the champ car events. It would be just two short seasons later that the famed “Gurney White Paper” would instigate the car-owner controlled Championship Auto Racing Teams (CART), that took Indy car racing to road courses and the streets.

There was much back and forth while everyone had their say. As Stahler remembers, “The atmosphere was acrimonious at best.” Most of the promoters were in agreement that they hadn’t had great consumer success since the Can-Am died in 1974. They felt the F5000 series had not effectively replaced the Can-Am. To add even more to the considerations, Argetsinger then introduced another perspective and said, “I am expecting somebody to come here to make a counter presentation.”

Full-Bodied Flavor

Schulz said that he was not invited to the meeting. Yet Stahler remembers someone giving a counter presentation—perhaps Les Griebing or someone brought in by the opposition. In the presentation and proposal, the now unknown person suggested the teams take the current F5000 cars, and put full Can-Am style bodies on them but leave them single seaters. In doing this, re-institute the Can-Am after only three years’ absence. Because of the design of the glider kit and fittings, the bodywork could be easily retrofitted to a F5000 car—and the change could be made without costing the owners bucketfuls of money. The closing argument was that the last really good attendance for tracks was when the Can-Am was running full bodies. It has consumer recognition and branding. At that point, the 12th-scale concept model was revealed, with credit going to Schulz and McKee.

“The first time I looked at it, I thought it was right out of science fiction!” exclaimed Stahler.

“There was resistance by the car owners to moving back to the Can-Am. The rumors started flying around that the 5000 was going to disappear and there was resistance to that,” commented Pook.

The representative then added, “Doug Schulz will enter Tom Klausler in this car for the 1977 season.” Klausler was a hot young Formula Atlantic driver who had won the famed Grand Prix de Trois-Rivières in 1974. He had been driving for Lee Hall, a Chicago-based banker and racer, who would go on to become president of Road

America after Tufte. Offering up the first team to be entered in the “new-Can-Am” really got the discussion rolling.

At some point in the subsequent discussions, someone turned to Rip McEldowney and Jim Melvin at Citicorp and asked, “What do you guys think?” Rip replied, “We are here to sponsor a racing series. We don’t give a s--- what you run. Can-Am or Formula 5000.”

However that might not have been a genuine statement from the banking executive. “When it came time to talk to the car owners, they saw the series sponsorship from First National City Travelers Checks, they saw the expenditures that were going to be made, the enhancements to the prize money...” recalls Pook. “I think behind the scenes, Stecker wanted to have the Can-Am series—as he was a big Can-Am fan.”

The meeting ran from about 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. As the comments and acrimony died to a low rumble, Haas suggests, “Why don’t we adjourn and reconvene for cocktails and dinner at my home at 6:30.” As the meeting broke up, and people went out in groups, the afternoon lobbying began among the attendees. Haas, it is believed, made a call to Eric Broadley, reporting the results of the meeting and strategizing for what looked like a new Lola retro-fit glider kit.

At the Haas home in West Lake Forest, a buffet dinner and what was reported to be “a copious amount of liquor” was served to all the attendees. At the time, retired racer and Haas’ close friend, Masten Gregory was also residing with Carl and Bernie. “The Kansas City Flash” as Gregory was known during his sports car and Formula 1 career, had by then spent his inherited fortune but never really lost sight of the Playboy lifestyle and attitude. “He added a lot of levity to the party... Some in attendance got really drunk, and a lot of things were said,” remembers Stahler. The awkwardness of the afternoon flowed right into the evening. It was apparently a very late night for a few of the attendees which included a major cleanup the next day including vomit and broken items.

By the time the post meeting phone calls were made, Dick King had quietly backed out of the deal, leaving it all back in the SCCA’s hands. All considered, the decision came as quickly as the next day. “Saturday morning I get a call from Carl, said Schulz. ‘He starts stammering about this and that, and I ask, Carl, what are you calling about? He says, ‘SCCA and I have decided we will go Can-Am racing with you.’ All the guys at my meeting had picked dates. I promised the promoters that I would build two of these cars—so we began really thrashing to get the cars done.’”

Pook analyzed, “The SCCA always had a hankering to bring back the Can-Am series. The business of the sponsorship fees and the sharing of revenue with USAC came into play. This was really a business decision. The ball was moving very quickly. The presentation was based on SCCA trying to flex its muscles and the convenience of having a big sponsor. There was a lot going on behind the scenes. It was very political.”

Getting Ready for the New Can-Am

According to Bob McKee, “We made a roll cage on the 332. It stiffened up the chassis a lot and made it safer and more aerodynamic. We tried to make it as safe as possible and as slippery as possible. The big wing on the back gave it good adjustable bite on the back that could really be dialed in. We mated the body and moved the radiators on the chassis.”

The first test of the SchKee was at Indianapolis Raceway park. Schulz took on the driving duties. McKee recalls “That car worked right out of the box. It had a splitter and had good downforce.” Downforce became a much bigger issue though as the rear wing bowed and collapsed. McKee continues, “We had two wings that joined together in the middle. None of us appreciated how much downforce it was going to get. We ended up running a big tube through the wing to support it. On the second car, we had a wing mounting off the transaxle. We used the rear wing mount from the 332.”



Keke Rosberg flies at Riverside in 1980.

LARRY FULHURST



The SchKee as it appears today.



Patrick Tambay's worst finish was 4th at Road America in a rainy 1977 race.



Elliott Forbes-Robinson in a Lola T-530 leads Al Holbert in the CAC-1 at Brainerd.

Haas immediately went to work on several nuances including sponsorship and continuing his dominance to the top series. "Carl was the master of orchestration of business deals," said Pook, "very quietly conducting the orchestra behind the scenes. He ultimately had the First National City Travelers Checks sponsorship on his own cars." Citicorp would also be the series sponsor. He would again be entering three-time F5000 champion Redman. But there was much work to do. The first glider kit was delivered to Jim Hall and immediately the team headed down to Rattlesnake Raceway to begin development. Schulz said, "Carl was selling the bodywork for the transition to competitors, yet developed their own bodywork with Jim Hall at Rattlesnake. Once Carl saw he could sell a whole lot of body kits, this added business for Lola as the preeminent manufacturer." Needless to say, working on gaining the "unfair advantage" on the new body kits became a priority for the Haas team.

The next test of the SchKee was at Blackhawk Farms, near Rockford, Illinois. This time Klausler did the test. They did a full race distance and were quite satisfied with the car and its potential. A second car for Schulz was in the works, but would not be completed until two months later at Road

America. But St. Jovite was around the corner and the Schulz team felt confident for the upcoming race.

At St. Jovite, Klausler was the class of the field. This may have been mostly because during the weekend's first practice session, Brian Redman joined the "Mt. Tremblant flying club." After making adjustments to the front wings of the Lola T-332's new bodywork, Redman headed back out of the pits and on his first flying lap—literally flew—as he crossed Mt. Tremblant's infamous "hump." The car took off like a missile, flipping backwards, landing upside-down and dragging the Brit for over 300 yards on his helmet as the roll bar broke. Among his injuries, Redman broke his neck, smashed his shoulder, split his breastbone and had a severe concussion. Add to the chaos, that the ambulance suffered a flat tire on the way to the hospital. The Haas team would miss the next race at Laguna Seca, but make a triumphant comeback with Patrick Tambay by the third event at Watkins Glen, where the Frenchman scored a win on his way to the 1977 Series Championship.

With Redman's accident and a similar crash by Elliott Forbes-Robinson also in practice, the organizers added a temporary chicane to the circuit right before the hump. Robinson walked away from his wreck and

was able to start the race on Sunday. Seven of the 17 cars that started the race had the new bodywork. The rest were a mishmash of former Can-Am cars including a McLaren, a shadow DN4 and number of "under 2.0 liter" sports racers.

The race began in the rain. Because the SchKee had a large windshield, which was polished with Rain-X inside and out, Klausler could see much better than the "visor-view" all the other drivers had. By the end of the first lap, he had a nine-second lead. Klausler spun on lap 4 and got right back on the circuit in 1st. The one caveat however was the bodywork, which had to be removed to change tires as the track dried. This led to a four-minute pit stop for the eventual winner. This would be the only race win for the SchKee, but most certainly an important one as this was the *magic* car that made the whole transition happen.

Unfortunately It Didn't Bring Back the Magic of the '60s

Chris Pook reminisces on the situation, "Re-inventing a product sometimes is very hard to do. The overall push seemed to be to bring back the Can-Am. F5000 struggled to find a series sponsor. People remembered all the money in the Can-Am with Johnson Wax and the way they would help the tracks promote."

While the racing was good, the true magic of the Can-Am was really gone. The series continued into the early 1980s. It introduced the world to some of the top racers of the era including Bobby Rahal, Gilles and Jacques Villeneuve (Sr.), Danny Sullivan and Al Unser Jr. A great number of other well-known drivers raced in the series. Haas himself dominated the Citicorp Cup championship another four times in a row with drivers Patrick Tambay, Alan Jones and Jacky Ickx. Tambay took the championship again in 1980 in a newly designed and developed Lola—the T-530.

In 1981, Haas himself was without a sponsor. Budweiser, who had a significant relationship with Paul Newman, took on the series sponsorship, which only lasted through the 1982 season. Haas sold a ride in the T-530 to up and comer Jeff Wood. The amicable American, despite good equipment did well, but was no match for Teo Fabi, Danny Sullivan and Geoff Brabham. When the team owners in Indy car had formed CART, this truly became the death knell for top competition in the Can-Am. Haas, VDS, Truesports, Shierson and Newman/Freeman all pulled up stakes and headed for the glories of Indy car racing.

And that, they say, is show business. 